



Corporation
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Public Media Closes the Early Literacy Gap
Research Shows Educational Media Accelerates Learning

(Washington, DC)-- A new study shows preschool children who participated in a media-rich literary curriculum integrating public media video content and educational games were better prepared for kindergarten than students who did not use the curriculum.

The study, which was conducted by researchers at the Education Development Center, Inc. and SRI International, evaluated educational video content and associated interactive games from *Super Why!*, *Between the Lions* and *Sesame Street*, which are produced as part of the Ready To Learn (RTL) initiative. RTL aims to increase literacy skills for children aged 2-8 living in high poverty communities, by utilizing multiplatform content.

The researchers examined the impact of the curriculum which included public media content in a randomized controlled trial with 398 low-income four and five-year olds from 80 preschool classes in New York City and San Francisco. The children who had public media content in their classes developed significantly more early literacy skills – the ability to name letters, know the sounds associated with those letters and understand the basic concepts about stories and printed words – than children who did not have public media content in the classroom.

“This study underscores the important and unprecedented work that the Ready To Learn initiative has accomplished by teaching these children the skills they will need to succeed in life,” said Pat Harrison, president and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). “CPB congratulates the producers, the teachers and caregivers, station staff and their community partners who have made the Ready To Learn initiative the success that it is today.”

This study is significant because digital content from public television was integrated into a preschool curriculum, while past studies focused on public television viewing at home with or without parents or caregivers present. Also, previous research only studied one television program and did not incorporate interactive educational media.

“These findings demonstrate the effective role public media plays in preschool children’s early literacy outcomes,” said Dr. Susan Zelman, SVP of Education and Children’s Content for CPB.

“This is a validation of the hard work that our local stations and community partners engage in to help improve children’s education,” said Beth Courtney, CPB vice-chair of the board and chair of its education committee.

The study was conducted by researchers at the Education Development Center, Inc. and SRI International between January and June 2009, with a grant from CPB and the U.S. Department of Education, in preschools serving low-income children in the New York City and San Francisco metropolitan areas.

To learn more about the study, please go to www.cpb.org or www.cct.edc.org/rtl.

About CPB:

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967 and is the steward of the federal government’s investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,100 locally-owned and operated public television and radio stations nationwide and is the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program development for public radio, television and related online services. (www.cpb.org)

About RTL:

Ready To Learn is a national initiative to increase literacy skills for low-income children ages 2-8. Ready To Learn’s goal is to help children learn to read through the use of multiplatform content developed with scientifically-based reading research and targeted, local community engagement activities. It is funded by the Department of Education, part of a cooperative agreement with CPB and PBS.

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