Technical References

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Chapter 1  ♦  Introduction

This technical manual provides information about the scientifically based research for the development and on the effectiveness of the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program.

This first chapter introduces the technical manual as well as highlights the features of the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program. The second chapter gives pertinent background information about the program’s authors, Ronald Goldman and Martha E. Lynch. Chapter 3 presents the philosophy upon which the Sounds & Symbols program is based. Chapter 4 contains a brief description of the program manual and a list of components. The fifth chapter presents a historical perspective, detailing the initial development and research involving the program. Chapter 6 contains an annotated bibliography of some of the Sounds & Symbols research and reviews. And finally, long-time and current believers in the program have their say in Chapter 7, which is comprised of testimonials and “success stories” concerning the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program.

The Sounds & Symbols program was created for speech-language pathologists and classroom teachers working independently or collaboratively on early reading development, remedial reading, or articulation therapy.

The program emphasizes phonics training and phonemic awareness as students learn the sounds and symbols of a slightly modified alphabet. Children are taught to:

◆ discriminate speech sounds
◆ determine sound positions (initial, medial, final)
◆ segment or sound out syllables and words
◆ delete and substitute sounds in syllables and words
◆ blend sounds and symbols into words and sentences

See the Sound Sheet on the inside back cover for a complete list of the sounds and symbols introduced in this program.

The Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program provides an entertaining introduction to reading as well as an engaging vehicle for speech improvement.
Sounds & Symbols is mainly for children from preschool through third grade. It also can be used with older children who have various kinds of reading, speech, or phonemic difficulties. The activities are written for use with groups of children, but you can easily adapt them for working one-on-one.

Because the former editions of the Sounds & Symbols program were proven to be highly effective, the goal of this current revision was to maintain the structure and philosophy of the program and to change and update only where necessary.

The program was created for speech-language pathologists and classroom teachers working independently or collaboratively on early reading development, remedial reading, or articulation therapy.

The program can also be used by paraprofessionals consulting with a specialist in the area of reading or speech as necessary.

The Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program was originally published as the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit, 1971, and High Hat, 1986 (Circle Pines, Minnesota: American Guidance Service, Inc.). Because the former editions were proven to be highly effective, the goal of this current revision was to maintain the structure and philosophy of the program and to change and update only where necessary. Numerous speech-language pathologists and teachers who are great fans and users of the program provided invaluable feedback during this process.

It is anticipated that this latest edition of Sounds & Symbols will continue to be an effective and fun phonemic awareness program that provides an excellent introduction to the written word. It will give students the skills necessary to become proficient readers.
Ronald Goldman, Ph.D., has been highly visible in the profession of speech-language pathology and audiology for over 40 years. As a university professor, he was active as a teacher, clinician, researcher, and administrator. Dr. Goldman earned his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in speech and hearing from the University of Pittsburgh. He later served as a professor at Tulane University, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He was the director of speech-language pathology as well as the training director of a large interdisciplinary training program at the Sparks Center for Developmental and Learning Disorders.

As a scholar, Dr. Goldman has published numerous research articles dealing with auditory processing, articulation, and fluency disorders. He was one of the first to foresee the need for and then develop assessment procedures and remedial programs that could be employed with very young children. His standardized diagnostic tests and training programs are used widely by speech-language pathologists and special educators. In addition to the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program (formerly published as Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit and High Hat), the tests and programs developed by Dr. Goldman include the Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation, Goldman-Fristoe-Woodcock Test of Auditory Discrimination, Goldman-Fristoe-Woodcock Auditory Skills Test Battery, and Listening to the World. The Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation is currently one of the most frequently employed diagnostic procedures used by speech-language pathologists in the United States.

Dr. Goldman has been directly involved with numerous national and state professional associations throughout his career. He served on many committees and boards for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation (ASHF), the Louisiana Speech and Hearing Association (LSHA), and the Speech and Hearing Association of Alabama (SHAA). He was president of the Tennessee Speech and Hearing Association, vice president for planning for ASHA, and president of ASHF. He was also active as an associate editor for such publications as Topics in Language, Exceptional Children, Journal of Childhood Communication Disorders, and Journal of Language Disorders and Rehabilitation. For many years he served on numerous review boards for the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Education, and other federal agencies.

Dr. Goldman has been honored by numerous national and state associations for his clinical, teaching, and research contributions. SHAA presented him with their Distinguished Achievement Award for Outstanding Contributions in the Development of Innovative Clinical Procedures. ASHA awarded him fellowship status and later gave him their highest award, the Honors of the Association, for which the recipient’s achievements must be “of such excellence that they have enhanced or altered the course of our profession” (ASHA bylaws).
Martha E. Lynch, M.S., has been in the profession of speech-language pathology and educational tutoring for 39 years. She earned her B.S. from Middle Tennessee State University and her M.S. from Vanderbilt University. She holds Tennessee certification in elementary education and speech and hearing as well as her Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) through ASHA and is licensed through the state of Tennessee in speech-language pathology.

She has been an instructor at Vanderbilt University and Peabody College. She has served as a speech-language pathologist and educational consultant for Metro Nashville Public Schools as coordinator of the language delay classes and as a speech-language therapist for the orthopedically handicapped children in Metro schools. In addition, she has served as a consultant for Clover Bottom Hospital and School. All of these duties were performed as part of her responsibilities while on the staff of Bill Wilkerson Hearing & Speech Center in Nashville. During Ms. Lynch's 14 years at Bill Wilkerson, she served as a speech clinician, supervisor of the children's language program, research assistant, coordinator of speech pathology, clinical coordinator, and chief speech pathologist. For the past 24 years she has been in private practice in Nashville with Martha E. Lynch and Associates. She has specialized in helping children who are in academic distress as a result of auditory processing problems or language disorders. In addition to doing therapy for these disorders, she tutors the children in their academics, especially with reading and written language. She has had many years of experience working with dyslexic and dysgraphic children and adults in her practice.

Ms. Lynch has published a number of research papers and articles dealing with auditory processing, articulation, and language. She has presented numerous workshops and lectures in Tennessee and throughout the United States. She was co-leader in a workshop on articulation in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada, and was a guest lecturer for a week in the medical school in Medellin, Colombia, South America.

She has co-authored the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program (formerly published as Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit and High Hat) and Listening to the World.

Ms. Lynch has been involved in several national and state professional associations throughout her career. She has been a member of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), the Tennessee Association of Audiologists and Speech/Language Pathologists (TAASLP), the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Communication Disorders for Exceptional Children, the Middle Tennessee Association for Learning Disabilities, the Tennessee Education Association, and the National Education Association. For TAASLP, she has served as secretary and on several committees, chairing many of them. In addition, she has served on the nominating committee for the Communication Disorders for Exceptional Children.

Ms. Lynch is the recipient of the Honors Award and the Distinguished Service Award given by TAASLP and has been recognized for her significant contributions to ASHA. She was recognized for her outstanding clinical achievement by the ASHA Foundation. As a result of her contributions to the speech-language pathologists working in the public schools, a Guest Lecture Series has been established in her honor by the Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center for Otolaryngology and Communication Sciences. This lecture series for the past 10 years has provided an excellent opportunity for additional training for speech-language pathologists working in the public schools.
Chapter 3  Philosophy

The Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program has been developed to:

◆ help children develop skills in language and its graphic or written symbolization
◆ teach children to recognize and produce the sounds in the system by which we communicate

Jeanne Chall concluded that programs that include phonics when teaching reading tend to be superior to those that do not (1983; Roswell & Chall, 1994). Chall’s research suggests that phonics instruction is an essential ingredient in teaching children to read words. Chall also reports that classroom research (Johnson & Baumann, 1984; Pflaum, Walberg, Karegianes, & Rasher, 1980) demonstrates that children who are provided phonics training seem to get off to a better start in learning to read than children who are not exposed to phonics. The greatest advantage seems to be on tests of word identification and tests of story and sentence comprehension, particularly in the earlier grades. Phonics seems to facilitate word identification, a necessary component in comprehension.

Programs that include phonics when teaching reading tend to be superior to those that do not.

Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading (National Academy of Education, Commission on Education and Public Policy, 1985) states that “. . . the purpose of phonics is to teach children the alphabetic principle. The goal is for this to become an operating principle so that young readers consistently use information about the relationship between letters and sounds and letters and meanings to assist in the identification of known words and to independently figure out unfamiliar words . . . The right maxims for phonics are: Do it early. Keep it simple. Except in cases of diagnosed individual need, phonics instruction should have been completed by the end of the second grade.”

The report concludes that whether or not children should be taught phonics is no longer an issue; the issue is how phonics should be taught. This position was reiterated in the Report of the National
Studies have demonstrated that speech-sound awareness, letter knowledge, and phonics are indispensable components of effective early reading instruction.

A major goal of the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program is to demonstrate that there are systematic relationships between letters and sounds. In this program, children learn phonic attack skills and auditory and visual discrimination skills that are necessary for many school activities, particularly reading. Children learn a phonically oriented symbol system that has only one sound for each symbol but that is highly consistent with traditional orthography. The modified symbols help children avoid the confusion created by traditional letters in beginning reading activities.

The modified symbols in the Sounds & Symbols program help children avoid the confusion created by traditional letters in beginning reading activities.

Speech production is still a major emphasis of the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 2001) has taken the position that speech-language pathologists (SLPs) play an integral role in the development of literacy for children. The authors believe that the best way to develop in children an awareness of speech sounds is to confront them with both visual and auditory stimulation (Mellin, 1962; Schoolfield & Timberlake, 1969).

Speech instruction that relies on the auditory channel is relatively abstract and frequently ineffective for young children (McGinnis, 1963; Anderson, 1968). When the auditory channel is used alone, children must learn not only to recognize and produce sounds correctly, but also to place the sounds properly in words and sentences (Stern & Gould, 1965). For example, a child who says tite for kite must learn to articulate the k sound correctly and also to place it at the beginning of the word kite. Thus, the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program relies on both visual and auditory stimuli. Program activities train children to discriminate between the vowel and consonant phonemes presented through both auditory and visual channels. Children learn to produce the phonemes accurately in speech and to recognize the visual symbols. The program then teaches the child an awareness of sound and symbol sequence in larger units of speech—syllables, words, and sentences. Children learn to blend individual sounds into words and to analyze the sounds in syllables and words auditorily and visually.

The Sounds & Symbols program activities train children to discriminate between the vowel and consonant phonemes presented through both auditory and visual channels.
References


Chapter 4 • Program Components

The Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program has several components. The manual, which is the cornerstone of the program, contains 40 lessons. The first lesson introduces High Hat. The next 38 lessons introduce the 38 sounds and the storybook characters that represent them. The last lesson introduces common consonant blends. Each lesson includes:

- main objective(s)
- necessary materials
- teacher-led activities to address objectives
- consonant sound production teaching techniques
- review activities of previously learned sounds

The manual also contains a scope and sequence of the lessons, reinforcement activities, techniques for teaching the production of the vowel sounds, sound practice activities, the philosophy underlying the program, and the musical scores for all the songs.

The Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program also contains the following components:

- **Storybooks**—two full-color storybooks about High Hat and his adventures
- **Character cards**—38 main story characters and 2 views of High Hat
- **Puppets**—two High Hat puppets for use in lesson activities
- **Flash cards**—38 symbol cards and 2 arrow cards
- **CDs**—two CDs of recorded stories; one CD of songs and sound training for teachers
- **Reproducible masters**—for every lesson (both teacher-led and take-home activities)
- **Stamps**—six stamps for stamping students’ work
- **Ring binder with tabs**—for organizing every lesson
- **Zippered canvas bag**—roomy enough to hold the entire kit
Chapter 5 ◆ Development and Research

The initial work on the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit occurred during 1964 and 1965 with the construction of a set of teaching materials (Goldman, Horton, & Neas, 1966). From June 1965 until February 1966, these materials were used with children ranging in age from 3 years 8 months to 5 years 1 month in 1-hour group sessions twice a week. The responses of these children indicated that they were capable of rapidly learning the visual symbols (essentially a modified initial teaching alphabet devised by the authors) and associating them with correlated sounds. It was noted that these children exhibited an increased ability to analyze and synthesize and that they developed greater precision in articulatory production. On the basis of these experiences, the materials were modified to enhance their appeal and usefulness for young children.

In the initial study, children using Sounds & Symbols exhibited an increased ability to analyze and synthesize and developed greater precision in articulatory production.

Results with these children encouraged the authors to consider this type of program for use with children who had problems in articulation. In a pilot investigation (Goldman, 1968), an attempt was made to determine the applicability of this program for 4- and 5-year-old children with articulatory disorders. The previously developed materials were modified and duplicated to make them usable with children with articulation disorders. Then an investigation was carried out to assess the feasibility of these modified materials in treating children who had articulation problems. Twenty-four children were studied; 12 had the experimental approach, and the other 12 had a traditional articulation program (Van Riper, 1963). Prior to the initiation of the experimental and control treatments, the articulatory ability of each subject was carefully assessed. In addition, all subjects were given tests measuring auditory memory, auditory discrimination, and intelligence.

A second study, using a control group and an experimental group (Sounds & Symbols), found that

1) the experimental group had a mean reduction of 25 articulatory errors versus 16 in the control group;

2) the experimental group learned the visual symbols and correlated them with the phonemes faster and more easily; and

3) the experimental group exhibited greater gains in auditory discrimination.
In general, the findings of this study supported the experimental approach as having value in the following respects: (1) A greater degree of improvement, as measured by performance on the Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation, Experimental Edition (1969), was observed in the experimental group. It was found that the children in this group had a mean reduction of approximately 25 articulatory errors, while the children in the control group had a mean reduction of only 16 errors. The difference between the means of the groups was significant at the 5 percent level of confidence. (2) The children in the experimental group learned the visual symbols and related them to their phonemic correlates with great speed and facility. These children were consistent in saying the correct phoneme in word and sentence contexts when they were stimulated by the visual symbols. (3) The children in the experimental group exhibited considerable gains in auditory discrimination.

A third study of this approach was carried out in another project, sponsored by the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In several speech clinics, these materials were tested with 108 children with speech disorders. The previous findings were verified, indicating that a program that relies heavily on the use of a phonic-visual symbol system has value.


Encouraged by these findings, the authors began to consider enlarging the scope of the program. Feedback from various teachers and clinicians led to a complete modification in the phonic alphabet, materials, and lessons to make the program suitable for providing early reading experiences, training in phonics, training in speech improvement, and modification of misarticulation. This revised program was then tested in two preschool programs, two public school settings, and eight speech and hearing centers. A total of 250 children were exposed to an experimental version of the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit.

In a fourth study, children using Sounds & Symbols demonstrated significant improvement in auditory discrimination (50 percent error reduction) and vocal phonic ability (60 percent error reduction). Two groups of kindergarten classes scored on average at approximately the second-grade reading level.

The children in these settings demonstrated significant improvement in auditory discrimination and vocal phonic ability. The children in the study who had speech disorders showed a significant reduction in their misarticulation. In auditory discrimination, these children showed a 50 percent error reduction. In vocal phonics, a 60 percent decrease in errors was obtained. Articulation errors decreased by 50 percent in words and by 55 percent in contextual speech after 6 months of exposure to the experimental version of the program. The articulation data were obtained through the use of the Sounds-in-Words and Sounds-in-Sentences sections of the Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation.

When the program was used with children with normal speech, teachers reported an increase in phonemic awareness. Some of the children entering first grade were reported to have found reading experiences much easier and to be performing at high levels in vocal phonics and reading.
Children at the preschool level who had this program were given the California Reading Test, Lower Primary, Form W (Tiegs & Clark, 1957) following the program. Two groups of kindergarten classes, 40 children in all, scored on the average at approximately the second-grade reading level. The highest achievement occurred generally in word recognition, a subtest in which the child must exhibit phonic attack skills.

Lamphear and Berryman (1974) reported a study in which they investigated the effects of the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit on reading skills of African-American children. They indicated that the group receiving this experimental procedure scored significantly higher as measured by the California Achievement Test (CAT) than those children in the control group did. They indicated that these results supported previous findings that speech-improvement training is effective in improving reading skills.

In a study examining the effects of the Sounds & Symbols program on the reading skills of African-American children, the experimental group (Sounds & Symbols) scored considerably higher on the CAT than the control group did.

Siler (1977) designed a study to determine whether a language-stimulation program, using the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit, would be more effective with children demonstrating language delay or with children having both language delay and articulation disorder. The results of this investigation indicated that the program was an effective therapeutic approach to enhance receptive and expressive language. Additionally, the program was effective in correcting articulation errors. This was evidenced by a reduction in the number of misarticulated sounds from 39 to 15 as a result of the program. Goldman and Lynch (1972) also reported a similar outcome when they presented an approach for modifying articulation disorders using the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit. It was noted that the program was intended not only as an early phonics training program and introduction, but also as a valuable tool for speech-language pathologists and teachers dealing with speech-improvement activities. They reported the value of such a procedure for helping children produce speech sounds accurately, recognize the visual symbols for these sounds, and understand the use of language sounds in their various relationships in words, sentences, and contextual speech.

Richards (1995) designed a study to determine if early reading ability could be improved in young children by adding phonemic awareness to a whole-language curriculum. Participants in the study were 29 rural Tennessee students in a transition first grade between kindergarten and first grade. The control group received no additional phonemic training beyond a pure whole-language approach. The treatment group received training with the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit twice a week for 30 minutes each time. The Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation (GFTA), Sawyer's Test of Awareness of Language Segments (TALS), the Slosson Oral Reading Test
In a 1995 study using a control group (whole language only) and a treatment group (Sounds & Symbols plus whole language), the treatment group scored considerably higher and showed greater gains at the end of the study.

The original Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit helped children to develop their phonemic awareness skills, provided them with an introduction to reading experiences, and offered training in speech-sound production and improvement. The current Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program is based on the same philosophy and retains basically the same lesson activities as its predecessor; the program has been updated to achieve better gender and ethnicity balance in the characters and to modernize the stories. The Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program continues to provide an excellent introduction to the readiness skills so necessary in the development of literacy in all children.

## References


Sawyer, D. J. (1987). Test of Awareness of Language Segments. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.


Chapter 6 ◆ Completed Research and Reviews

This chapter contains abstracts of research studies and reviews of the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit (predecessor to the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program). These abstracts are listed on the AGS Web site, and copies of several of the studies are available from AGS.


The purpose of this study was to determine the reason why a large quantity of students in the speech therapy program at Green Park Elementary School in the Jefferson Parish public school system in Alabama were on the Honor Roll. It was discovered that 73 percent of the students participating in the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit program achieved at least a 3.0 grade point average and 18 percent had at least a 3.5 average. The report established a direct relationship between the number of Sounds & Symbols lessons completed and probability for academic success for the students. An increase in student self-esteem because of the lessons was also noted.


The authors explain the rationale behind the design of the original Sounds & Symbols Development Kit. The program links visual stimulation to auditory stimulation for better learning of phonemes. In addition, the program teaches students both phonic attack skills and auditory and visual discrimination skills that are necessary for many school activities, especially reading.


The purpose of this report was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit for Australian schools. Thirteen experienced teachers and 30 pre-service students reviewed the program. An additional 120 pre-service students participated in inspection and discussion of the kit. Users of the program were enthusiastic about results obtained. The report commends the comprehensive teacher manual and lesson plans. Ultimately, the kit was recommended for use by Australian schools.


The purpose of this study was to determine if use of the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit would positively affect the reading ability of a group of first- and second-grade African-American children. The study focused on 225 students from two predominantly African-American elementary schools in Georgia. The experimental group consisted of 124 students (62 males and 62 females) comprising one class of first-graders and three classes of second-graders. The control group consisted of 101 students (45 males and 56 females) comprising two classes of second-graders. The experimental classrooms were administered the Sounds & Symbols lessons as regularly as possible. The CAT (Lower Primary, Form W, Reading) was administered as the post-test. The data showed that the experimental classrooms did...
significantly better on the CAT than the controls. Analysis of the means for all but one CAT reading score yielded differences significant beyond the .05 probability level. The use of the classroom teacher as the prime training agent appeared to be a strength of the study.


This newspaper article profiles Mrs. Doris Lewis and her class of 22 first-graders, most of whom began the school year not being able to utter a complete sentence. Using the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols program has accelerated her class with language problems into skills Mrs. Lewis says are comparable to those of some third-graders with no diagnosed speech difficulties.


The purpose of this study was to determine if early reading ability could be improved in young children by adding phonemic awareness to a whole-language curriculum. Participants in the study were 29 rural Tennessee students in a transition first grade between kindergarten and first grade. The students were divided more or less evenly between two classrooms. The control group received no additional phonemic training beyond a pure whole-language approach. The treatment group received training with the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit twice a week for 30 minutes each time. The GFTA, SORT, TALS, and LAC were used as pretests and post-tests to measure improvement. The treatment group scored considerably higher at the end of the experiment.


The purpose of this study was to determine whether the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit program would be more effective with children diagnosed with only language delay or with children diagnosed with language delay and defective articulation. Seven students aged 6 to 8 from Dupont Elementary in Chattanooga, Tennessee, participated. Four were classified as delayed language students, and three had delayed language as well as mild to severe articulation problems. The following tests were used as pretests and post-tests to measure progress: Goldman-Fristoe Test of Articulation, Utah Test of Language Development, Northwestern Syntax Screening Test, Goldman-Fristoe-Woodcock Test of Auditory Discrimination, Grammatic Closure subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities. The students received 7 weeks of training with Sounds & Symbols three times a week for 45 minutes. Significant language growth occurred in both groups of students. The children who had both delayed language and articulation disorders made significantly larger gains. The number of misarticulated sounds on the GFTA was decreased by half for that group. Grammatic closure was tested, and no significant gains were made. However, gains on the Utah Test of Language Development were impressive, with most students gaining nearly a year’s worth of language development in 7 weeks.


In this resource book, Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit is listed and described as a “widely used” program for children with spoken language difficulties.
Chapter 7 • Success Stories

While Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the scientifically based research involving the Sounds & Symbols program over the years, this chapter presents another type of program validation—the stories and testimonials from the professionals who have been using the program successfully for many years. The following are representative of the many letters in AGS files from speech-language pathologists, kindergarten teachers, special educators, reading teachers, etc., commending the Sounds & Symbols program because of its effectiveness.

From a Special Education Teacher . . .

Success is sometimes in the eye of the beholder, and sometimes it is just plain fact. I am a special education teacher, and I take great pleasure in small steps made by some children during their academic careers.

At this point in time, I have two very low students who have had traumatic lives. Neither of them is very interested in learning, and they don’t quite see the importance or significance of learning to read. In fact, one student in particular found it absolutely amusing to see how little he could learn on any given day.

Recently my district ordered the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program, and it looked like fun. Fortunately, I wasn’t the only one who thought so! The first day I used it, my students walked out the door to go back to class singing, “High Hat, High Hat, that’s my name!” It was an instant hit, and I knew I had them hooked!

They have made great progress in the last few weeks. They are beginning to read simple CV words without any fighting or stalling on their parts. They beg to hear certain songs, so I use them as “treats” for when their work is done well on any given day. But the best part of this program is that the children are learning and having fun at the same time. They don’t realize that they are learning; they just are!

Thank you for your program. You have made a world of difference for me and for my students!

Zoë S. LeCours
Special Education Teacher
Ferguson Elementary School
Klamath Falls, Oregon
From a Speech-Language Pathologist . . .

I am a speech-language pathologist at a public school in Minneapolis. Several years ago I was assigned to do preps for a new half-day High Five Program for children who just missed the kindergarten cutoff and would be 5 years old before January 1. I was able to develop my own curriculum, and I chose High Hat to be a part of it. Two classes of 18 children received High Hat instruction approximately three times per week for 20- to 25-minute sessions. I incorporated a writing program with each new letter so that, by the end of the year, our pre-kindergarten students were not only reading early reader books, but many were writing paragraphs using High Hat spelling! The children loved the characters and stories, and the interactive lessons were fun and held their interest. The results amazed teachers, parents, visitors, everyone. I worked in that assignment for two years. Four classes of children reaped the benefits of your program.

When I returned to my original school full time the next year, I wanted our kindergarten students to have the High Hat experience, too. Upon entering kindergarten, our students always scored near the bottom of Minneapolis tests of reading skills. I approached our principal at the beginning of the year with an offer. If she would let me pilot the High Hat program with a willing kindergarten teacher, I would promise improved reading scores. She approved the plan, and I collaborated with a young teacher from among our six kindergarten classrooms. I offered to come into her classroom every day for 25 minutes and teach High Hat. She agreed to observe the lessons and continue the program, if she liked the results, for the remainder of the year.

I began the lessons the first week of school. By October, another experienced teacher who had been noticing our activity asked if her classroom could be next. In November, our principal stopped in to see how the program was working. She was totally amazed and immediately wanted to adopt High Hat as our kindergarten reading program. I began gathering as many kits as I could from throughout the district and started High Hat in two more classrooms. By the end of the first year, half of our teachers were using the High Hat program. The next year we added three more classrooms. At the beginning of that year, district test results showed that our incoming kindergarten students had had the lowest reading scores in the district. By the end of the year, thanks to High Hat, our kindergarten classes had outscored all of the other schools!

This year all six of our kindergarten teachers are using the new Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program. Our teachers have developed lots of activities around the High Hat theme for students to use at stations. We are beginning to incorporate writing programs, too. Everyone is very enthusiastic about the program. First-grade teachers are delighted in the skill level of students entering their grade. They asked for kits, too, so they could review lessons for students who needed more exposure to phonemic awareness activities.

Valerie Sandler
Speech-Language Pathologist
Minneapolis, Minnesota

From a Preschool Director . . .

I’ve been hanging out with High Hat for over 25 years. As a speech therapist in Lennox School District in 1972, I introduced the Sounds & Symbols program to the primary teachers. I did the program in their classrooms so they could observe its implementation. Phonics began to have meaning to the many nonreaders with whom I worked. Rather than just relying on their memory to identify symbols, they could remember the name of High Hat’s friend and listen for the beginning sound. I had fifth-graders willing to give up their lunch in order to come and work with High Hat.
In 1979 I started my own early childhood education center, Born Learners School, in Agoura, California. I used the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit with my 4-year-old classes. They loved it. Because the program is multileveled, there was no academic pressure. Children could just listen to the great stories and get a lot from the experience. However, the majority of the children learned the sounds and blending very easily. One little girl listened to her mother pronouncing the sounds in the word “cat” and responded, “That’s spelling—High Hat teaches us how to blend!”

Children really bond with High Hat and his friends. At the end of the school year, one of my kindergarten students began to cry when my last High Hat lesson was over. I asked him what was wrong. He replied that he was sad because he was going to miss High Hat so much!

After they “graduate” from Born Learners, most of my students enroll in the public school district. Teachers all say they can tell Born Learners students as they are so well prepared in the area of phonics. I am so glad that you reissued the program; I now own all three versions (Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit, High Hat, and Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program). For 22 years, Born Learners School has successfully used this program and has helped many a young reader to accomplish phonics in a fun way. I love it when I hear the children exclaim, “Oh boy, it’s High Hat time!”

Beatrice Elliott
Owner/Director
Born Learners School
Agoura, California

From a Kindergarten Teacher . . .

I have used High Hat since 1983. I think it is the greatest!!!

I use the workbook as “homework.” I tear the sheets from the workbook and send them home one at a time after the lesson. As we all know, in class it is difficult for everyone to have a lot of turns. Using the workbook in this way, the child can do the activities one on one. The parent can see the progress. This is very beneficial, especially with blending sounds and listening where the sound is heard in a word (first, middle, last).

I teach in a school system that includes several housing projects. Parents are super supportive with the homework assignments. Once a parent walked in the rain to bring a “homework page” the child had forgotten. If a child is unable, for whatever reason, to complete an assignment on the night I send it home, I always receive a note explaining why. It is returned the next day. Parents tell me High Hat homework is the first thing their child wants to do as soon as he/she gets home from school. Several have said their child will not leave them alone until the homework is done.

My children get so excited each day with High Hat. They get upset when we do not have a new character. My children do learn to read. The
program is also helpful to my parents who struggle with reading or language (ESL). As they do the “homework” with their child, this helps them with their reading.

Thank you for this program!!!

Juanita Scarbrough
Kindergarten Teacher
City Park School
Athens, Tennessee

From a Speech-Language Therapist . . .

I have been using the High Hat program for 21+ years. It was called the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit back then. Every year I receive notes from parents expressing their pleasure with their children’s progress in articulation development. Even during the “whole language” era, I continued to use the program because I saw measurable growth in speech and reading (a bonus) skills.

When a set of twins who had developed their own phonological system entered school, I needed a program that would address many aspects of sound discrimination, sound blending, and other metalinguistic skills. Sounds & Symbols was that program. At year’s end the twins had made remarkable progress. They loved the stories, and their parents loved the follow-up activities.

Since that time, I have ordered two additional kits and have recommended the program to other SLPs as well as special education teachers. The response is always the same! They think the program is fantastic. It has been used for individualized therapy as well as the reading program for an entire class.

Thank you for years of success stories.

Paula Janicki
Speech-Language Therapist
Pine Hill Primary Center
Cheektowaga, New York

From a Graduate Student . . .

Part of our preparation in graduate school at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is spent critically examining a variety of materials that may be useful to us while practicing as speech-language therapists. In a graduate class focusing on language disorders in elementary school-age populations, my project involved learning the Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program. I chose this program because of my interest and past experience in working with preschool and school-age children in the schools.

Working closely with preschool teachers in the past, I have seen how few good choices there are for addressing early reading skills with this age group. After learning the Sounds & Symbols program and presenting it to my classmates, I am convinced that this is the kind of program that will keep children involved, interested and learning, along with being very structured and easy to use. Everyone was very impressed with the program AND the evidence of growth shown through research. It will be a program strongly considered as “necessary” for their classroom when out in the workforce.

The Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program looks to be an effective means for getting those little ones “a step ahead!”

Kelly Remily
Graduate Student
Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders
University of Nebraska–Lincoln
From a Reading Specialist . . .

My kindergarten Title I students LOVE it when High Hat visits them. As the group of five students recently came to me for instruction, one little boy told me he had a song for Mr. High Hat and proceeded to sing a song he had composed about High Hat. Not to be outdone, a second student also said he had a song for High Hat and sang it to the group. Due to peer group pressure, four of the five students sang a song to High Hat (one child was simply too shy). All of the songs were different. I was very impressed at the creativity the High Hat puppet inspired!

Sandra Fehr  
Reading Specialist  
Carroll Elementary School  
Shermans Dale, Pennsylvania

From a Speech-Language Therapist . . .

In the fall of 1976, I began my career as a school speech-language therapist for a small Michigan school system. At that time, I was introduced to the Goldman-Lynch Sounds & Symbols Development Kit by the current therapist on staff. She was using it to reinforce sound-symbol recognition in all kindergarten classrooms.

Fast forward to CUSD 301 in Burlington, Illinois. Upon being hired in the fall of 1990, I asked to purchase the program (by then known as High Hat) for use with all kindergarten classrooms. Permission was granted, and my adventures with this program began.

I use a multisensory approach to help the students learn the sound-symbol connection. Each lesson is
formatted in a similar manner. After one child holds the High Hat puppet and makes it dance while we sing the song, the lesson begins. I tell the students I must “check” their hearing, vision, and ability to read lips before I can read the High Hat story. I check vision by pointing to the letter symbols and having them clap when I come to the sound of the week. Previous sounds have a sign or gesture that they must use so I know they remember material taught before. For example, for Marti Mouse we use the ASL mouse sign, for Ada Ape we pretend to be monkeys, etc. Then I check their hearing by turning my back and making the sound associated with the letter. Again, I assess their knowledge when they respond with clapping or signs/gestures of previously learned letters. Finally, so they understand and have another hook to help them develop reading/writing skills, the students must read my lips as I manipulate my oral structure to formulate the way the sounds look on my mouth. They learn the “bite your lip” sound of Fannie Fox and the back sound with voice box on of Gordon Goat. Then the students play a game as they produce the sounds. For long sounds like /s/, /f/, /m/, they battle against me to see who can hold on to the sound the longest. For short sounds, they must watch my fingers and as I extend one finger at a time; the students say the short sound: /k/, /t/, /p/, etc. Finally the moment they have been waiting for—the High Hat story of the week. We finish with an activity geared to each sound. An example is “Pin the Tail on the Tiger” for Tiger Tom. If the picture on the tiger tail has a /t/ word on it, the student may pin it on the large tiger poster. As a last reminder, if children have the particular sound in their first name, they get a High Hat stamp on their hand.

The importance of this program hit home for me when I went to service students in the middle school last year and was recognized by so many as the High Hat teacher. Wow! I even wear a High Hat costume each year on Halloween. And I have been called Mrs. High Hat! This program has been a great way for me to impact the youngest children in our schools. I feel that the parents approach me more easily with concerns about their children because I am loved by their sons and daughters. And other teachers have asked to include special needs children in the kindergarten High Hat classes because they know it is a successful multisensory program.

Thank you AGS and High Hat for years of happy memories, because more than anything “High Hat likes to make people happy!!!”

Jan Harnish
Speech-Language Therapist
Howard B. Thomas Grade School
Burlington, Illinois

From a Kindergarten Teacher . . .

“Here comes High Hat, oh ho! He’s back again today.” My kids love that song! Every time we are ready to start the High Hat lesson, the kids beg me to sing that song!

My kindergartners have learned so much from the Sounds & Symbols program. They like to keep track of the number of sounds they have learned. Even new students to my room have easily picked up the previous sounds the class had already learned. The repetition is great with this program. The kids just naturally begin to put the sounds together and then read words. And they are able to remember the sounds and use them to help sound out words they are not familiar with. When our class was making Mother’s Day cards, one of my students wrote on his card “to mom.” He did that all on his own!

Working with kids on the north side of Minneapolis has very many challenges. One challenge is that our kids come to kindergarten with very few experiences and very little vocabulary. High Hat helps them with both. The kids love the stories and the characters.
And learning the sounds helps them to develop more vocabulary words. They are so proud of themselves when they can read words, and then begin to read sentences. The first grade teachers have commented on how prepared the kids are coming into first grade.

You would be amazed if you watched my kids in action as they are doing their High Hat lesson. Even the shy and quiet kids want a turn to do the activities. They all feel confident they will know the correct answer so they want to participate.

I can’t say enough wonderful things about how High Hat has helped my kids learn sounds, letters, and words!

Barb Stevens  
Kindergarten Teacher  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

From a Speech-Language Pathologist . . .

Since I discovered High Hat, hundreds of children have enjoyed the stories. As a speech-language pathologist, I manage to make weekly visits to kindergartens and first grades. Kindergartners in Mrs. K’s class in Leavenworth, Kansas, can tell you that, on Tuesdays, High Hat comes with a new story and sound. The picture cards remind the children all week of the character that received help from High Hat.

I have never seen a better program for introducing sounds to children.

Marilyn Lane  
Speech-Language Pathologist  
Private Practice  
Platte City, Missouri

From a Speech and Language Coach . . .

I used the Sounds & Symbols program in an entirely unique way—I became Mr. High Hat.

Using cardboard and felt, I built a hat, just like the puppet. I used a blue blanket, folded it in half, and cut out a slit for my head. I held my arms out (like a scarecrow) and sewed along just below my arm (making sleeves). I cut another slit in the front of the blanket to make a pocket. This enabled me to reach inside and get materials that I kept in yet another pouch tied around my chest. I made a walking stick by dipping an ordinary cotton garden glove in white glue and forming it into the shape of a hand with one pointer finger extended. I glued a five-foot length of half-inch plastic pipe (PVC) into the glove and painted it to look like the pointer that used to be provided in the program. Oh, and I mustn’t forget the Groucho Marx type glasses with the moustache (oversized nose removed)!

I memorized the High Hat song and then sang it as I walked through the school to the various classes to select those who were to come for speech and language sessions. All of the children wanted to go with Mr. High Hat. From time to time, I would select children who were not in my caseload to come along and participate in the sessions.

It was a superb way to generate interest, and I found that I had even better results by playing the persona of Mr. High Hat. I was the talk of the school, and even the older students wanted to participate (this was in a K-6, year-round, loft-style school).

I hope that others would also seek ways to fully utilize such a great Sounds & Symbols program. It’s a winner!

Howard Baker, Jr.  
Speech and Language Coach  
Atkinson Graduate School of Business Management  
Salem, Oregon
# Sound Sheet for Sounds & Symbols Early Reading Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order in which sound is introduced</th>
<th>Sound-Symbol</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>First Sound</th>
<th>Middle Sound</th>
<th>Final Sound</th>
<th>Lesson in which sound is introduced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>Marti Mouse</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>hammer</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ò</td>
<td>Eli Eel</td>
<td>eat</td>
<td>keep</td>
<td>be</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>Fannie Fox</td>
<td>five</td>
<td>coffee</td>
<td>laugh</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>òò</td>
<td>Oopy Oops</td>
<td>ooze</td>
<td>boot</td>
<td>too</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>Penny Put</td>
<td>pet</td>
<td>apple</td>
<td>top</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>òi</td>
<td>Oily Oink</td>
<td>oil</td>
<td>soil</td>
<td>boy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ò</td>
<td>Oh-No Oboe</td>
<td>open</td>
<td>boat</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Buzzy Bee</td>
<td>bed</td>
<td>habit</td>
<td>tub</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ò</td>
<td>Ada Ape</td>
<td>ate</td>
<td>rake</td>
<td>hay</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>Tiger Tom</td>
<td>tie</td>
<td>potato</td>
<td>sit</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>ì</td>
<td>I Spy</td>
<td>ice</td>
<td>bike</td>
<td>my</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>Sailor Sam</td>
<td>sew</td>
<td>pencil</td>
<td>mouse</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>Itchy Itch</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>pit</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>c and k</td>
<td>Copy Cat</td>
<td>kite</td>
<td>become</td>
<td>rock</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Apple Annie</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>back</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>Hairy Horse</td>
<td>hat</td>
<td>ahead</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>Wendy Watch</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>sidewalk</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>Dirty Dan</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>ladder</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>Eddy Elf</td>
<td>end</td>
<td>bed</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Noisy Nan</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>penny</td>
<td>fun</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>Ollie Octopus</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>hot</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>z and s</td>
<td>Zoo Zoo</td>
<td>zebra</td>
<td>busy</td>
<td>buzz</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>Gordon Goat</td>
<td>get</td>
<td>wagon</td>
<td>egg</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>Uncle Up</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>sun</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>Look and Listen</td>
<td>lake</td>
<td>pillow</td>
<td>ball</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>òò</td>
<td>Ooky Ook</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>Vernon and Vera</td>
<td>voice</td>
<td>shovel</td>
<td>cave</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>ò</td>
<td>Awful Auto</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>talk</td>
<td>law</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>òò</td>
<td>Thelma Thumb</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>nothing</td>
<td>teeth</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>òò</td>
<td>Shy Shadow</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>washing</td>
<td>fish</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>òò</td>
<td>Outside Owl</td>
<td>out</td>
<td>about</td>
<td>cow</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>ò</td>
<td>Yellow Yo-Yo</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>onion</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>ò</td>
<td>Early Bird</td>
<td>early</td>
<td>circus</td>
<td>her</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>Regular Rabbit</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>carrot</td>
<td>car</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>òò</td>
<td>Charlie Choo-Choo</td>
<td>chain</td>
<td>watching</td>
<td>catch</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>ò</td>
<td>Jumping Jack</td>
<td>jam</td>
<td>engine</td>
<td>bridge</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>ò</td>
<td>The Thup</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>father</td>
<td>bathe</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>òò</td>
<td>Inky Inkpen</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>singer</td>
<td>ring</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = The sound does not commonly occur in this position.