



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 16, 2008

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Hooked on Phonics® CEO Praises Duncan Nomination as Education Secretary

Baltimore, Md. — Judy Harris, CEO of Smarterville Inc., the maker of Hooked on Phonics®, issued the following statement on the nomination today of Arne Duncan to be U.S. Secretary of Education.

“America’s schools are struggling, and Arne Duncan is an A+ choice to reform our education programs in schools...and at home. Parents can have an enormous and lasting impact on their child’s education by focusing on reading and literacy, particularly in their early years.

“An important part of Mr. Duncan’s experience is head of the Ariel Education Initiative, which helps promote the idea that family and community are vital ingredients in the social, physical, emotional and educational well being of children. President-elect Obama’s selection of Mr. Duncan — and Mr. Obama’s recent comments on parents reading to children — send a clear message to America’s parents that schools cannot educate children on their own.

“The ability to read well is the foundation for learning and for succeeding later on whether in the workplace, in the home or in life. If parents would spend just 20 minutes a day for three days a week reading to — and with — their children, it would make a tremendous difference in their reading and their education.

“Mr. Duncan will arrive in Washington at a time when the economy is struggling and the chorus for greater emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math education is growing ever louder. Math and science education is unquestionably important and central to the country’s long-term economic security, but it cannot and must not be emphasized at the expense of investments in reading and literacy. Parental involvement is critical, but reading serves as the backbone to learning and must not be “outsourced” or ignored by our schools. The federal government has an important role to play and I look forward to supporting this administration in any way I can.”

About Hooked on Phonics

Hooked on Phonics, operated by Smarterville Inc., is a leading creator of 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.