



**Fostering Emergent Literacy and School Readiness: Providing Balance and Best Practices**

featuring  
Dr. Dorothy S. Strickland  
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Introduction

*Fostering Emergent Literacy and School Readiness: Providing Balance and Best Practices* is part of a series of symposia designed to heighten the dialogue in Maryland around the importance of early care and education among key stakeholders—parents, early childhood professionals, elementary school staff, legislators, community service providers, public libraries staff, advocates, and the business and faith communities.

Dr. Dorothy S. Strickland, Ph.D. is the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Chair in Education at Rutgers University. She was formerly the Arthur I. Gates Professor of Education at Teachers College Columbia University. Dr. Strickland has served on the faculties of Kean University and New Jersey City University and is a former classroom teacher, reading consultant and learning disabilities specialist with the New Jersey Public Schools. Dr. Strickland holds a Ph.D. from New York University.

Dr. Strickland is a past president of both the International Reading Association (IRA) and its Reading Hall of Fame. She was the 1998 recipient of the National Council of Teachers of English Award as Outstanding Educator in the Language Arts and the 1994 NCTE Rewey Belle Inglis Award as Outstanding Woman in the Teaching of English. She is featured on several national videotape series on literacy learning and teaching.

Dr. Strickland has published more than 100 articles and books in major educational journals in the field of reading/language arts. Her latest publications are *Teaching Phonics Today*, *Beginning Reading and Writing*, and *Supporting Struggling Readers and Writers*.

Following is an abstract of Dr. Strickland's remarks.

**Scientifically Based Research**  
**in Early Childhood Education**  
**Focus on Early Literacy and School Readiness**

**Research offers a converging body of evidence about the development of young children and the ways in which adults support their growth and abilities.**

**What is Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR)?**

SBRR applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This includes research that:

1. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
2. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
3. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
4. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

**Overview of Research.** Research suggests that

(1) Early life experiences are important to development of all domains of learning– physical, social, emotional, language, and cognition;

Physical Development

- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Sensory-perceptual development

Social and Emotional Development

- Social Competency
- Self-regulation
- Friendships, gender identity, pro-social behaviors

Language Development

- Learning language
- Learning through language
- Learning about language

(2) Early human relationships and interactions play an important role in supporting a child's development.

(3) Planned interventions have the potential capacity to favorably influence children's developmental outcomes.

(4) Young children experience *multiple pathways* of development - **These pathways of development share critical features.**

- Young children's development is influenced by both nature and nurture.

- Young children's development is deeply rooted in the language and culture of their families and communities.
- Play is essential to all aspects of a child's development.
- Motivation to learn is an important contributor to school readiness and success.
- The pathways of development are dynamic and interrelated.
- All of the developmental pathways play a significant role in young children's learning and school readiness

### **Language and Literacy Development in Early Childhood Education Key Ideas and Implications**

- Literacy learning starts early and persists throughout life.
- Oral language is the foundation for literacy development.
- Children's experiences with the world and with print greatly influence their ability to comprehend what is read to them and what they read on their own.
- Key Areas of Early Literacy Development can predict success in early reading and school readiness.
  1. Oral Language: Listening Comprehension, Vocabulary Development/Background Knowledge
  2. Phonological Awareness
  3. Concepts About Print
  4. Letter Name Knowledge