

Hooked on Phonics® Challenges Parents to Help their Children Read in the New Year

Hooked on Phonics to donate 15,000 Learn to Read programs to First Book for first 15,000 parent resolutions

BALTIMORE — Hooked on Phonics®, maker of award-winning educational tools to help parents teach their children to read, this week announced a new campaign encouraging parents to make their 2009 New Year's resolution helping their children read. In celebration of the first 15,000 parents to make the resolution, Hooked on Phonics will donate 15,000 *Learn to Read* programs to First Book, a nonprofit group that distributes books to children from low-income families, to ensure that all parents, regardless of income, can help their children read in the New Year.

Adults across the country will set many worthy goals for 2009 — quitting smoking, exercising more, eating better, or spending less. But in addition to making these more traditional New Years' resolutions, parents can make a real difference by challenging themselves to spend time reading with their child.

Children who grow up reading with their parents attend school more regularly and are more likely to complete their educations. Studies even show that parental involvement in early child literacy matters more to student success than family income or family education.

To make their resolutions, parents are encouraged to visit <http://www.learntoread2009.com>. There, they can pledge their resolution and ask Hooked on Phonics to donate a *Learn to Read* program in their name to First Book. Parents can also sign up to receive a newsletter with tips to help their child read and to share stories and make connections with other parents making the same commitment.

“There's no substitute for reading with your child,” says Kyle Zimmer, President and Co-Founder of First Book. “Early and frequent reading with children builds important skills and helps them learn to love reading, and it's fun to do. We applaud Hooked on Phonics for encouraging parents to make this resolution and for making this important contribution to help low-income families and communities do the same.”

“Our company is based on the knowledge that, in child literacy, there is no force greater than caring parents,” said Judy Harris, CEO of Smarterville, the company that owns, creates, manufactures, and distributes Hooked on Phonics products. “With this campaign we hope to help thousands of families — regardless of income — make 2009 the year their children learn to read.”

Parents can visit www.learntoread2009.com any time in December to make their resolution pledges. The campaign will end December 31, 2008.

About First Book

First Book provides new books to children in need addressing one of the most important factors affecting literacy — access to books. An innovative leader in social enterprise, First Book has distributed more than 60 million free and low cost books in thousands of communities. First Book now has offices in the U.S. and Canada. For more information about the nonprofit First Book please visit www.firstbook.org or call 866-393-1222.

About Hooked on Phonics

Hooked on Phonics, operated by Smarterville Productions LLC, is a leading creator of educational products for families that are fun, easy to use, and effective. The company works with professional educators, interactive designers, writers, artists, and parents to develop step-by-step learning systems that help teach children critical reading, math, and study skills. Since the company was founded in 1987, more than two million families and thousands of schools have turned to Hooked on Phonics' library of award-winning programs. Hooked on Phonics products are available at major retailers worldwide and online at www.hookedonphonics.com.