



# NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND



## Early Reading First and Reading First

*"A child who can read is a child who can learn. And a child who can learn is a child who can succeed in school and in life."*  
*Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings*

Early language development and foundational pre-reading skills are extremely important in learning how to read.

- Reading is a **learned skill**. Early childhood is a critical time for children to develop the language, cognitive and early reading skills they will need in order to enter kindergarten ready to learn to read.
- The skills include: *oral language* (expressive and receptive language, such as vocabulary development); *phonological awareness* (rhyming, blending, segmenting); *print awareness*; and *alphabetic knowledge* (letter-sound knowledge).
- Researchers estimate that with proper exposure and systematic opportunities to develop these foundational skills during early childhood, **as few as five percent** of children may suffer serious reading difficulties.

The importance of the *No Child Left Behind Act's* Early Reading First Program.

- The Early Reading First Program supports preschools and early childhood education providers, especially those serving children from low-income families, so that they can become **preschool centers of educational excellence**, providing children with the foundational skills necessary to become successful readers.
- Specifically, Early Reading First provides funds to:
  - Support local efforts to **enhance the early language, cognitive, and reading development skills** through strategies and professional development based on scientific research;
  - Create **high-quality language and print-rich environments** in which to learn;
  - Engage in **scientifically proven language and literacy activities** that support the age-appropriate development of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabet knowledge;
  - Use appropriate measures to **identify preschool-age children** who may be at risk for reading failure; and
  - Integrate **scientifically based instructional materials and programs** into existing preschool programs.

Early Reading First and Reading First build on more than 20 years of research.

- The **National Reading Panel** examined thousands of scientific studies over the past two decades to determine how children best learn to read.

According to the Nation's Report Card [NAEP], children are reading more and making great academic gains.

- Overall, America's 9-year-olds posted the **highest reading scores** ever recorded by the NAEP.
- Reading scores for Hispanic American and African American 9-year-olds also reached **all-time highs**.
- Reading scores jumped an **unprecedented seven points** since 1999.
- A record number of 9-year-olds are **reading more than 20 pages a day** in school and for homework.

President Bush is committed to providing the resources necessary to ensure all children become successful readers.

- The U.S. Department of Education is awarding **33 three-year Early Reading First grants** in FY 2005 to eligible school districts with at-risk children, and to public and private organizations located in communities served by those school districts, for a total of 125 grants. Total amount: about **\$102 million**.
- Early Reading First grants complement No Child Left Behind's **Reading First State Grants Program**, which provides support for high-quality, scientifically based classroom reading instruction from kindergarten through grade three.
- Reading First grants are currently benefiting more than **100,000 teachers** and **1.5 million students**.
- President Bush's FY 2006 budget proposes **\$104 million** for Early Reading First and **\$1.1 billion** for Reading First.

Call 1(888) 814-6252 or visit [www.nclb.gov](http://www.nclb.gov) for more information on No Child Left Behind.