



Home Literacy Kits Literature Review

Prepared by the Department of Research & Performance Management

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Strategy

Provide at-home literacy kits for parents of students in grades K-11 with training from a non-profit organization grounded in literacy research with proven results.

Description

Students and parents will receive literacy kits grounded in the “Big 5” components of reading. The kits will provide parents with the resources to reinforce strategies to learn how to read.

Recommendations and Take Aways

- Research largely supports training parents to use specific skills to teach their children the content of home literacy kits although it has not identified the best skills and strategies to use.²² Incorporating the specific reading skills appropriate for reinforcing instruction at each grade-level might maximize program success.
- Much of the literature covered incorporated the targeted reading skills into the context of a book that was basis of the home literacy kit. Using literacy kits with both books and targeted skills might be most effective.
- Program engagement is higher when books are of interest to the children.⁸ Using leveled readers as the basis for home literacy kits to bridge students’ interests and reading levels could help program participation.
- Given that highly structured programs are much more effective than loosely structured programs,²⁰ any purchased home literacy curricula should have explicit, grade-level instructions and activities for parents and students to work on.
- Implementation quality should be maintained by ensuring that parents are trained to the level of mastery for the skills they are expected to teach. Perhaps demonstration videos available on the SCS website for parents to review as needed would be a helpful tool.

Theme: The use of family/home literacy kits has been linked to improved reading in students in grades PK – 5.

- Correlational studies have shown that parent-child reading with young children is positively linked to emergent literacy and to reading achievement.^{6, 21}
- A significantly higher percentage of PK students who participated in a 12-week *Raising a Reader* program with their parents made significant gains in receptive vocabulary compared to a control group as measured by the PPVT. Participating and control students were in PK classrooms located in schools with low levels of third-grade reading achievement.⁷
- In a study conducted in schools serving middle-income, suburban families, parents of kindergarten students were invited to opt into a 12-week reading intervention program that provided literacy exercises for students to practice at home. The exercises extended reading instruction occurring in the classroom. Students in the intervention group



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performed significantly better than those in comparison groups on reading tests after the 12-week program, controlling for parent interest in participating in the program and students' initial reading level. Additionally, a higher percentage of students in the intervention scored 80% or greater on the posttest than did comparison-group students.¹⁸

- A meta-analysis²² examined 16 peer reviewed studies that were designed with an intervention group and a control group to determine the impact of three types of parent-child reading activities on reading achievement for students in grades K-3. The biggest effect size (1.15) was for parents trained to do literacy exercises relevant to the books with their children, which equated to 17 points on a standardized test. Also having an impact was providing training to parents on how to listen to their children read to them (effect size = 0.52 or 8 points on a standardized test). Found to be not effective was asking parents to read to their children (effect size = 0.18, which was not statistically different from 0).
- This meta-analysis also found that interventions using family literacy kits were effective for students in grades K-3, for students reading at both grade level or below, and for students in families of working-class and middle to high economic class.²²
- A study of low-income students and their parents in grade 2 examined the effects of participating in a home fluency program. Parents attended parent training meetings, then basal readers were sent home twice a week with explicit instructions for parents. Findings showed that students in the intervention had higher posttest fluency standard scores than students in the control group. Additionally, a higher percentage of parents in the intervention group reported helping their children with homework and reading to their children multiple times per week compared to the control group.¹⁷
- A meta-analysis revealed that not all home literacy kit programs monitored implementation quality which can negatively influence program impact.⁹ Another study recommended that parents be trained to the level of mastery on the reading skills to be taught to children.¹⁰

Theme: Longitudinal analyses show positive effects can be long-term and can emerge months after tutoring ends.

- In an experimental design, an intervention developed to enrich Head Start parent language use, extend parent-child interaction, and promote dialogic reading through book kits and dramatic play kits rich with literacy activities resulted in significant gains for participating students in emergent literacy skills (letter and sight recognition, letter naming fluency, letter sound fluency, short word and nonsense word fluency) and teacher ratings of academic performance at the beginning of Kindergarten compared to non-participating students.³
- Students in British Infant School (5-7 years) and Junior School (8-13 years) who were tutored by their parents using paired reading techniques demonstrated both short-term (<=17 weeks) and long-term (17+ weeks) gains in reading accuracy compared to students not tutored.²⁵



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- Students in grades 1-2 in high-poverty schools who participated in a three-year summer book program performed better on standardized reading achievement tests after the three years compared to students in the control group.¹
- Struggling readers in grade 1 and their parents participated in a summer reading program. Student reading levels did not improve from spring to fall, but did from fall to winter.⁸

Theme: Parents can be effective at teaching reading skills to children at home and are eager to do so.

- Given specific tutoring skills, appropriate materials and feedback, parents can have a positive impact on student academic success.^{11, 12, 16}
- Training parents with specific techniques for coaching children reading²⁴ and instructions for how to engage in paired reading²⁶ resulted in positive effects for children at risk of reading failure.
- Parents who participated in a reading program with their young children sought out activities (e.g., watching videos, attending workshops) to learn how to be better reading teachers.⁷
- A meta-analysis of studies examining the effectiveness of reading tutors for elementary and middle school students found that parent tutors were equally effective as college-student tutors and community volunteer tutors for all grade levels at improving overall reading, reading letters and words, reading fluency, and writing. Reading tutors did not impact students' reading comprehension.²⁰
- A meta-analysis of studies that examined training parents to tutor their primary (grades K-3) and intermediate (grades 4-6) children analyzed different parent instruction methods. Using written instructions, modeling, and supervised practice to train parents all had moderate to large effect sizes for the treatment group on reading fluency, word recognition, and reading comprehension at both age levels.¹⁰
- A study administering parent surveys found that parents of students in grades 1-3 reported knowing more about how to teach their children grade-level reading and writing skills after participating in a home literacy bag program during the year.¹³

Theme: The most effective literacy kit programs give explicit directions to parents on how to teach reading. Parent training should be detailed but can be done in a relatively short period of time.

- A meta-analysis of studies examining the effectiveness of reading tutors found a moderate effect size (0.59) for highly structured reading programs compared to a low effect size (0.14) for loosely structured programs on overall reading, reading letters and words, reading fluency, and writing for tutored students in elementary and middle school.²⁰
- Another meta-analysis revealed that short parent training sessions (1-2 hours) and longer sessions (3-13.5 hours) were equally effective at training parents to teach reading skills to their children.²²



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- Parents of kindergarten students were trained to teach reading sight words, recognizing beginning and ending sounds, and blending sounds into new words in a 90-minute session that included opportunities for role playing and feedback. Literacy kits included activities and lessons structured for parents. Students in the intervention performed significantly better than comparison groups on reading tests after a 12-week program.¹⁸

Theme: Additional benefits of using literacy kits include boosting parent interest and involvement and promoting community engagement in children's reading acquisition.

- Using classroom traveling book kits has been linked to keeping parents engaged in their children's learning throughout the school year.^{4, 14, 19, 23}
- Parents reported home literacy kits from schools promoted more parent-child reading at home with PK students. Additionally, parents reported learning more about children's literature options.²
- Partnering with libraries can provide opportunities for parents to learn how to interact with their children through books. For example, attending story time can model effective ways to read books to children.⁵ Participation in book clubs can inform families of literacy resources.
- Library book clubs for elementary students can incorporate reading instruction to be more effective. Students in an intervention group that paired instructional techniques on effective reading practices with the book club books improved reading comprehension compared to a control group that only read the books.¹⁵



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