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Autor: Goodman Yetta/ Martens Prisca

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This volume adds in important ways to understanding the power and complexity of the forces in the lives of children that impact their literacy learning. The critical issues presented emerge from interpretivist research and thinking practices that are constructivist in nature. The chapters by researchers, teacher researchers, teacher educators, and teachers are antidotes to the present political context in which political agendas are being used to define literacy, literacy teaching and learning, and literacy research in narrow ways. Providing a rich source of information about how young children come to know reading and writing as a tool of communication in a range of social and cultural contexts, this book: presents current research and thinking in the field; documents research that is currently being ignored by many who make decisions about children's learning; values who children are and what they bring with them to school; provides a useful tool for advocacy and for social action toward improving education in ways that can make a difference in the lives of young children; and raises thoughtful issues for discussion.

Critical Issues in Early Literacy is essential reading for early childhood teachers and prospective teachers, for teacher educators, for literacy researchers (including teacher researchers), for special educators, for those working with English-language and foreign-language learners, and for early childhood education administrators, advocates, and policy makers.