Teaching Strategies and the Science of Reading

Position Statement

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TeachingStrategies®

Learning to read is a core goal of education. At Teaching Strategies, we firmly believe in evidence-based instruction. As such, we feel it is imperative for our resources to reflect the academic consensus on best practices in early childhood education. That means ensuring we are leveraging the science of reading research in ways that are appropriate for our youngest learners well before they enter the K-12 system. It also means leveraging the power of a comprehensive, whole-child approach to pre-seed literacy skills and an innate love of reading, starting as early as birth, throughout a child's day through authentic play-based experiences.

We agree that literacy is about letters, their individual sounds, and how those sounds form words. It is also about understanding the meaning of words and how they relate to what a child already knows and is yet to know as that child develops rapidly from birth to kindergarten. We build this understanding by delivering developmentally appropriate instruction that empowers children to be in control of their learning and fall in love with reading.

Our offerings align with the science of reading. Dr. Louisa Moats (2019), the nationally recognized author and authority on literacy education, states that the science of reading is

> *the emerging consensus from many related disciplines, based on literally thousands of studies, supported by hundreds of millions of research dollars, conducted across the world in many languages. These studies have revealed a great deal about how we learn to read, what goes wrong when students don't learn, and what kind of instruction is most likely to work the best for the most students.*

The many related disciplines described by Moats can be summarized in the following components.

- **Phonemic awareness** – the awareness to hear and manipulate the sounds of spoken words
- **Phonics** – the relationship between letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language
- **Fluency** – smooth and accurate reading that mirrors the pace and degree of expression in natural speech
- **Vocabulary** – understanding the meaning of words
- **Comprehension** – using the principles above to build an accurate understanding of the written text

As any child, parent, and educator knows, these components are inherently intertwined, and when taught with diligent repetition over time, can create skilled young readers. It remains paramount that the education community effectively translates this research into classroom reading activities that preserve the complexity and nuance of the science of reading. It is also critical that high-quality early childhood programs set children up for success in these disciplines by making early deposits in these areas that align with the best practices for developing the whole child from birth to 3rd grade.

Teaching Strategies' approach to literacy is based on these elements of the science of reading in order to help young children become competent and confident emerging readers through explicit, play-based instruction. Our position on literacy for young children is supported by renowned researchers who have been key advocates and influencers for ensuring that the science of reading—in all its complexity—exists in early childhood curricula for children.

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