S., to the NEWS

RELEASE: September 23

by PHYLLIS SCHL.AFLY

Box 618, . Alton, Illinois **62002**
Phone:· **618-462-5415**

READING AT HOME

The opening of school this fall·confronted the public with many thorny problems. In some areas it is busing, in others it is con troversial textbooks, and in still others it is teachers' strikes. What is the solution for parents who simply want their children to learn the basics, without the controversy, the politics, or the propa ganda?

Each one has to make his own decision as to h·ow to cope with these unwelcome problems, but I'd like to tell you about what one mother I know accomplished on her own. She made a quiet resolve that she wanted her daughter to have the very best education she could possibly give her. She didn't want her daughter to be handicapped like other children by inferior schools, or busing, or wasted time spent on frills and fi !d trips instead of on the essential task of learning.

This woman isn't well-to-do, or well-educated, or specially talented. The fact is that she is black and has had to support her self all her life as a cook and a laundress. She never went to college and would never qualify for a teacher's certificate.

But she had the vision to set a goal for herself and the per severance to pursue it despite all obstacles. That goal was to teach her child to read at home. The mother was smart enough to know that reading is the key to all learning, and that being a good reader would open more doors for her daughter than any other skill. So the mother acquired the necessary books and successfully taught her child to

{more)

read using a 100 percent phonics -- the only sure method by method which a child can learn to read and spell.

It was tough going for the first few weeks last year -- as mother and daughter tackled a new experience. But as the child learned the basic phonetic sounds of the English language and began to unlock the words on her own, learning became an exciting challenge. Next to learning to walk and talk, learning to read is the most thrilling of all childhood achievements.

The moment of truth came this month when my friend entered her child in school and sought admission -- not to the first but to the second grade. The daughter passed the test with flying colors and is now one of the best readers in her second grade.

The moral of this story is clear: If you want your child to have the very best, use a phonics reader and workbook and give your child a better first-grade education than can be had in any school. If you do, your child will never be the victim of the deplorable situation described so eloquently and succinctly in this letter to the editor that was printed recently in a major Chicago newspaper:

"As a student at Bradley University in Peoria, I lived in the same dormitory as 22 blacks. Five of them, after four years of public high school, could not read or write. All five were from Chicago. Who were their teachers? Probably the same ones who now demand a big wage increase. I wonder if these so-called teachers can read and write."

(end)