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## Reading and Pre-First Grade: A Joint Statement of Concerns about Present Practices in Pre-First Grade Reading Instruction and Recommendations for Improvement

International Reading Association

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(Editor's Note: Realizing many of our readers are involved with reading instruction and young children, we have obtained permission to reprint this article from *The Reading Teacher*, April, 1977 issue.)

#### A PERSPECTIVE on pre-first graders and the teaching of reading

##### Pre-first graders need

- opportunities to express orally, graphically, and dramatically their feelings and responses to experiences,
- opportunities to interpret the language of others whether it is written, spoken, or nonverbal.

##### Teachers of pre-first graders need

- preparation which emphasizes developmentally appropriate language experiences for all pre-first graders, including those ready to read or already reading,
- the combined efforts of professional organizations, colleges, and universities to help them successfully meet the concerns outlined in this document.

#### CONCERNS

■ A growing number of children are enrolled in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes in which highly structured pre-reading and reading programs are being used. ■ Decisions related to schooling, including the teaching of reading, are increasingly being made on economic and political bases instead of on our knowledge of young children and of how they best learn. In a time of diminishing financial resources, schools often try to make "a good showing" on measures of achievement that may or may not be appropriate for the children involved. Such measures all too often dictate the content and goals of the programs. ■ In attempting to respond to pressures for high scores on widely-used measures of achievement, teachers of young children sometimes feel compelled to use materials, methods, and activities designed for older children. In so doing, they may impede the development of intellectual functions such as curiosity, critical thinking, and creative expression, and, at the same time, promote negative attitudes toward reading. ■ A need exists to provide alternative ways to teach and evaluate progress in pre-reading and reading skills. ■ Teachers of pre-first graders who are carrying out highly individualized programs without depending upon commercial readers and workbooks need help in articulating for themselves and the public *what* they are doing and *why*.

## Reading and Pre-First Grade

### A Joint Statement of Concerns about Present Practices in Pre-First Grade Reading Instruction and Recommendations for Improvement

#### Prepared by the Committee

Dorothy Strickland, IRA ■ Jessie Roderick, NCTE ■ Dolores Durkin, IRA ■ Jeanne Corbin, Virginia Plunkett, AAE/K/NE ■ Dell Kjer, Alberta Meyer, ACEI ■ Barbara Day, ASCD ■ Joanne Nurss, Lloyd Ollila, IRA ■ William Pharis, NAESP ■ Georgianna Engstrom, Marilyn Smith, NAEYC

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### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Provide reading experiences as an integrated part of the broader communication process that includes listening, speaking, and writing. A language experience approach is an example of such integration.
2. Provide for a broad range of activities both in scope and in content. Include direct experiences that offer opportunities to communicate in different settings with different persons.
3. Foster children's affective and cognitive development by providing materials, experiences, and opportunities to communicate what they know and how they feel.
4. Continually appraise how various aspects of each child's total development affects his/her reading development.
5. Use evaluative procedures that are developmentally appropriate for the children being assessed and that reflect the goals and objectives of the instructional program.

6. Insure feelings of success for all children in order to help them see themselves as persons who can enjoy exploring language and learning to read.
7. Plan flexibly in order to accommodate a variety of learning styles and ways of thinking.
8. Respect the language the child brings to school, and use it as a base for language activities.
9. Plan activities that will cause children to become active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of knowledge.
10. Provide opportunities for children to experiment with language and simply to have fun with it.
11. Require that pre-service and in-service teachers of young children be prepared in the teaching of reading in a way that emphasizes reading as an integral part of the language arts as well as the total curriculum.
12. Encourage developmentally appropriate language learning opportunities in the home.

Single copies of this statement are available free from IRA Headquarters, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, DE 19711, U.S.A. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Bulk copies are available at cost.

# IRA

International Reading Association

## 2nd GREAT LAKES REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Indianapolis, Indiana

September 29-October 1, 1977

### *reading — the hub of learning*

**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:** James J. Kilpatrick, syndicated columnist; Frank Smith, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; Dorothy Strickland, Kean College of New Jersey; Roselmina Indrisano, Boston University

**SECTIONAL MEETINGS:** Over 50 sessions spanning a full spectrum of reading topics at all levels of interest with meetings chaired by outstanding educators including Roger Farr, Indiana University; Richard A. Boning, Barnell Loft Dexter Westbrook Publications; Floyd Sucher, Brigham Young University; Joseph S. Nemeth, Bowling Green State University.

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## **NEW FROM IRA:**

### **Assessing Reading Behavior: Informal Reading Inventories – An Annotated Bibliography**

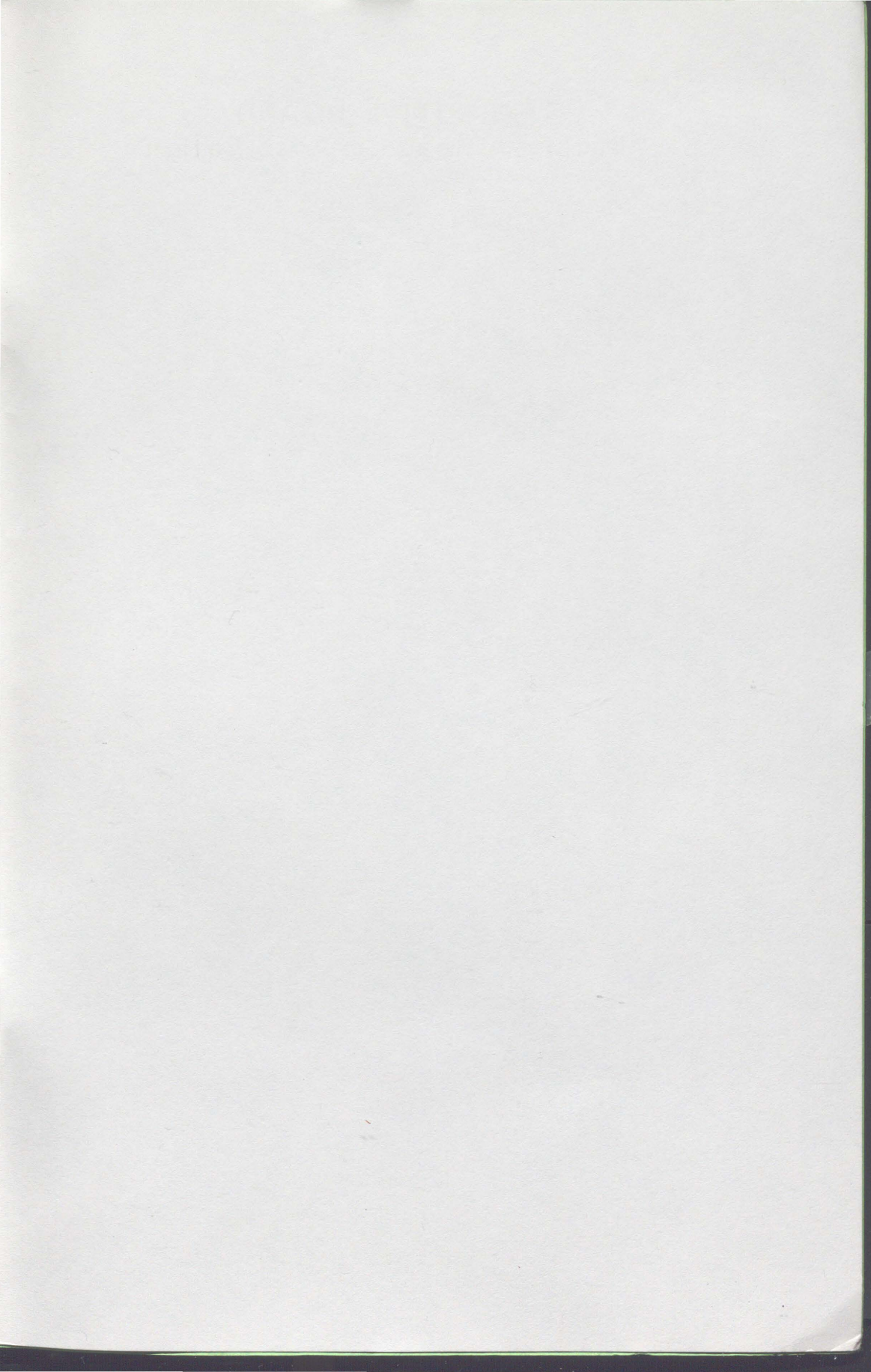
A new annotated bibliography has been issued by the International Reading Association: **Assessing Reading Behavior: Informal Reading Inventories**.

The new publication lists sources of information on IRIs, dilemmas with IRIs, comparing IRIs and standardized tests, psycholinguistic insights into reading errors, related factors, and unpublished materials. At the beginning of each major section is an introduction designed to help those unfamiliar with IRIs to understand the problems and issues involved with their use. Sources were chosen on the basis of their potential to increase understanding of IRIs.

Also included is a list of published reading inventories.

The bibliography was compiled by Jerry L. Johns of Northern Illinois University; Sharon Garton and Paula Schoenfelder, both of the Wheatland School, Plainfield, Illinois; and Patricia Skriba of the Christian Primary Educational Center, Downers Grove, Illinois.

**Assessing Reading Behavior: Informal Reading Inventories – An Annotated Bibliography**, may be obtained from the Order Department, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Delaware 19711, U.S.A. at a cost of \$1.50 for IRA individual members and \$2 for others. Also available is a free IRA publications catalog.



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