

# WEBWORDS 15

## Literacy links

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### Netting a wide audience

The *Get Ready to Read* campaign<sup>1</sup>, mounted by the National Center for Learning Disabilities aims to build the early literacy skills of preschool children throughout the US. Its website includes a research-driven screening tool<sup>2</sup> for four year olds, and literacy-related resources for families, teachers, researchers and health professionals.

The publication *Put Reading First*<sup>3</sup> is also designed to net a wide audience, including educators, parents and policy-makers. The site represents the outcome of a collaborative effort between the National Institute for Literacy, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the US Department of Education. It provides an evidence-based, in-depth account of instruction of K to 3s in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension.

### Rocket science

These two sites are complemented by the National Reading Panel (NRP) publications page<sup>4</sup> on the NICHD site, where there is a rich collection of reading research resources<sup>5</sup> such as the wonderfully titled booklet<sup>6</sup> *Teaching reading IS rocket science*. The NRP 2000 report confirmed that phonics instruction is not the complete answer to reading instruction (nothing new in that), and that language activities and other critical learning experiences are also important (still nothing new).

An article<sup>7</sup> in *Education Week* (it takes moments to set up a free online subscription) critical of the panel's methodology and its practical application in schools, points out that the nub of the problem is not really to do with the panel's findings per se, but how they have been interpreted<sup>8</sup> and implemented. An example, it seems, of policy-makers opting for the narrow<sup>9</sup> view in the quest for simplistic solutions to complex issues. Rocket science indeed!

### Reading rockets

The Reading Rockets<sup>10</sup> site is one of many resource sites on the web geared to the needs of reading teachers and other interested parties. Among the gems are BBCi Learning<sup>11</sup>, comprehension worksheets<sup>12</sup>, Guys Read<sup>13</sup> – a literacy initiative for boys, Helping Your Child Become a Reader<sup>14</sup>, a collection of phonemic awareness songs<sup>15</sup>, the Scholastic<sup>16</sup> site, Starfall<sup>17</sup>, and Webbing into Literacy<sup>18</sup>

### Readable research

One of the pleasures of leafing and browsing through the research on literacy is finding so many well-written, interesting, thought-provoking, and often witty, articles. And what better place to find them than the ASHA Leader, where Gail Gillon discusses phonological awareness intervention<sup>19</sup> for children, Alan Kamhi writes about the role of the SLP in improving reading fluency<sup>20</sup>, Mary Spratcher highlights key roles<sup>21</sup> for SLPs in reading and writing instruction, and Denise Yess talks about literacy in public schools<sup>22</sup>.

Participants in discussion groups devoted to literacy also tend to maintain a high standard of clear written expression when they post. Examples include the *Read by Grade 3* list<sup>23</sup> and the *Reading Reform Foundation* message board<sup>24</sup>. Whether or not you agree with the views expressed, you have to admire the way they are expressed.

### No end

There is no end to the information about reading, writing and spelling on the web. Products and schemes are pushed, home-schoolers and teachers<sup>25</sup> exchange favoured methods, theorists expound their ideas, consumers have their say, researchers<sup>26</sup> put their case, and lists of resources grow and grow. In comparison, Web content for auditory processing disorders<sup>27</sup> looks like a very neat little package!

### Links

1. <http://www.getreadytoread.org/>
2. <http://www.familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,63-25466,00.html>
3. [http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading\\_first1.html](http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/reading_first1.html)
4. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/report.htm>
5. <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/crmc/cdb/reading.htm#cpc>
6. <http://www.aft.org/edissues/rocketscience.htm>
7. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/newstory.cfm?slug=37read.h22>
8. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=33yatvin.h22>
9. <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n15/>
10. <http://www.readingrockets.org/>
11. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/>
12. <http://www.rhlschool.com/reading.htm>
13. <http://www.guysread.com/>
14. <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reader/>
15. <http://www.songsforteaching.com/PA.html>
16. <http://teacher.scholastic.com/>
17. <http://www.starfall.com/>
18. <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/wil/home.html>
19. <http://professional.asha.org/news/021203a.cfm>
20. <http://professional.asha.org/news/030415f.cfm>
21. <http://professional.asha.org/news/literacy.cfm>
22. <http://professional.asha.org/news/020910f.cfm>
23. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/readbygrade3/>
24. <http://members5.boardhost.com/debbierf1/>
25. <http://www.literatureforliterature.ecsd.net/>
26. <http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/res/literacy/>
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