



EXPERTS GUIDE

THE CAMPAIGN FOR
GRADE-LEVEL READING



3 RD GRADE
READING
≡ SUCCESS
MATTERS



Reading by the End of Third Grade

If students don't learn to read well by the end of third grade, they seldom catch up. In fact, they are four times more likely to drop out than better readers. Yet, more than four out of five children from low-income families are not hitting that benchmark. The personal and social costs are staggering, affecting success in school, work, and life. There is a growing consensus that grade-level reading should be a shared national goal.

CONTACTS:

- **Nonie Lesaux**, professor of human development and urban education advancement at Harvard University, an adviser to the Striving Readers program and member of the Reading First Advisory Committee. Her research includes early vocabulary development and reading, and effective instructional strategies to prevent reading difficulties. (617) 495-3523 or nonie_lesaux@gse.harvard.edu
 - **Susan Neuman**, professor of education at the University of Michigan, a prominent researcher on early literacy and a former U.S. Department of Education official who helped implement the federal reading program. sbneuman@umich.edu
 - **Don Hernandez**, professor of sociology at Hunter College whose research shows that third grade reading skills and poverty have a powerful influence on whether a student will graduate from high school. Donald.Hernandez@hunter.cuny.edu
 - **Elizabeth Burke Bryant**, executive director, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, a children's policy and research organization, and a leader in policy development for the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. ebb@rikidscount.org
 - **B.J. Walker**, who established a statewide campaign in Georgia, embracing the birth–8 framework, to ensure children learn to read on grade level. beverlyjowalker@gmail.com
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RESEARCH:

- *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, updated March 2012
- *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Special Report, Annie E. Casey Foundation, May 2010
- Lesnick, Joy et al., *Students At and Above Grade Level for Reading in Grade 3 Graduate from High School at Higher Rates Than Students Below Grade Level*, Chapin Hall, 2010

There is a collection of research on www.gradelevelreading.net

School Readiness and Preschool

Research shows that the poor children come to kindergarten having heard 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers. This vast gap in words and language leads to developmental delays that then predict a tougher climb to literacy. Increasingly communities are engaging parents to drench their children in words and expanding preschool seats to prepare students for success. Other educators are focusing on lining up early learning with what happens in the primary grades.

CONTACTS:

- **Tamara Halle**, co-director of early childhood research at Child Trends, recently authored a report on early learning disparities, literacy development among English language learning children, and evaluations of early childhood curricula, programs, and professional development initiatives. (202) 572-6034 or thalle@childtrends.org
 - **Ellen Galinsky**, president and co-founder of Families and Work Institute and author of *Mind in the Making*, Galinsky can speak about the research on how even the youngest children interact with their environment. (212) 465-2044
 - **Gary Resnick**, director of researcher for Harder + Company Community Research and a nationally recognized expert in child development research who has studied children ranging in age from infancy through adolescence. (415) 522-5400
 - **Sarah Watson**, director of Ready Nation, a business partnership for early childhood and economic success. (202) 657-0661 or saraw@americaspromise.org
 - **Lisa Klein**, executive director of the Birth to Five Policy Alliance, which promotes innovative and successful policies to achieve early learning, strong families, and good health for vulnerable children birth to age 5. lisa.klein@birthtofivepolicy.org
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RESEARCH:

- Hart, Betty M. and Todd R. Risley, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*, Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 1995
- Hustedt, Jason T. et al., *The New Mexico PreK Evaluation: Impacts From the Fourth Year (2008–2009) of New Mexico’s State-Funded PreK Program*, National Institute for Early Childhood Research, November 2010
- Storch, Stacey A. and Grover Whitehurst, *The Role of Family and Home in the Literacy Development of Children from Low-Income Backgrounds*, New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development No. 92, Summer 2001
- Heckman, J.J., “Skill formation and the economics of investing in disadvantaged children,” *Science*, 2006; 312(5782):1900–1902



Pirate Sam

Chronic Absence

Education reform has long focused on reducing truancy in high schools, overlooking a critical problem in the early years, where one in 10 of our youngest students is missing a month or more of school each year. Many of these children aren't truants, since 5-year-olds generally stay home with a parent's permission. But excused or not, these absences are hurting students academically, especially low-income kids. By middle school, chronic absence is a key predictor of high school dropout rates.

CONTACTS:

- **Hedy Chang**, director of Attendance Works, a national initiative aimed creating better practice and policy around attendance. Chang is one of the first researchers to delve into chronic early absence. Check out the website at www.attendanceworks.org, email her at hedy@attendanceworks.org or call (415) 505-6845
- **Bob Balfanz**, co-director, Everyone Graduates Center, and a research scientist at Johns Hopkins University, who has conducted research showing that chronic absence as early as middle school is a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school. rbalfanz@CSOS.jhu.edu
- New York City schools, where research shows one in five elementary students is chronically absent, has a pilot program in 50 schools that involves building public awareness and assigning members to at-risk students. The Children's Aid Society is assisting the effort, as well as its own initiative, which has added school-based health clinics to help reduce absences
 - **Leslie Cornfeld** in Mayor Bloomberg's office. LCornfeld@cityhall.nyc.gov or contact **Peter Goldwasser** at (646) 469-6762 or pgoldwasser@cityhall.nyc.gov
 - **Abe Fernandez**, community schools consultant at the Children's Aid Society. (212) 949-4800
 - **Andrew White** or **Kim Nauer** who conducted research showing one in five NYC students are chronically absent, with the New School's Center for New York City Affairs. (212) 229-5400
- Baltimore city schools, where the schools chief demonstrated the gap in test scores for chronically absent students and where a new approach to structuring middle schools and reducing suspensions led to a significant drop in chronic absence in the middle grades
 - **Heidi Stevens**, coordinator of the School Every Day! Volunteer Initiative. (410) 545-1870 or hstevens@bcps.k12.md.us
 - **Sue Fothergill**, Director of the Baltimore Student Attendance Initiative. (410) 404-4570 or fothergill.sue@gmail.com
 - **Jane Sundius**, Director of Education and Youth Development for the Open Society Institute. (410) 234-1091 or jsundius@sorosny.org

RESEARCH:

- *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes*, Applied Survey Research, May 2011
- Chang, Hedy and Mariajose Romero, *Present, Engaged & Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades*, National Center for Children in Poverty: NY, NY, September 2008
- Durham, Rachel and Stephen B. Plank, *Maintaining High Achievement in Baltimore: An Overview of the Elementary School Trajectories of Four Recent City Schools First Grade Cohorts*, Baltimore Educational Research Consortium, March 2010
- Nauer, Kim, Andrew White and Rajeev Yerneni, *Strengthening Schools by Strengthening Families: Community Strategies to Reverse Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades and Improve Supports for Children and Families*, Center for New York City Affairs at the New School, October 2008



Summer Learning Loss

Research shows that most students fall more than two months behind in math over the summer, and low-income children lose two to three months in reading achievement during the break from school. While school districts nationwide are cutting summer school to deal with shrinking budgets, a growing number of forward-thinking districts—such as Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Minneapolis—are instead investing in comprehensive, innovative summer learning programs.

CONTACTS:

- **Gary Huggins**, CEO, and **Jeff Smink**, vice president for policy, at the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), which promotes best practices and policies for learning and health over the summer months. ghuggins@summerlearning.org, jsmink@summerlearning.org or contact Kate Shatzkin at (410) 856-1370
 - **Catherine Augustine** and **Jennifer Sloan McCombs**, RAND Corporation researchers who authored the 2011 *Making Summer Count* report demonstrating the value of summer learning programs in turning around the summer slide. Contact the RAND Office of Media Relations at (310) 451-6913 or by email at media@rand.org
 - **Karl Alexander**, professor of sociology, Johns Hopkins University, has done compelling research on the impact of summer learning loss. karl@jhu.edu
 - **Ron Fairchild**, senior consultant for the Campaign and past director of the NSLA, has a deep knowledge of the topic. ron@gradelevelreading.net
 - **Ed Pauly**, director of research and evaluation at The Wallace Foundation, which invests in summer learning. EPauly@wallacefoundation.org
 - **Lorna Smith**, CEO of Horizons National, an award-winning summer enrichment program that brings low-income public school students to private school and university campuses for six weeks of academics, arts, and sports. (203) 594-7040 or lsmith@horizonsnational.org
 - **Tiffany Cooper Gueye**, CEO of Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL), a summer learning program that operates in disadvantaged, urban neighborhoods. Contact Stacey Clark at (617) 740-0458 or stacey.clarke@experiencebell.org
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RESEARCH:

- *Making Summer Count, How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning*, The Rand Corporation, June 2011
- Alexander, Karl R. et al., *Lasting Consequences of Summer Learning Loss*, American Sociological Review, April 2007
- Von Hippel, P.T., B. Powell, D.B. Downey, and N.J. Rowland, *Changes in Children's Body Mass Index (BMI) During School and Summer 2006*

Retention

The importance of reading well by the end of third grade has prompted several states to enact or consider automatic retention policies holding back struggling readers. This is a complex, divisive issue that does not lend itself to easy answers. The Campaign supports a responsible approach to promotion that recognizes the importance of starting early to achieve reading proficiency.

CONTACTS:

- **Mary Laura Bragg**, a director at the Foundation for Excellence in Education. She ran then-Gov. Jeb Bush's reading initiative, which included the third grade retention policy and other early education initiatives. (850) 391-3077 or MaryLaura@excelined.org
- **Melissa Roderick**, a University of Chicago professor and senior director of the Consortium on Chicago School Research who found that Chicago's retention policy had little effect on student achievement. m-roderick@uchicago.edu
- **Jay P. Greene**, an endowed professor of education reform at the University of Arkansas, has written reports touting test score gains that occurred after Florida instituted a third grade retention policy about a decade ago. (479) 575-3172 or jpg@uark.edu
- **Karen Schimke** and **Stephanie Rose**, analysts at the Education Commission of the States who prepared a report discussing third grade retention policies and proposals in various states. kschimke@ecs.org and srose@ecs.org or (303) 299-3673
- **Sunny Deye**, a policy analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures tracking retention issues. sunny.deye@ncsl.org
- **Barbara O'Brien**, the former lieutenant governor of Colorado and a senior fellow at the Piton Foundation, who is also helping to develop policy for the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. obrien.barbara@gmail.com

RESEARCH:

- Rose, Stephanie and Karen Schimke, *Third Grade Literacy Policies: Identification, Intervention, Retention*, Education Commission of the States, March 2012
- Green, Jay P. and Marcus A. Winters, *GETTING FARTHER AHEAD BY STAYING BEHIND: A Second-Year Evaluation of Florida's Policy to End Social Promotion*, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, 2006
- McCombs, Jennifer Sloan and Shelia Nataraj Kirby, *Ending Social Promotion Without Leaving Children Behind The Case of New York City*, RAND Corporation, 2009
- Nagaoka, Jenny and Melissa Roderick, *Ending Social Promotion: The Effects of Retention*, Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2004

Family Engagement

Parents are the first and most important teachers in their children's lives. Research shows that students are most successful academically and socially when their parents are involved and engaged in their learning.

CONTACTS:

- **Sharon Darling**, president and founder of the National Center for Family Literacy, which works to ensure that parents support their children's educational efforts at home and that parents themselves know how to read. (502) 584-1133, ext. 129 or sdarling@famlit.org
 - **Oscar Cruz**, president and CEO of Families in Schools, which works to improve student outcomes by strengthening parent and community involvement. ocruz@familiesinschools.org or call communications coordinator Maria Abraham at (213) 201-3913
 - **Sandra Gutierrez**, national director of Abriendo Puertas, an offshoot of Families in Schools that focuses on Latino families. (213) 201-3908 or sgutierrez@familiesinschools.org
 - **Joyce Epstein**, author of some of the seminal research on family engagement and director of The National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. (410) 516-8807 or jepstein@jhu.edu
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RESEARCH:

- Epstein, Joyce, *School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share*, Phi Delta Kappan, 1995
- Belfield, Clive and Emma Garcia, *Parental Notions of School Readiness: How Have They Changed and Has Preschool Made a Difference?* National Institute for Early Education Research, February 2012
- Gelber, Alexander M. and Adam Isen, *Children's Schooling and Parents' Investment in Children: Evidence from the Head Start Impact Study*, National Bureau of Economic Research, December 2011

For more information on any of these issues, contact **Phyllis Jordan** at (301) 655-0348 or pjordan@thehatchergroup.com and **Stacey Mink** at (410) 962-5707 or stacey@thehatchergroup.com.



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