



## What does the Science of Reading mean for parents?

Reading instruction in Arkansas has made a big shift over the last several years due to growing evidence in the field of cognitive brain research. Educators in our state are now using the Science of Reading to help inform policies, strengthen instruction and utilize assessments to align with what we know about how the brain learns to read. Here are a few ways education has changed and what parents need to know to help their child as they learn to read!

### In the past...



### Now we know...

...if students showed early signs of difficulties in reading instruction, parents might have been advised to take a "wait and see" approach to determine if they would eventually catch up.

... early intervention is a must! The gaps don't close as time goes by, they just get larger. We know three things work to help students close those gaps: phonemic awareness, step-by-step phonics and reading texts that contain the phonics patterns covered in their instruction.

...students were expected to memorize large numbers of high frequency words to help them read leveled texts.

...words are not stored based on how they look, so the use of flash cards for word learning is not encouraged.

...students practiced reading using predictable leveled readers. These follow a pattern which students have memorized. Students use pictures to guess the words they don't know, which doesn't help them become stronger decoders.

...most words can be read if students are familiar with the letters or letter patterns contained in that word. If a student comes to a word that doesn't follow familiar patterns they can focus on the decodable parts and memorize the part that is irregular.

...parents and teachers thought students would learn to read simply by reading to the student or by providing literature rich environments.

... that while reading to your child has many beneficial outcomes, decoding is not one of them. Learning to speak is natural, learning to read is not. Students must be taught to decode the words on the page and then, how to understand what is being read.

...spelling lists were created many different ways. Word lists may have contained words from science or social studies lessons, monthly theme words, or words at random.

... lists should contain words that follow consistent phonics rules and patterns. For example, when students are studying the v\_e syllable pattern, a good spelling list would contain lots of words such as:  
like, bake, rope, and cube.

... it was thought there were many different ways to teach a child to read.

... all children learn to read the same way. Students build pathways in the brain that connect speech sounds to print and are able to understand the meaning of words.

