

How can we prevent reading difficulties in all children including those learning English as a second language?

A program developed and tested by Dr. Linda Siegel (UBC) & North Vancouver School District

1. Identify children in kindergarten who are at risk for early reading difficulties
2. Provide literacy activities for the class and in small groups
3. Monitor progress annually

Identify

Assessments by teachers or assistants after 1-hr training
Children tested in classroom at start of year
Testing takes 20 minutes
 letter identification
 memory
 phonological processing
 syntax
Identify children at risk for reading difficulties

Intervene

Components

 sound-letter connections (phonics)
 breaking words into sounds (phonological awareness)
 building vocabulary
 initial sounds, blending, sound discrimination
 basic grammar through modeling
 repeated exposure to books and story structure
 teachers read stories, children act out, retell, discuss,
 draw pictures of the stories, etc.

Small groups

 combine ESL and native English speakers with similar skill level
 work 20 minutes, 3-4 times per week
 provide individually-targeted help when needed
 base exercises on programs proven to be effective
 Launch into Reading Success; Firm Foundations; Reading 44

Classroom activities

 phonological
 literacy activities: songs, rhymes, stories, letter games

Monitor

Test reading, spelling, and mathematics skills every year
Measure decoding and comprehension skills
Introduce comprehension, communication, and literacy problem-solving activities

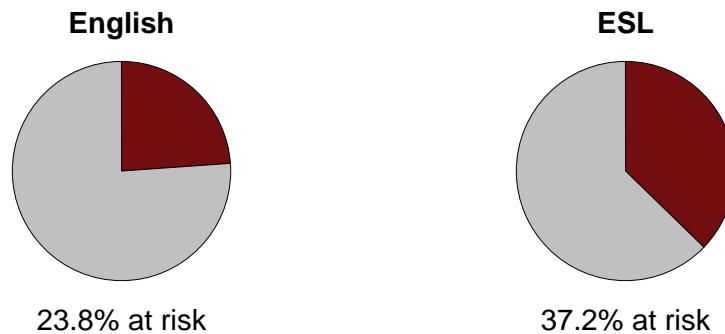
How do we know it will work?

The program was tested with over 1000 children in the 30 schools of the North Vancouver School District starting in 1997.

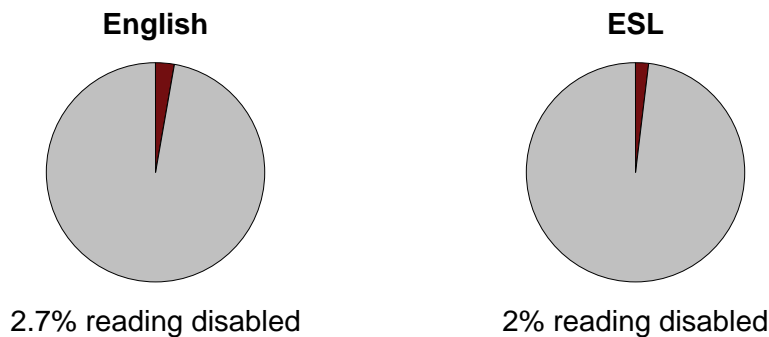
Children varied in socioeconomic status. For 20% of the children, English was not the language of their home.

Screening and intervention began in kindergarten. By Grade 2 ESL speakers matched or performed better on reading and spelling tests than children who were native English speakers. Success continued as depicted in the graphs below.

Kindergarten (1997)



Grade 4 (2002)



This program is innovative because the intervention does not cost very much since it is introduced by teachers as part of the reading program and is done right in the classroom.
~ Dr. Linda Siegel

How can we learn more?

Visit the website of the North Vancouver District School Board (<http://www.nvdsd44.bc.ca>) and find out about the intervention programs: *Firm Foundations* and *Reading 44*.

Read the scientific publication by Dr. Siegel and her colleague:

Lesaux, N. K. and Siegel, L. S. (2003). The development of reading in children who speak English as a second language. *Developmental Psychology*, 39, 1005-1019.

To implement the program in your school district contact:

Dr. Linda S. Siegel
linda.siegel@ubc.ca

