



POSITION STATEMENT

Children's Rights to Excellent Literacy Instruction

This position statement addresses the International Literacy Association's (ILA) advocacy for the right to excellent literacy instruction for children worldwide, which builds on the 10 principles in ILA's Children's Rights to Read campaign: ensuring that every child, everywhere, has access to the education, opportunities, and resources needed to read.

ILA asserts that literacy—the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context—and access to excellent and equitable literacy instruction are basic human rights. Guaranteeing and protecting these rights means ensuring the following:

- ***Children Have the Right to Knowledgeable and Qualified Literacy Educators:*** Teachers matter more to student achievement than any other school-related factor, but teachers and their students cannot be successful without the supports of other knowledgeable and qualified school personnel, such as principals, reading/literacy specialists, literacy coaches, and literacy coordinators. These professionals must complete high-quality, rigorous, and standards-based preparation programs that provide opportunities to learn foundational knowledge, quality curricula, evidence-based instructional methods, and literacy assessment and evaluation methods. These programs must also prepare teachers to design literacy learning environments, both face-to-face and virtual, that meet the needs of all students. Those needs include being taught by educators who respect, acknowledge, and appreciate the identities of their students and their colleagues—teachers who understand marginalizing forces in schools and have the courage, conviction, and competencies to name, challenge, and dismantle those forces.
- ***Children Have the Right to Integrated Support Systems:*** Student learning depends on the successful alignment of a complex system of stakeholders working cooperatively to strengthen teaching and learning practices and knowledge-building frameworks. Integrated support systems must be inclusive of students, classroom teachers, reading/literacy specialists, school staff, school leaders, families and caregivers, volunteers, and community members.



Researchers, policymakers, and global partners play key roles as well. Learning occurs as a result of overlapping, multifaceted spheres of influence, and when this complexity of education systems is recognized, there is a stronger likelihood that all stakeholders will work as partners toward the same, collective goal.

- ***Children Have the Right to Supportive Learning Environments and High-Quality Resources:*** Accessible learning environments that provide opportunity for robust, literacy-rich experiences, interactivity, and exploration of thought should be inclusive of teachers, students, families, and communities. Educators must not only acknowledge social and cultural identities at local and global levels but also audit their resources and practice to ensure they are bias free, culturally responsive, and student centered. Literacy and learning resources can take the form of text, audio, video, and interactive technologies—all of which need to be current, relevant, and in good condition. Access to print, digital, audio, and visual resources should encompass high-quality and representative children’s literature as well. Physical and virtual learning spaces of the classroom must be prioritized to achieve a truly supportive environment.
- ***Children Have the Right to Policies That Ensure Equitable Literacy Instruction:*** Nonacademic barriers to education, such as those that come in the form of poverty, physical health, mental health, and lack of social-emotional competencies, impede a child’s ability to learn. Extra financial and educational supports must be provided to the children and families needing it the most, and it is the responsibility of those who develop and enact policy to address these needs. The same can be said for the needs of teachers, who are leaving the profession at an alarming rate because of poor working conditions and lack of ongoing and sustained professional development. In addition to policies that promote retention of teachers, more effort must be made in terms of recruitment, especially where underrepresented teachers of color are concerned. A more diverse workforce yields significant educational benefits, including but not limited to the quality of both teaching and learning. Policymakers should recognize the professionalism and autonomy of teachers to implement curriculum in well-resourced classrooms. Every child, everywhere, benefits from policies that safeguard not only their welfare but also their educational potential.

Excellent literacy instruction builds a strong foundation for learning and, in turn, equips children to develop their potential, growing into adults who participate fully in their communities and society, enjoying the fullness that continuous learning brings to their lives.

It is our collective responsibility to advocate for, ensure, and protect these rights for every child, everywhere.

International Literacy Association: Children's Rights to Excellent Literacy Instruction Committee

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This position statement is available in PDF form for free download through the International Literacy Association's website: literacyworldwide.org/statements and rightstoread.org/statement.

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About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers, and experts across 146 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught, and evaluated. ILA's *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017* provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather, and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices, and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students, and inform policymakers. ILA publishes *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, and *Reading Research Quarterly*, which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.



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