

Evidence-Based Reading Research and *Phonics Pathways*

1997 – Reading First Initiative

In 1997 Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the National Institutes of Health, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a National Reading Panel to assess the effectiveness of various approaches used to teach children to read. This extensive research was conducted by experts at major universities nationwide, and included brain imaging studies.

The results from the National Reading Panel were the basis for its 2000 report, “Teaching Children to Read,” and used to craft “Reading First,” the initiative that was part of “No Child Left Behind.”

2010 – Common Core State Standards

In 2010 the Common Core State Standards Initiative was formed, a new state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). These standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and other school and community experts. States voluntarily opt-in, individually.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative standards are designed to provide teachers and parents with a common understanding of what students are expected to learn. Consistent content and skills standards will provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live.



The specific reading skills recommended in each one of these two reports are the same, but described differently. For example, what is called “explicit phonics” in one report is called “grapheme-phoneme relationships” in the other, and what is called “spelling rules” in one is called “syllable chunking” in the other. This means that if a reading program is found to be in alignment with one report it will also fulfill the requirements of the other report.

The content and skills in *Phonics Pathways* were analyzed for the mandates of the National Reading Panel and were found to be in complete alignment with all of the requirements in its 2000 report *Reading First*. Therefore, it will also meet the benchmarks of the Common Core State Standards.

Some states are adopting the Common Core State Standards through their state boards of education, while others are adopting them through their state legislators. Ultimately, a teacher’s professional judgement is key to making an appropriate standards alignment based upon their own state’s guidelines.