

# Position Statement

## Approaches to Reading Instruction Supported by Learning Difficulties Australia

Learning Difficulties Australia (LDA) supports approaches to reading instruction that adopt an explicit structured approach to the teaching of reading and are consistent with the scientific evidence as to how children learn to read and how best to teach them. This approach is important for all children, but it is particularly important for children who have difficulty in learning to read.

Programs that follow an explicit structured approach to the teaching of reading include as an integral part of the teaching program specific instruction in phonology (phonological and phonemic awareness), sound-symbol associations (letter-sound correspondences), as well as syllable structures, morphology, syntax and semantics (the structure, use and meaning of words) as a basis for developing accurate and fluent reading and reading comprehension. Such programs conform to the definition of 'structured literacy programs' as adopted by the International Dyslexia Association in July 2014, and place emphasis on the importance of learning the alphabetic code and the twin processes of blending and segmenting as the basis of learning to read. They do **not** include programs that follow a whole language or 'balanced literacy' approach, which place emphasis on the three cueing system and guessing from context as acceptable strategies for identifying words.

Examples of programs that follow an explicit structured approach to the teaching of reading include but are not limited to programs such as those outlined in the [Primary Reading Pledge](#). Examples of programs that follow a whole language or 'balanced literacy' approach include but are not limited to programs such as Reading Recovery and the literacy approaches developed by Fountas and Pinnell, including Levelled Literacy Intervention and Guided Reading. LDA does **not** support or endorse programs that place emphasis on the exercise or training of underlying brain processes including working memory as the basis for improving reading or other academic skills. Such programs include Brain Gym, Fast ForWord, CogMed and the Arrowsmith program.

You can find a more detailed overview of the knowledge required by teachers for effective teaching of reading on the LDA website.