

Ready4K Program Description

Background: There are significant systematic differences in the home learning environments of young children. For example, by the age of four, economically disadvantaged children hear 30 million fewer words than wealthy children (Hart & Risley, 1995). Such disparities have significant consequences for individuals and society as a whole, given strong links between children's early experiences at home and their development of motor, social, emotional, literacy, and math skills (Anderson, 2006). Parenting programs can place significant demands on parents' time and effort, and many programs suffer from low turnout and high dropout rates (Prinz & Miller, 1994). The small number of parents who do show up to workshops often receive a substantial amount of information that is difficult to remember and put into practice.

The Ready4K program: Through text messaging, Ready4K breaks down the complexity of engaged parenting into small steps that are easy to achieve. In addition, the program provides continuous encouragement and support to parents over an entire school year. Each week, parents receive three text messages to help them build their children's skills by maximizing existing family routines in fun and easy ways. For example:

FACT: Preschool is when many children begin learning how to write letters. Kids can get ready for this big step by making letters with everyday objects.

TIP: During snack time, have a letter building party. Can your child make a T, X, L & N out of snacks like cheerios or grapes? What about curvy letters like S?

GROWTH: Keep making letters to prepare your child 4K! Before dinner, try using toothpicks, tinfoil, or straws to make all of the letters in your child's name.

Research: In a randomized controlled trial study in San Francisco Unified School District, Stanford University researchers found that the Ready4K approach increased parental involvement at home and school, ultimately leading to two to three months of child learning gains in literacy (York & Loeb, 2014). The researchers found similar effects in a follow-up study focused on differentiated messages (working paper forthcoming). The results of this research have been highlighted in *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Education Week*.

Impact: During the 2016-17 school year, tens of thousands of families across the country will receive Ready4K text messages, which are currently available for parents of three-, four-, and five-year-olds in English and Spanish.

Ready4K is free and easy to implement: The Ready4K text messaging program is free for school districts and other educational organizations, and enrolling all of your families at one time is easy. To learn more, e-mail us at: info@parentpowered.com