Harnessing our Potential: Investing in Early Literacy and Early Learning in Collier County

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Florida Institute of Education
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Four Questions

1. WHY Early Literacy? Why NOW?

2. WHAT are ELLM and SEEDS?

3. HOW DID WE DO in Year 1?

4. WHAT is NEXT?
Experiences from birth-5 profoundly affect children’s learning and intellectual growth.

Why Early Literacy? Why NOW?

Social and economic changes demand higher-quality early care and learning services

• More women in the workforce; more children in childcare
• More dual-income families
• More single parents
• Shift from industrial to knowledge-based and global economy

High-quality early learning is directly linked to a well-prepared 21st century workforce
Why Early Literacy? Why NOW?

• Differences in early experiences result in a “readiness gap.”

• Children who enter kindergarten with limited readiness skills are more likely to develop reading difficulties and require remedial education.

• Children who start school behind their peers are UNLIKELY to catch up.
Language Experiences Matter Greatly

- **Professional**
- **Working-class**
- **Very low SES**

The graph illustrates the estimated cumulative words addressed to children of different socioeconomic statuses (SES) from birth to 48 months. The data shows a significant gap in language exposure, with professional children having much higher cumulative words addressed compared to those from very low SES backgrounds.
Why Early Literacy? Why NOW?

Cumulative Vocabulary Words

- Professional
- Working-class
- Very Low SES

Age of child in months

Cumulative vocabulary words

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

10 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36
### Selected Findings About First-Time Kindergartners, Fall 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Mother with less than High School</th>
<th>Mother with BA or Higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have 3 Print Familiarity Skills</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Recognize Letters</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Recognize Numbers/Shapes</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Recognize Relative Size</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Say General Health is Excellent</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Say Persist at Task</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have More Than 50 Books at home</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Members Read to Child 3 or More Days a Week</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If **50** first graders have problems reading, then **44** of them will still have problems reading in fourth grade.

If 50 third graders are poor readers, then 37 of them are still poor readers in ninth grade.

Why Early Literacy? Why NOW?

- Learning to read is a complex task that begins with key early literacy or “pre-reading” skills.

- Developing early literacy skills happens in...

  *Home*
  *Communities*
  *Childcare Settings*
  *Schools*
Why Early Literacy? Why NOW?

Benefits of High-Quality Preschool

- Increased Achievement Test Scores
- Improved Behavior and Attitudes
- Decreased Special Education
- Decreased Crime and Delinquency
- Increased High School Graduation
- Remarkable Return on Investment
Why Early Literacy? Why NOW?

High Quality Early Care and Learning Experiences

- Successful Start in School
- More Successful Learning
- Less Delinquency and Truancy
- Higher High School Graduation Rates
- Higher Rate of Entrance to and Completion of College
- Better Jobs
- More Durable Family Life

Greater Engagement in Civic Life
## Anchor Partners
- Fun Time Early Childhood Academy
- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Florida Institute of Education at UNF

## Community Partners
- Christ Child Society
- Community Foundation of Collier County
- District School Board of Collier County, with Collier County Public Schools Head Start Program
- Naples Children and Education Foundation
- Stranahan Foundation
Q2: What is ELLM?
What is ELLM?

The Early Literacy and Learning Model – ELLM

An early literacy curriculum and instructional support system:

• Developed from scientifically based research

• Documented success in improving early literacy achievement
What is ELLM?

In Collier County we partnered with the Christ Child Society to add a volunteer component: *Learning Advocates Reaching Kids (LARKs).*
What is ELLM?

**ELLM is NOT a silver bullet**

It DOES provide *four critical tools* to tackle the literacy gap:

- **Research**- and standards-based curriculum;
- **Instructional** support system for teachers;
- **Opportunities** for at-risk children to work with well-trained, caring adults; and
- **Evaluation** as a key component.
A Resounding Success!

49 classrooms implemented ELLM.

Approximately 825 preschool and Head Start children served.

Approximately 145 children reached by 64 Christ Child Society ELLM/LARK volunteers.
HOW DID WE DO in Year 1?

Year 1: Solid and Substantiated Success

![Bar chart showing scores for Fall and Spring](chart.png)
HOW DID WE DO in Year 1?

Year 1: Solid and Substantiated Success

TOLD-P:3 Listening Quotient Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quartile</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottom</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
HOW DID WE DO in Year 1?

Year 1: Solid and Substantiated Success

TERA-3 Reading Quotient Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottom Quartile</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Quartile</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4: WHAT is NEXT?

Review of the Evidence

• Early literacy is crucial to children’s future success and the availability of a well-educated workforce.

• Investment in high-quality early childhood education for at-risk children yields an extraordinary return on investment.

• ELLM/SEEDS improves the readiness outcomes of at-risk children.
WHAT is NEXT?

Celebrate the Achievements of Collier County Children, Families, Teachers, Directors, Coaches, Volunteers, and Advocates

• Continue to document progress.

• Use results to improve performance.

• Expand the community-wide partnership.

• Develop a strategy for continuing the investment in Collier County’s youngest citizens.