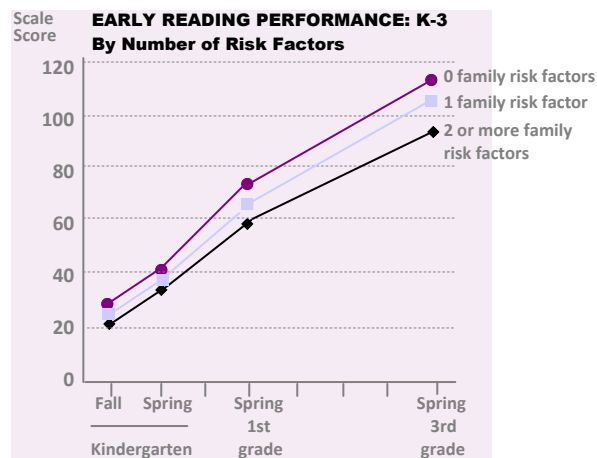


### The Issue: Building Literacy through Family Engagement

Nearly half the children entering kindergarten lack the early reading skills needed for school success, according to The Condition of Education 2000-2010 published by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Science. Further, the effects of these deficits persist on reading acquisition through third grade. (See graph)

Two decades of research point to **the benefits of family engagement in children's learning** for promoting academic achievement, including reading achievement.\* When families' involvement in school increases from kindergarten through third grade, children's literacy achievement increases. Furthermore, family involvement matters *most* for children whose mothers have the *least* education.\*\*



ORIGINAL SOURCE: Rathbun, A, and West, J. (2004). From *Kindergarten Through Third Grade: Children's Beginning School Experiences* (NCES 2004-2007), e data file, Fall 1998, Spring 1999, Spring 2000, and Spring 2002.

### Raising A Reader's Approach

Raising A Reader is an evidence-based literacy and family engagement program for children ages birth through kindergarten. Raising A Reader rotates bright red bags filled with award-winning children's books into homes on a weekly basis, exposing each child to approximately 100 books per year. Raising A Reader also offers resources and training to build parents' skills in interactive reading techniques and connects families to their local library. By increasing book access and parent knowledge and skills, the program promotes the quality and frequency of shared reading between parents and children. In short, **Raising A Reader offers a meaningful family engagement program that enhances the literacy efforts of classroom teachers.**

### Why Use Raising A Reader in Kindergarten?

- **Family Engagement to Support Literacy:** Raising A Reader helps children and families build home literacy routines that reinforce classroom literacy instruction.
- **Building Children's Internal Motivation:** Raising A Reader complements direct literacy instruction by ensuring all children have the opportunity for meaningful book sharing experiences with a caring adult; experiences that continue to develop the language, comprehension and internal motivation to become a skilled lifelong reader.
- **Greater Impact through Early Engagement:** Raising A Reader builds strong connections that help set the stage for meaningful family engagement and establish a strong literacy trajectory for children.
- **Articulation between pre-K and K:** Easily implemented in pre-Kindergarten, summer bridge programs and kindergarten classrooms, Raising A Reader offers strong pre-K-K programmatic articulation.
- **Scalable and Affordable:** Raising A Reader offers overburdened teachers with tight budgets a turnkey program that is easy to scale and affordable, with program materials that last an average of five years.
- **Fundable through Title I:** Title I regulations require support for family engagement as a means to improving children's literacy achievement. The U.S. Department of Education recently proposed doubling Title I family engagement funds.

"Parents need to read aloud daily, supply engaging books, listen to their child read, and help their child develop an enjoyment of books and reading."

Dr. Louisa Cook Moats, author of *Speech to Print* and *Parenting a Struggling Reader*

\*Weiss, H.B., Caspe, M. & Lopez, M.E. (2006). Family involvement in early childhood education. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

\*\*Dearing, E., Kreider, H., Simpkins, S., & Weiss, H. B. (2006). Family involvement in school and low-income children's literacy performance: Longitudinal associations between and within families. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98, 653-664.

## Proven Results

To date, 19 *independent* evaluations demonstrate Raising A Reader's statistically significant effects, including increased frequency of family reading behavior, use of community libraries, and improved language and literacy outcomes for children across diverse economic, cultural and language backgrounds.

### Kindergarten Readiness for Children Exposed to RAR

Evaluators at the Garfield County School District in Rifle, Colorado concluded that a large proportion of students exposed to RAR prior to kindergarten are strategically ready for or already proficient in pre-reading skills, based on their fall Kindergarten assessment battery:

- 91% strategic or proficient in letter naming fluency (DIBELS)
- 98% strategic or proficient in sound fluency (DIBELS)
- 88% proficient in rhyming (PALS)

"The trend we are seeing is that the kids who participate in Raising a Reader are more ready to learn how to read and write when they enter kindergarten. That early exposure to books and reading is so incredibly important, and we're seeing that it is a powerful tool to close achievement gaps, even by age five."

Julie Knowles,  
Director of Assessment &  
Special Programs,  
Garfield County School  
District Region 2, Rifle, Colo.

## Case Study: Helping Parents Support Classroom Literacy Efforts

As Jeanette Pauls, former kindergarten teacher at Calistoga Elementary School in Calistoga, California, will tell you, her reason for wanting Raising A Reader for her classroom was all about getting books in her students' hands.

Working at a school where 70 percent of the children live at or below the poverty level, Jeanette wanted to have an impact on students not only in the classroom but to also support what parents could do at home.

She recalls one kindergarten student who brought her home reading log back to school each day with the same title listed. When Jeanette asked the student if the reason she did this was because it was her favorite book, the little girl told her no, it was because it was the only book she had at home.

Raising A Reader gives this student and others like her regular access to the high quality books at home so parents have the opportunity to help build literacy skills important for their school success.

## About Raising A Reader

Raising A Reader is a national nonprofit organization offering local agencies an evidence-based early literacy and family engagement program that has been demonstrated to improve the reading readiness skills of children from birth through kindergarten. With nearly half of all U.S. children entering kindergarten lacking the early reading skills needed for success in school, Raising A Reader has set a long-term goal of reaching one million children and families.

In 2010 Raising A Reader served 110,000 children through its 2,500 affiliate sites across the country. Since its founding Raising A Reader has reached more than 700,000 children working with organizations such as United Way, Head Start, home visiting programs and school districts.



**Raising A Reader's mission is to engage parents in a routine of daily "book cuddling" with their children from birth through age five to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills critical for school success.**

For more information about Raising A Reader, please visit [raisingareader.org](http://raisingareader.org)