

Minnesota Principals Academy – Action Learning Project

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STAR (Sit Together and Read) Reading Club:

A program to support parents and preschool children reading together

Abstract

This Action Learning Project involved developing a program to support parents and their preschool children spending time reading together. STAR (Sit Together And Read) Reading Club focused on: exposing children to vocabulary using developmentally appropriate books, supporting reading at home with high-interest incentives, and working with parents on strategies to help improve early literacy skills through reading and meaningful interactions with text. The project evaluated to what degree parents and children are motivated by incentives and reading support activities to read beyond the school day. The project also evaluated to what degree exposing children to developmentally appropriate books and reading activities impact assessment scores.

The evaluation concluded that books being sent home each school day motivated students more than extrinsic rewards (charm necklace). Parents reported that the reading records (with support activities) increased the frequency of reading at home. Students completing more than half of the reading records scored higher (average growth) on LNF and LSF assessments.

Vision: Improve the early literacy skills of our preschool students by extending reading opportunities to the home.

Background/Context: Preschool assessment results suggest students would benefit from additional early literacy support. A child entering kindergarten with a strong foundation in language development is more likely to read proficiently by third grade. Special needs counts: 48% of three-year-old preschool receiving SPED and 33% of four-year-old preschool receiving SPED.

Program rationale: Students in the kindergarten program are assessed each fall using general outcome measures to determine school readiness. In 2013, 32% of students met both targets for kindergarten readiness, while 68% of students entered kindergarten needing immediate remediation. A reading program designed to support the development of early literacy skills will provide all preschool students opportunities for literacy and language development beyond the school day.

What we did: Preschool families receive a monthly reading record (calendar). Students are given a book each school day to take home and read with a family member. Families record nightly reading activities. Each calendar includes four Quick Response (QR) codes linked to read-aloud and strategies videos. Students return completed reading records to receive a charm for their STAR necklace. STAR necklaces are displayed in classrooms and can be worn during reading activities. Families receive a monthly postcard with tips for reading with children. The reading tips are suggestions for engaging children using text.

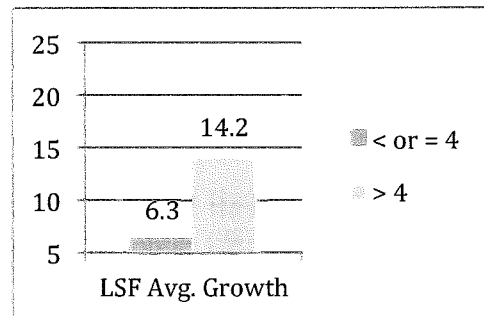
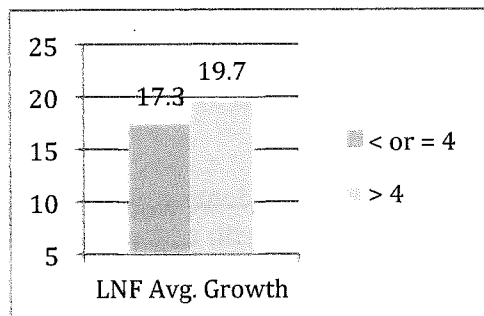
What we found out:

1. Parents reported reading more often with children after STAR Reading Club was introduced.

How often do you read with your child?	Fall	Winter
Most nights	43	58
Twice a week	14	1
Once a week	1	2
Less than once a week	3	0
Never	0	0

How often does your child ask you to read to him/her?	Fall	Winter
Most nights	39	46
Twice a week	14	10
Once a week	3	3
Less than once a week	4	2
Never	1	0

2. The correlation of reading record participation to LNF and LSF scores.



red bar – completed half (or fewer) of reading records
green bar – completed more than half of reading records

Implications for practice:

1. Reading beyond the school day increased
 - a. Parents reported students being excited about bringing books home
 - b. Teachers reported students being excited about bringing books home
 - c. Parents reported using the reading record to increase reading at home
 - d. Parents reported extrinsic rewards less motivating than books sent home
2. Parent education opportunities received mixed results
 - a. Less than half of parents surveyed viewed video clips
 - b. Less than one third of parents surveyed used video tips with children
3. Assessment scores increased
 - a. LNF average growth increased with participation in the program
 - b. LSF average growth increased with participation in the program
4. Effect on kindergarten preparation to be determined
 - a. Kindergarten benchmark results (September) will be collected to compare to previous kindergarten groups