

## President's Message

Welcome to a new year full of excitement and opportunities!

In Florida, we are leading the way to literacy. We continue to show growth in the area of reading. As reported by the NAEP reading scores, Florida leads the way in closing the achievement gap and general reading increases.

*Congratulations* on the accomplishments that we have achieved in the area of reading. This is due to the dedication of each individual teacher, the culmination of effort of all Florida educators, as well as the contribution and commitment of all FRA members. We should be proud of the work we have done. Florida educators are determined and dedicated to providing lifelong opportunity to our students. We have a new opportunity this year in that we begin to roll in the Common Core State Standards and make our students adept at handling texts of higher complexity levels; however, we also need to continue to support our students in their reading development in order to attain those goals.

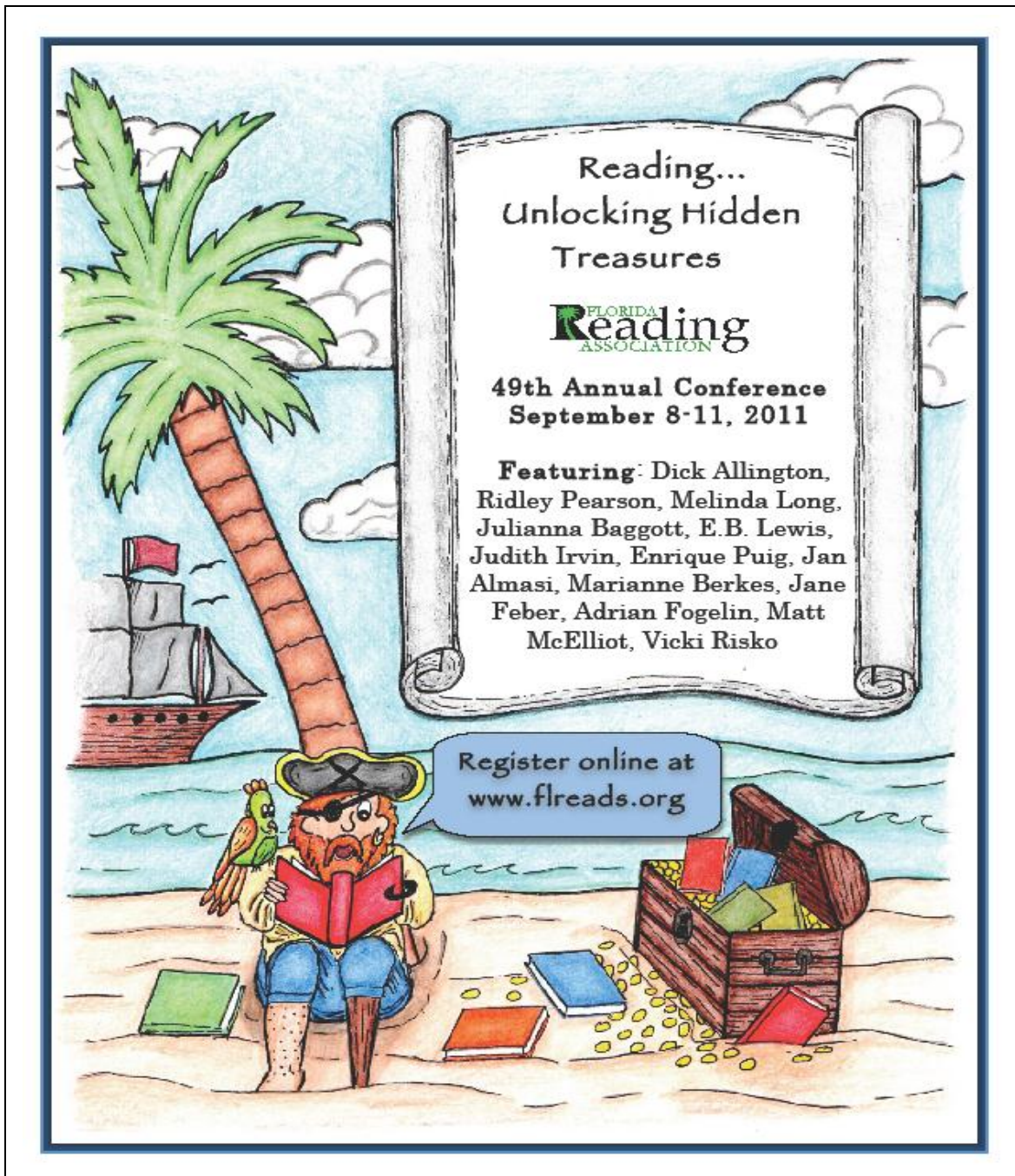
FRA promotes this through providing quality professional development opportunities and publications. Although we have been successful in the work we do with children across the state, it is very important that at this time our organization takes the opportunity to make the public and the legislature aware of our significance to the state. We also need to emphasize the importance of providing the necessary support that our children, parents, and communities have not only earned but are entitled to.

One way that FRA members can contribute to doing this is by recognizing the great work of those around us. We all have worked hard and have made personal sacrifices to meet the educational needs of our students. FRA currently offers over a dozen different awards, grants, or recognitions to honor the accomplishments of individuals and our local organizations. Please contribute to the recognition of Florida educators by nominating someone for or applying for these awards. Another way that we can seize these opportunities is by supporting one another through participation in our annual conference, other events that will take place throughout the year, and various projects.

It is both a privilege and an honor to serve as FRA's president for the 2011-2012 year, and I am grateful for this awesome opportunity.

We look forward to collaborating with you in Orlando at our conference September 8-11. Please do not let this opportunity pass.

Sincerely,  
*Maria Callis*



**Registration** for the Florida Reading Association (FRA) conference is now open! The registration form may be downloaded or registration may take place online at [www.flreads.org](http://www.flreads.org). The conference will be held from September 8-11, 2011 at the Shingle Creek Resort in Orlando. The conference will feature excellent speakers and authors this year, including: Dick Allington, Vicki Risko, Ridley Pearson, Melinda Long, Julianna Baggott, E.B. Lewis, Judith Irvin, Enrique Puig, Jan Almasi, Marianne Berkes, Jane Feber, Adrian Fogelin, Matt McElligott, Jan Hasbrouck, Elfrieda Hiebert, Jan Godown Annino, and Katie Garner.

**In addition** to a special luncheon with the authors on Friday and Saturday, September 9th-10th, there are also 11 exciting pre-conference institutes participants may attend. A Breakfast with the Authors will also be available on Saturday, September 10th. Register as an 'early bird' on or before August 22 for the best rates. We hope to see you in Orlando!



## **Part-Time Employment Available- Great learning opportunity!**

We are looking for Teachers, Graduate Students in Education or Psychology, and other interested individuals to work on a large scale assessment grant.

Testers are needed to participate with the  
**Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR)**  
on an exciting assessment project.

### **Where?**

- Orange County Public Schools

### **What?**

- Part-time testers are needed to help collect data on 500 students per grade in PreK, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11.
- Training for selected testers will take place in October, 2011 in the Orlando area.

### **When?**

- Late October through early December, 2011
  - Home for the weekends and holidays (and for evening classes)
  - Possibility of testing in January

### **How much?**

- \$12-\$15 per hour for graduate students.

*This is a tremendous professional opportunity for graduate students who anticipate pursuing a career in the educational field.*

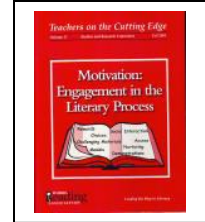
*If interested, please contact Denise Bishop via email at [dbishop@fcrr.org](mailto:dbishop@fcrr.org) or by telephone at (850) 645-2479.*

**COMMITTEE NEWS**

**Studies and Research Committee**

**Enrique Puig & Joyce Warner – chairs**

The Studies and Research Committee is currently working on articles for the next edition of *Teachers on the Cutting Edge*. Anyone wishing to submit an article summary for this edition can contact Joyce Warner at [jwarner@barry.edu](mailto:jwarner@barry.edu) for more information and a copy of the template used for *Teachers on the Cutting Edge*. Reading professors are invited to involve their students in this writing process by including this as an assignment in the class syllabus.



**Membership Committee:**



**Deann Nelson, chair**

It's time to renew your FRA membership for 2011-2012. Log on to [www.flreads.org](http://www.flreads.org) to renew now; or see page 7 for a membership form!

**Children’s Book Award**

**Roberta Mann & Jodi Vizzi, Co-chairs**

We are very excited to announce the results of the 2010-2011 Children’s Book Award voting:

<p><b>The winner for the 2010-2011 Children’s Book Award is:</b> <i>Dewey There’s a Cat in the Library!</i> by Vicki Myron and Bret Witter</p>	
<p>Honor Titles are: <i>The Three Little Gators</i> by Helen Ketteman</p>	
<p>And <i>Trouble Gum</i> by Matthew Cordell</p>	

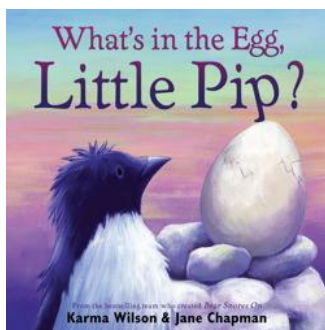
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Ideas for implementing the Children's Book Award program are found on the Children's Book Award web site under Implementation Ideas.

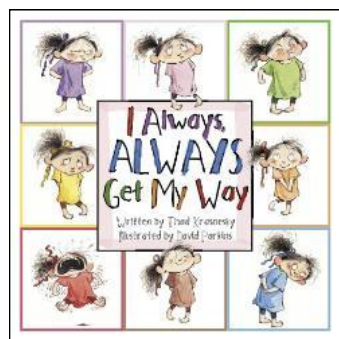
The labels to mark these books as the winners are available for printing from the Children's Book Award web site under the Labels & Stickers section. <http://www.flreads.org> > Children's Book Award

The Children's Book Award program is open to all kindergarten, first and second grade students in the state of Florida. Voting is open until April 15. Student votes may be submitted by a teacher or librarian after the students have heard or read at least 5 of the books. To submit your votes, go to the Children's Book Award web site then Vote on a Book.

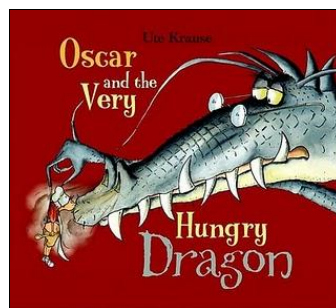
The titles for the 2011-2012 school year are:



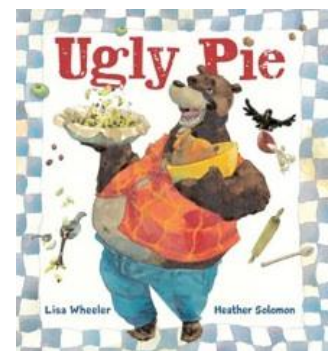
*What's in the Egg Little Pip?*  
By: Karma Wilson



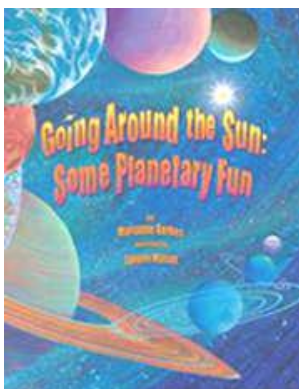
*I Always, Always Get My Way*  
By: Thad Krasnesky



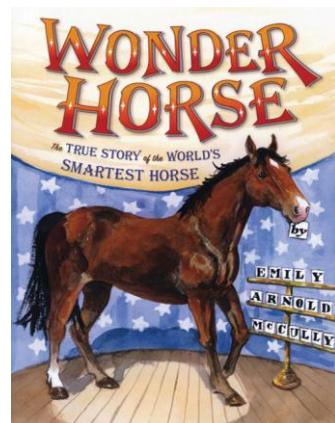
*Oscar and the Very Hungry Dragon*  
By: Ute Krause



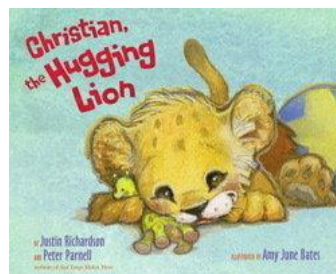
*Ugly Pie*  
By: Lisa Wheeler



*Going Around the Sun:  
Some Planetary Fun*



*Wonder Horse*  
By: Emily Arnold McCully



*Christian, the Hugging Lion*  
By: Justin Richardson  
and Peter Parnell



*Green Tree Frogs  
Colorful Hiders*  
By: Natalie Lunis

Activities for these books can be found at the Children's Book Award Web Site: <http://www.flreads.org> > Children's Book Award > Extension Activities

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us!

Roberta Mann [rmann45@comcast.net](mailto:rmann45@comcast.net) and Jodi Vizzi [jodi.vizzi@sdhc.k12.fl.us](mailto:jodi.vizzi@sdhc.k12.fl.us)  
Co-Chairs/North Florida and South Florida  
FRA Children's Book Award

Dear Dr. Maier:

We Love the FRA Book Award program so much at our school, that I wanted to share my feelings about it in a possible article for the newsletter.

Each year the literacy and community of an Oprah's book club and the voting excitement of American Idol come alive in our Media Center. It's all because of the eight books chosen each year by the Florida Reading Association and shared with all students at our school in grades kindergarten through second grade.

Thanks to our PTO we use book fair vouchers to purchase five copies of each title. Through the years these Florida Reading Association award books quickly become some of the most widely circulated of our media center books. This is because they are quality children's literature, both fiction and nonfiction, with universal appeal.

Who cannot resist the story of a little cat dropped in the book return of the library in Spencer, Iowa, on a cold winter's night? Or the tale of three little gators in an east Texas swamp who build their houses to try to stay safe from the big-bottomed boar? Or the story of a gum-chewing pig who gets into trouble for blowing big, sticky bubbles?

Students love the books because they are fun and engaging. As the media specialist, I love the books because I can see students' reading motivation and comprehension increase as they read these books over and over just for the fun of it. I also love these books because they lend themselves to wonderful interdisciplinary units of study.

For example, after reading Art from Her Heart, we studied the life of Clementine Hunter, a folk artist from Louisiana. We used technology to take a trip to her cabin through Discovery Learning. Using Google Earth we located Louisiana. We used the National Gallery of Art Brushter program to paint our own "close to our heart" pictures. We reenacted scenes from her life by using broken crayons to draw by lantern light. We then hung our pictures on a clothesline for an art show - just like Clementine. We had a Vocabulary Museum where realia such as bolls of cotton, pecans in the shell, a cane pole, and a black iron skillet were labeled and available for students to see and touch.

At the end of each school year, students gather at the hallway bulletin board to look at the spreadsheet of how each class voted. I hear conversations about their favorites as students look at the bookcovers of each of the beloved books that we have shared as a community of readers. It is then that I realize what a great learning experience the FRA award program is. It is just as they say in one of the book nominees, Butterflies in my Stomach, we were truly "lost in the book."

Thank you, Florida Reading Association, for sponsoring this program!

Meredeth Legg  
Media Specialist  
Cooper City Elementary  
Cooper City, Florida

Join or renew today!



FRA Membership
P.O. Box 151555
Cape Coral, FL 33915
www.FLReads.org

Check Appropriate Box: [ ] New Member [ ] Renewal
Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_
(Required to receive electronic journals and newsletter)

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

School or Organization \_\_\_\_\_

- Occupation: [ ] Elementary Teacher (PreK-5) [ ] Secondary Teacher (6-12)
[ ] District/School Administrator [ ] College/University Instructor
[ ] Retired Educator [ ] Full Time College Student
[ ] Consultant/Representative [ ] Other \_\_\_\_\_

I am a current member of: [ ] International Reading Association (IRA)
[ ] Local Reading Council \_\_\_\_\_

Referred for membership by a current FRA member? If so, please list both

Member's name \_\_\_\_\_ Member # \_\_\_\_\_

The membership year is from July 1 through June 30. Membership applications received after March 1 will become effective immediately and extend through June 30 of the following year.

- Membership Type: [ ] Regular with electronic Florida Reading Journal (FRJ) \$30.00
[ ] Regular with print FRJ \$60.00
[ ] Retired with electronic FRJ \$20.00
[ ] Retired with print FRJ \$50.00

[ ] Full Time Student with electronic FRJ \$20.00
[ ] Full time Student with print FRJ \$50.00
Faculty Sponsor's Signature (Required) College/University

Make checks payable to: FRA

[ ] VISA [ ] MasterCard [ ] American Express Expiration Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ (month / year)

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## *Regional Coordinators*

The previous title of *District Director* has been replaced with the new, more comprehensive title of *Regional Coordinator*. The new title is reflective of the more encompassing responsibility of these individuals to act as the FRA liaison to specific geographical areas of Florida.

Local Reading Councils enhance the IRA/FRA experience by providing:

**Connection.** Joining a diverse group of professionals who share a passion for literacy, instruction, and student achievement, can expand professional relations and transform formal and informal learning opportunities.

**Leadership outside classroom walls.** Teaching can be an isolation career, but volunteer-led professional organization develop and grow leadership skills that can be applied to a variety of areas.

**Community building for a literate future.** Councils engage whole communities in literacy awareness campaigns through recognition programs, community service, and special projects.

For the Regional Coordinator for your specific area, you may directly contact any local council or access them through [www.FLReads.org](http://www.FLReads.org). Click on FRA Organizations, and then click on Local Councils and Associations. Alternately, contact the IRA Coordinator Ellen Supran at: [esupran@aol.com](mailto:esupran@aol.com).



### *Regional Highlights:*

#### **Region 5: Denise Pedro, Coordinator**

- **Duval County:** [duvalreadingcouncil.org](http://duvalreadingcouncil.org)

Duval County Reading Council ended their academic year with two dynamic presenters:

**Vincent Taylor** is a nationally acclaimed educational consultant and author of numerous publications. He is most well known for *Cornbread*, a multicultural children's book series. Mr. Taylor discussed and demonstrated creative and fun ways to engage students during academic instruction.

**Jane Wood** presented at Duval County's Installation Dinner. A juvenile fiction author, Ms. Wood captures the imagination of young readers ages 9-14 through stories rich with mystery, adventure, and humor. Ms. Wood weaves the history and the environment of her settings into her storylines, making her books educational, as well as fun.

(continued)



The members of this council participated in a district-wide program called “Superintendent’s Star Reader Book Club”. Duval County Reading Council members volunteered their services for this project. This day of entertainment and activities was held to encourage students to meet or exceed the Superintendent’s goal of twenty-five books. The celebration was designed for all ages to enjoy. The entire family was treated to an “extra special day” full of prizes and storytellers.

Duval County Reading Council has begun to make plans for the 2011-2012 academic year. The speaker for their September meeting will be Mary Ellen Vogt.

This county is redesigning their website. We look forward to seeing their new design.

- For information on Baker, Nassau, and St. Johns Counties, please contact Denise Pedro: [pedrod@duvalschools.org](mailto:pedrod@duvalschools.org)

### **Region 10: Ruth Sylvester, Coordinator**

- **Polk County Reading Council**



On May 26, Dr. Richard Marshall of University of South Florida Polytechnic, presented on the topic of reading and the brain, a continuation of his presentation from the previous year. Members of the board served chicken salad sandwiches and fresh fruit. The highlight was the *Candy Bar* where attendees filled small bags with an assortment of candy.

The board took a hiatus for the summer and will convene their planning on August 9. They have plans to kick off the year with a Make and Take Workshop featuring FRA’s Children’s Book Nominees. In January, National Geographic will sponsor an event featuring Dr. Malcolm Butler from USF who has conducted extensive research on the journals of renowned scientist, physicians, engineers, and historians.

Polk County Reading Council is delighted to have Dr. Rita Meadows on board to represent their council at FRA meetings.





## Morgridge International Reading Center

Where people and ideas come together

College of Education  
University of Central Florida

***The grand opening of the Morgridge International Reading Center will be September 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM. As part of the grand opening Tim Rasinski will be there giving a lecture from 11:00 to noon and Vicki Risko (IRA President) will also be attending.***

Reading is the foundation of learning. The University of Central Florida was honored with a significant major gift from the Morgridge Family Foundation to establish the Morgridge International Reading Center at the university's College of Education. The gift, made by John and Carrie Morgridge and the Morgridge Family Foundation, supported construction of the facility and the establishment of a professional learning environment that will be home to a collective international effort to enhance literacy acquisition and instruction PK-20.

The Morgridge International Reading Center is a dynamic complex for the free exchange of ideas and information to improve literacy acquisition and instruction. Our main goal is to advance literacy through communication, collaboration, learning, and research. The Center will serve as a repository of materials and have extended functions including:

- Professional learning opportunities for educators to learn the most successful instructional practices in teaching children to read
- Showcase for authors
- Resource for educators to connect appropriate instructional practices and the learning environment
- Setting for meetings of literacy stakeholders serving the global community.

The Morgridge International Reading Center will be responsible for coordinating national and global efforts to enhance literacy acquisition and instruction. The Center will facilitate collaboration among authors, practitioner and research scholars, leading to the implementation of action-based programs formulated on evidence-based research, and focused on teaching all students to read well. Through research, the Center will establish linkage between theory and practice, creating a synergy that will unfold worldwide in school learning environments.

The Morgridge International Reading Center will provide the following:

- Scientific and educational information based on research
- A comprehensive collection of reading initiatives from around the world
- A communication hub for stakeholders committed to reading excellence
- Assembling and disseminating research conducted by top institutes, such as the National Institutes of Health, Center for Improvement of Early Achievement, Florida State University, Florida Institute of Education, Florida Center for Reading Research, and UCF reading projects
- A showcase for authors of books for children and young adults
- A center for professional learning.

The Morgridge International Reading Center will serve as a hub for communicating, collaborating, learning, and researching efforts to improve international literacy acquisition and instruction.

For more information, please visit our website: [mirc.ucf.edu](http://mirc.ucf.edu)

Morgridge International Reading Center • PO Box 161250 • Orlando, FL 32816-1250  
(407) 882-MIRC • [mirc@ucf.edu](mailto:mirc@ucf.edu) • [www.education.ucf.edu/mirc](http://www.education.ucf.edu/mirc)

## ***EMERGENT / EARLY LITERACY***

Greetings, and best wishes to all of you for a great school year. While researching for this issue's column, I wanted to provide some information on young children and school readiness. While consulting the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), I came across their position paper on this topic...and so with all credit to the NAEYC, I will share some of that position paper with you:

### **What Is School Readiness?**

School readiness involves more than just children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. Children are not innately "ready" or "not ready" for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school.

(Maxwell & Clifford 2004, 42)

### **School readiness must be flexibly and broadly defined**

- **Young children develop in different ways and at different rates.** Readiness does not happen at the same time or in the same way for all children. For example, one child may develop language skills rapidly while being slower to gain social competence. Definitions of readiness must consider these variations.
- **All areas of children's development and learning must be included in definitions of readiness.** Readiness is more than basic knowledge of language and math, important as these are. Readiness expectations should include all areas: physical, cognitive, social, and emotional competence as well as positive attitudes toward learning.
- **The concept of readiness includes much more than children's readiness.** As defined by the National Education Goals Panel, the School Readiness Indicators Initiative, and others, *readiness* includes ready children, ready families, ready communities, ready early care and education, and ready schools. All are necessary so that all children will experience success.

### **Kindergarten entry should be based on age, not on mastery of skills**

- **Children are ready to enter kindergarten when they reach the legal chronological age of entry.** The use of readiness tests to exclude children from school or to make other high-stakes decisions is indefensible.
- **Raising the legal entry age or voluntarily holding children back from kindergarten will not ensure that more children are ready for kindergarten.** Little evidence exists that older children are more successful in kindergarten. Raising the entry age also leaves many children with no access to high quality early education in the year before kindergarten. Hoping to promote kindergarten readiness, families may decide to hold a child out of school for a year; in general, holding children out of school has not been found to predict better social or academic outcomes.

### **Schools must be ready to help children learn**

- **A school is ready if the curriculum in kindergarten and the early grades builds on prior learning.**

In early childhood and beyond, skills are most effectively learned and practiced when embedded in meaningful experiences. Even for children who enter school without having mastered specific skills, curriculum should include child-guided as well as teacher-supported activities and should emphasize hands-on, integrated learning.

- **The school must take into account individual differences in language, culture, and prior**

**experience.** Children whose experiences differ from those of the school they enter may be viewed as less ready. Effective kindergarten and primary programs meet children where they are and take extra care to help make meaningful connections with each child's home, culture, and community.

- **Teachers must know how to teach young children and have the resources to do so.**

Ready schools need kindergarten and primary grade teachers who have professional preparation in child development and early education. Class sizes are small enough to meet children's individual learning needs. Classroom equipment and materials support children's active, thoughtful engagement with learning.

### **Making a commitment to readiness for all**

The investment and commitment needed to ensure that every child enters school ready to succeed and that schools are effective in educating every child will not be small. But it is essential. We must provide every child with the firm foundation so critical to learning in school and we must ensure that schools are prepared to meet the needs of individual children as they arrive at the school door.

Please take time to also read the NAEYC-IRA joint position statement on Learning to Read and Write. That statement is available for download at: [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org) or [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)

Best wishes;

*heidi*

Heidi Maier, Ed.D.  
Associate Professor  
College of Central Florida  
*Editor, FRA Newsletter*

Leading the Way to Literacy



NEWSLETTER

AN AFFILIATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION... VOLUME XXXII, NO. 1      SUMMER 2011  
 Articles for the **next** *FRA Newsletter* should be sent to the newsletter editor:

Heidi Maier, Ed.D  
 College of Central Florida, Teacher Education

E-mail: [heidimaier@earthlink.net](mailto:heidimaier@earthlink.net)

**NOTE: E-mailing articles allows the editor to cut and paste your information directly into the *FRA Newsletter*.**

***FRA Newsletter***

Published by the Florida Reading Association, an affiliate of the International Reading Association

**Deadlines for Upcoming Newsletter Issues:**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Fall: October/November	October 1
Winter: January/February	January 3
Spring: April/May	April 1
Summer: August	July 1

Florida Reading Association’s Fall Conference, 2011



*“Unlocking Hidden Treasures”*

More information for the 2011 Conference  
 Check <http://www.flreads.org/Annual%20Conference/annual.htm> for details