

GUIDANCE

for the

**EARLY READING FIRST
PROGRAM**

**Subpart B, Part B, Title I of the
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)
as amended by
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
(Updated March 17, 2003)**

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC**

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A. INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM PURPOSE

A-1. What is the purpose of the Early Reading First Program?

The overall purpose of the Early Reading First Program is to prepare preschool age children to enter kindergarten with the language, cognitive, and early reading skills necessary for reading success, thereby preventing later reading difficulties. Early Reading First will transform early childhood programs into centers of excellence that provide a high-quality education to preschool age children, especially those children from low-income families.

Early Reading First enables preschool programs to do what scientifically based research shows is the most effective way to reach this goal. Classroom environments will be rich in age-appropriate print, from sources such as books, labeling, and posting the alphabet and children's work in pre-writing. Teachers will deliver intentional and explicit, contextualized, and scaffolded instruction and conduct progress monitoring to determine which skills children are learning. Programs will provide intensive and ongoing professional development that includes mentoring and coaching in the classroom. These are just a few examples of how Early Reading First is designed to make a dramatic improvement in the ways we teach our preschool age children and prepare them for future school success.

The specific purposes of the Early Reading First program are as follows:

- To support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy, and early reading development of preschool age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research.
- To provide preschool age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and literature-rich environments so that they can attain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond.
- To demonstrate language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research that supports the age-appropriate development of --
 - *oral language* (vocabulary development, expressive language, and listening comprehension);
 - *phonological awareness* (rhyming, blending, segmenting)
 - *print awareness*; and
 - *alphabet knowledge* (letter recognition).

- To use screening assessments to effectively identify preschool age children who may be at risk for reading failure.

A-2. How do the other developmental domains for young children fit into Early Reading First?

It is vital that preschool programs attend to all the developmental domains of early childhood. The developmental domains (social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and physical) are closely related, and growth in language and cognition will optimally occur in the context of the other areas of development. Language development emerges from social interactions and rich experiences, good health and nutrition are foundations for all types of learning, and self-assurance in a group setting helps children profit from school experiences.

Early Reading First, however, emphasizes cognitive and language development. Early care and education programs have long done a good job in addressing the social, emotional, and health needs of children and families. However, new research points to the importance of the language and cognitive domains, which programs often have not strongly or systematically addressed. This research illustrates the intellectual competencies of young children and specific ways to support learning such as through explicit and “scaffolded” instruction. Scaffolding refers to instruction in which adults build upon what children already know to help them accomplish a complex task by breaking it down into simpler components. An extensive body of evidence is also now available pointing to the necessity of developing phonological awareness, print awareness, oral language skills and alphabet knowledge. Early Reading First is designed to improve the language, cognitive, and early reading skills of preschool age children in the context of the other developmental domains, all of which need strong and consistent attention.

A-3. What is the relationship between Early Reading First and other federally funded education programs for preschool age children, particularly Title I preschools, Head Start, and family literacy programs such as Even Start?

Early Reading First is designed to transform existing early education programs, such as Title I preschools, child care agencies and programs, Head Start centers, and family literacy programs, such as Even Start, into centers of early learning excellence that will result in preschool age children developing the early language and cognitive skills they need to enter school ready to read. Early Reading First will provide the opportunity for these preschool programs to change the classroom environment, provide professional development for staff in scientific

reading research-based instruction, support preschool age children's language and cognitive development, and use screening assessments and progress monitoring to identify and work with preschool children who may be at risk for reading failure.

A-4. What legislation authorizes Early Reading First?

Early Reading First is authorized under Subpart 2, Part B, Title I of the ESEA, as enacted by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), 2001, Public Law 107-110. Early Reading First complements another key reading program under the NCLB, Reading First (Subpart 1, Part B, Title I, ESEA), which helps states and school districts to implement programs and strategies scientifically proven to be effective in helping school age children (K-3) learn to read.

A-5. What is the relationship between Early Reading First and Reading First?

Reading First is designed to improve reading instruction in grades kindergarten through third grade. Early Reading First is designed to improve existing programs for preschool age children. Reading First is a large formula grant to states, with competitive subgrants at the local level. Early Reading First is a smaller program under which the Department makes competitive discretionary grants at the local level. Applicants that receive an Early Reading First grant from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for one or more preschool programs, and also receive a Reading First subgrant from their State for reading programs for school age children, must coordinate their Early Reading First activities with their Reading First activities to ensure continuity between preschool and kindergarten through grade 3.

**B. DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE
EARLY READING FIRST PROGRAM**

B-1. What language, cognitive, and early reading skills are important for preschool age children?

Scientifically based reading research shows that it is important for preschool age children to acquire the following language, cognitive, and early reading skills for continued school success:

1. **Phonological Awareness:** Includes –
 - (1) identifying and making oral rhymes;
 - (2) identifying and working with syllables in spoken words through segmenting and blending;

- (3) identifying and working with “onsets” (all the sounds of a word that come before the first vowel) and “rimes” (the first vowel in a word and all the sounds that follow) in spoken syllables;
- (4) identifying and working with individual sounds in spoken words.
2. **Oral Language:** Development of expressive and receptive spoken language, including vocabulary, the contextual use of speech and syntax, and oral comprehension abilities.
3. **Print Awareness:** Knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print.
4. **Alphabet Knowledge:** Letter recognition.

B-2. What strategies and professional development, based on scientifically based reading research, can you use to enhance the language, cognitive, and early reading development of preschool age children?

Research shows that the following strategies and activities, required by Early Reading First, are effective in developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills of young children:

⇒ *A high-quality oral language and literacy-rich environment.* A high-quality oral language environment includes adults reading books aloud to children, asking children, for example, to predict what might happen next in the book, and asking children predictive and analytic questions that help them analyze the story. Adults use rich and varied vocabulary and provide children frequent opportunities during all activities to ask and answer questions. Teachers engage children in conversation and use linguistic awareness games, such as songs and nursery rhymes, and rhythmic activities that are focused on phonological awareness to help develop children’s oral language skills.

A high-quality print-rich environment includes access to print in a variety of forms. The alphabet is posted at an eye level appropriate for young children, and items in the classroom are labeled. The classroom contains a variety of attractive and age-appropriate books easily accessible to young children, including storybooks and non-fiction books, for them to look at and hold and for adults to read aloud. Children are given opportunities to express themselves on paper without being limited to using correct spelling and proper handwriting, to help them understand that writing has real purpose. Teachers post children’s work around the classroom, as well as posting “environmental print” (print from familiar objects children may see at home and in the community). The classroom contains objects that children can manipulate into letters and words as an engaging way to provide children with the opportunity to explore letters and print.

⇒ *Providing professional development to staff that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of early language and reading*

development. Professional development is provided on a continuous, ongoing basis, and is sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused. Effective professional development includes strategies such as mentoring and coaching (e.g., demonstration by the coach of effective strategies, and coaches' observation of teachers' instruction followed by discussion and reflection on the effectiveness of instructional strategies and how they support student progress).

- ⇒ Teachers identify and provide activities and instructional materials based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing children's phonological awareness, print awareness, oral language skills, and alphabet knowledge. Teachers organize and present these materials in a systematic, coherent manner. Teachers prepare monthly, weekly, and daily lesson plans by referring to a scope and sequence that outlines the academic goals for the year. Curricula are intellectually engaging, have meaningful content, and provide multiple opportunities for developing phonological awareness, print awareness, oral language skills and alphabet knowledge, including the use of explicit, contextualized, and scaffolded instruction. Teaching is intentional, meaning that the teacher is focused upon the skills that a child is developing while engaged in any activity.

- ⇒ Teachers use screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures and progress monitoring based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool age children are developing the cognitive skills they need for later reading success. Screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures are critical for evaluating student progress and determining whether children are developing language and early literacy skills necessary for continued school success. Teachers receive training in how to use these screening assessments. Teachers administer screening assessments or other measures on a regular basis, embedded in instruction as appropriate, to determine progress and identify cognitive development problems. Teachers also use these assessments to tailor a plan of instruction to the needs of individual students, using learning and instructional strategies and activities that build on the skills of that student (scaffolding instruction).

- ⇒ The preschool program integrates the instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures described above into the overall early childhood education program offered. It is important to provide high-quality professional development and to identify materials, activities, and assessments based on scientific reading research. The process is not complete, however, until teachers begin to demonstrate their new competencies in working with children and they incorporate those materials, activities, and assessments into the everyday operation of the preschool program.

B-3. What is scientifically based reading research?

Scientifically based reading research is research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid and reliable knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This research:

1. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
2. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
3. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
4. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

B-4. Where can I find research and research-based resources about young children's language, cognitive, and early reading development?

Appendix B provides research and research-based resources on the language, cognitive, and early reading development of young children.

C. AWARD PROCESS AND FUNDING

C-1. What process will the Department use to award Early Reading First grants?

The Department will award Early Reading First grants on a competitive basis to eligible applicants, as described below. In selecting award recipients, the Department will use a two-phase system that will include a pre-application and a full application.

All applicants will submit pre-applications that briefly address certain key concepts described in the application notice and package. A peer review panel of experts will evaluate the pre-applications based on pre-application selection criteria included in that package. In determining which applicants to invite to submit full applications, the Secretary will consider the rank order of the pre-applications.

Applicants that are invited to file full applications will respond to more specific selection criteria for full applications described in the application package. A separate peer review panel of experts will evaluate the full applications against the full-application selection criteria. The Department will base its funding decisions on the quality of the full applications. In making funding decisions, the Department will use the procedures in section 75.217 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

C-2. How much money is available for Early Reading First?

The Congress appropriated \$74,512 for the Early Reading First Program for fiscal year 2003.

C-3. What is the size of Early Reading First grants?

The Department anticipates that awards will range between \$300,000 and \$1.5 million each per year. The size of each grant will depend on the size of the preschool program or programs being served and the cost of the activities and services proposed by applicants.

C-4. What length are Early Reading First grants?

An applicant may propose activities for a project period of up to 3 years.

C-5. When will the Department award Early Reading First grants?

The Department anticipates making Early Reading First grant awards in September 2003.

C-6. When will Early Reading First pre-applications and full applications be due?

The deadline for transmitting Early Reading First pre-applications is April 11, 2003. The transmittal deadline for applicants invited to submit full applications is June 27, 2003.

C-7. How can I obtain an application package?

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The Department published a Notice Inviting Local Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 for the Early Reading First program in the *Federal Register* on March 11, 2003, which announced that the Early Reading First application package will be available by March 17, 2003. Applications can be downloaded from the Early Reading First web site at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/>. You can also obtain a printed copy of the application through the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To order a printed copy of the application through ED Pubs, follow the instructions in the Notice Inviting Applications, which is available on this website.

C-8. How can I find out more about the Department of Education's general grant process?

For general information about the Department's competitive grant process see "What Should I Know About ED Grants," available at: <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/about/knowabtgrants/>.

D. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

D-1. What entities can apply for Early Reading First grants?

The following are eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant:

(1) One or more local educational agencies (LEAs) identified as being eligible on the list of "Eligible LEAs" that is posted on the Department's Web site for the FY 2003 Early Reading First program grant competition at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/index.html>.

(2) One or more public or private organizations or agencies (including faith-based organizations), located in a community served by one of those LEAs, in which the organization or agency is acting on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool age children (such as a Head Start program, a child care program, an Even Start family literacy program, or a lab school at a university).

(3) One or more of the eligible LEAs, applying in collaboration with one or more of the eligible organizations or agencies.

D-2. What is an eligible local educational agency (LEA) for the FY 2003 Early Reading First grant competition?

The Early Reading First statute ties grant applicant eligibility to basic LEA eligibility for Reading First State Grants subgrants. The Department will use the same eligibility lists for the FY 2003 Early Reading First competition that it used for the FY 2002 competition, supplemented with any LEAs that are eligible under approved Reading First plans in States that have those approved plans on or before February 28, 2003. The Department will provide a list of FY 2003 eligible LEAs on the Early Reading First website at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/earlyreading/index.html>. This list was made available on March 17, 2003, when applications were made available.

D-3. What public and private organizations or agencies can apply for an Early Reading First grant?

Public and private organizations or agencies (including faith-based organizations) that are located in a community served by an LEA eligible for an Early Reading First grant may apply on behalf of one or more programs (including their own program) that serve preschool age children, such as a Head Start, an Even Start family literacy program, or a lab school at a university. For the FY 2003 Early

Reading First competition, the Department will identify eligible LEAs as described above.

A State-level organization or agency, such as a State educational agency or State childcare agency, qualifies as a public organization that may apply on behalf of one or more preschool programs in the State, if the State-level organization or agency is located in a community served by an LEA that is eligible for an Early Reading First grant. The Department strongly encourages organizations or agencies to apply on behalf of no more than five (5) preschool programs, to ensure that sufficient funds are available to develop each program into a center of excellence that succeeds in preparing preschool age, at-risk children for continued school achievement.

D-4. May several eligible LEAs and organizations apply in collaboration with one another?

Yes. The Secretary encourages joint applications between one or more eligible LEAs and one or more eligible public or private agencies or organizations.

D-5. Are public charter schools eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant?

Under State law, public charter schools are generally either local educational agencies or public schools within an LEA. If a charter school is considered to be an LEA in the State, the public charter school is eligible for Early Reading First support on the same basis as other LEAs (that is, the charter school must qualify as an eligible LEA). As indicated above, for the FY 2003 Early Reading First competition, the Department will identify these eligible LEAs in each State. If a charter school is not considered to be an LEA under State law, then it may qualify as an eligible public organization if it meets the requirements for an eligible public organization described above.

D-6. Are Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant?

A BIA-funded or BIA-operated school is eligible to apply for an Early Reading First grant if it qualifies as an LEA under section 9101(26) of the ESEA and meets the LEA eligibility requirements under Early Reading First. As indicated above, for the FY 2003 Early Reading First competition, the Secretary will identify these eligible LEAs in each State.

E. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND DESIGN

E-1. What activities must a grantee provide with Early Reading First funds?

A grantee must use the funds to:

1. Provide preschool age children with high-quality oral language and literature-rich environments in which to acquire language and cognitive skills.
2. Provide professional development that is based on scientifically based reading research knowledge of early language and reading development for the staff of the eligible applicant and that will assist in developing the preschool age children's –
 - A. oral language (vocabulary, expressive language, and listening comprehension);
 - B. phonological awareness (rhyming, blending, and segmenting);
 - C. print awareness (knowledge of the purposes and conventions of print); and
 - D. alphabet knowledge (letter recognition).
3. Identify and provide activities and instructional materials that are based on scientifically based reading research for use in developing the skills and abilities described in subparagraph (2).
4. Acquire, provide training for, and implement screening reading assessments or other appropriate measures that are based on scientifically based reading research to determine whether preschool age children are developing the early language and cognitive skills they need for later reading success.
5. Integrate the above instructional materials, activities, tools, and measures into the applicant's preschool programs.

E-2. What children may participate in an Early Reading First program?

Early Reading First programs are intended to serve preschool age children primarily from low-income families.

E-3. What staff may participate in an Early Reading First program?

Early Reading First projects should provide professional development to the staff of the preschool programs for which funding is received. In addition, the Department strongly encourages Early Reading First programs to work closely

with staff in the elementary grades through such activities as joint training and professional development to ensure continuity of instruction and curriculum and alignment with State content standards.

E-4. May Early Reading First programs provide parenting education and other services supporting parents' engagement in their preschool children's education?

Yes. The quality of family environments and parent-child interactions is central to a child's literacy development and education. Parents strengthen their child's literacy development and school-related competencies when they engage in language-rich parent-child interaction, provide support for literacy in the family, and hold appropriate expectations of the child's learning and development. The Department strongly encourages Early Reading First programs to provide parents with educational training in those parenting skills most closely associated with children's language and cognitive development.

In addition, program staff are encouraged to meet with parents to talk about any areas in which their child is experiencing difficulty, and the early language and cognitive activities the parent can do at home to help prepare their child for formal school instruction. Program staff should work with parents to develop a plan to consistently reinforce crucial oral language and cognitive skills during summer or other extended vacation periods between preschool and kindergarten, which will help prevent the loss of previously acquired skills.

E-5. How can an Early Reading First project help sustain the learning gains of preschool age children when the children enter elementary school?

The Department strongly encourages Early Reading First programs to have a specific plan for establishing continuity with the State educational goals in the elementary grades that facilitates the transition from the preschool to kindergarten. This continuity will ensure that what children are doing before they enter school is aligned with what is expected of them once they are in school. Providing information on children's preschool experience, and, on areas of concern for a particular child, if any, can help ensure that the proper supports continue to be provided as the children begin formal schooling.

If an applicant receives an Early Reading First grant for a preschool program and also receives a Reading First subgrant from their State for school-age children, activities must be coordinated to ensure continuity. For example, for children who are having particular difficulty with spoken language or cognitive skills upon entrance to kindergarten, the preschool teacher should provide the kindergarten teacher with the child's history, which would likely include documentation of

how the child has progressed toward his or her program goals, and a discussion of areas where the child still is experiencing difficulty.

E-6. May a grantee provide teacher stipends, bonuses, or scholarships with Early Reading First funds?

Yes. The Department strongly supports the use of reasonable and necessary incentives to encourage the full participation of staff in such activities as professional development. The Department also urges Early Reading First projects to consider conducting professional development activities during the school day, by using paid, trained substitutes to free up the instructors to participate in the professional development. This approach emphasizes the importance of the professional development and ensures the full engagement of staff.

E-7. May a grantee use Early Reading First grant funds to change the preschool physical environment?

Yes. Early Reading First funds may be used for the reasonable and necessary costs associated with minor remodeling or alterations of classroom space to enhance early language and cognitive development activities. For example, funds may be used to create a separate reading center or “library” area, as long as there are no structural alterations to the building. However, Early Reading First funds may not be used to make structural alterations (such as by moving walls) or for construction

E-8. May a grantee subgrant Early Reading First funds?

No. However, grantees may award contracts with Early Reading First funds for program services and activities.

E-9. May a grantee use Early Reading First funds for the indirect costs of the program?

Yes. Applicants may apply their approved unrestricted indirect cost rate to the Early Reading First program.

E-10. How can a grantee determine the specific cost items it may charge to its Federal funds?

Applicants should refer to the Early Reading First statute and the following OMB Cost Principles in determining which specific cost items are allowable when preparing their proposed budgets:

- LEAs, State and Local Governments, Indian Tribes and Tribal Organizations, and Public Nonprofit Organizations (other than hospitals or institutions of higher education): OMB Circular A-87.
- Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs): OMB Circular A-21.
- Private nonprofit organizations (other than hospitals, institutions of higher education, and commercial organizations): OMB Circular A-122.

These OMB Cost Principles are available on the internet at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/circulars>.

F. MISCELLANEOUS

F-1. What portions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) apply to the Early Reading First program?

The following portions of EDGAR (available electronically at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html>) are applicable as indicated below:

- Part 74 – Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations (for applicants/grantees that are institutions of higher education or non-profit organizations)
- Part 75 – Direct Grant Programs (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 77 – Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 79 – Intergovernmental Review of Department of Education Programs and Activities (for all applicants/grantees except federally recognized Indian tribes)
- Part 80 – Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments (for applicants/grantees that are States or local governments such as local educational agencies)
- Part 81 – General Education Provisions Act – Enforcement (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 82 – New Restrictions on Lobbying (for all applicants/grantees)

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- Part 85 – Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) (for all applicants/grantees), and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-free Workplace (for applicants/grantees that are institutions of higher education)
- Part 86 – Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 97 – Protection of Human Subjects (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 98 – Student Rights in Research, Experimental Programs, and Testing (for all applicants/grantees)
- Part 99 – Family Educational Rights and Privacy (for all applicants/grantees)

F-2. Will there be a national evaluation of Early Reading First?

Yes. The statute provides \$3 million for the purposes of conducting an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. Grantees are required to cooperate in this national evaluation.

Appendix B An Early Reading First Resource Sampler

The following bibliography represents a small sample of the scientifically based research and resources available that support the Early Reading First goals. The list is not exhaustive, and the Department will add other relevant research and resources in the future.

Adams, M.J., Foorman, B.R., Lundberg, I., & Beeler, T. (1998). **Phonemic Awareness in Young Children**. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

This book addresses the "research to practice" issue in phonemic awareness and includes activities that stimulate the development of "phonemic awareness" in early education programs. While MOST teachers are familiar with the term "phonemic awareness" and its importance in the process of acquiring literacy, but knowing how to teach and support "phonemic awareness" learning has been a challenge for many. The authors intend to close the gap between the research findings and classroom instruction by providing a developmental curriculum in "phonemic awareness" based upon validated classroom research that originated in Sweden and Denmark, and was then adapted and researched in classrooms in the United States.

Apel, K., & Masterson, J. (2001). **Beyond Baby Talk: From Sounds to Sentences - A Parent's Guide to Language Development**. California: Prima Publishing.

Sponsored by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, this book describes how children develop language from their earliest words to sentences. With the understanding that parents are the primary language role models for their children, the authors provide parents with a guide to understanding language development as well as ways in which they can interact with their children to promote language development.

Burns, M.S., Griffin, P., & Snow, C.E. (Eds.). (1999). **Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success**. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

This book is edited by members of the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children. It is intended for parents, teachers, policymakers, and community members. The book addresses the following central questions:

- What kinds of language and literacy experiences should be part of all preschool and childcare settings?
- What should reading instruction look like in kindergarten and the early grades?
- What questions should be asked of school boards, principals, elected officials and other policymakers who make decisions regarding early reading instruction?
- Is my child making progress in reading related skills and early reading?

The goal of the book is to share a wealth of knowledge based upon extensive guidelines, program descriptions, advice on resources, and strategies that can be used in everyday life.

Gopnik, A., Meltzoff, A.N., & Kuhl, P.K. (1999). **The Scientist in the Crib**. New York: Morrow.

This book looks with great detail into the relationship between science and young children's development. There have been many rigorous scientific studies conducted that have helped us better understand how babies think and learn. The latest research on early childhood development tells us that babies and young children know and learn much more about the world around them than we ever have imagined. This book is not the typical parenting advice or "how to" book. Rather, it strives to take a different road and look at the science of babies' minds.

Hart, B., & Risley, T.R. (1999). **The Social World of Children: Learning to Talk**. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

This book follows the groundbreaking study reported by Hart and Risley in their earlier book, **Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children**. It goes beyond the discussion in the earlier book on the role of language experience in the intergenerational transmission of language competence and examines the patterns in that transmission. The authors provide tables and figures with their data and thoroughly discuss their findings. Hart and Risley state that they have a simple message for parents: their conversation matters when their children are young. Talking with children provides them with experiences that are important to both their cognitive and their social/emotional learning. The authors provide evidence that the language tools provided to children through conversation can contribute at least as much to a child's future success as their heredity and their choice of friends .

Neuman, S., & Copple, C., Bredekamp, S. (2000). **Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children**. Washington D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

This book is the product of a professional collaboration between early childhood educators and reading specialists. It explains the position statement of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children on the all important and controversial topic of when and how to teach young children to read and write. Also included is a summary of effective teaching practices for preschool teachers, a section on frequently asked questions, and a glossary of terms in early literacy. Finally, to help teachers consider the value of what they are doing across the dimensions of literacy, there is a brief self-inventory (*Taking Stock of What You Do to Promote Children's Literacy*).

Neuman, S.B., & Dickinson, D.K. (Eds.). (2001). **Handbook of Early Literacy Research**. New York: Guilford Press.

This volume examines current research on early literacy and intervention. The *Handbook* begins by addressing broad questions about the nature of early literacy, and then continues by summarizing current knowledge on cognitive development, and emphasizing the importance of cultural contexts in the acquisition of literacy. Subsequent chapters focus on various skills and knowledge that emerge as children become literate as well as the roles of peers and families in this process. The book devotes attention to the importance of meeting the literacy needs of all children and emphasizes the importance of coordinated school, family, and social services to provide the necessary support for those children who struggle most in school.

Various approaches to instruction, assessment, and early intervention and research on the efficacy of these approaches are described.

Snow, C.E., Burns, S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). **Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children**. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

This book is a summary report developed from the findings of the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children. It examines research findings to provide an "integrated picture of how reading develops and how reading instruction should proceed (p. vi)." The core message of the book with regard to reading instruction is: "that reading instruction should integrate attention to the alphabetic principle with attention to the construction of meaning and opportunities to develop fluency (p. vii)."

The research reviewed in this book includes studies on normal reading development and instruction; on risk factors that can be useful in identifying children at risk for reading failure; and on prevention, intervention, and instructional approaches to ensuring the most optimal reading outcomes. The committee emphasizes the importance of high-quality preschool and kindergarten environments and their contribution to providing a critical foundation to facilitate children's acquisition of essential reading skills.