

I am Linda Weinmaster, I have been married to Kerry Weinmaster for 30 years. We have 3 sons, Philip age 25, Kyle age 23 and Adam age 20. For the past 25 years I have dedicated many hours to issues that affect children as the Kansas/Nebraska director of the National Right to Read Foundation. I am here to share a success story that could have ended in tragedy had I not discovered research based intensive, explicit, systematic phonics instruction.

When Philip was in the first grade he was not gaining literacy skills. We were advised at a meeting that they needed to test Philip to identify his learning disabilities for Special Education services. We declined and removed him from school that day.

Philip began school a day later at a school that taught Orton based Spalding. His handwriting improved the very first day and by the third week he was reading independently. In 61 days he had jumped from a pre-primer reading level to a child reading at a third grade second month reading level. Not so miraculously, his "disability disappeared." Nothing was wrong with him, like many other children he was simple being disabled by ineffective reading curriculum and instructional methods.

I have heard the same story over and over again from hundreds of devastated parents. "My child can't read and he is being enrolled in special education or a federally funded reading program."

Intensive, systematic phonics program has proven to prevent reading disabilities including dyslexia. Dr. G. Reid Lyon, chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch of the NIH states, "Our data strongly show that the 20 million children today suffering from reading failure could be reduced by approximately two-thirds. While still a totally unacceptable rate of reading failure, such reduction would allow us to provide services to the children who are in genuine need of special education."

Early reading acquisition and instruction with explicit phonics is supported and concur with over 50 years of scientific and medical research on reading including Project Follow Through, Becoming an Nation of Readers, \$200 million study by the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development, MRI's, and the Massachusetts Forty; professors and specialist in linguistics and psycholinguistics. They have all concluded that direct, systematic instruction in phonics is the only method that has produced substantial progress in reading.

Dr. Samuel T. Orton, a renowned neurologist studied how the brain acquired reading skills. His research concluded that it is necessary to teach dyslexic children by the use of phonics. "Saying the sounds used in speaking and using the letters for them in writing, make the writing and reading of a word easier. His multi sensory approach is still used in classrooms today with great success.

Dr. Hilde Mosse, M.D. published "The Complete Handbook of Children' Reading Disorders," assembled scientific facts that proves beyond logical doubt that absence of phonics in beginning reading programs started the path to illiteracy in America. She said, "It took painstaking examination of children to make me realize that reading and writing disorders were not necessarily signs of psychopathology or organic defects, but may instead be consequences of inappropriate teaching methods.

Today most classrooms use implicit phonics, within the context of the word. Many children can't isolate the sounds and will never know that letters and groups of letters stand for the 45 sounds used in English speech. Using the 25 single letters of the alphabet and 2, 3 and 4 letter combination make up the 70 phonograms needed to read write and spell 95 % of words used in English.

Please mandate scientifically based reading instruction for those who have been labeled with a reading disability. Offer these children the Right to Read.

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