

## **IRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT TIME OF ADOPTION**

John J. Pikulski, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, *President* • Kathryn A. Ransom, Illinois State University, Springfield, Illinois, *President-Elect* • Carol Minnick Santa, School District #5, Kalispell, Montana, *Vice President* • Richard L. Allington, University at Albany–SUNY, Albany, New York • Betsy M. Baker, Columbia Public Schools, Columbia, Missouri • James F. Baumann, Department of Reading Education, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia • James V. Hoffman, The University of Texas–Austin, Austin, Texas • Kathleen Stumpf Jongsma, Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas • Adria F. Klein, California State University, San Bernardino, California • Diane L. Larson, Owatonna Public Schools, Owatonna, Minnesota • John W. Logan, Northbrook School District 27, Northbrook, Illinois • Lesley M. Morrow, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey • Alan E. Farstrup, Executive Director

The International Reading Association attempts, through its publications, to provide a forum for a wide spectrum of opinions on reading. This policy permits divergent viewpoints without implying the endorsement of the Association.

**Director of Publications** Joan M. Irwin  
**Assistant Director of Publications** Jeanette K. Moss  
**Editor-in-Chief, Books** Christian A. Kempers  
**Senior Editor** Matthew W. Baker  
**Assistant Editor** Janet S. Parrack  
**Assistant Editor** Mara P. Gorman  
**Publications Coordinator** Beth Doughty  
**Association Editor** David K. Roberts  
**Production Department Manager** Iona Sauscermen  
**Art Director** Boni Nash  
**Electronic Publishing Supervisor** Wendy A. Mazur  
**Electronic Publishing Specialist** Anette Schütz-Ruff  
**Electronic Publishing Specialist** Cheryl J. Strum  
**Electronic Publishing Assistant** Peggy Mason

Copyright 1998 by the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, or any informational storage and retrieval system, without permission from the publisher.

# LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE: DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The development of this position statement began in early 1997, shortly after publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children's revised edition of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* (DAP). International Reading Association President John J. Pikulski wrote an article in *Reading Today*, IRA's bimonthly newspaper, responding favorably to the revised document and welcoming some of the changes, while also raising some ongoing concerns about misrepresentations of developmentally appropriate practice as meaning no teaching about literacy to young children. Pikulski's own work with kindergarten teachers led to his concern that there are many missed opportunities for learning in the name of developmentally appropriate practice.

IRA's Reading/Language in Early Childhood Committee, along with the Literacy Development in Young Children Special Interest Group, examined the new document carefully. They also expressed concern that it did not go far enough in clarifying the teacher's important role in supporting early literacy development of preschool children, and felt that the docu-

ment was not specific enough on the important topic of reading. Two subsequent articles in *Reading Today* printed critiques of the revised DAP statement. These concerns were raised at the same time that vocal arguments about reading instruction began appearing regularly in the media.

Pikulski initiated a collaboration between IRA and NAEYC by inviting Sue Bredekamp of NAEYC to serve on IRA's Reading/Language in Early Childhood Committee, along with Susan Neuman, who had been among the most concerned about the need to articulate developmentally appropriate practices in early literacy. The committee met for the first time at IRA's annual convention in May 1997 and agreed that the first agenda item would be to revise the 1989 IRA position statement on early literacy that had been endorsed by NAEYC and numerous other groups. The committee identified key issues to be addressed in the revised document.

Over the summer, NAEYC posted the statement on its World Wide Web site and requested feedback from its members. In the fall, IRA set up a listserv so that NAEYC's DAP Panel and IRA's committees,

---

as well as other interested professionals, could discuss the issues online.

Pikulski, Bredekamp, and Neuman met in the fall and agreed that Bredekamp and Neuman would lead the writing task and draw on the expertise of both organizations. A highly interactive 2-hour open hearing was conducted at NAEYC's annual meeting in Anaheim, California, with Pikulski, Neuman, Bredekamp, and Kathy Roskos presenting and receiving feedback from more than 300 participants. Presenters heard comments from teacher trainers, researchers, policy makers, child care staff, and parent advocates interested in children's early reading and writing development. Following the hearing, a panel from NAEYC on developmentally appropriate

---

***The level of review of this document was unprecedented.***

---

practice, including administrators, researchers, and U.S. Department of Education consultants, met to discuss the suggestions and agree on directions for the statement. Neuman subsequently held two open sessions with research colleagues at the National Reading Conference in early December 1997 to get their input.

The two groups agreed that the statement should do and be the following:

1. The statement should be research based;
2. be contextualized in response to current issues or concerns about practice;
3. be addressed to a primary audience of teachers and secondary audiences of parents, administrators, and policy makers;
4. address the full age range of birth through age 8 in terms of general principles, recommended practices, and policies;
5. be reasonably brief yet long enough to support its key points;
6. address the importance of teaching, because literacy does not just emerge naturally;

7. address appropriate assessment practices;

8. be responsive to issues of cultural and linguistic diversity;

9. describe the continuum of reading and writing development and the range of individual variation; and

10. focus on reading and writing rather than the broadest possible definition of literacy.

A thorough review of all the relevant research was conducted. In addition, every additional study that reviewers suggested for citation was read or reread. Bredekamp and Neuman wrote a draft of the position statement and circulated it for review and comment to the two committees and the Boards of Directors of NAEYC and IRA. It also was distributed for review to the members of the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in state departments of education and IRA's Literacy Development in Young Children Special Interest Group.

Perhaps most unique to this process was the use of the listserv. Although many comments were received by fax, most reviews were sent through the listserv. The level of review of this document was unprecedented as compared with the many other position statements the NAEYC has developed. In fact, more than 75 thoughtful and detailed critiques were received and reviewed. Early reviews by some colleagues created a model for subsequent reviews, leading to more thorough and detailed comments than ever received previously.

Because the listserv ensured that the entire review process was made public, it allowed for issues of controversy to be debated openly, then resolved through a consensus process. Every member of the group had an equal opportunity to comment. Further, the listserv was used throughout the process to summarize key discussions at meetings, highlight important points, and provide an occasional update of activities needed to finalize the document.

The position statement was revised considerably in response to the excellent reviews. The revised statement considers all

---

the major concerns of reviewers, which were as follows:

1. The statement needed to be clearer about the role of instruction (no one naturally becomes literate, the original document lapsed into a maturation perspective at times);

2. address infants and toddlers;

3. better address bilingualism and second-language learners;

4. more thoroughly address cultural diversity;

5. better address assessment;

6. better address ongoing professional development;

7. get to the issues of controversy more succinctly;

8. address administrators; and

9. improve formatting and readability.

Some people thought the document was too long, but most felt that it needed the level of detail provided and that shorter versions could be derived from it.

The developmental continuum, which we thought might be controversial, was actually the most positively received aspect of the document. The strong consensus of reviewers was to keep the grade-connected markers of goals because they communicate to teachers that there is such a thing as a developmentally appropriate goal while

emphasizing the importance of seeing children as individuals within the continuum.

The final draft of the position statement was presented for approval to the NAEYC Board of Directors at its meeting in late April 1998, and to the IRA Board of Directors in early May. It was approved unanimously by both organizations. Additional endorsements from other groups are being sought.

The committee also outlined several additional needs to address in an expanded work plan. Among the first priorities were

1. a shortened version for teachers that could be printed in journals and placed on Web sites;

2. a brochure for parents;

3. an action plan for policy makers;

4. forums (specific training at various sites) or a videoconference;

5. more detailed publications articulating the developmental continuum of reading and writing and what teachers and parents can do to support children's literacy; and

6. articles for related publications such as those of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The committee representatives from IRA and NAEYC have been asked to suggest implementation strategies to help achieve real change in practice and policy.

---

**L**earning to read and write is critical to a child's success in school and later in life. One of the best predictors of whether a child will function competently in school and go on to contribute actively in our increasingly literate society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing. Although reading and writing abilities continue to develop throughout the life span, the early childhood years—from birth through age 8—are the most important period for literacy development. It is for this reason that the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) joined together to formulate a position statement regarding early literacy development. The statement consists of a set of principles and recommendations for teaching practices and public policy.

The primary purpose of this position statement is to provide guidance to teachers of young children in schools and early childhood programs (including child care centers, preschools, and family child care homes) serving children from birth through age 8. By and large, the principles and practices suggested here also will be of interest to any adults who are in a position to influence a young child's learning and development—parents, grandparents, older siblings, tutors, and other community members.

Teachers work in schools or programs regulated by administrative policies as well as available resources. Therefore secondary audiences for this position statement are school principals and program administrators whose roles are critical in establishing a supportive climate for sound, developmentally appropriate teaching practices; and policy makers whose decisions determine whether adequate resources are available for high-quality early childhood education.

A great deal is known about how young children learn to read and write and how they can be helped toward literacy during the first 5 years of life. A great deal is known also about how to help children once compulsory schooling begins, whether in kindergarten or the primary grades. Based on a thorough review of the research, this document reflects the commitment of two major professional organizations to the goal of helping children learn to read well enough by the end of third grade so

that they can read to learn in all curriculum areas. IRA and NAEYC are committed not only to helping young children learn to read and write but also to fostering and sustaining their interest and disposition to read and write for their own enjoyment, information, and communication.

First, the statement summarizes the current issues that are the impetus for this position; then it reviews what is known from research on young children's literacy development. This review of research as well as the collective wisdom and experience of IRA and NAEYC members provides the basis for a position statement about what constitutes developmentally appropriate practice in early literacy over the period of birth through age 8. The position concludes with recommendations for teaching practices and policies.

### **Statement of the issues**

Why take a position on something as obviously important as children's learning to read and write? The IRA and NAEYC believe that this position statement will contribute significantly to an improvement in practice and the development of supportive educational policies. The two associations saw that a clear, concise position statement was needed at this time for several reasons.

- It is essential and urgent to teach children to read and write competently, enabling them to achieve today's high standards of literacy.

Although the U.S. enjoys the highest literacy rate in its history, society now expects virtually everyone in the population to function beyond the minimum standards of literacy. Today the definition of *basic proficiency* in literacy calls for a fairly high standard of reading comprehension and analysis. The main reason is that literacy requirements of most jobs have increased significantly and are expected to increase further in the future. Communications that in the past were verbal (by phone or in person) now demand reading and writing—messages sent by electronic mail, Internet, or facsimile as well as print documents.

- With the increasing variation among young children in our programs and schools, teaching today has become more challenging.

Experienced teachers throughout the U.S. report that the children they teach today are

---

more diverse in their backgrounds, experiences, and abilities than were those they taught in the past. Kindergarten classes now include children who have been in group settings for 3 or 4 years as well as children who are participating for the first time in an organized early childhood program. Classes include both children with identified disabilities and children with exceptional abilities, children who are already independent readers and children who are just beginning to acquire some basic literacy knowledge and skills. Children in the group may speak different languages at varying levels of proficiency. Because of these individual and experiential variations, it is common to find within a kindergarten classroom a 5-year range in children's literacy-related skills and functioning (Riley, 1996). What this means is that some kindergartners may have skills characteristic of the typical 3-year-old, while others might be functioning at the level of the typical 8-year-old. Diversity is to be expected and embraced, but it can be overwhelming when teachers are expected to produce uniform outcomes for all, with no account taken of the initial range in abilities, experiences, interests, and personalities of individual children.

- Among many early childhood teachers, a maturationist view of young children's development persists despite much evidence to the contrary.

A readiness view of reading development assumes that there is a specific time in the early childhood years when the teaching of reading should begin. It also assumes that physical and neurological maturation alone prepare the child to take advantage of instruction in reading and writing. The readiness perspective implies that until children reach a certain stage of maturity all exposure to reading and writing, except perhaps being read stories, is a waste of time or even potentially harmful. Experiences throughout the early childhood years, birth through age 8, affect the development of literacy. These experiences constantly interact with characteristics of individual children to determine the level of literacy skills a child ultimately achieves. Failing to give children literacy experiences until they are school-age can severely limit the reading and writing levels they ultimately attain.

- Recognizing the early beginnings of literacy acquisition too often has resulted in use of inappropriate teaching practices suited to older children or adults but perhaps ineffective with children in preschool, kindergarten, and the early grades.

Teaching practices associated with outdated views of literacy development and/or learning theories are still prevalent in many classrooms. Such practices include extensive whole-group instruction and intensive drill and practice on isolated skills for groups or individuals. These practices, not particularly effective for primary-grade children, are even less suitable and effective with preschool and kindergarten children. Young children especially need to be engaged in experiences that make academic content meaningful and build on prior learning. It is vital for all children to have literacy experiences in schools and early childhood programs. Such access is even more critical for children with limited home experiences in literacy. However, these school experiences must teach the broad range of language and literacy knowledge and skills to provide the solid foundation on which high levels of reading and writing ultimately depend.

- Current policies and resources are inadequate in ensuring that preschool and primary teachers are qualified to support the literacy development of all children, a task requiring strong preservice preparation and ongoing professional development.

For teachers of children younger than kindergarten age in the United States, no uniform preparation requirements or licensure standards exist. In fact, a high-school diploma is the highest level of education required to be a child care teacher in most states. Moreover, salaries in child care and preschool programs are too low to attract or retain better qualified staff. Even in the primary grades, for which certified teachers are required, many states do not offer specialized early childhood certification, which means many teachers are not adequately prepared to teach reading and writing to young children. All teachers of young children need good, foundational knowledge in language acquisition, including second-language learning, the processes of reading and writing, early literacy development, and experiences and teaching practices contributing to optimal development. Resources also

---

are insufficient to ensure teachers continuing access to professional education so they can remain current in the field or can prepare to teach a different age group if they are reassigned.

### **What research reveals: Rationale for the position statement**

Children take their first critical steps toward learning to read and write very early in life. Long before they can exhibit reading and writing production skills, they begin to acquire some basic understandings of the concepts about literacy and its functions. Children learn to use symbols, combining their oral language, pictures, print, and play into a coherent mixed medium and creating and communicating meanings in a variety of ways. From their initial experiences and interactions with adults, children begin to read words, processing letter-sound relations and acquiring substantial knowledge of the alphabetic system. As they continue to learn, children increasingly consolidate this information into patterns that allow for automaticity and fluency in reading and writing. Consequently reading and writing acquisition is conceptualized better as a developmental continuum than as an all-or-nothing phenomenon (see pp. 8–9 for an illustration of a developmental continuum).

But the ability to read and write does not develop naturally, without careful planning and instruction. Children need regular and active interactions with print. Specific abilities required for reading and writing come from immediate experiences with oral *and* written language. Experiences in these early years begin to define the assumptions and expectations about becoming literate and give children the motivation to work toward learning to read and write. From these experiences children learn that reading and writing are valuable tools that will help them do many things in life.

#### *The beginning years (birth through preschool)*

Even in the first few months of life, children begin to experiment with language. Young babies make sounds that imitate the tones and rhythms of adult talk; they “read” gestures and facial expressions, and they begin to associate sound sequences frequently heard—words—with their referents (Berk, 1996). They delight in listening to familiar jingles and rhymes, play

along in games such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake, and manipulate objects such as board books and alphabet blocks in their play. From these remarkable beginnings children learn to use a variety of symbols.

In the midst of gaining facility with these symbol systems, children acquire through interactions with others the insights that specific kinds of marks—print—also can represent meanings. At first children will use the physical and visual cues surrounding print to determine what something says. But as they develop an understanding of the alphabetic principle, children begin to process letters, translate them into sounds, and connect this information with a known meaning. Although it may seem as though some children acquire these understandings magically or on their own, studies suggest that they are the beneficiaries of considerable, though playful and informal, adult guidance and instruction (Anbar, 1986; Durkin, 1966).

Considerable diversity in children’s oral and written language experiences occurs in these years (Hart & Risley, 1995). In home and child care situations, children encounter many different resources and types and degrees of support for early reading and writing (McGill-Franzen & Lanford, 1994). Some children may have ready access to a range of writing and reading materials, while others may not; some children will observe their parents writing and reading frequently, others only occasionally; some children receive direct instruction, while others receive much more casual, informal assistance.

What this means is that no one teaching method or approach is likely to be the most effective for all children (Strickland, 1994). Rather, good teachers bring into play a variety of teaching strategies that can encompass the great diversity of children in schools. Excellent instruction builds on what children already know and can do, and provides knowledge, skills, and dispositions for lifelong learning. Children need to learn not only the technical skills of reading and writing but also how to use these tools to better their thinking and reasoning (Neuman, in press).

The single most important activity for building these understandings and skills essential for reading success appears to be *reading aloud to children* (Bus, Van IJendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Wells, 1985). High-quality

---

book reading occurs when children feel emotionally secure (Bus & Van IJzendoorn, 1995; Bus et al., 1997) and are active participants in reading (Whitehurst et al., 1994). Asking predictive and analytic questions in small-group settings appears to affect children's vocabulary and comprehension of stories (Karweit & Wasik, 1996). Children may talk about the pictures, retell the story, discuss their favorite actions, and request multiple rereadings. It is the talk that surrounds the storybook reading that gives it power, helping children to bridge what is in the story and their own lives (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Snow, Tabors, Nicholson, & Kurland, 1995). Snow (1991) has described these types of conversations as "decontextualized language" in which teachers may induce higher level thinking by moving experiences in stories from what the children may see in front of them to what they can imagine.

A central goal during these preschool years is to enhance children's *exposure to and concepts about print* (Clay, 1979, 1991; Holdaway, 1979; Stanovich & West, 1989; Teale, 1984). Some teachers use Big Books to help children distinguish many print features, including the fact that print (rather than pictures) carries the meaning of the story that the strings of letters between spaces are words and in print correspond to an oral version, and that reading progresses from left to right and top to bottom. In the course of reading stories, teachers may demonstrate these features by pointing to individual words, directing children's attention to where to begin reading, and helping children to recognize letter shapes and sounds. Some researchers (Adams, 1990; Roberts, in press) have suggested that the key to these critical concepts, such as developing word awareness, may lie in these demonstrations of how print works.

Children also need opportunity to practice what they've learned about print with their peers and on their own. Studies suggest that the physical arrangement of the classroom can promote time with books (Morrow & Weinstein, 1986; Neuman & Roskos, 1997). A key area is the classroom library—a collection of attractive stories and informational books—that provides children with immediate access to books. Regular visits to the school or public library and library card registration ensure that children's collections remain con-

tinually updated and may help children develop the habit of reading as lifelong learning. In comfortable library settings children often will pretend to read, using visual cues to remember the words of their favorite stories. Although studies have shown that these pretend readings are just that (Ehri & Sweet, 1991), such visual readings may demonstrate substantial knowledge about the global features of reading and its purposes.

Storybooks are not the only means of providing children with exposure to written language. Children learn a lot about reading from the labels, signs, and other kinds of print they see around them (McGee, Lomax, & Head, 1988; Neuman & Roskos, 1993). Highly visible print labels on objects, signs, and bulletin boards in classrooms demonstrate the practical uses of written language. In environments rich with print, children incorporate literacy into their dramatic play (Morrow, 1990; Neuman & Roskos, 1997; Vukelich, 1994), using these communication tools to enhance the drama and realism of the pretend situation. These everyday, playful experiences by themselves do not make most children readers. Rather, they expose children to a variety of print experiences and the processes of reading for real purposes.

For children whose primary language is other than English, studies have shown that a strong basis in a first language promotes school achievement in a second language (Cummins, 1979). Children who are *learning English as a second language* are more likely to become readers and writers of English when they are already familiar with the vocabulary and concepts in their primary language. In this respect, oral and written language experiences should be regarded as an additive process, ensuring that children are able to maintain their home language while also learning to speak and read English (Wong Fillmore, 1991). Including non-English materials and resources to the extent possible can help to support children's first language while children acquire oral proficiency in English.

A fundamental insight developed in children's early years through instruction is the *alphabetic principle*, the understanding that there is a systematic relationship between letters and sounds (Adams, 1990). The research of Gibson and Levin (1975) indicates that the



## Continuum of children's development in early reading and writing

**Note:** This list is intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive. Children at any grade level will function at a variety of phases along the reading/writing continuum.

### Phase 1: Awareness and exploration (goals for preschool)

Children explore their environment and build the foundations for learning to read and write.

#### Children can

- enjoy listening to and discussing storybooks
- understand that print carries a message
- engage in reading and writing attempts
- identify labels and signs in their environment
- participate in rhyming games
- identify some letters and make some letter - sound matches
- use known letters or approximations of letters to represent written language (especially meaningful words like their name and phrases such as "I love you")

#### What teachers do

- share books with children, including Big Books, and model reading behaviors
- talk about letters by name and sounds
- establish a literacy - rich environment
- reread favorite stories
- engage children in language games
- promote literacy - related play activities
- encourage children to experiment with writing

#### What parents and family members can do

- talk with children, engage them in conversation, give names of things, show interest in what a child says
- read and reread stories with predictable texts to children
- encourage children to recount experiences and describe ideas and events that are important to them
- visit the library regularly
- provide opportunities for children to draw and print, using markers, crayons, and pencils

### Phase 2: Experimental reading and writing (goals for kindergarten)

Children develop basic concepts of print and begin to engage in and experiment with reading and writing.

#### Kindergartners can

- enjoy being read to and themselves retell simple narrative stories or informational texts
- use descriptive language to explain and explore
- recognize letters and letter - sound matches
- show familiarity with rhyming and beginning sounds
- understand left - to - right and top - to - bottom orientation and familiar concepts of print
- match spoken words with written ones
- begin to write letters of the alphabet and some high - frequency words

#### What teachers do

- encourage children to talk about reading and writing experiences
- provide many opportunities for children to explore and identify sound - symbol relationships in meaningful contexts
- help children to segment spoken words into individual sounds and blend the sounds into whole words (for example, by slowly writing a word and saying its sound)
- frequently read interesting and conceptually rich stories to children
- provide daily opportunities for children to write
- help children build a sight vocabulary
- create a literacy - rich environment for children to engage independently in reading and writing

#### What parents and family members can do

- daily read and reread narrative and informational stories to children
- encourage children's attempts at reading and writing
- allow children to participate in activities that involve writing and reading (for example, cooking, making grocery lists)
- play games that involve specific directions (such as "Simon Says")
- have conversations with children during mealtimes and throughout the day

### Phase 3: Early reading and writing (goals for first grade)

Children begin to read simple stories and can write about a topic that is meaningful to them.

#### First graders can

- read and retell familiar stories
- use strategies (rereading, predicting, questioning, contextualizing) when comprehension breaks down
- use reading and writing for various purposes on their own initiative
- orally read with reasonable fluency
- use letter - sound associations, word parts, and context to identify new words
- identify an increasing number of words by sight
- sound out and represent all substantial sounds in spelling a word
- write about topics that are personally meaningful
- attempt to use some punctuation and capitalization

#### What teachers do

- support the development of vocabulary by reading daily to the children, transcribing their language, and selecting materials that expand children's knowledge and language development

(continued)

## Continuum of children's development in early reading and writing (cont'd.).

- model strategies and provide practice for identifying unknown words
- give children opportunities for independent reading and writing practice
- read, write, and discuss a range of different text types (poems, informational books)
- introduce new words and teach strategies for learning to spell new words
- demonstrate and model strategies to use when comprehension breaks down
- help children build lists of commonly used words from their writing

### What parents and family members can do

- talk about favorite storybooks
- read to children and encourage them to read to you
- suggest that children write to friends and relatives
- bring to a parent-teacher conference evidence of what your child can do in writing and reading
- encourage children to share what they have learned about their writing and reading

### Phase 4: Transitional reading and writing (goals for second grade)

Children begin to read more fluently and write various text forms using simple and more complex sentences.

#### Second graders can

- read with greater fluency
- use strategies more efficiently (rereading, questioning, and so on) when comprehension breaks down
- use word identification strategies with greater facility to unlock unknown words
- identify an increasing number of words by sight
- write about a range of topics to suit different audiences
- use common letter patterns and critical features to spell words
- punctuate simple sentences correctly and proofread their own work
- spend time reading daily and use reading to research topics

#### What teachers do

- create a climate that fosters analytic, evaluative, and reflective thinking
- teach children to write in multiple forms (stories, information, poems)
- ensure that children read a range of texts for a variety of purposes
- teach revising, editing, and proofreading skills
- teach strategies for spelling new and difficult words
- model enjoyment of reading

#### What parents and family members can do

- continue to read to children and encourage them to read to you
- engage children in activities that require reading and writing

- become involved in school activities
- show children your interest in their learning by displaying their written work
- visit the library regularly
- support your child's specific hobby or interest with reading materials and references

### Phase 5: Independent and productive reading and writing (goals for third grade)

Children continue to extend and refine their reading and writing to suit varying purposes and audiences.

#### Third graders can

- read fluently and enjoy reading
- use a range of strategies when drawing meaning from the text
- use word identification strategies appropriately and automatically when encountering unknown words
- recognize and discuss elements of different text structures
- make critical connections between texts
- write expressively in many different forms (stories, poems, reports)
- use a rich variety of vocabulary and sentences appropriate to text forms
- revise and edit their own writing during and after composing
- spell words correctly in final writing drafts

#### What teachers do

- provide opportunities daily for children to read, examine, and critically evaluate narrative and expository texts
- continue to create a climate that fosters critical reading and personal response
- teach children to examine ideas in texts
- encourage children to use writing as a tool for thinking and learning
- extend children's knowledge of the correct use of writing conventions
- emphasize the importance of correct spelling in finished written products
- create a climate that engages all children as a community of literacy learners

#### What parents and family members can do

- continue to support children's learning and interest by visiting the library and bookstores with them
- find ways to highlight children's progress in reading and writing
- stay in regular contact with your child's teachers about activities and progress in reading and writing
- encourage children to use and enjoy print for many purposes (such as recipes, directions, games, and sports)
- build a love of language in all its forms and engage children in conversation

---

shapes of letters are learned by distinguishing one character from another by its type of spatial features. Teachers will often involve children in comparing letter shapes, helping them to differentiate a number of letters visually. Alphabet books and alphabet puzzles in which children can see and compare letters may be a key to efficient and easy learning.

At the same time children learn about the sounds of language through exposure to *linguistic awareness* games, nursery rhymes, and rhythmic activities. Some research suggests that the roots of phonemic awareness, a powerful predictor of later reading success, are found in traditional rhyming, skipping, and word games (Bryant, MacLean, Bradley, & Crossland, 1990). In one study, for example (MacLean, Bryant, & Bradley, 1987), researchers found that 3-year-old children's knowledge of nursery rhymes specifically related to their more abstract phonological knowledge later on. Engaging children in choral readings of rhymes and rhythms allows them to associate the symbols with the sounds they hear in these words.

Although children's facility in *phonemic awareness* has been shown to be strongly related to later reading achievement, the precise role it plays in these early years is not fully understood. Phonemic awareness refers to a child's understanding and conscious awareness that speech is composed of identifiable units, such as spoken words, syllables, and sounds. Training studies have demonstrated that phonemic awareness can be taught to children as young as age 5 (Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Bryne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1991; Cunningham, 1990; Lundberg, Frost, & Petersen, 1988). These studies used tiles (boxes) (Elkonin, 1973) and linguistic games to engage children in explicitly manipulating speech segments at the phoneme level. Yet, whether such training is appropriate for younger children is highly suspect. Other scholars find that children benefit most from such training only after they have learned some letter names, shapes, and sounds and can apply what they learn to real reading in meaningful contexts (Cunningham, 1990; Foorman, Novy, Francis, & Liberman, 1991). Even at this later age, however, many children acquire phonemic awareness skills without specific training but as a consequence of learning to

read (Ehri, 1994; Wagner & Torgesen, 1987). In the preschool years sensitizing children to sound similarities does not seem to be strongly dependent on formal training but rather from listening to patterned, predictable texts while enjoying the feel of reading and language.

Children acquire a working knowledge of the alphabetic system not only through reading but also through writing. A classic study by Read (1971) found that even without formal spelling instruction, preschoolers use their tacit knowledge of phonological relations to spell words. *Invented spelling* (or phonic spelling) refers to beginners' use of the symbols they associate with the sounds they hear in the words they wish to write. For example, a child may initially write *b* or *bk* for the word *bike*, to be followed by more conventionalized forms later on.

Some educators may wonder whether invented spelling promotes poor spelling habits. To the contrary, studies suggest that *temporary* invented spelling may contribute to beginning reading (Chomsky, 1979; Clarke, 1988). One study, for example, found that children benefited from using invented spelling compared to having the teacher provide correct spellings in writing (Clarke, 1988). Although children's invented spellings did not comply with correct spellings, the process encouraged them to think actively about letter-sound relations. As children engage in writing, they are learning to segment the words they wish to spell into constituent sounds.

Classrooms that provide children with regular opportunities to express themselves on paper, without feeling too constrained for correct spelling and proper handwriting, also help children understand that writing has real purpose (Dyson, 1988; Graves, 1983; Sulzby, 1985). Teachers can organize situations that both demonstrate the writing process and get children actively involved in it. Some teachers serve as scribes and help children write down their ideas, keeping in mind the balance between children doing it themselves and asking for help. In the beginning these products likely emphasize pictures with few attempts at writing letters or words. With encouragement, children begin to label their pictures, tell stories, and attempt to write stories about the pictures they have drawn. Such novice writing activity sends the important message that writing is not just handwriting practice—

---

children are using their own words to compose a message to communicate with others.

Thus the picture that emerges from research in these first years of children's reading and writing is one that emphasizes wide exposure to print and to developing concepts about its forms and functions. Classrooms filled with print, language and literacy play, storybook reading, and writing allow children to experience the joy and power associated with reading and writing while mastering basic concepts about print that research has shown are strong predictors of achievement.

#### *In kindergarten*

Knowledge of the forms and functions of print serves as a foundation from which children become increasingly sensitive to letter shapes, names, sounds, and words. However, not all children typically come to kindergarten with similar levels of knowledge about printed language. Estimating where each child is developmentally and building on that base, a key feature of all good teaching, is particularly important for the kindergarten teacher. Instruction will need to be adapted to account for children's differences. For those children with lots of print experiences, instruction will extend their knowledge as they learn more about the formal features of letters and their sound correspondences. For other children with fewer prior experiences, initiating them to the alphabetic principle, that the alphabet comprises a limited set of letters and that these letters stand for the sounds that make up spoken words, will require more focused and direct instruction. In all cases, however, children need to interact with a rich variety of print (Morrow, Strickland, & Woo, 1998).

In this critical year kindergarten teachers need to capitalize on every opportunity for enhancing children's *vocabulary development*. One approach is through listening to stories (Elley, 1989; Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein, 1986). Children need to be exposed to vocabulary from a wide variety of genres, including informational texts as well as narratives. The learning of vocabulary, however, is not necessarily simply a byproduct of reading stories (Leung & Pikulski, 1990). Some explanation of vocabulary words prior to listening to a story is related significantly to children's learning of new words (Elley, 1989). Dickinson and

Smith (1994), for example, found that asking predictive and analytic questions before and after the readings produced positive effects on vocabulary and comprehension.

*Repeated readings* appear to further reinforce the language of the text as well as to familiarize children with the way different genres are structured (Eller, Pappas, & Brown, 1988; Morrow, 1988). Understanding the forms of informational and narrative texts seems to distinguish those children who have been well read to from those who have not (Pappas, 1991). In one study, for example, Pappas found that with multiple exposures to a story (three readings), children's retelling became increasingly rich, integrating what they knew about the world, the language of the book, and the message of the author. Thus, considering the benefits for vocabulary development and comprehension, the case is strong for interactive storybook reading (Anderson, 1995). Increasing the volume of children's playful, stimulating experiences with good books is associated with accelerated growth in reading competence.

Activities that help children clarify the *concept of word* are also worthy of time and attention in the kindergarten curriculum (Juel, 1991). Language experience charts that let teachers demonstrate how talk can be written down provide a natural medium for children's developing word awareness in meaningful contexts. Transposing children's spoken words into written symbols through dictation provides a concrete demonstration that strings of letters between spaces are words and that not all words are the same length. Studies by Clay (1979) and Bissex (1980) confirm the value of what many teachers have known and done for years: Teacher dictations of children's stories help develop word awareness, spelling, and the conventions of written language.

Many children enter kindergarten with at least some perfunctory knowledge of the alphabet letters. An important goal for the kindergarten teacher is to reinforce this skill by ensuring that children can recognize and discriminate these letter shapes with increasing ease and fluency (Mason, 1980; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Children's proficiency in *letter naming* is a well-established predictor of their end-of-year achievement (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Riley, 1996), probably because

---

it mediates the ability to remember sounds. Generally a good rule according to current learning theory (Adams, 1990) is to start with the more easily visualized uppercase letters, to be followed by identifying lowercase letters. In each case, introducing just a few letters at a time, rather than many, enhances mastery.

At about the time children are readily able to identify letter names, they begin to connect the letters with the sounds they hear. A fundamental insight in this phase of learning is that a letter and letter sequences map onto phonological forms. Phonemic awareness, however, is not merely a solitary insight or an instant ability (Juel, 1991). It takes time and practice.

Children who are phonemically aware can think about and manipulate sounds in words. They know when words rhyme or do not; they know when words begin or end with the same sound; and they know that a word like *bat* is composed of three sounds /b/ /a/ /t/ and that these sounds can be blended into a spoken word. Popular rhyming books, for example, may draw children's attention to rhyming patterns, serving as a basis for extending vocabulary (Ehri & Robbins, 1992). Using initial letter cues, children can learn many new words through analogy, taking the familiar word *bake* as a strategy for figuring out a new word, *lake*.

Further, as teachers engage children in shared writing, they can pause before writing a word, say it slowly, and stretch out the sounds as they write it. Such activities in the context of real reading and writing help children attend to the features of print and the alphabetic nature of English.

There is accumulated evidence that instructing children in phonemic awareness activities in kindergarten (and first grade) enhances reading achievement (Bryne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1991, 1993, 1995; Lundberg, Frost, & Petersen, 1988; Stanovich, 1986). Although a large number of children will acquire phonemic awareness skills as they learn to read, an estimated 20% will not without additional training. A statement by the IRA (1998) indicates that "the likelihood of these students becoming successful readers is slim.... This figure [20%], however, can be reduced through more systematic attention to engagement with language early on in the child's home, preschool and kindergarten classes." A study by Hanson and Farrell (1995), for example, examined the

long-term benefits of a carefully developed kindergarten curriculum that focused on word study and decoding skills, along with sets of stories so that children would be able to practice these skills in meaningful contexts. High school seniors who early on had received this type of instruction outperformed their counterparts on reading achievement, attitude toward schooling, grades, and attendance.

In kindergarten many children will begin to read some words through recognition or by processing letter-sound relations. Studies by Domico (1993) and Richgels (1995) suggest that children's ability to read words is tied to their ability to write words in a somewhat reciprocal relationship. The more opportunities children have to write, the greater the likelihood that they will reproduce spellings of words they have seen and heard. Though not conventional, these spellings likely show greater letter-sound correspondences and partial encoding of some parts of words, like *SWM* for *swim*, than do the inventions of preschoolers (Clay, 1975).

To provide more intensive and extensive practice, some teachers try to integrate writing in other areas of the curriculum like literacy-related play (Neuman & Roskos, 1992), and other project activities (Katz & Chard, 1989). These types of projects engage children in using reading and writing for multiple purposes while they are learning about topics meaningful to them.

Early literacy activities teach children a great deal about writing and reading but often in ways that do not look much like traditional elementary school instruction. Capitalizing on the active and social nature of children's learning, early instruction must provide rich demonstrations, interactions, and models of literacy in the course of activities that make sense to young children. Children must also learn about the relation between oral and written language and the relation between letters, sounds, and words. In classrooms built around a wide variety of print activities, and in talking, reading, writing, playing, and listening to one another, children will want to read and write and feel capable that they can do so.

### *The primary grades*

Instruction takes on a more formal nature as children move into the elementary grades.

---

Here it is virtually certain that children will receive at least some instruction from a commercially published product, like a basal or literature anthology series.

Although research has clearly established that no one method is superior for all children (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998), approaches that favor some type of *systematic code instruction along with meaningful connected reading* report children's superior progress in reading. Instruction should aim to teach the important letter-sound relationships, which once learned are practiced through having many opportunities to read. Most likely these research findings are a positive result of the Matthew Effect, the rich-get-richer effects that are embedded in such instruction; that is, children who acquire alphabetic coding skills begin to recognize many words (Stanovich, 1986). As word recognition processes become more automatic, children are likely to allocate more attention to higher level processes of comprehension. Since these reading experiences tend to be rewarding for children, they may read more often; thus reading achievement may be a byproduct of reading enjoyment.

One of the hallmarks of skilled reading is *fluent, accurate word identification* (Juel, Griffith, & Gough, 1986). Yet instruction in simply word calling with flashcards is not reading. Real reading is comprehension. Children need to read a wide variety of interesting, comprehensible materials, which they can read orally with about 90 to 95% accuracy (Durrell & Catterson, 1980). In the beginning children are likely to read slowly and deliberately as they focus on exactly what's on the page. In fact they may seem "glued to print" (Chall, 1983), figuring out the fine points of form at the word level. However, children's reading expression, fluency, and comprehension generally improve when they read familiar texts. Some authorities have found the practice of repeated rereadings in which children reread short selections significantly enhances their confidence, fluency, and comprehension in reading (Moyer, 1982; Samuels, 1979).

Children not only use their increasing knowledge of letter-sound patterns to read unfamiliar texts. They also use a variety of strategies. Studies reveal that early readers are

capable of being intentional in their use of *metacognitive strategies* (Brown & DeLoache, 1978; Rowe, 1994). Even in these early grades, children make predictions about what they are to read, self-correct, reread, and question if necessary, giving evidence that they are able to adjust their reading when understanding breaks down. Teacher practices, such as the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA), effectively model these strategies by helping children set purposes for reading, ask questions, and summarize ideas through the text (Stauffer, 1970).

But children also need time for *independent practice*. These activities may take on numerous forms. Some research, for example, has demonstrated the powerful effects that children's reading to their caregivers has on promoting confidence as well as reading proficiency (Hannon, 1995). Visiting the library and scheduling independent reading and writing periods in literacy-rich classrooms also provide children with opportunities to select books of their own choosing. They may engage in the social activities of reading with their peers, asking questions, and writing stories (Morrow & Weinstein, 1986), all of which may nurture interest and appreciation for reading and writing.

Supportive relationships between these communication processes lead many teachers to *integrate reading and writing* in classroom instruction (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). After all, writing challenges children to actively think about print. As young authors struggle to express themselves, they come to grips with different written forms, syntactic patterns, and themes. They use writing for multiple purposes: to write descriptions, lists, and stories to communicate with others. It is important for teachers to expose children to a range of text forms, including stories, reports, and informational texts, and to help children select vocabulary and punctuate simple sentences that meet the demands of audience and purpose. Since handwriting instruction helps children communicate effectively, it should also be part of the writing process (McGee & Richgels, 1996). Short lessons demonstrating certain letter formations tied to the publication of writing provide an ideal time for instruction. Reading and writing workshops, in which teachers provide small-group and individual instruction,

---

may help children to develop the skills they need for communicating with others.

Although children's initial writing drafts will contain invented spellings, learning about spelling will take on increasing importance in these years (Henderson & Beers, 1980; Richgels, 1986). *Spelling instruction* should be an important component of the reading and writing program since it directly affects reading ability. Some teachers create their own spelling lists, focusing on words with common patterns and high-frequency words, as well as some personally meaningful words from the children's writing. Research indicates that seeing a word in print, imagining how it is spelled, and copying new words is an effective way of acquiring spellings (Barron, 1980). Nevertheless, even though the teacher's goal is to foster more conventionalized forms, it is important to recognize that there is more to writing than just spelling and grammatically correct sentences. Rather, writing has been characterized by Applebee (1977) as "thinking with a pencil." It is true that children will need adult help to master the complexities of the writing process. But they also will need to learn that the power of writing is expressing one's own ideas in ways that can be understood by others.

As children's capabilities develop and become more fluent, instruction will turn from a central focus on helping children learn to read and write to helping them read and write to learn. Increasingly the emphasis for teachers will be on encouraging children to become *independent and productive readers*, helping them to extend their reasoning and comprehension abilities in learning about their world. Teachers will need to provide challenging materials that require children to analyze and think creatively and from different points of view. They also will need to ensure that children have practice in reading and writing (both in and out of school) and many opportunities to analyze topics, generate questions, and organize written responses for different purposes in meaningful activities.

Throughout these critical years *accurate assessment* of children's knowledge, skills, and dispositions in reading and writing will help teachers better match instruction with how and what children are learning. However, early reading and writing cannot simply be

measured as a set of narrowly defined skills on standardized tests. These measures often are not reliable or valid indicators of what children can do in typical practice, nor are they sensitive to language variation, culture, or the experiences of young children (Johnston, 1997; Shepard, 1994; Shepard & Smith, 1988). Rather, a sound assessment should be anchored in real-life writing and reading tasks and continuously chronicle a wide range of children's literacy activities in different situations. Good assessment is essential to help teachers tailor appropriate instruction to young children and to know when and how much intensive instruction on any particular skill or strategy might be needed.

By the end of the third grade, children will still have much to learn about literacy. Clearly some will be further along the path to independent reading and writing than others. Yet with high-quality instruction, the majority of children will be able to decode words with a fair degree of facility, use a variety of strategies to adapt to different types of text, and be able to communicate effectively for multiple purposes using conventionalized spelling and punctuation. Most of all they will have come to see themselves as capable readers and writers, having mastered the complex set of attitudes, expectations, behaviors, and skills related to written language.

### **Statement of position**

IRA and NAEYC believe that achieving high standards of literacy for every child in the U.S. is a shared responsibility of schools, early childhood programs, families, and communities. But teachers of young children, whether employed in preschools, child care programs, or elementary schools, have a unique responsibility to promote children's literacy development, based on the most current professional knowledge and research.

A review of research along with the collective wisdom and experience of members has led IRA and NAEYC to conclude that learning to read and write is a complex, multifaceted process that requires a wide variety of instructional approaches, a conclusion similar to that reached by an esteemed panel of experts for the National Academy of Sciences (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

---

Similarly, this review of research leads to a theoretical model of literacy learning and development as an interactive process. Research supports the view of the child as an active constructor of his or her own learning, while at the same time studies emphasize the critical role of the supportive, interested, engaged adult (e.g., teacher, parent, or tutor) who provides scaffolding for the child's development of greater skill and understanding (Mason & Sinha, 1993; Riley, 1996). The principle of learning is that "children are active learners, drawing on direct social and physical experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them" (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 13).

IRA and NAEYC believe that goals and expectations for young children's achievement in reading and writing should be developmentally appropriate, that is, *challenging but achievable*, with sufficient adult support. A continuum of reading and writing development is generally accepted and useful for teachers in understanding the goals of literacy instruction and in assessing children's progress toward those goals. (An abbreviated continuum of reading and writing development appears on pp. 8–9; for more detailed examples, see Chall, 1983; Education Department of Western Australia, 1994; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Whitmore & Goodman, 1995.) Good teachers understand that children do not progress along this developmental continuum in rigid sequence. Rather, each child exhibits a unique pattern and timing in acquiring skills and understanding related to reading and writing.

Like other complex skills, reading and writing are outcomes that result from the continual interplay of development and learning, and therefore a range of individual variation is to be expected in the rate and pace at which children gain literacy skills. Given exposure to appropriate literacy experiences and good teaching during early childhood, most children learn to read at age 6 or 7, a few learn at 4, some learn at 5, and others need intensive individualized support to learn to read at 8 or 9. Some children who do not explore books and other print during their early years are likely to need more focused support for literacy development when they enter an educational program, whether at preschool, kindergarten, or

first grade (since preschool and even kindergarten attendance is not universal). Other children who enter school speaking little or no English are likely to need instructional strategies in their home language (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

Given the range within which children typically master reading, even with exposure to print-rich environments and good teaching, a developmentally appropriate expectation is for most children to achieve beginning conventional reading (also called early reading) by age 7. For children with disabilities or special learning needs, achievable but challenging goals for their individual reading and writing development in an inclusive environment are established by teachers, families, and specialists working in collaboration (Division for Early Childhood Task Force on Recommended Practices, 1993; Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children, 1994).

IRA and NAEYC believe that early childhood teachers need to understand the developmental continuum of reading and writing and be skilled in a variety of strategies to assess and support individual children's development and learning across the continuum. At the same time teachers must set developmentally appropriate literacy goals for young children and then adapt instructional strategies for children whose learning and development are advanced or lag behind those goals. Good teachers make instructional decisions based on their knowledge of reading and writing, current research, appropriate expectations, and their knowledge of individual children's strengths and needs.

A continuum of reading and writing development is useful for identifying challenging but achievable goals or benchmarks for children's literacy learning, remembering that individual variation is to be expected and supported. Using a developmental continuum enables teachers to assess individual children's progress against realistic goals and then adapt instruction to ensure that children continue to progress. During the preschool years most children can be expected to function in phase 1 of the developmental continuum, Awareness and Exploration. In kindergarten an appropriate expectation is that most children will be at phase 2, Experimental Reading and Writing. By the end of first grade, most children will



---

function in phase 3, Early Reading and Writing. An appropriate expectation for second grade is Transitional Reading and Writing (phase 4), while the goal for third grade is Independent and Productive Reading and Writing (phase 5). Advanced Reading is the goal for fourth grade and above.

As fundamental as the principle of individual variation is the principle that human development and learning occur in and are influenced by social and cultural contexts. Language, reading, and writing are strongly shaped by culture. Children enter early childhood programs or schools having learned to communicate and make sense of their experiences at home and in their communities. When the ways of making and communicating meaning are similar at home and in school, children's transitions are eased. However, when the language and culture of the home and school are not congruent, teachers and parents must work together to help children strengthen and preserve their home language and culture while acquiring skills needed to participate in the shared culture of the school (NAEYC, 1996a).

Most important, teachers must understand how children learn a second language and how this process applies to young children's literacy development. Teachers need to respect the child's home language and culture and use it as a base on which to build and extend children's language and literacy experiences. Unfortunately teachers too often react negatively to children's linguistic and cultural diversity, equating difference with deficit. Such situations hurt children whose abilities within their own cultural context are not recognized because they do not match the cultural expectations of the school. Failing to recognize children's strengths or capabilities, teachers may underestimate their competence. Competence is not tied to any particular language, dialect, or culture. Teachers should never use a child's dialect, language, or culture as a basis for making judgments about the child's intellect or capability. Linguistically and culturally diverse children bring multiple perspectives and impressive skills, such as code-switching (the ability to go back and forth between two languages to deepen conceptual understanding), to the tasks of learning to speak, read, and write a second language. These self-motivated,

self-initiating, constructive thinking processes should be celebrated and used as rich teaching and learning resources for all children.

### **Recommended teaching practices**

*During the infant and toddler years.* Children need relationships with caring adults who engage in many one-on-one, face-to-face interactions with them to support their oral language development and lay the foundation for later literacy learning. Important experiences and teaching behaviors include but are not limited to

- talking to babies and toddlers with simple language, frequent eye contact, and responsiveness to children's cues and language attempts;
- frequently playing with, talking to, singing to, and doing fingerplays with very young children;
- sharing cardboard books with babies and frequently reading to toddlers on the adult's lap or together with one or two other children; and
- providing simple art materials such as crayons, markers, and large paper for toddlers to explore and manipulate.

*During the preschool years.* Young children need developmentally appropriate experiences and teaching to support literacy learning. These include but are not limited to

- positive, nurturing relationships with adults who engage in responsive conversations with individual children, model reading and writing behavior, and foster children's interest in and enjoyment of reading and writing;
- print-rich environments that provide opportunities and tools for children to see and use written language for a variety of purposes, with teachers' drawing children's attention to specific letters and words;
- adults' daily reading of high-quality books to individual children or small groups, including books that positively reflect children's identity, home language, and culture;
- opportunities for children to talk about what is read and to focus on the sounds and parts of language as well as the meaning;
- teaching strategies and experiences that develop phonemic awareness, such as songs, fingerplays, games, poems, and stories in which phonemic patterns such as rhyme and alliteration are salient;

---

- opportunities to engage in play that incorporates literacy tools, such as writing grocery lists in dramatic play, making signs in block building, and using icons and words in exploring a computer game; and

- firsthand experiences that expand children's vocabulary, such as trips in the community and exposure to various tools, objects, and materials.

*In kindergarten and primary grades.* Teachers should continue many of these same good practices with the goal of continually advancing children's learning and development (see the continuum of reading and writing development on pp. 8–9 for appropriate grade-level expectations). In addition every child is entitled to excellent instruction in reading and writing that includes but is not limited to

- daily experiences of being read to and independently reading meaningful and engaging stories and informational texts;

- a balanced instructional program that includes systematic code instruction along with meaningful reading and writing activities;

- daily opportunities and teacher support to write many kinds of texts for different purposes, including stories, lists, messages to others, poems, reports, and responses to literature;

- writing experiences that allow the flexibility to use nonconventional forms of writing at first (invented or phonic spelling) and over time move to conventional forms;

- opportunities to work in small groups for focused instruction and collaboration with other children;

- an intellectually engaging and challenging curriculum that expands knowledge of the world and vocabulary; and

- adaptation of instructional strategies or more individualized instruction if the child fails to make expected progress in reading or when literacy skills are advanced.

Although experiences during the earliest years of life can have powerful long-term consequences, human beings are amazingly resilient and incredibly capable of learning throughout life. We should strengthen our resolve to ensure that every child has the benefit of positive early childhood experiences that support literacy development. At the same time, regardless of children's prior learning, schools have the responsibility to educate every

child and to never give up even if later interventions must be more intensive and costly.

### **Recommended policies essential for achieving developmentally appropriate literacy experiences**

Early childhood programs and elementary schools in the U.S. operate in widely differing contexts with varying levels of funding and resources. Regardless of the resources available, professionals have an ethical responsibility to teach, to the best of their ability, according to the standards of the profession. Nevertheless the kinds of practices advocated here are more likely to be implemented within an infrastructure of supportive policies and resources. IRA and NAEYC strongly recommend that the following policies be developed and adequately funded at the appropriate state or local levels:

1. A comprehensive, consistent system of early childhood professional preparation and ongoing professional development (see Darling-Hammond, 1997; Kagan & Cohen, 1997).

Such a professional preparation system is badly needed in every state to ensure that staff in early childhood programs and teachers in primary schools obtain specialized, college-level education that informs them about developmental patterns in early literacy learning and about research-based ways of teaching reading and writing during the early childhood years. Ongoing professional development is essential for teachers to stay current in an ever-expanding research base and to continually improve their teaching skills and the learning outcomes for children.

2. Sufficient resources to ensure adequate ratios of qualified teachers to children and small groups for individualizing instruction.

For 4- and 5-year-olds, adult-child ratios should be one adult for no more than 8 to 10 children, with a maximum group size of 20 (Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995; Howes, Phillips, & Whitebook, 1992). Optimum class size in the early grades is 15 to 18 with one teacher (Nye, Boyd-Zaharias, & Fulton, 1994; Nye, Boyd-Zaharias, Fulton, & Wallenhurst, 1992). Young children benefit most from being taught in small groups or as individuals. There will always be a wide range of individual differences among children. Small class size increases the

---

likelihood that teachers will be able to accommodate children's diverse abilities and interests, strengths, and needs.

3. Sufficient resources to ensure classroom, school, and public libraries that include a wide range of high-quality children's books, computer software, and multimedia resources at various levels of difficulty and reflecting various cultural and family backgrounds.

Studies have found that a minimum of five books per child is necessary to provide even the most basic print-rich environment (Neuman, in press-b). Computers and developmentally appropriate software should also be available to provide alternative, engaging, enriching literacy experiences (NAEYC, 1996b).

4. Policies that promote children's continuous learning progress.

When individual children do not make expected progress in literacy development, resources should be available to provide more individualized instruction, focused time, tutoring by trained and qualified tutors, or other individualized intervention strategies. These instructional strategies are used to accelerate children's learning instead of either grade retention or social promotion, neither of which has been proven effective in improving children's achievement (Shepard & Smith, 1988).

5. Appropriate assessment strategies that promote children's learning and development.

Teachers need to regularly and systematically use multiple indicators—observation of children's oral language, evaluation of children's work, and performance at authentic reading and writing tasks—to assess and monitor children's progress in reading and writing development, plan and adapt instruction, and communicate with parents (Shepard, Kagan, & Wurtz, 1998). Group-administered, multiple-choice standardized achievement tests in reading and writing skills should not be used before third grade or preferably even before fourth grade. The younger the child, the more difficult it is to obtain valid and reliable indices of his or her development and learning using one-time test administrations. Standardized testing has a legitimate function, but on its own it tends to lead to standardized teaching—one approach fits all—the opposite of the kind of individualized diagnosis and teaching that is needed to help young children continue to progress in reading and writing.

6. Access to regular, ongoing health care for every child.

Every young child needs to have a regular health care provider as well as screening for early diagnosis and treatment of vision and hearing problems. Chronic untreated middle-ear infections in the earliest years of life may delay language development, which in turn may delay reading development (Vernon-Feagans, Emanuel, & Blood, 1992). Similarly, vision problems should never be allowed to go uncorrected, causing a child difficulty with reading and writing.

7. Increased public investment to ensure access to high-quality preschool and child care programs for all children who need them.

The National Academy of Sciences (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) and decades of longitudinal research (see, for example, Barnett, 1995) demonstrate the benefits of preschool education for literacy learning. Unfortunately, there is no system to ensure accessible, affordable, high-quality early childhood education programs for all families who choose to use them (Kagan & Cohen, 1997). As a result, preschool attendance varies considerably by family income; for example, 80% of 4-year-olds whose families earn more than US\$50,000 per year attend preschool compared to approximately 50% of 4-year-olds attending preschool from families earning less than \$20,000 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996). In addition, due primarily to inadequate funding, the quality of preschool and child care programs varies considerably, with studies finding that the majority of programs provide only mediocre quality and that only about 15% rate as good quality (Cost, Quality, & Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995; Galinsky, Howes, Kontos, & Shinn, 1994; Layzer, Goodson, & Moss 1993).

## Conclusion

Collaboration between IRA and NAEYC is symbolic of the coming together of the two essential bodies of knowledge necessary to support literacy development of young children: knowledge about the processes of reading and writing and knowledge of child development and learning. Developmentally appropriate practices (Bredenkamp & Copple, 1997) in reading and writing are ways of teaching that consider

1. what is generally known about children's development and learning to set achievable but challenging goals for literacy learning and to plan learning experiences and teaching strategies that vary with the age and experience of the learners;

2. results of ongoing assessment of individual children's progress in reading and writing to plan next steps or to adapt instruction when children fail to make expected progress or are at advanced levels; and

3. social and cultural contexts in which children live so as to help them make sense of their learning experiences in relation to what they already know and are able to do.

To teach in developmentally appropriate ways, teachers must understand *both* the continuum of reading and writing development *and* children's individual and cultural variations. Teachers must recognize when variation is within the typical range and when intervention is necessary, because early intervention is more effective and less costly than later remediation.

Learning to read and write is one of the most important and powerful achievements in life. Its value is clearly seen in the faces of young children—the proud, confident smile of the capable reader contrasts sharply with the furrowed brow and sullen frown of the discouraged nonreader. Ensuring that all young children reach their potentials as readers and writers is the shared responsibility of teachers, administrators, families, and communities. Educators have a special responsibility to teach every child and not to blame children, families, or each other when the task is difficult. All responsible adults need to work together to help children become competent readers and writers.

## References

- Adams, M. (1990). *Beginning to read*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Anbar, A. (1986). Reading acquisition of preschool children without systematic instruction. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 1, 69 – 83.
- Anderson, R.C. (1995). *Research foundations for wide reading*. Paper presented at invitational conference on the Impact of Wide Reading, Center for the Study of Reading, Urbana, IL.
- Applebee, A.N. (1977). Writing and reading. *Language Arts*, 20, 534 – 537.
- Barnett, W.S. (1995). Long-term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes. *The Future of Children*, 5, 25 – 50.

- Barron, R.W. (1980). Visual and phonological strategies in reading and spelling. In U. Frith (Ed.), *Cognitive processes in spelling* (pp. 339 – 353). New York: Academic.
- Berk, L. (1996). *Infants and children: Prenatal through middle childhood* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bissex, G. (1980). *GNYS AT WRK: A child learns to write and read*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bond, G., & Dykstra, R. (1967). The cooperative research program in first-grade reading instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 2, 5 – 142.
- Bradley, L., & Bryant, P.E. (1983). Categorizing sounds and learning to read—A causal connection. *Nature*, 301, 419 – 421.
- Bredenkamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (Rev. ed.). Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Brown, A.L., & DeLoache, J.S. (1978). Skills, plans and self-regulation. In R. Siegler (Ed.), *Children's thinking: What develops?* (pp. 3 – 36). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bryant, P.E., MacLean, M., Bradley, L., & Crossland, J. (1990). Rhyme and alliteration, phoneme detection, and learning to read. *Developmental Psychology*, 26, 429 – 438.
- Bryne, B., & Fielding-Barnsley, R. (1991). Evaluation of a program to teach phonemic awareness to young children. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83, 451 – 455.
- Bryne, B., & Fielding-Barnsley, R. (1993). Evaluation of a program to teach phonemic awareness to young children: A 1-year follow-up. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85, 104 – 111.
- Bryne, B., & Fielding-Barnsley, R. (1995). Evaluation of a program to teach phonemic awareness to young children: A 2- and 3-year follow-up and a new preschool trial. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 87, 488 – 503.
- Bus, A., Belsky, J., van IJzendoorn, M.H., & Crnic, K. (1997). Attachment and book-reading patterns: A study of mothers, fathers, and their toddlers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 12, 81 – 98.
- Bus, A., & Van IJzendoorn, M. (1995). Mothers reading to their 3-year-olds: The role of mother-child attachment security in becoming literate. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30, 998 – 1015.
- Bus, A., Van IJzendoorn, M., & Pellegrini, A. (1995). Joint book reading makes for success in learning to read: A meta-analysis on intergenerational transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research*, 65, 1 – 21.
- Chomsky, C. (1979). Approaching reading through invented spelling. In L.B. Resnick & P.A. Weaver (Eds.), *Theory and practice of early reading* (Vol. 2, pp. 43 – 65). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Clarke, L. (1988). Invented versus traditional spelling in first graders' writings: Effects on learning to spell and read. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 22, 281 – 309.
- Clay, M. (1975). *What did I write?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. (1979). *The early detection of reading difficulties*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Clay, M. (1991). *Becoming literate*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team. (1995). *Cost, quality, and child outcomes in child care centers* (Public report, 2nd ed.). Denver, CO: Economics Department, University of Colorado.
- Cummins, J. (1979). Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. *Review of Educational Research*, 49, 222 – 251.
- Cunningham, A. (1990). Explicit versus implicit instruction in phonemic awareness. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 50, 429 – 444.

- Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *Doing what matters most: Investing in quality teaching*. New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.
- Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children. (1994). Position on inclusion. *Young Children*, 49(5), 78.
- Division for Early Childhood Task Force on Recommended Practices. (1993). *DEC recommended practices: Indicators of quality in programs for infants and young children with special needs and their families*. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.
- Dickinson, D., & Smith, M. (1994). Long-term effects of preschool teachers' book readings on low-income children's vocabulary and story comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 29, 104 – 122.
- Domico, M.A. (1993). Patterns of development in narrative stories of emergent writers. In C. Kinzer & D. Leu (Eds.), *Examining central issues in literacy research, theory, and practice* (pp. 391 – 404). Chicago: National Reading Conference.
- Durkin, D. (1966). *Children who read early*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Durrell, D.D., & Catterson, J.H. (1980). *Durrell analysis of reading difficulty* (Rev. ed). New York: Psychological Corp.
- Dyson, A.H. (1988). Appreciate the drawing and dictating of young children. *Young Children* 43(3), 25 – 32.
- Education Department of Western Australia. (1994). *Reading, writing, spelling, verbal language developmental continuum*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ehri, L. (1994). Development of the ability to read words: Update. In R. Ruddell, M.R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed., pp. 323 – 358). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Ehri, L.C., & Robbins, C. (1992). Beginners need some decoding skill to read words by analogy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 27, 13 – 26.
- Ehri, L., & Sweet, J. (1991). Finger-point reading of memorized text: What enables beginners to process the print? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 26, 442 – 461.
- Elkonin, D.B. (1973). USSR. In J. Downing (Ed.), *Comparative reading* (pp. 551-580). New York: Macmillian.
- Eller, R., Pappas, C., & Brown, E. (1988). The lexical development of kindergartners: Learning from written context. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 20, 5 – 24.
- Elley, W. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 24, 174 – 187.
- Feitelson, D., Kita, B., & Goldstein, Z. (1986). Effects of listening to series stories on first graders' comprehension and use of language. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 20, 339 – 355.
- Foorman, B., Novy, D., Francis, D., & Liberman, D. (1991). How letter-sound instruction mediates progress in first-grade reading and spelling. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83, 456 – 469.
- Galinsky, E., Howes, C., Kontos, S., & Shinn, M. (1994). *The study of children in family child care and relative care: Highlights of findings*. New York: Families and Work Institute.
- Gibson, E., & Levin, E. (1975). *The psychology of reading*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Graves, D. (1983). *Writing: Teachers and children at work*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hannon, P. (1995). *Literacy, home and school*. London: Falmer.
- Hanson, R., & Farrell, D. (1995). The long-term effects on high school seniors of learning to read in kindergarten. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30, 908 – 933.
- Hart, B., & Risley, T. (1995). *Meaningful differences*. Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes.
- Henderson, E.H., & Beers, J.W. (1980). *Developmental and cognitive aspects of learning to spell*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Holdaway, D. (1979). *The foundations of literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Howes, C., Phillips, D.A., & Whitebook, M. (1992). Thresholds of quality: Implications for the social development of children in center-based child care. *Child Development*, 63, 449 – 460.
- International Reading Association. (1998). *Phonemic awareness and the teaching of reading: A position statement of the Board of Directors of the International Reading Association*. Newark, DE: Author.
- Johnston, P. (1997). *Knowing literacy: Constructive literacy assessment*. York, ME: Stenhouse.
- Juel, C. (1991). Beginning reading. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 759 – 788). New York: Longman.
- Juel, C., Griffith, P.L., & Gough, P. (1986). Acquisition of literacy: A longitudinal study of children in first and second grade. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 78, 243 – 255.
- Kagan, S.L., & Cohen, N. (1997). *Not by chance: Creating an early care and education system for America's children*. New Haven, CT: Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy, Yale University.
- Karweit, N., & Wasik, B. (1996). The effects of story reading programs on literacy and language development of disadvantaged pre-schoolers. *Journal of Education for Students Placed At-Risk*, 4, 319 – 348.
- Katz, L., & Chard, C. (1989). *Engaging children's minds*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Layzer, J., Goodson, B., & Moss, M. (1993). *Life in preschool: Volume one of an observational study of early childhood programs for disadvantaged four-year-olds*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates.
- Leung, C.B., & Pikulski, J.J. (1990). Incidental learning of word meanings by kindergarten and first grade children through repeated read aloud events. In J. Zutell & S. McCormick (Eds.), *Literacy theory and research: Analyses from multiple paradigms* (pp. 231 – 240). Chicago: National Reading Conference.
- Lundberg, I., Frost, J., & Petersen, O.P. (1988). Effects of an extensive program for stimulating phonological awareness in preschool children. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, 263 – 284.
- MacLean, M., Bryant, P., & Bradley, L. (1987). Rhymes, nursery rhymes, and reading in early childhood. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 33, 255 – 281.
- Mason, J., & Sinha, S. (1993). Emerging literacy in the early childhood years: Applying a Vygotskian model of learning and development. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children* (pp. 137 – 150). New York: Macmillian.
- McGee, L., Lomax, R., & Head, M. (1988). Young children's written language knowledge: What environmental and functional print reading reveals. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 20, 99 – 118.
- McGee, L., & Richgels, D. (1996). *Literacy's beginnings*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- McGill-Franzen, A., & Lanford, C. (1994). Exposing the edge of the preschool curriculum: Teachers' talk about text and children's literary understandings. *Language Arts*, 71, 264 – 273.
- Morrow, L.M. (1988). Young children's responses to one-to-one readings in school settings. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, 89 – 107.

- Morrow, L.M. (1990). Preparing the classroom environment to promote literacy during play. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 5, 537 – 554.
- Morrow, L.M., Strickland, D., & Woo, D.G. (1998). *Literacy instruction in half- and whole-day kindergarten: Research to practice*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Morrow, L.M., & Weinstein, C. (1986). Encouraging voluntary reading: The impact of a literature program on children's use of library centers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21, 330 – 346.
- Moyer, S.B. (1982). Repeated reading. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 15, 619 – 623.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1996a). NAEYC position statement: Responding to linguistic and cultural diversity—Recommendations for effective early childhood education. *Young Children*, 51(2), 4 – 12.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1996b). NAEYC position statement: Technology and young children—Ages three through eight. *Young Children*, 51(6), 11 – 16.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (1996). *The condition of education*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Neuman, S.B. (in press-a). How can we enable all children to achieve? In S.B. Neuman & K.A. Roskos (Eds.), *Children achieving: Best practices in early literacy*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Neuman, S.B. (in press-b). Books make a difference: A study of access to literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*.
- Neuman, S.B., & Roskos, K. (1992). Literacy objects as cultural tools: Effects on children's literacy behaviors in play. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 27, 202 – 225.
- Neuman, S.B., & Roskos, K. (1993). Access to print for children of poverty: Differential effects of adult mediation and literacy-enriched play settings on environmental and functional print tasks. *American Educational Research Journal*, 30, 95 – 122.
- Neuman, S.B., & Roskos, K. (1997). Literacy knowledge in practice: Contexts of participation for young writers and readers. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 32, 10 – 32.
- Nye, B.A., Boyd-Zaharias, J., & Fulton, B.D. (1994). *The lasting benefits study: A continuing analysis of the effect of small class size in kindergarten through third grade on student achievement test scores in subsequent grade levels—seventh grade (1992–93)* (Tech. Rep.). Nashville, TN: Center of Excellence for Research in Basic Skills, Tennessee State University.
- Nye, B.A., Boyd-Zaharias, J., Fulton, B.D., & Wallenhorst, M.P. (1992). Smaller classes really are better. *The American School Board Journal*, 179(5), 31 – 33.
- Pappas, C. (1991). Young children's strategies in learning the "book language" of information books. *Discourse Processes*, 14, 203 – 225.
- Read, C. (1971). Pre-school children's knowledge of English phonology. *Harvard Educational Review*, 41, 1 – 34.
- Richgels, D.J. (1986). Beginning first graders' "invented spelling" ability and their performance in functional classroom writing activities. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 1, 85 – 97.
- Richgels, D.J. (1995). Invented spelling ability and printed word learning in kindergarten. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30, 96 – 109.
- Riley, J. (1996). *The teaching of reading*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Roberts, B. (in press). "I No EvrethENGe": What skills are essential in early literacy? In S.B. Neuman & K.A. Roskos (Eds.), *Children achieving: Best practices in early literacy*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Rowe, D.W. (1994). *Preschoolers as authors*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton.
- Samuels, S.J. (1979). The method of repeated readings. *The Reading Teacher*, 32, 403 – 408.
- Shepard, L. (1994). The challenges of assessing young children appropriately. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 206 – 213.
- Shepard, L., Kagan, S.L., & Wurtz, E. (Eds.). (1998). *Principles and recommendations for early childhood assessments*. Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel.
- Shepard, L., & Smith, M.L. (1988). Escalating academic demand in kindergarten: Some nonsolutions. *The Elementary School Journal*, 89, 135 – 146.
- Snow, C. (1991). The theoretical basis for relationships between language and literacy in development. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 6, 5 – 10.
- Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Snow, C., Tabors, P., Nicholson, P., & Kurland, B. (1995). SHELL: Oral language and early literacy skills in kindergarten and first-grade children. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 10, 37 – 48.
- Stanovich, K.E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21, 360 – 406.
- Stanovich, K.E., & West, R.F. (1989). Exposure to print and orthographic processing. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 24, 402 – 433.
- Stauffer, R. (1970). *The language experience approach to the teaching of reading*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Strickland, D. (1994). Educating African American learners at risk: Finding a better way. *Language Arts*, 71, 328 – 336.
- Sulzby, E. (1985). Kindergartners as writers and readers. In M. Farr (Ed.), *Advances in writing research* (pp. 127 – 199). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Teale, W. (1984). Reading to young children: Its significance for literacy development. In H. Goelman, A. Oberg, & F. Smith (Eds.), *Awakening to literacy* (pp. 110 – 121). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Tierney, R., & Shanahan, T. (1991). Research on the reading-writing relationship: Interactions, transactions, and outcomes. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook on reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 246 – 280). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Vernon-Feagans, L., Emanuel, D., & Blood, I. (1992). About middle ear problems: The effect of otitis media and quality of day care on children's language development. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 18, 395 – 409.
- Vukelich, C. (1994). Effects of play interventions on young children's reading of environmental print. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 9, 153 – 170.
- Wagner, R., & Torgesen, J. (1987). The nature of phonological processing and its causal role in the acquisition of reading skills. *Psychological Bulletin*, 101, 192 – 212.
- Wells, G. (1985). *The meaning makers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Whitehurst, G., Arnold, D., Epstein, J., Angell, A., Smith, M., & Fischel, J. (1994). A picture book reading intervention in day care and home for children from low-income families. *Developmental Psychology*, 30, 679 – 689.
- Whitmore, K., & Goodman, Y. (1995). Transforming curriculum in language and literacy. In S. Bredekamp & T. Rosegrant (Eds.), *Reaching potentials: Transforming*

---

*early childhood curriculum and assessment* (Vol. 2). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.  
Wong Fillmore, L. (1991). When learning a second language means losing the first. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 6, 323–346.

university educators and preschool teachers—present ways to provide for, support, and guide children as they gain a greater understanding of reading and writing. [JULY 1998 BOOK CLUB SELECTION]  
©1998 US\$28.95      Order number **187-574**

## Related resources from IRA

### Books

#### Children Achieving: Best Practices in Early Literacy

Susan B. Neuman, Kathleen A. Roskos, Editors

Addressing a wide range of individual variation among young children in our schools today has become increasingly complex. How do we provide instruction that meets the diverse needs of our children? How can we ensure that children receive the skills they most need? The contributors to *Children Achieving* address these important questions. Each of the 13 chapters frames a critical issue in early literacy, examines what we know about it, and describes literacy practices suggested from this existing knowledge base. The issues that are addressed include providing inclusive early-literacy instruction for children with disabilities, providing culturally responsive instruction, fostering children's early-literacy development through parent involvement, recognizing the role of computer-related technology in early literacy, and assessing young children's literacy learning. The focus is on issues of theory and practice appropriate for children ages 2 through 8 in classrooms ranging from prekindergarten to third grade. [NOVEMBER 1998 BOOK CLUB SELECTION; available late October]

©1998 US\$28.95      Order number **193-574**

#### Facilitating Preschool Literacy

Robin Campbell, Editor

How can preschool teachers support literacy learning and provide effective instruction for all students who enter their classroom? This multiauthored volume, edited by Robin Campbell from the University of Hertfordshire in the United Kingdom, addresses three important themes in the literacy learning of preschool children:

1. Children are active constructors of their own learning.
2. Families provide invaluable support in the early literacy learning of children.
3. Preschool settings should reflect the literacy learning that occurs in many homes and should provide opportunities for children to further develop their literacy.

Accepting these views has a profound influence on the way early-years educators provide learning opportunities for the children in their care. The contributors to this volume—representing Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and including both

#### Literacy Instruction in Half- and Whole-Day Kindergarten: Research to Practice (Literacy Studies Series)

Lesley Mandel Morrow, Dorothy S. Strickland, Deborah Gee Woo

What is the best way to begin early literacy instruction? How much time should be spent on literacy instruction in kindergarten classrooms? Should kindergarten meet for a full school day? Based on their extensive observations, the authors discuss frameworks for designing the literacy curriculum and plans for organizing the classroom in whole-day and half-day kindergartens. They include specific details about their methodology and assessment results and use these results to suggest plans for designing the curriculum and organizing the classroom. Readers will find many of their questions about the length of the kindergarten day and best practices in early literacy answered in this book.

©1998 US\$24.95      Order number **188-574**

#### Revisiting the First-Grade Studies

John E. Readence, Diane M. Barone, Editors

This reprint of the October/November/December 1997 issue of *Reading Research Quarterly* provides a view of the historical implications of the First-Grade Studies and how the Studies continue to provide valuable insights for those who seek answers about effective beginning reading instruction. This book will allow literacy educators of today and those of the future to enjoy and benefit from revisiting this historical reading research.

©1998 US\$9.95      Order number **9120-574**

#### Building a Knowledge Base in Reading

Jane Braunger, Jan Patricia Lewis

This book summarizes the available research on how children learn to read and provides a baseline for educators and policymakers to consider in helping all children meet today's higher literacy standards. The focus is on the learner's needs, a balance of experiences and approaches, and respect and appreciation for various sources of knowledge about literacy learning. The book includes information on language acquisition and factors affecting literacy learning. It also contains an extensive bibliography. Published jointly with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and the National Council of Teachers of English.

©1997 US\$12.95      Order number **9118-574**

---

### **Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children**

Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, Peg Griffin, Editors  
National Research Council

This book, written by a committee of prominent reading experts assembled by the National Research Council, is the result of a 2-year effort by that committee to distill the extant research in order to determine how best to help young children learn to read and forestall reading difficulties

©1998 US\$35.95      Order number **9122-574**

### **Emerging Literacy: Young Children Learn to Read and Write**

Dorothy S. Strickland, Lesley Mandel Morrow, Editors

Contributors to this award-winning book share practical ideas for daycare workers, classroom teachers, and curriculum specialists. The illustrated format features "Ideas You Can Use" in classrooms from prekindergarten through second grade. [APRIL 1989 BOOK CLUB SELECTION]

©1989 US\$19.95      Order number **351-574**

### **Beyond Storybooks: Young Children and the Shared Book Experience**

Judith Pollard Slaughter

A practical, hands-on book for people working with emergent, developing, and at-risk readers in the preschool and early-elementary years. Slaughter's many teaching ideas will inspire creative teachers and children to come up with thousands of extensions of their own. An annotated bibliography of more than 100 children's books is included. [JANUARY 1993 BOOK CLUB SELECTION]

©1993 US\$19.95      Order number **377-574**

### *Videos*

#### **Linking Literacy and Play**

Kathleen A. Roskos, Carol Vukelich, James F. Christie, Billie J. Enz, Susan B. Neuman

This 12-minute video package provides early childhood teachers, parents, and caregivers with ideas about how to use the natural environment of play to foster literacy development. The accompanying facilitator's guide provides a collection of ideas and insights on how to combine literacy and play. The guide is divided into four sections: Exploring Beliefs About Literacy in Play, Creating Literacy-Enriched Play Environments, Understanding Adult Roles That Support Literacy, and Promoting Literacy and Preserving Play. Also included are 10 books of readings, featuring five articles about children's literacy development in play situations.

©1995 US\$165.00      Order number **136-574**

### **Linking Literacy and Play Book of Readings**

Single copy US\$5.25      Order number **241-574**

### **Reading and Young Children: A Practical Guide for Childcare Providers**

Provides general, practical information for anyone who works with young children on the importance of making reading a part of every child's day. Intended for use as an introductory training tape for childcare professionals and others who work with young children, the video demonstrates techniques for reading aloud, choral reading, using Big Books, and storytelling, and suggests inexpensive resources that can help childcare facilities become reader friendly. [MARCH 1992 BOOK CLUB SELECTION]

©1992 US\$29.95      Order number **373-574**

### **Read to Me**

This 13-minute video introduces parents to the importance of reading aloud to their children. *Read to Me* shows parents the value of reading aloud, how to read to their children, and how to select appropriate books. Excellent for parent-teacher programs. Produced by the Idaho Literacy Project. [DECEMBER 1991 BOOK CLUB SELECTION]

©1991 US\$29.95      Order number **655-574**

### **Becoming a Family of Readers**

This 10-minute video features parents and their children modeling book sharing, advocates reading as a family-friendly activity, and encourages viewers to become involved in family literacy programs. Coproduced by Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. and Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.

©1995 US\$19.95      Order number **9100-574**

### *Parent brochures*

#### **Summer Reading Adventure! Tips for Parents of Young Readers\***

Order number **1023-574**

#### **Making the Most of Television: Tips for Parents of Young Viewers\***

Order number **1024-574**

#### **Get Ready to Read! Tips for Parents of Young Children\***

Order number **1017-574**

#### **Explore the Playground of Books: Tips for Parents of Beginning Readers\***

Order number **1019-574**

100 copies US\$12.00

\*Also available in Spanish



---

*Ordering information*

To order these books, videos, and parent brochures or other IRA materials (IRA members deduct 20% before adding shipping charges), contact: Order Department, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road,

Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, USA. Telephone: 302-731-1600. Fax: 302-731-1057. For credit card orders, call toll free (US/Canada only) 800-336-READ, ext. 266.