

Preschoolers in Davenport, IA, improve language skills from 41st to 62nd percentile

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Implementation Objectives

The Davenport Community Schools in Davenport, IA, were interested in evaluating the impact of the Fast ForWord products on the early reading skills of their preschool students. The study design was a randomized comparison trial. The developmental skills of the students, age 3 to 5 years old, ranged from delayed to accelerated, with the skills of most students in the average to slightly below average range. Students were randomly divided into a comparison group and a Fast ForWord group. The students' language skills were evaluated before and after participation on the Fast ForWord products.

Methodology

School personnel tested the students' early reading skills before and after Fast ForWord participation using the Preschool Language Scales – 4th edition (PLS-4).

At each school, educators were trained in:

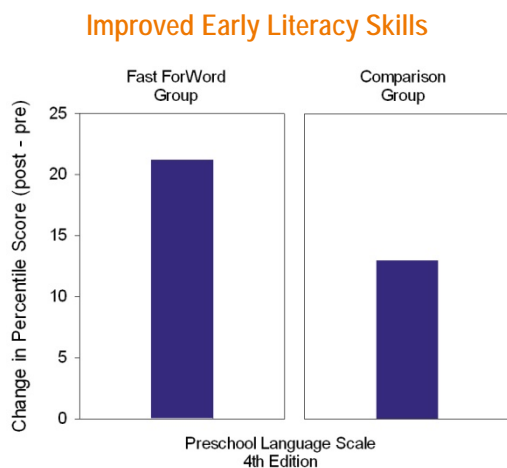
- Current findings on the neuroscience of how phonemic awareness and the acoustic properties of speech impact rapid development of language and reading skills
- Methods for assessing candidates for use of Fast ForWord
- Appropriate measures for testing and evaluation
- Effective implementation techniques
- Use of Progress Tracker reports to monitor student performance
- Techniques for measuring gains students achieve after using the product

Schedule of Use

Students in the experimental group used the 30-Minute protocols which call for students to use the products 30-minutes per day, five days per week. The students started in February on the Fast ForWord Language Basics product and, time permitting, progressed to the Fast ForWord Reading Prep and then the Fast ForWord Language products. Students in both the experimental and the comparison group were pre-tested in November and post-tested in May.

Assessment Results

The Preschool Language Scales – 4th edition (PLS-4) is an age-corrected norm-referenced test designed to evaluate the language skills of children from birth up through age 6. The items, which focus on receptive and expressive language, evaluate a range of language skills ranging from gestural and vocal behaviors up through early literacy and phonological awareness.



The Davenport Community Schools have a very strong preschool program. Based on the students' PLS-4 scores, the language skills of both groups of students improved relative to those of their peers nationwide. The improvement of the skills of the Fast ForWord participants was greater than that of the comparison group by a statistically significant amount ($p < 0.05$). After using the Fast ForWord products from early February through the post-test, the experimental group made a statistically significant improvement with scores increasing an average of 21 percentage points, moving from the 41st percentile in November up to the 62nd percentile in May.

Educational Gains

The results found in this study support other studies demonstrating that using the Fast ForWord products results in the strengthening of foundational language skills, better positioning students to partake in the classroom curriculum.

Students who used Fast ForWord products achieved statistically significant gains in early literacy skills.

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Program Study Statistics

School Years:

2007-2010

Number of Schools:

8

Number of Students:

592

Grade Level:

Preschool

Products Used:

Fast ForWord Language Basics
Fast ForWord Reading Prep
Fast ForWord Language

Assessment Tool Used:

Preschool Language Scales –
4th Edition (PLS-4)

District Statistics

Ethnic Breakdown

White: 65%
Black: 22%
Hispanic: 9%
Asian / Pacific Islander: 3%

Classifications

English Language Learners: 2%
Students with IEP's: 12%
Economically Disadvantaged: 54%

Environment:

Urban

For other reports showing significant academic gains following use of Scientific Learning products go to:
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