

The YesPhonics Program incorporates the guidelines for: *Reading First* of the No Child Left Behind Act

Reading First, and its companion *Early Reading First*, is federal legislation designed to address the reading deficit. They became law in the *No Child Left Behind Act* on January 8, 2002. *Reading First* relies on the findings of the **National Reading Panel**, which determined that effective reading programs must be based on Scientifically Based Reading Research.

Read the panel's findings: **Summary of the (U.S.) National Reading Panel Report, *Teaching Children to Read***. Prepared by the Division of Research and Policy: International Reading Association (2002), P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139, Phone: 303-731-1600

In 1997, the U.S. Congress requested that the Director of National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), in consultation with the Secretary of Education, appoint a panel of experts to determine the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching reading. They selected 14 panel members (for the **National Reading Panel**) from 300 applicants. No federal government employees, persons who had taken set stands on particular approaches to teaching methods, or persons with financial or commercial ties to reading-material production were considered. The group included scientists engaged in reading research, psychologists, a pediatrician, a teacher, administrators, a principal and a parent. In April 2000, the NICHD released the report of the National Reading Panel, under the title *Teaching Children to Read*. (see: www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/bubskey.cfm?from=nrp)

Studies reviewed: The panel selected research from approximately 100,000 reading research studies published since 1966, and another 15,000 that had been published before that time.
Public comments: Five regional meetings of more than 400 people.

Panel findings:

Four components identified by the National Reading Panel as essential for success in reading.

1) Teach children to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words (phonemic awareness)

Panel: Phonemic awareness is knowledge that spoken words are made up of tiny segments of sound referred to as phonemes.

YesPhonics Program: Phonemic awareness is literally “sound” awareness. It is the understanding that words are made up of sounds and being able to hear, recognize, and manipulate the individual sounds that make up a word. For example, it is the ability to recognize that the word “dad” is made up of the separate sounds /d/ /a/ /d/. Children vary greatly in their natural ability to hear the sounds within words. Many do not realize the words they hear break apart into smaller sounds (phonemes). Hearing the individual sounds within a word is difficult because when we speak, we effortlessly blend all the sounds together which hides the phonetic nature of spoken language. In order to read and spell fluently these sounds (phonemes) must first be taught systematically and explicitly in isolation which is easily accomplished with the 72 Orton Phonograms.

Dr Samuel Orton isolated the most used phonograms that represent the common spelling patterns of English. They are the primary codes for speaking, spelling, writing and reading English. A “phonogram” is a letter or a set combination of letters that represent one or more single sounds (phoneme) in a word. The English language is a sound (phoneme)/symbol (written) system; it has 26 letters that say the 45 single sounds (phonemes) heard in English speech. The phonograms consist of the 26 alphabet letters and 46 set combinations (teams) of letters (multi-letters) with 2 to 4 letters; each has 1-6 single sounds (phonemes).

The phonogram’s sound sequence should be rehearsed until the phonogram stands out as a “sound” (phoneme) in the printed word.

2) Teach them that these sounds are represented by letters that can be blended together to form words (phonics)

Panel: The panel found that the research conducted to date strongly supports the concept that explicitly and systematically teaching children to manipulate phonemes significantly improves children’s reading and spelling abilities. The evidence for this is so clear cut that this method should be an important component of classroom reading instruction.

The panel also concluded that research literature provides solid evidence that phonics instruction produces significant benefits for children from kindergarten through 6th grade and for children having difficulties learning to read. The greatest improvements in reading were seen from systematic phonics instruction. This type of phonics instruction consists of teaching a planned sequence of phonics elements, rather than highlighting elements as they happen to appear in a text. Here again, the evidence was so strong that the panel concluded that systematic phonics instruction is appropriate for routine classroom instruction.

For children with learning disabilities and children who are low achievers, systematic phonics instruction, combined with synthetic phonics instruction produced the greatest gains. Synthetic phonics instruction consists of teaching students to explicitly convert letters into phonemes and then blend the phonemes to form words. Moreover, systematic synthetic phonics instruction was significantly more effective in improving the reading skills of children from low socioeconomic levels. Across all grade levels, systematic synthetic phonics instruction improved the ability of good readers to spell.

YesPhonics Program: Explicit phonics moves from the smallest part (phonemes) to the whole. The students first learn the 72 Orton Phonograms, the word building tools of alphabet letters and multi-letter (set combinations of letters) and their sounds (phonemes). Then they build and recombine them into syllables and words.

This systematic, sequential teaching method unclutters and unifies English. The phonograms, spelling list and spelling rules are taught systematically. The phonograms are learned as they are used for spelling. The spelling rules are not taught in isolation but are taught with the words as they are needed with lesson plans and worksheets. Learning one rule for many words is much easier than learning each word individually.

The Ayers Spelling List consists of 1000 high frequency words most commonly used in everyday English with 300 added derivatives and related words. The words are taught in syllables with a multi-sensory approach of seeing, hearing, saying (phonemes) and writing the words directly from dictation. This method is systematic and direct with an exact dictated dialogue of phonemes for the phonograms and spelling words. How to teach instructions accompany each word with its vowel sounds (phonemes). This method guarantees accurate spelling and fluent reading.

3) Have them practice what they've learned by reading aloud with guidance and feedback (guided oral reading).

Panel: The panel determined that effective reading instruction includes teaching children to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words, teaching them that these sounds are represented by letters of the alphabet which can be then be blended together to form words (phonics).

The panel concluded that guided oral reading is important for developing reading fluency-the ability to read with efficiency and ease. In guided oral reading, students read out loud, to a parent, teachers or other student, who corrects their mistakes and provides them with other feedback. Specifically, guided oral reading helped students across a wide range of grade levels to learn to recognize new words, helped them to read accurately and easily, and helped them to comprehend what they read.

YesPhonics Program: This is accomplished by learning the 72 phonograms (phonics) and writing spelling words in syllables from words that are dictated phonogram by phonogram, sound by sound (phoneme-by-phoneme) in syllables. The student then sounds (says the phonemes) and writes the spelling word without seeing the word first. The students use only paper and pencil and their minds. The students read aloud in class their spelling words, sentences and paragraphs they have written.

In the first five weeks and at the completion of the first 56 phonograms and 150 spelling words they start reading beginning books of literature and other subjects of their age interest that educates and develops a love for reading. This literature based program uses age appropriate books from the library, bookstore, newspapers, magazines and other sources; no boring, repetitive, limiting vocabulary controlled readers are used.

Read to Learn: Much reading aloud for all levels and grades is needed to develop the habit of reading accurately for precise enunciation and improvement of both vocabulary and grammar. The practice of accurate reading develops the ability to get ideas from the printed page and understand correct meaning. Correct meanings can only be learned from accurate reading. In reading we are trying to learn from the author and not substitute our ideas for theirs. New words are worked out as they occur; words that present a difficulty are not taught ahead of the story but are sounded out to produce the correct word.

4) Teach them to apply strategies to guide and improve reading comprehension.

Panel: To determine how children best learn to comprehend what they read, the panel reviewed studies of three areas regarded as essential to developing reading comprehension; vocabulary development, text comprehension instruction, and teacher preparation. Vocabulary should be taught both directly-apart from a larger narrative or text-and indirectly-as words are encountered in a larger text.

YesPhonics: In the spelling lessons the students obtain the basic knowledge of how the written language works. At the completion of the spelling list at the end of level 3 (3rd grade) elementary students can decode (read and pronounce) the longest of unfamiliar words, phoneme-by-phoneme and syllable-by-syllable. At this point, students are able to read anything in their comprehension vocabularies, about 30,000 words. Compare this with the 900 words third graders are able to read using the Whole Language method.

Word clearing: This activity should only commence after the students are reading and have a solid phonetic foundation. To practice word clearing: Choose reading material slightly above the student's reading ability. The student reads aloud. When a word is "un-clear" (hesitates or stumbles) look the word up in the dictionary and use it to write sentences. They can word clear with a teacher, parent or friend (taking turns reading and listening).

Panel: The panel noted that literally hundreds of studies have shown that the best readers read silently to themselves more frequently than do poor readers.

YesPhonics: To spell and write to read from the beginning produces auditory processing skills that can be more precisely and efficiently taught through spelling rather than randomly taught through "implicit" phonics applied to pronouncing words for reading. Phonics for reading alone gives only approximate pronunciations for many words. Early learning of correct spelling patterns (while avoiding programming of misinformation such as "invented" spelling) allows elementary students to write with increased precision and creativity. As a result, they can then read at their interest and speaking vocabulary levels; enjoying quality literature with its obvious benefits.

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