

The background of the slide is a photograph of a teacher sitting on the floor, reading a book to a group of young children. The scene is dimly lit, with a blue overlay. The teacher is on the left, and several children are on the right, looking towards the book.

# THE ROAD TO IMPACT: OVERCOMING COMMON PITFALLS AND IDENTIFYING HIGH- STAKES DECISIONS FOR LITERACY SUCCESS



Lectio

[lectioapproach.com](http://lectioapproach.com)

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First Things First Early Childhood Summit  
August 22, 2016

## OUR SESSION

- Today's Context of Early Literacy
- What We're Learning about Literacy:  
*A Research Snapshot for Today's Conversation*
- What We're Learning about Literacy Efforts:  
*Common Challenges & Pitfalls to our Desired Outcomes*
- Designing Programs for Impact:  
*Interactive Casework*
- Where Do We Go From Here:  
*The Next Generation of Improvement Initiatives*

# Who You Are

## *Introductions*

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Your name

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Your role

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# Who We Are

*Lectio Mission*

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Unlocking the power of our collective commitment to America's youngest readers

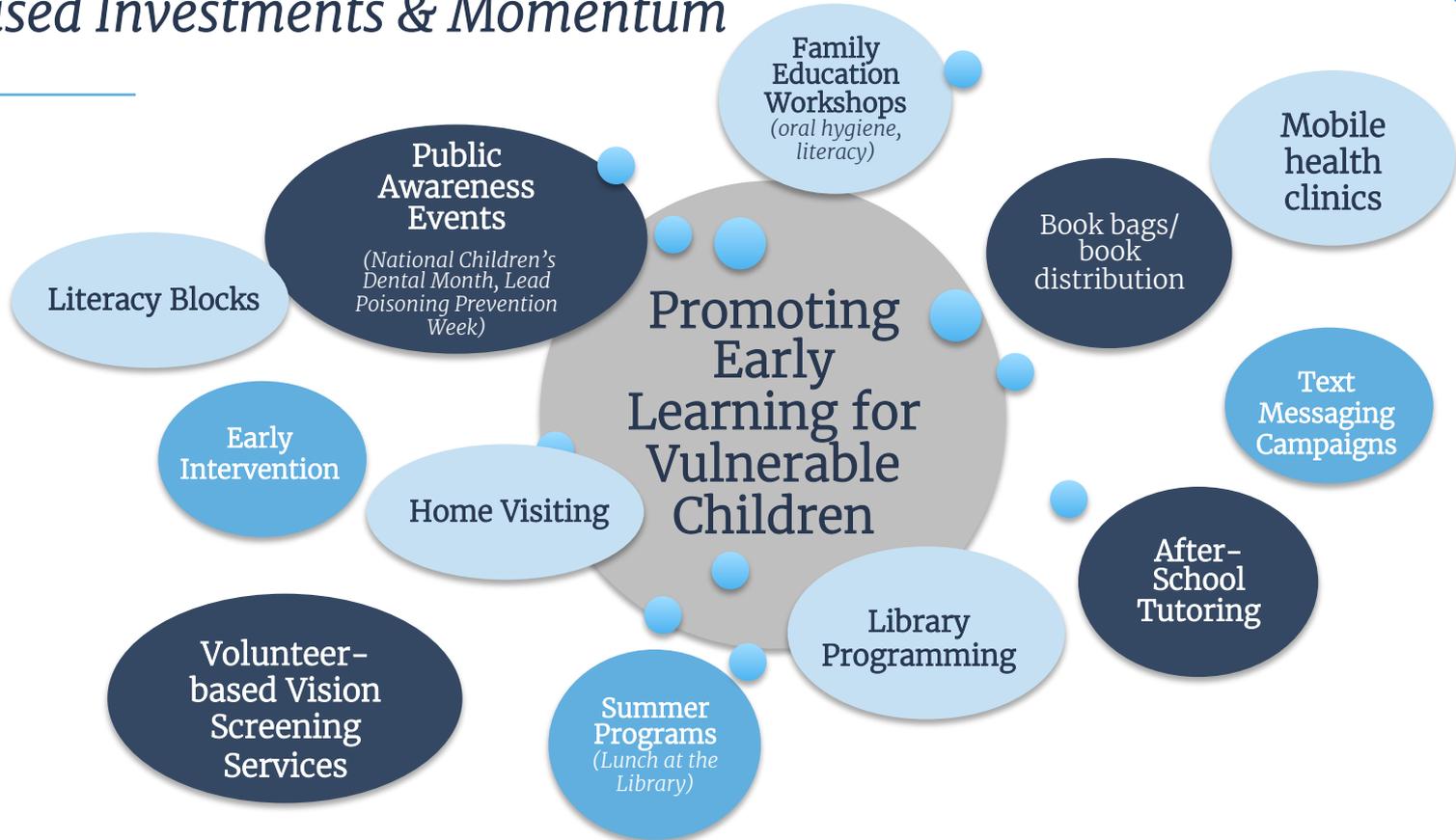
*We work to ensure that all children's literacy efforts and those they serve reach their potential, and that all stakeholders see the results and impacts they intended.*



# Today's National Context

## *Increased Investments & Momentum*

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# Today's National Context

## *Increased Investments & Momentum*



### Today's Tactics: *A Snapshot*

Investing in evidence-based programs with sound designs

Adopting promising practices from other communities

Monitoring implementation and evaluating program success

Strengthening the birth-age 8 continuum of supports

- community-based and cross-sector resources and efforts; targeting different ages and stages

# The Goal

High-Quality  
Experiences for All



# Lectio's Work: Capitalizing on the Promise & Efforts

## *Addressing Some Key Challenges and Pitfalls*

Need for increased intensity to meet goals

Limited/unclear information on impact

Need for more strategic coordination

Initiative fatigue

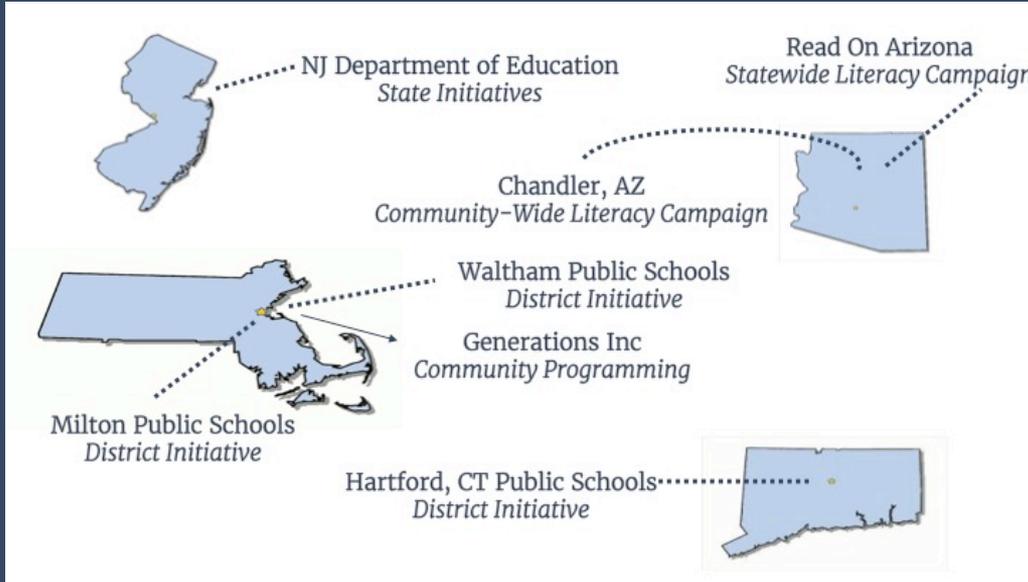
*Reading, health, cradle to career, etc.*



# Our Medium



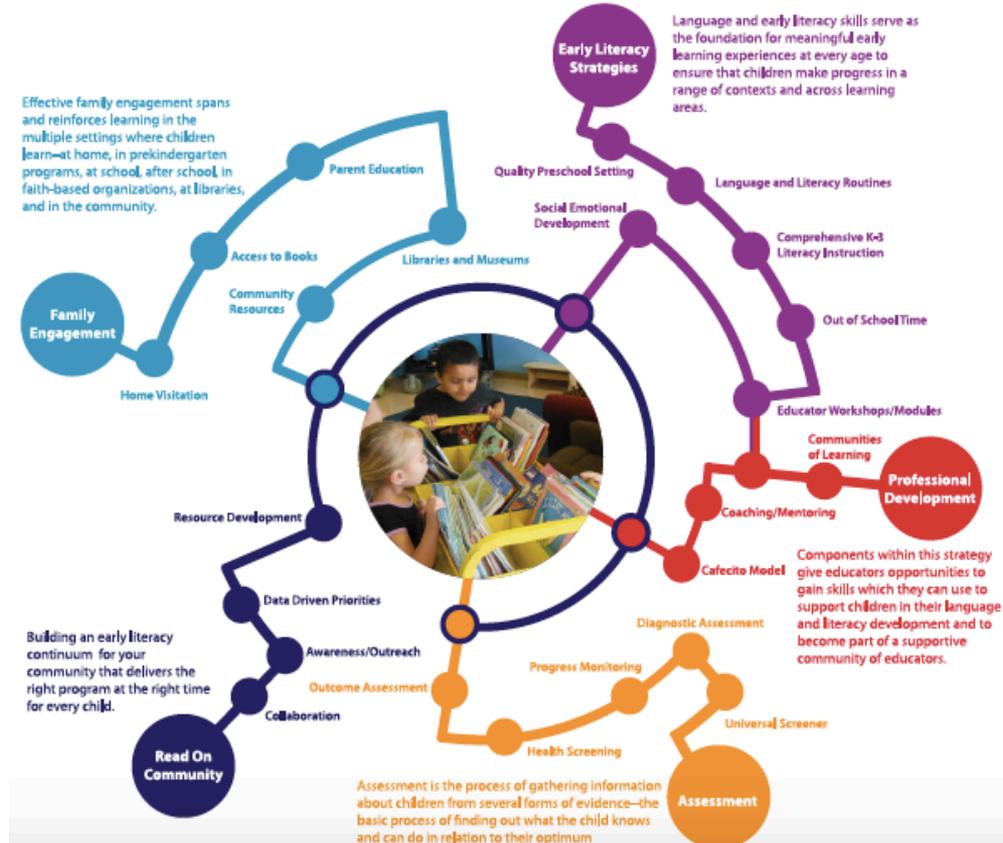
## 3-DAY TEAM-BASED INSTITUTES



- 5-Phase impact analysis
- Cross-sector teams  
(state, community, district, etc.)
- Professional learning community of change agents
- Facilitated, interactive sessions

# Lectio / Read On Partnership

## Extension and Advancement



# What We're Learning about Literacy: A Research Snapshot for Today's Conversation



# Talking about Talk

*Making the Distinction  
between Quality & Quantity*

Vocabulary at age 3 is the strongest predictor of 10<sup>th</sup> grade comprehension

# The Language-Reading Connection

*Accumulating knowledge for comprehension*



Has  
250-350  
words

Has  
3000-5000  
words

Now learning  
3,000 words/year

**Infant**

**Toddler**

**Preschooler**

**Early Elementary**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

Imitates  
Speech

Vocalize  
feelings  
(cry,  
giggle)

Looks  
through a  
book and  
retells the  
story

Reads simple  
books

Asks questions  
when listening  
to stories

Reads  
independently  
and talks about  
what he reads



# Quality vs. Quantity

## *Getting Beneath the 30 Million Word Gap*

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L

- Historical and current focus:
  - Increasing the *amount* of language children are exposed to—we've pushed for more *input*

- Talk Campaigns
- Targeted programs (*Reach out and Read, Home Visiting*)
- Public Service Announcements
- Family engagement efforts, etc.

# Quality vs. Quantity

*Getting Beneath the 30 Million Word Gap*



An  
Emerging  
Trend in  
Research

BUT emerging research highlights...it is the *quality* of the talk that matters, not the *quantity*...

Complicates  
our thinking &  
work re:  
program  
design

AND the kind of language interactions that promote later reading exist in households across the income spectrum

## Quality vs. Quantity

- What is Meant by Quality?

Exchange ends up sounding more like a story or explanation rather than directions or a list of questions and answers.

“Conversations” or back-and forth with babies, toddlers, and kids that:

- Are responsive to the child's utterances
- Follow-on and discuss what the child is interested in but also extend towards getting them outside of their immediate world
- Use routines and rituals (bedtime, story time, “my turn, your turn” play, etc.)
- Recall past events together
- Ask wh- questions
  - Beginning with “*where*” questions with babies who can respond with a point;
  - Moving to “*what*” questions that elicit labels;
  - Continuing with “*how*” and “*why*” questions that promote more explanatory talk
- Use symbols—words and gestures that keep an exchange going

# Quality vs. Quantity

## *Getting Beneath the 30 Million Word Gap*



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### Why quality and not quantity?

- Quality indicators are actually scaffolds—children are introduced to words *and learning the meaning and practicing their use*.
  - Demand more complex responses; are challenging forms of input for children.
- Without sufficient scaffolding, parents' and educators' words may flow by like background noise, with no impact on child learning.

# Implications

## Common Pitfall

- Engaging in ‘talk campaigns’ without a strategy for promoting quality
- Assuming that more talk is needed in many homes and communities, especially low-income
- Assuming educators = high-quality language for learning

## What We’re Learning

- Quantity is necessary but not sufficient.
- Families and early educators need supports and scaffolds re: the *how* to engage in foundational communication
- This is both a messaging and program design challenge

# In Formal Settings

## Traditional Practice

Starting conversations where children are – what they notice, their interests, their experiences

Posing questions, listening to the child's response, and commenting on that response

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Practice

- Extending children's talk to things they cannot see, past events, or the future
- Linking conversations to classroom learning

- Going back-and-forth multiple times (at least 5!)
- Using prompts to bring more children into the conversation

## TURN AND TALK

What does this research make you think about...

- your own efforts?
- the collective effort (e.g., community, district, and/or state)?

# What We're Learning about Literacy Efforts: A Snapshot for Today's Conversation



# Key Pitfall #1

*Lack of attention to program design within a comprehensive literacy effort*



Increase the quality of children's language and reading environments across the many settings in which they are growing up, from birth to age 9 and beyond

|  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Program Design & Implementation for Impact | Ongoing Assessment of Children & Settings | Re-Defined Adult Capacity-Building Models | Language-Rich, Rigorous, and Engaging Curricula | Partnerships with families focused on language & learning |
|--|---|---|---|---|

# Program Design for Impact

## *Conceptualizing for Impact*

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# Key Pitfall #2

*Disconnect Between What We've Invested in and What We Expect*



# Key Pitfall #3:

*No Clear Distinction between Outputs and Outcomes*



## Outputs

- Products of program activities

*(# of books distributed,  
# of tutoring hours,  
attendance rates)*



## Outcomes

- Changes in participants behaviors, knowledge, and skills

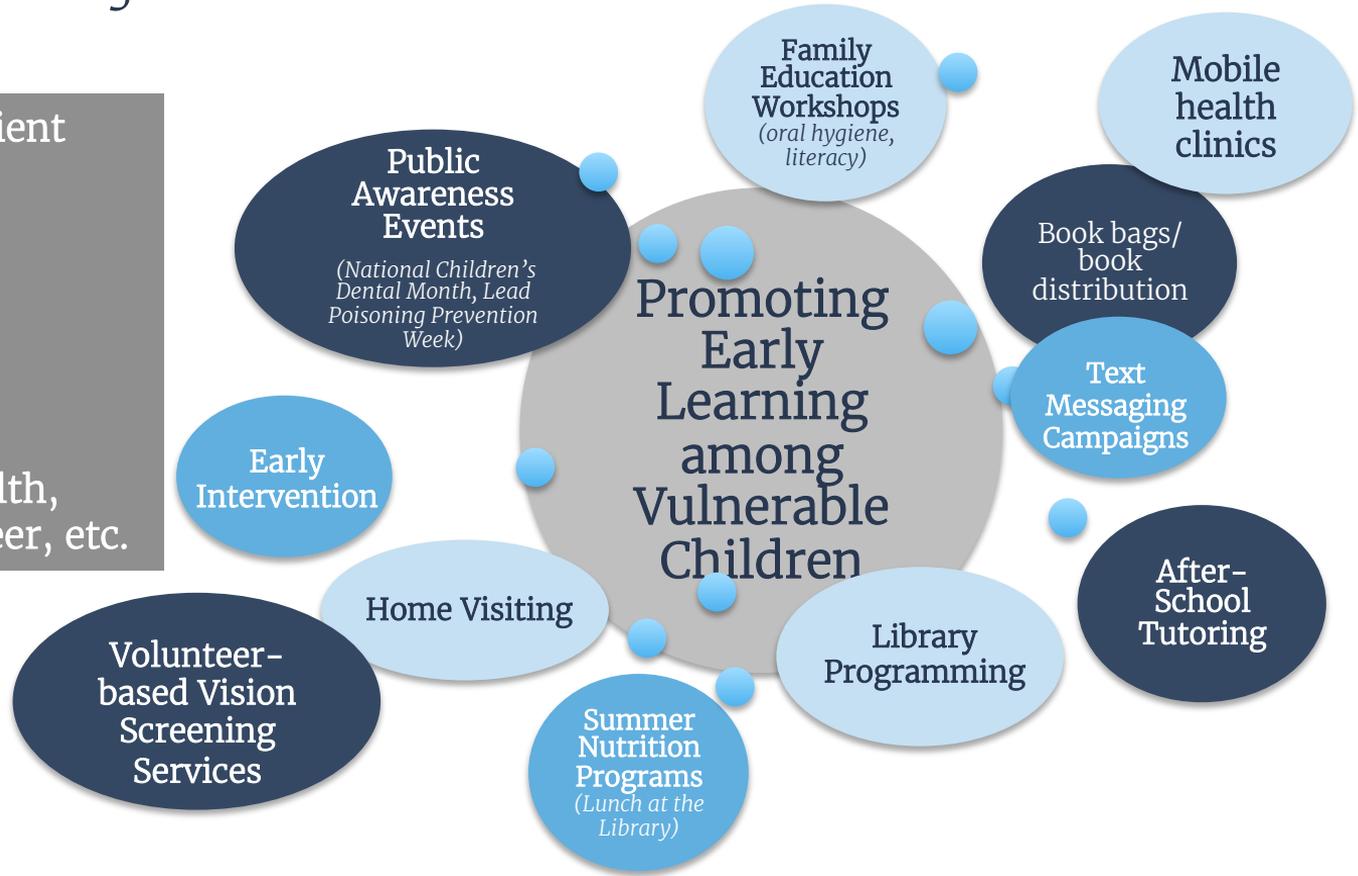
Intended Results

# Key Pitfall #4:

*Need for more strategic coordination*



- Sometimes inefficient redundancies
- Confusion among stakeholders and providers
- Initiative fatigue
  - Reading, health, cradle to career, etc.



# Our Response:

What does the Next Stage of Work Look Like for School Districts, Communities, and States?

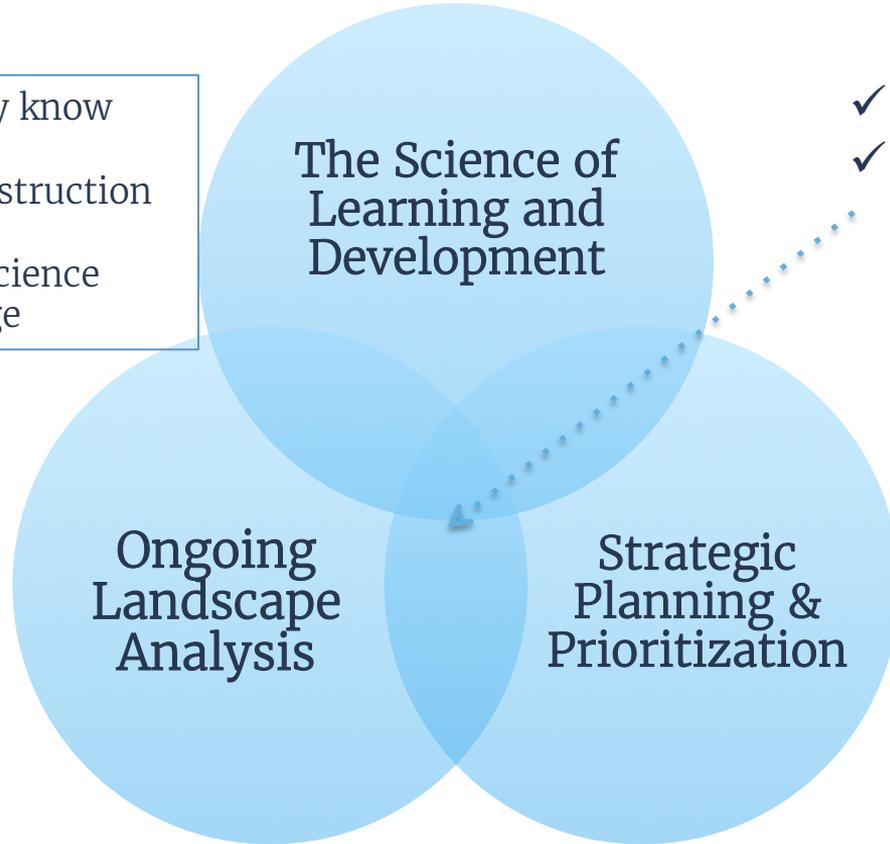


# The Lectio Approach



- Share what we currently know about:
  - Literacy and its instruction
  - Program design
  - Implementation science
  - Community change

- Identify programs, instruction, partners, resource allocations
- Analyze instructional opportunities and their current/potential impact
- Articulate strengths, challenges, gaps, etc.



- ✓ Increase Impact
- ✓ Maximize Resources (time, money, human capital)

- Identify pressing issues
- Make key decisions, plan for next phases of instructional improvement

# The Lectio Approach

## *Impact Analysis at Two Levels*

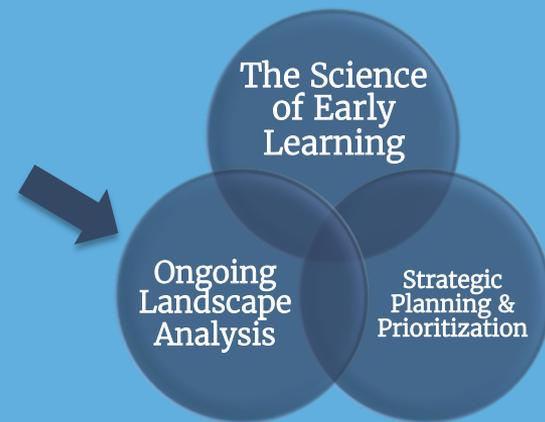
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Individual (Instructional Strategy, Program, Support)

Collective (School, District, Community, etc.)

# Designing Programs for Impact: Interactive Casework



# Case Study

## *“Read to Succeed!”*

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Partnering with two local housing developments, the local library holds on-site parent workshops called “Read to Succeed!”. For ten consecutive weeks, parents meet every Saturday morning in hopes to build their knowledge of early literacy development and to increase their children’s literacy skills. During each session, parents bring the book bag they received in their initial workshop and practice the taught literacy practices with those books provided. They also receive a library card, other resources, and step-by-step instructions for how best to provide these learning opportunities with their child. The librarians often lead the tightly linked sessions but are hoping to develop a cohort of parent leaders to continue running the program once completed. With a focus on promoting storytelling and bringing literacy to everyday life, parents leave the program expressing increased confidence and engagement with their children.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
**CASE: "Read to Succeed!"**

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**Case Questions:**

- What do you notice?
- What are the challenges?
- Consider and discuss the program design in light of the desired results. What changes may need to be made based on the information you have?
- How does the program's content relate to some of the research we discussed?

## NOTES

# Case Discussion

*Considering the program design in light of the desired results*

# Case Study

## *Kindergarten Readiness*

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To support 4- and 5- year-olds deemed at-risk on an early literacy screener, the preK classrooms made a change to their typical whole-group story hour on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. During this time, they began a reading initiative led by community volunteers. Capitalizing on a partnership with the business community, this initiative recruits employees from the nearby businesses to make a 10-month commitment, dedicating two hours weekly to read to participating children. At the outset, all volunteers attend a 2-hour training and information session. Each week, the volunteer is assigned a pair or trio and reads a high-interest book selected from a collection put together with the participating children in mind. To monitor the children's literacy growth over the course of the year, during the fall, spring, and winter the teachers assess letter and word recognition as well as story retell skills. The goal is that by the year's end, these at-risk children will be "kindergarten ready."

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## NOTES

# Case Discussion

*Considering the program design in light of the desired results*

# Case Study

## *Summer Learning*

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Staffed by district elementary teachers and retired reading specialists, a 6-week summer program aims to mitigate potential summer learning loss and boost low literacy skills among first graders. Using end-of-year assessment data, 150 children are identified for the program, which integrates outdoor learning and literacy-learning experiences. Each day, children engage in tasks and activities—journal writing, choral reading, and self-selected independent reading—that connect to the program’s curriculum. Throughout the day, the staff are often seen working with a young child who is reading independently; the staff member asks questions of the child and provides support and redirection as needed, and then logs these interactions. The program is designed to promote literacy growth and foster exploration, play, and positive social interactions. Data on each participating child’s word reading accuracy and fluency are gathered pre-and post-program.

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**CASE: "Read to Succeed!"**

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## NOTES

# Case Discussion

*Considering the program design in light of the desired results*

# To Summarize...

## *Current Trends Across the Nation*

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Individual (Program, Support)

Collective (Community, District, etc.)

- Disconnect between the program's design and delivery and the intended outcome
- Often no indicators of impact for a given program or support
- Staff training efforts are low-intensity in nature
- Lack of specificity of the intervention's specific mechanisms
  - limiting the ability to accurately apply and scale the model

# To Summarize...

## *Current Trends Across the Nation*

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Individual (Program, Support)

Collective (Community, District, etc.)

- Many more program types serve a raising awareness function than changing behaviors
- Consider a more balanced approach, rounding out the “Nice to do” vs. “Need to do” disequilibrium

Where do we go  
from here?

Bringing it All Together

# Moving Forward

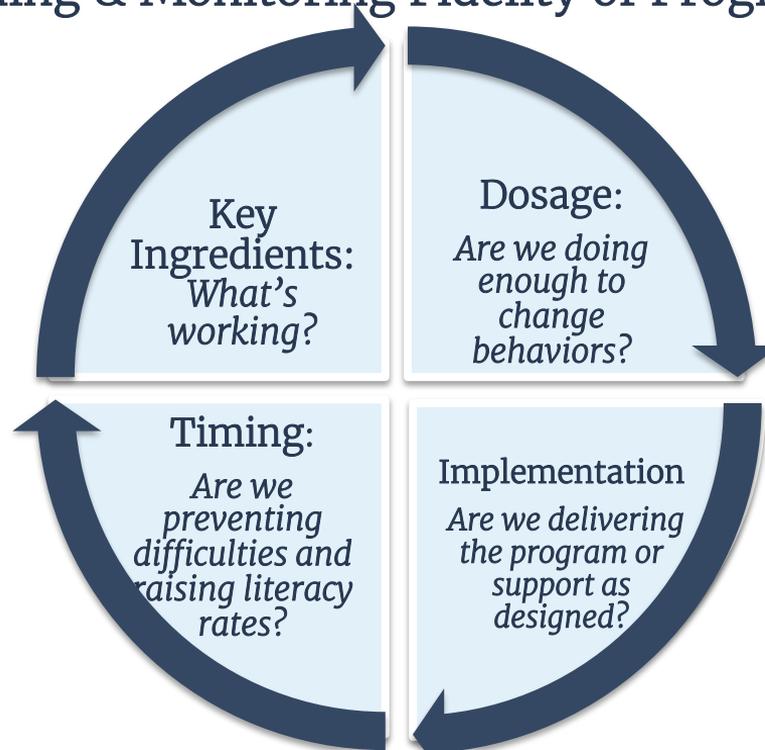
## *Critical Analysis on the Road to Impact*



Individual (Program, Support)

Collective (Community, District, etc.)

### Determining & Monitoring Fidelity of Program Implementation



Lesaux et al. (2010) *Turning the Page: Refocusing Massachusetts for Reading Success*

# Moving Forward

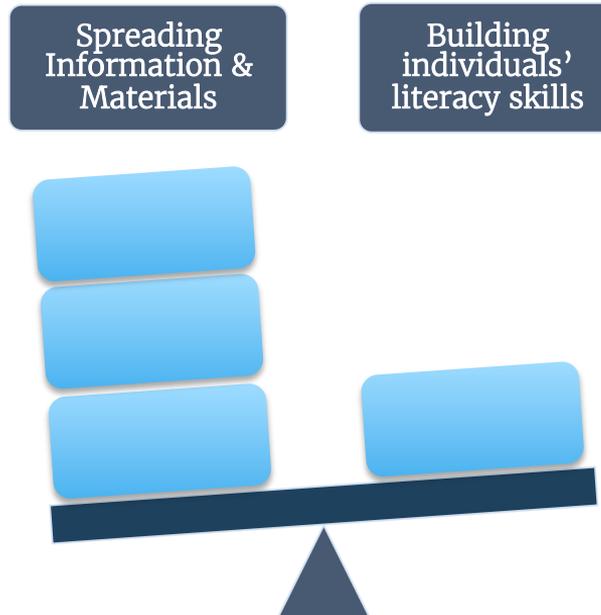
## *Critical Analysis on the Road to Impact*



Individual (Program, Support)

Collective (Community, District, etc.)

Resource Allocation and Management  
*(Re)allocating Some Resources Toward Changing Behaviors*



# Q&A



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# THANK YOU

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Join our network of over 100 partners:

- **ATTEND** the Read On/Lectio Institute
  - *October 25-26 (contact Read On AZ for more details)*
- **SIGN UP** for our newsletter
- **PARTICIPATE** in our webinar series this fall
  - *Overcoming Common Pitfalls and Identifying High-Stakes Decisions for Literacy Success*