

## **New Web strives to diagnose, help children with reading problems**

Thanks to a new Web site, parents who are concerned that their children might have reading difficulties or dyslexia can now find help privately and at home. The Center for the Assessment and Remediation of Reading Difficulties (CARRD) at Pittsburg State University and VRSchoolHouse recently launched the Reading Screening Web site at [www.ReadingScreening.org](http://www.ReadingScreening.org).

Dr. David Hurford, chairman of the PSU Department of Psychology and Counseling and director of the CARRD, said the creation of the Web site grew out of a growing demand for the center's services.

"About six years ago I had the idea for the site," said Hurford, who is the author of the Reading Screening system and who has been working in the field of reading difficulties for nearly 20 years. "We get a lot of calls from all over the country regarding the services at the Center for the Assessment and Remediation of Reading Difficulties (CARRD). Some of them live way too far away to visit here for an assessment."

Hurford said his goal in creating the Web site was "...to develop a highly accurate, user-friendly, and cost-effective approach to identifying children's strengths and weakness in reading. I hope that providing parents with specific information concerning the skills that are necessary for successful reading will help them to help their children become competent readers. Good reading skills are crucially important in today's society."

The Web site provides parents, teachers, and other professionals who advocate for children a means to assess children between 5 and 12 years of age for reading difficulties, Hurford said. The parent, teacher, or professional works with his or her child at a computer that is connected to the Internet. The child is assessed on 14 tasks that researchers have found to be the most effective in identifying children who will experience, or who are already experiencing, reading problems. It takes approximately 30 minutes to complete the assessment.

A detailed summary of assessment report highlights the child's strengths and weaknesses in reading and provides an overall rating of the child's reading abilities. In addition, the professional summary of assessment report can be used

**Editors/Directors - For more information on CARRD, Reading Screening or the PSU Department of Psychology and Counseling, please call Dr. David Hurford at 620-235-4521 or e-mail him at [<dhurford@pittstate.edu>](mailto:dhurford@pittstate.edu).**

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by members of an IEP or SIT team at the child's school.

The Reading Screening system provides information that is highly specific to reading and is therefore very useful in developing interventions to help the child become a better reader, Hurford said. Additionally, the parent, teacher, or professional can also use links associated with the Summary of Assessment report to visit the CARRD's help area. The help area provides suggested activities that can be done to help the child improve his or her reading skills.

The cost to do the Reading Screening is \$35. Hurford said the cost for similar assessments done by a professional range between \$90 and \$250 and do not include the specificity included in the Reading Screening system. Revenue generated by the Reading Screening Web site will help support the CARRD budget, according to Hurford.

"We could do so much more if we were able to hire full-time staff," Hurford said.

Dr. Hurford has had more than 65 articles published in scientific journals or papers presented at professional conferences on reading difficulties. He was also a recipient of the prestigious Spencer Fellowship from the National Academy of Education.

**---Pitt State---**