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Alina O'Donnell
609.280.3905
press@reading.org

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION'S NEW BRIEF REAFFIRMS ORGANIZATION'S STANCE ON PHONICS INSTRUCTION

Newark, Del. (July 31, 2019) — A new brief issued by the International Literacy Association (ILA), published earlier this month, supports the organization's position on the role effective, evidence-based phonics instruction plays in the context of a total reading program.

Meeting the Challenges of Early Literacy Phonics Instruction describes key characteristics of effective phonics instruction as well as common obstacles related to instruction and how to overcome them. The piece reinforces ILA's long-standing view on the oft-polarizing topic of phonics instruction.

In a position statement reaching back to 1997, the organization—then the International Reading Association (IRA)—asserted that “the teaching of phonics is an important aspect of beginning reading instruction.” It also states that “when phonics instruction is linked to children's reading and writing, they are more likely to become strategic and independent in their use of phonics than when phonics instruction is drilled and practiced in isolation.”

In an interview with *Education Week*, Diane Lapp, chair of ILA's Literacy Research Panel, said this integrated approach accommodates students' unique learning styles and gives them a bevy of tools from which to pull.

"I also think that we never need to lose sight of individualized instruction," she said. "Students who come into school not knowing the letters of the alphabet need a lot of phonics instruction, while students who already know how to read don't need the same program."

Lapp's comments also echo IRA's 1997 statement, which declared, “Rather than engage in debates about whether phonics should or should not be taught, effective teachers of reading and writing ask when, how, how much, and under what circumstances phonics should be taught.”

Access the full 2019 brief, 1997 position statement and other resources at literacyworldwide.org/statements.

About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers and experts across 146 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught and evaluated. ILA's Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017 provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students and inform policymakers. ILA publishes *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* and *Reading Research Quarterly*, which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.