An Early Reading Intervention Program
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CHILDREN DO NOT OUTGROW READING DIFFICULTIES

A child who is a poor reader at the end of first grade has an almost 90% chance of remaining a poor reader at the end of Grade 4 (Juel, 1988) and at least a 75% chance of being a poor reader as long as they are in school (Francis et al., 1995).

....unless we provide quality intervention!
Students who are performing below grade level will only close the gap with their classmates if they learn FASTER than other students.

More Instruction
Efficient Instruction
More Practice
WHAT IS READING RULES?

- Early intervention instructional program for first grade students who are at-risk for developing serious reading problems (initial field test in kindergarten)
- Provides direct, sequential instruction in comprehension as well as word-reading and decoding
- Children learn to read the words and understand what they are reading
WHAT IS READING RULES?

WHOLE CLASS
- 15 minute comprehension lesson focused on one of seven comprehension skills
- Teacher models each skill and children practice
- In the context of teacher read-alouds

SMALL GROUP OF AT-RISK READERS
- 10 minutes comprehension instruction
- 10 minutes word study Instruction
- 10 minutes text reading with teacher modeling and coaching
SMALL GROUP WORD STUDY
SMALL GROUP: TEXT READING

Hints of Fall
Written by Laura Appleton
Illustrated by Keinya White
THE READING RULES PROJECT

- 3-Year grant from the Institute of Education Sciences (US Department of Education)
- Years 1-2: Development of an intervention in collaboration with first grade teachers in Houston ISD
- Year 2: Conducted a small initial pilot of the program
- Year 3: Conducted a larger pilot with teachers randomly assigned within schools to deliver Reading RULES or their typical reading instruction
HOW IS READING RULES DIFFERENT?

**Typical Supplemental First Grade Programs**

- Focus primarily on *accurate* reading by emphasizing word reading instruction
- Comprehension instruction is not direct and does not follow a step-by-step progression from easier to harder skills

**Reading Rules**

- Focus is on *both* reading accuracy and understanding what is read
- Provides direct, step-by-step instruction in both word study and comprehension
- Starts with listening comprehension and transfers to reading comprehension
- Teacher models comprehension skills through a think-aloud and students practice with different books
HOW IS READING RULES DIFFERENT?

TYPICAL SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST GRADE PROGRAMS

Students read either

- Non-decodable text (in which they cannot read the words using the phonics skills they have been taught)

OR

- Poor-quality decodable text with contrived language and little or no plot

READING RULES

Students read

- High-quality, engaging text specifically developed for Reading RULES by a children’s author

- Books that are fully decodable using the word study skills taught in each unit of the program
Decodable Books
HOW IS READING RULES DIFFERENT?

Typical Programs

- Students may practice reading lists of words or manipulating magnetic letters to understand how words relate to each other.
- Spelling may not be emphasized.
- Comprehension instruction consists primarily of discussion of the text.

Reading Rules

- Students practice reading words in lists, spelling words, and manipulating letter tiles and magnetic letters, and other hands-on activities to promote automatic word recognition and flexibility in thinking about words.
- Students learn hand motions during comprehension instruction to help them remember the skills.
- Hands-on approach engages students and makes learning fun.
SMALL GROUP WORD STUDY
COMPREHENSION GESTURES

Background Knowledge

"Ding, Ding, Ding! I recognize that!"

Making Connections

Left hand out palm up

"When something from the story..."

Reminds me of my own life

Right hand out palm up

I am making a connection

hands clasped

pointer finger to temple
YEAR 3 PILOT STUDY
GRADE 1

- **8 schools**: teachers within each school randomly assigned to provide Reading RULES or their typical instruction (2:1 ratio)
- **Reading RULES group**: 13 classroom teachers and 57 of their students
- **Typical Instruction group**: 8 classroom teachers and 35 of their students
- Teachers varied widely in experience and proficiency instructing struggling readers
- Students mainly minority and economically disadvantaged
- R RULES teachers asked to provide the program 4 days per week for 17 weeks
STANDARD SCORE GAINS OVER 17 WEEKS
WOODCOCK-JOHNSON III LETTER-WORD ID

Standardized Test of Word Reading*

* Average = 100; Average range = 85-115; Standard score gains show progress toward closing the gap with typically-developing readers.
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STANDARD SCORE GAINS OVER 17 WEEKS
WOODCOCK-JOHNSON III PASSAGE COMPREHENSION

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OUR GOALS

1. Adapt the program for use in Kindergarten, for at-risk children and evaluate results
2. Develop activities for the rest of the class when the teacher is working with a small group of children; develop teacher training for these activities
3. Edit, revise, and refine the first grade program and conduct a larger study of the program
4. Develop a higher-level version for Grades 2-3
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