



## Raising a Reader is Evidence-Based and Evidence-Informed

There is decades of research in the early childhood and education field that supports the foundation of Raising a Reader's theory of change – high quality home literacy environments improve later literacy outcomes. This history has recently been reviewed and expanded upon in a new research-based initiative of Digital Promise, known as the Learner Variability Project. [Learner Variability Project](#) (LVP), focuses on recent learning sciences research and identifies three main themes about teaching and learning literacy at the PreK-3 level, and identifies key factors that are critical to strong literacy outcomes. The foundational theme to their PreK-3 literacy model is:

Early language experiences lay the foundation for reading and writing. Literacy development is rooted in children's early language experiences, nurtured by their [Home Literacy Environment](#), which includes important indicators, such as:

- The availability of reading and writing materials in the home.
- Time that parents and caregivers spend reading to their children.

According to LVP, children who develop early literacy skills before starting school by reading books and writing with caregivers often progress in school more easily and quickly. LVP's model emphasizes the integral connection between home literacy environments and other learner factors that are critical to positive literacy outcomes.

With coaching support from Harvard Center for the Developing Child, Raising A Reader updated our Theory of Change in 2021. This updated theory of change incorporates a child's sense of belonging and self-regulation, in addition to improved home literacy environment, as critical to achieving kindergarten readiness and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy proficiency. In sum, Raising A Reader's theory is that if we improve a child's home literacy environment and increase the child's sense of belonging and self-regulation, they will have stronger literacy outcomes – a theory that continues to be substantiated by the extensive research-base of the Learner Variability Project.

Following is a table of three child-level primary factors that RAR addresses and how they align to research-based whole-child factors identified by LVP that are critical for literacy outcomes. Also included are the specific RAR strategies that have been proven to impact the identified factors.

**Raising a Reader Alignment with Research-Based Strategies**

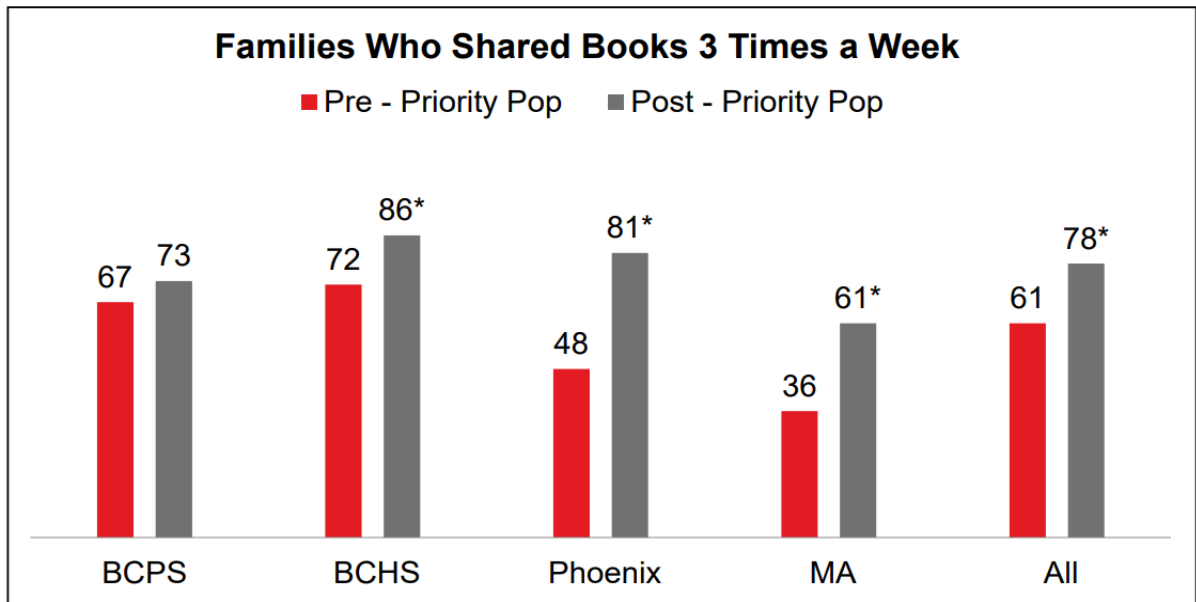
Primary Factors RAR addresses	Research-based “whole child” factors that connect to RAR primary factor that are critical for literacy outcomes	Research-based strategies related to primary factor that are incorporated into RAR programming
Home Literacy Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Motivation</li> <li>- Alphabet knowledge</li> <li>- Syntax</li> <li>- Print awareness</li> <li>- Phonological awareness</li> <li>- Morphological awareness</li> <li>- Narrative skills</li> <li>- Foundational writing skills</li> <li>- Decoding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dialogic reading</li> <li>- Discussing race with students</li> <li>- Games</li> <li>- Imagining</li> <li>- Independent reading</li> <li>- Manipulatives</li> <li>- Participatory and partner read-alouds</li> <li>- Read-alouds</li> <li>- Pre-reading questioning</li> <li>- Rereading</li> <li>- Rich library: complexity</li> <li>- Rich library: primary language</li> <li>- Rich library: SEL topics</li> <li>- Selecting culturally responsive texts</li> </ul>
Sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Primary language</li> <li>- Emotion</li> <li>- Self-regulation</li> <li>- Social awareness &amp; relationship skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussing emotions</li> <li>- Discussing race with students</li> <li>- Family engagement</li> <li>- Free choice</li> <li>- Model connections to text</li> <li>- Participatory and partner read-alouds</li> <li>- Non-intensive HLE intervention program</li> <li>- Rich library: Primary Language</li> <li>- Rich library: SEL topics</li> <li>- Strengths-based approach</li> </ul>

**Raising a Reader Evidence Base from Independent Evaluations**

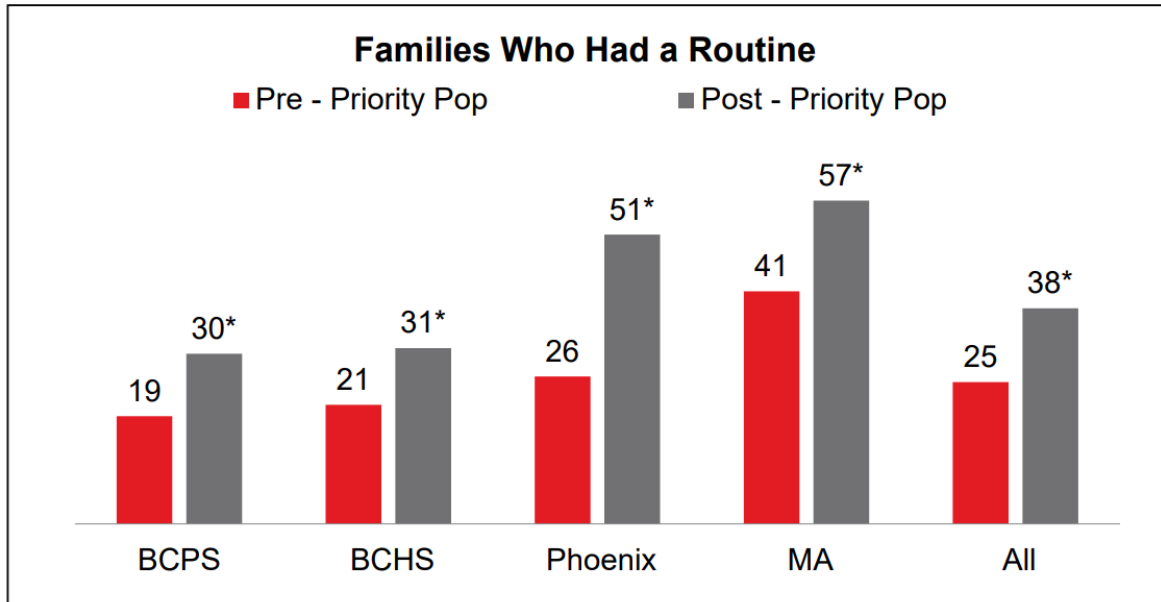
From 1999-2017, Raising a Reader has been part of 39 independent program evaluations\* of its Classic Red Book Bag Program, which have consistently demonstrated statistically significant impacts on family home literacy environments and early reading skills in the following ways:

- Increased access to books in the home.
- Increased frequency and duration of shared reading times
- Improved parent-child interactions during reading
- Improved early literacy skills

Below are select findings from our independent program evaluations:



Child Trends (2014). US Department of Education. Innovative Approaches to Literacy Grant.



Child Trends (2014). US Department of Education. Innovative Approaches to Literacy Grant.

Increase in vocabulary gains	<b>68%</b> (RAR) vs <b>39%</b> (control group)
Percentage of 1 <sup>st</sup> graders reading at grade level	<b>61%</b> (RAR) vs <b>43%</b> (control group)
Statistically significant improvements in pre-literacy skills on 54-point Likert scale	<b>4.6-point increase</b> in letter identification <b>4.6-point increase</b> in sound identification <b>5.1-point increase</b> in concepts of print

\*\*Gooze, Rachel, Sacks, Vanessa, Rojas, Angela, and Walker, Karen (Child Trends, 2015). Report of Pilot Implementation and Outcomes Study San Diego Unified School District.

\*\*Chao, S. L., Mattocks, G., Birden, A., Manarino-Leggett, P. (2015). The Impact of the Raising A Reader Program on Family Literacy Practices and Receptive Vocabulary of Children in Pre-Kindergarten. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 43, 427–434

For a full summary of evaluations that occurred between 2000-2017, please see the companion brief entitled *Raising A Reader's Independent Evaluation Summary*.



## Raising a Reader Program Affiliate Evaluation Results from 2018-2022

Raising a Reader regularly measures program impact through direct feedback from our Affiliates across the country. Depending on community preference, either pre and post surveys or a retrospective survey designed by [Child Trends](#), are completed by parents and caregivers of children participating in Raising a Reader programming. RAR utilizes a data analytics tool developed by Child Trends to track and evaluate impact.

Below are select findings **averaged** from data received from **five** Southern California Affiliates: Rialto Unified School District, Hemet School District, Baldwin Park Unified School District, Mountain View School District and Coachella Valley Unified School District

Percentage of parents who had a home book sharing routine.	<b>Improved by 36% after RAR</b>
Minutes spent book sharing during each session	<b>Increased by 11 minutes after RAR</b>
Percentage of families who found it <b>hard</b> to book share at home	<b>Decreased by 31% after RAR</b>

In Fall 2022, we implemented our Annual Affiliate Check-in Survey (AACI). The Annual Affiliate Check in is a 37-question survey sent to RAR coordinators to reflect on their program. The survey tool was recently improved and updated with consulting support from EC Prism, who is continuing to advise Raising a Reader on how we can improve our data collection tools and methods. The EC PRISM team at Institute for Child Success provides individualized technical assistance and consulting services to early childhood programs in order to help them build capacity and ultimately increase the impact of their programs.

### **2021-2022 topline results from the AACI include:**

Parents and caregivers' support:

- 90% of Affiliates observe that parents increase their confidence in sharing books with their children.
- 90% of Affiliates observe that parents increase their knowledge of shared reading techniques.
- 90% observe that children increase their social emotional learning through book sharing.
- 90% observe that children increase their motivation to read.

Educator capacity building:

- 97% of our Affiliates report an increase in tools and resources for family engagement.
- 98% of our Affiliates report an increase in their knowledge of shared reading techniques.
- 98% of our Affiliates report an increase in their knowledge of early brain development.
- 98% of our Affiliates report an increase in their knowledge of language and literacy development.
- 98% report an increase in our training increasing their organization's ability to foster children's motivation for reading.