

## **The Research Basis for Hooked on Phonics® Learn to Read**

**Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read** uses systematic instruction and multisensory materials to help children learn to read. The instructional approach and techniques are based on current research about how children learn to read, and the program builds systematically from letters and sounds, to reading words, sentences, and stories for meaning.

Research has demonstrated that a strong understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds is fundamental in learning to read. Research has also shown that exposure to reading helps reinforce these fundamental skills.

**Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read** combines practice in decoding or recognizing and pronouncing words with engaging books to allow children to use these skills in reading for meaning. Children initially learn and practice strategies to decode individual words and then immediately implement this new knowledge by reading stories and books that are specifically designed to include the words and letter-patterns the child has just learned.

### **Word Recognition and Reading Ability**

It is well documented that the ability to recognize words is the critical factor in beginning reading development. Word recognition problems play a major role in dyslexia and reading disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

In the early grades, a child's ability to recognize individual words plays a significant role in determining reading ability.<sup>2</sup> For example, this ability to recognize individual words accounts for 80 percent of a first-grader's reading comprehension.

***Application:** Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read, recognizing that, in order to become successful readers, children must have a strong foundation in word recognition skills, provides the basic steps that lead to fast, automatic word recognition. Through workbook practice and Visual Phonics™ on the DVDs, children are exposed to isolated word recognition exercises that help them achieve automaticity.*

Research has shown that low reading ability at the beginning stages is much more frequently the result of inadequate word-recognition skills than of poor comprehension. Therefore, to ensure success in reading, children need both exposure to and explicit

---

<sup>1</sup> Bertelson, 1986; Just & Carpenter, 1987; Morrison, 1984, 1987; Morrison & Manis, 1982; Olson, Kliegl, Davidson, & Foltz, 1985; Siegel, 1985; Vellutino, 1979

<sup>2</sup> Adams, Treiman, & Pressley, 1996; Bertelson, 1986; Chall, 1983b; Curtis, 1980; Ehri, 1992; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Perfetti, 1985; Richardson, DiBenedetto, & Adler, 1982; Stanovich, 1986, 1992; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; NICHD 2000

instruction in how to recognize words.<sup>3</sup> Readers cannot rely upon context strategies but must acquire fast, automatic word-recognition strategies to become skilled readers.

Fluent readers are able to recognize words quickly and automatically because of their efficient decoding processes, not by using context to speed word recognition.<sup>4</sup> Research demonstrates that good readers do not skip words or rely on context but read virtually every word and see all of the letters.<sup>5</sup>

Studies have demonstrated that teaching children to guess the meaning of words by context, instead of strengthening their ability to decode and recognize words, decreases the odds that children will learn to read well.<sup>6</sup>

***Application: Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read** starts by teaching students the alphabetic principle through phonics instruction and avoids reliance on “context clues.” **Learn to Read** offers children a variety of stories and storybooks that give them repeated exposure to letter-sound combinations they have recently learned.*

## **The Role of Print Exposure**

The more children read, the more opportunities they have to develop fast, automatic word recognition and decoding skills, which are the building blocks for reading for meaning. It is important to remember that many children who seem to have problems with comprehension are really demonstrating problems with decoding skills and fluency. Because these students have to devote so much attention to slowly and carefully decoding words, they have less attentional processes for interpreting the meaning of a passage.

For skilled readers, decoding is automatic, enabling them to focus more on the meaning of the passage. Therefore, to become good readers, children must practice reading stories and texts.

***Application: Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read** includes books and stories by award-winning authors and illustrators that are integrated into the program specifically to correspond with the child’s decoding ability.*

Research has shown that children vary in the amount of practice they need to decipher a word. Some need to read a word only once to recognize it again with great speed while others may need multiple readings. For example, Assink (1984) found that the average child needed to read a word four to eight times before it was automatized; whereas, other readers often needed as many as 15 to 20 exposures in a relatively short period of time.

---

<sup>3</sup> See Adams, Treiman, & Pressley, 1996; Fielding-Barnsley, 1997; Gough, 1983; Liberman, 1982; Leu, DeGross, & Simons, 1986; Mitchell, 1982; Perfetti, 1985; Stanovich, 1980, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1992; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; NICHD, 2000

<sup>4</sup> Perfetti, 1985; Share & Stanovich, 1995; Stanovich, 1986, for reviews

<sup>5</sup> For research in eye movements see Balota, Pollatsek & Rayner, 1985; Ehrlich & Rayner, 1981; Hogaboam, 1983; Just & Carpenter, 1980, 1987; Perfetti, 1985; Pollatsek, Rayner, & Balota, 1986

<sup>6</sup> Foorman, B., Francis, D., Winikates, D., Mehta, P., Schatschneider, C., & Fletcher, J., in press

Moreover, it is vitally important for students to read text that is tied to their independent reading level (on which they are 90 to 95 percent accurate), and for that text to provide specific practice in the skills being learned.<sup>7</sup>

*Application: Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read provides children with the necessary practice through interesting and engaging stories. The words in the stories contain at least 90 percent of the words and letter patterns that are taught in the skills-based lessons. The Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read program includes illustrations and interesting stories to grab the reader's attention and motivate the child to read the stories over and over again.*

## **The Precursors of Word Recognition:**

### **Building Awareness of Sound-Symbol Relationships**

Studies have demonstrated that the best predictor of early reading ability, even before the child begins to read<sup>8</sup>, is his or her understanding of how words are made up of sounds.<sup>9</sup> When children are taught these skills of hearing the sounds in words, they demonstrate greater abilities in reading, word recognition, and spelling.<sup>10</sup>

Research findings indicate that it is critical to learn to perceive the sounds within words. The process of learning to read increases a beginning reader's sensitivity to words and sounds.<sup>11</sup> Just as a basic understanding of how words relate to sounds is necessary to decode written words, the act of decoding strengthens the ability to perceive sounds in verbal and written language.<sup>12</sup>

*Application: Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read provides children with multiple ways to learn this critical skill by helping students develop an understanding of phonology through learning to decode words. It introduces simple compound words and two-syllable words to support corresponding decoding skills.*

## **The Role of Decoding Ability in Word Recognition**

Phonological abilities play a key role in the development of decoding ability. In order to automatically recognize the relationship between words and sounds, children must learn the general principles of how the spelling of the word corresponds to its sound and must see enough examples of spelling-to-sound relationships to support fast decoding.

---

<sup>7</sup> Beck & Juel, 1995

<sup>8</sup> Bradley & Bryant, 1983, 1985; Fox & Routh, 1975; Lundberg, Olofsson, & Wall, 1980; Maclean, Bryant, & Bradley, 1987; Share, et al., 1984

<sup>9</sup> Bradley & Bryant, 1985; Juel, et al., 1986; Liberman, 1982; Lomax & McGee, 1987; Mann, Tobin, & Wilson, 1987; Share, Jorm, Maclean, & Matthews, 1984; Stanovich, 1988; Stanovich, Cunningham, & Cramer, 1984; Tunmer & Nesdale, 1985; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987; Wagner & Torgesen, 1987; Williams, 1984; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; NICHD, 2000

<sup>10</sup> Bradley & Bryant, 1985; Cunningham, 1990; Fox & Routh, 1984; Lundberg, 1987; Olofsson & Lundberg, 1985; Torneus, 1984; Treiman & Baron, 1983; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987

<sup>11</sup> Ehri, 1979, 1985, 1987; Fielding-Barnsley, 1997; Morais, Alegria, & Content, 1987; Perfetti, 1985; Perfetti, et al., 1987; Wagner, Torgesen, & Rashotte, 1994

<sup>12</sup> Perfetti, 1987; Stanovich, 1987, 1988

Many children have difficulty determining the relationships between the printed word, its letters, and its sounds.<sup>13</sup> Haskell, Foorman, & Swank (1992) found that students who receive explicit instruction in letter-sound correspondences do better on word recognition tests than students who receive whole-word training or no training. Students benefit from programs that provide specific, systematic instruction in segmenting and blending sounds<sup>14</sup> that can help them decode words. Brown and Felton (1990) found significant trends supporting the use of structured phonics instruction over literature-based instruction for at-risk first-grade students. This type of instruction is especially important since studies have demonstrated that a child's ability to decode words in first grade predicts 80 to 90 percent of reading comprehension ability in third grade.<sup>15</sup> As a result, many experts view decoding as the major task in learning to read.<sup>16</sup>

***Application:** **Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read** provides both explicit and systematic instruction in the major sound-symbol correspondences, and extensive practice in these associations at the word, sentence, and text level. **Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read** introduces compound words and two-syllable words. The activities in **Learn to Read** help children recognize and read these words.*

## **Phonics and Reading Together**

Perhaps most important, research has shown that combining systematic phonics instruction and reading is the most effective way to develop a good reader. Reading that includes a high percentage of familiar patterns gives the child the opportunity to read for meaning.<sup>17</sup>

***Application:** **Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read** includes books and stories woven into the program at the appropriate decoding level of the child to provide opportunities for the child to read for meaning and enjoyment.*

## **Summary**

This is just a small sample of the growing body of research upon which **Hooked on Phonics Learn to Read** is based. Converging evidence from a multitude of studies supports the approach of the program in using explicit and systematic phonics instruction coupled with stories and books to enable children to read for meaning. The phonics aspects of the program give children the tools to learn to read, and the books included in the program give children the necessary opportunities to practice reading successfully.

---

<sup>13</sup> Frith, 1985; Gough & Hillinger, 1980

<sup>14</sup> Foorman, 1997; Vellutino, 1991; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1991; Vellutino, et al., 1996; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; NICHD, 2000

<sup>15</sup> Juel, 1994

<sup>16</sup> Foorman, Francis, & Shaywitz, Shaywitz, & Fletcher, 1997; Rieben & Perfetti, 1991; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1991; Vellutino, Scanlon, & Tanzman, 1994; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998

<sup>17</sup> Stahl, Osborn, and Pearson, 1992; Juel and Roper-Schneider, 1985; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; NICHD, 2000

## REFERENCES

- Adams, M.J., Treiman, R. & Pressley, M. (1996). "Reading, writing and literacy." In I. Sigel, A. Renninger (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology, Volume 4: Child psychology in practice*. New York: Wiley.
- Beck, I. & Juel, C. (1995). "The role of decoding in learning to read." *American Educator*, 19, 8, 21–25.
- Curtis, M.E. & Longo, A.M. (1999). *When adolescents can't read: Methods and materials that work*. Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.
- Dowhower, S. L. (1987). "Effects of repeated reading on second-grade transitional readers' fluency and comprehension." *Reading Research Quarterly*, 22, 389–406.
- Ehri, L.C. (1992). "Reconceptualizing the development of sight word reading and its relationship to recoding." In P.B. Gough, L.C. Ehri, & R. Treiman (Eds.), *Reading Acquisition* (pp. 107-143). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Fielding-Barnsley, R. (1997). "Explicit instruction in decoding benefits children high in phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge." *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 1, 82–95.
- Foorman, B.R., Francis, D.J., Beeler, T., Winikates, D., & Fletcher, J.M. (in press). "Early interventions for children with reading problems: Study designs and preliminary findings." *Learning Disabilities: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal*.
- Foorman, B.R., Francis, D.J., & Fletcher, J.M., & Lynn. (in press). "Relation of phonological and orthographic processing to early reading: Comparing two approaches to regression-based, reading-level-match design." *Journal of Educational Psychology*.
- Foorman, B., Francis, D., Winikates, D., Mehta, P., Schatschneider, C., & Fletcher, J. (in press). "Early interventions for children with reading disabilities." *Learning disabilities: A multidisciplinary perspective*.
- Foorman, Francis, & Shaywitz & Fletcher, (1997) "The case for early intervention." In B. Blachman (ed.), *Foundations of Reading Acquisition: Implications for Intervention and Dyslexia*. Hillsdale, N.J.: LEA.
- Greene, J.F. (1996). "LANGUAGE!: The effects of an individualized structured language curriculum for middle and high school students." *Annals of Dyslexia*, 38, 258–275.
- Haskell, Foorman, & Swank (1992) "Effects of three orthographic/phonological units on first grade reading." *Remedial and Special Education*, 13, 40–49.
- Juel, C., & Robert-Schneider, D. 1985. *The influence of basal readers on first grade reading*. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20, 134–152.
- Lovett, M.W., Borden, S.L., DeLuca, T., Lacerenza, L., Benson, N.J., & Brackstone, D. (1994). "Treating the core deficits of developmental dyslexia: Evidence of transfer of learning after phonologically- and strategy-based reading training programs." *Developmental Psychology*, 30, 805–822.
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

- Rieben, K. & Perfetti, C. (1991). *Learning to read: Basic research and its implications*. Hillsdale, NJ: LEA.
- Samuels, S.J., Scherner, N. & Reinking, D. (1992). "Reading fluency: Techniques for making decoding automatic." In S.J. Samuels & A.E. Farstrup (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (second edition). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Share, D. & Stanovich, K. (1995). "Cognitive processes in early reading development: Accommodating individual differences into a mode of acquisition." *Issues in education: Contributions from educational psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 1–57).
- Snow, C.E., Burns, S., Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Washington, D.C., National Research Council, National Academy Press.
- Stahl, S.A., Osborn, L., & Pearson, P.D. 1992. *The effects of beginning reading instruction: Six teachers in six classrooms*. Unpublished paper. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Stanovich, K.E. (1992). "Speculations on the causes and consequences of individual differences in early reading acquisition." In P.B. Gough, L.C. Ehri, & R. Treiman (Eds.), *Reading Acquisition* (pp. 307–143). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Torgesen, J.K., Wagner, R.K., Rashotte, C.A. (1997). "The prevention and remediation of reading disabilities: Keeping the end in mind." *Academic Language Therapy*.
- Torgesen, J.K., Wagner, R.K., Rashotte, C.A., Alexander, A.W., & Conway, T. (1997). "Preventive and remedial interventions for children with severe reading disabilities." *Learning Disabilities: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, 8, 51–61.
- Vellutino, F.R. (1991). "Introduction to three studies on reading acquisition: Convergent findings on theoretical foundations of code-oriented versus whole-language approaches to reading instruction." *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83, 437–443.
- Vellutino, F., & Scanlon, D.M. (1991). "The effects of instructional bias on word identification." In L. Rieben and C.A. Perfetti (Eds.), *Learning to Read* (pp. 189–204). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Vellutino, F.R., Scanlon, D. M., Sipay, E., Small, S., Pratt, A., Chen, R., & Denckla, M. (1996). "Cognitive profiles of difficult to remediate and readily remediated poor readers: Toward Distinguishing between constitutionally and experientially based causes of reading disability." *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 88, 601–638
- Wagner, R., Torgesen, J.K., & Rashotte, C.A. (1994). "Development of reading-related phonological processing abilities: New evidence of bidirectional causality from a latent variable longitudinal study." *Developmental Psychology*. 30, 73–87.