***My child does plenty of reading at school. Why does she need to read at home, too?***

To become good readers, children need to do lots and lots of reading both inside and outside of school. For children who find reading difficult, reading at home is especially important. These children tend to do less voluntary reading at school than their peers because it feels like work. In addition, they actually need more reading practice than other children because it takes them longer to learn to recognize words automatically. For these children, reading at home is particularly valuable.

While any reading will help children improve, most students progress more rapidly by reading books at a comfortable level, where they recognize most of the words. We call this their “independent level.” If your child continually chooses books that are too difficult or can’t seem to settle on a book, talk to her teacher. Teachers usually know what their students like to read at school, as well as what they are capable of reading. They are also familiar with many books that appeal to children at the grade level they teach. When in doubt, they can “try on” different books with a student at school until they find one that fits. With any luck, the book will be part of a series, and your child will be hooked (and you will have peace) for at least a month or two.