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**Hooked on Phonics® CEO Praises President Obama's Call  
To Expand The Promise of Education in America**

*Helping Children Learn to Read Must Begin at Home*

**BALTIMORE** — President Barack Obama's first speech to the Congress Tuesday night should be a rallying cry to parents to become more involved in their children's education, for their own economic and social growth, as well as the country's, according to Judy L. Harris, CEO of Smarterville, maker of research-based educational brands like Hooked on Phonics®.

"The president made very clear the importance of education in this country and the role parents need to play," said Harris. "In an increasingly global and technology-driven work environment, we must ensure a highly-skilled, qualified workforce to ensure jobs with family-sustaining wages, to reduce the cost of production and increase the return on investment, and to remain innovative and competitive.

"The best way our nation can address this structural deficit in our literacy and our economy is to establish a love of reading in children early in life so they're ready and willing to learn."

While the speech discussed the government investment in education through the economic recovery plan, expansion of early childhood education programs, and calls for education reform, the president stressed that schools cannot educate children on their own and that every American needed to help open doors of opportunity for children.

"Parental involvement is critical, but reading serves as the backbone to learning and must not be "outsourced" or ignored by our schools," Harris said. "To quote President Obama, 'In the end, there is no program or policy that can substitute for a mother or father who will attend those parent/teacher conferences, or help with homework after dinner, or turn off the TV, put away the video games, and read to their child.'"

**About Hooked on Phonics**

Hooked on Phonics, operated by Smarterville Inc., is a leading creator of award-winning research-based 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](http://www.hookedonphonics.com).