



# EARLY LITERACY DIFFICULTIES

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# MINI-LESSON:

## What it is:

- Challenges children face with the foundational skills for reading and writing
- Leads to challenges for children's ability for comprehension and etc.

## Signs:

- Lack of motivation
- Difficulty with corresponding sounds to letters
- But it also looks different for everyone


## Why it Matters

- If not addressed they can effect mental health
- Can create a gap
- struggle with other subject and development

## How to Help at Home

- Read together
- Playing literacy-focused games
- Practice letter recognition

## Things to Keep In Mind

- Appearances can be deceiving
  - Saying the words does not mean comprehension of them
  - All children benefit from literacy activities.
- 

# 01 The Need

- Giving back to the community
- Address early literacy difficulties and how it is different for everybody
- To see the progress and new ways that teachers can help with literacy
- Advocating more for families



Kathryn Feder:



Feder, Kathryn. Personal Interview. 16 October 2024.

- She is a therapist and works with children and worked in the school district as a counselor in a high school
- We learned that the impact on mental health that children face when having difficulty with literacy

Kathryn Bimpson:



Bimpson, Kathryn. Personal Interview. 16 October 2024.

- She is a principal at an Elementary School
- We learned about what the schools do to improve literacy skills

Leena Gill:



Gill, Leena. Personal Interview. 23 October 2024.

- She is a Mom whose daughter struggled with meeting play level expectations and reading after second grade
- We learned that there was no advocacy for her daughter and that testing can be expensive

# Interviews

## What we Learned

“Learning about it [early literacy difficulties] and exposing adults to it. Bring a larger level of advocacy”

Joan Shoemaker



Shoemaker, Joan. Personal Interview. 23 October 2024.

- She is a reading specialist at an elementary school
- We learned that the best way to help are by parents playing reading activities with their kid consistently and diagnostic testing should be broken up into parts for a better understanding

Henny N Halim Bhushan



Bhushan, Henny. Personal Interview. 18 October 2024.

- She is a Mom to her daughter that was diagnosed with a speech impediment
- We learned about a speech therapist that PAUSD provided

Academic Research:

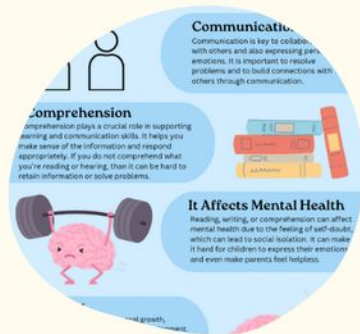


- Three Important Reasons Why We Can't Ignore Early Literacy
- By Rethinking How Reading is Taught, Bay Area Schools Hope to Boost Overall Literacy
- Every Student Reads Initiative





# THE PROJECT



## 1. Flyers



## 2. Brochures



## 3. Reading with Students

# The Project

## Prototypes:

- Flyers
- Brochures
- Received feedback from the AAR class

## Vision and Hopes:

- Learning new techniques that classes are using
- Seeing children read to us and showing comprehension skills
- More advocacy and awareness for our community

## Allies:

- All the interviews
  - Kathryn Feder
  - Kathryn Bimpson
  - Leena Gill
  - Joan Shoemaker
  - Henny Bhushan
- Bay Area School and the teachers we partnered with
  - Ms. Haley
  - Ms. Shiv

# 02 The Project

## Steps





# The Project

## Obstacles:

- Advocating for help with early literacy difficulties  
ex. parents finding help for their children
- Aligning times with different elementary schools  
ex. communication and timing differences



## Important Victories:

- Reading with two different grades
- Learning about new techniques that are implemented for a better understanding
- Having our flyers and brochures posted at the front office of an elementary school

# THE RESULTS



## The Effects:

- We were able to see how different classes work on handling different reading levels
- We saw how kids would get called to do their screening on the ipad

## Measure of Impact:

- We saw how children were happy to be able to do partner reading
- They would recommend books to each other and would relate back to the books to real life

## What we Learned

- We learned about the different strategies that teachers use to help with literacy skills

# 03 The Results

## STRATEGIES

### The Five-Finger Method

- Used for looking for the right book to read
- Searching for five too hard and five too easy words help determine if the book is too hard or too easy to read

### Regular Testing/ Quizzes

- With a reading specialist kids do online games where it works on comprehension, spelling, and etc.

### Partner Reading

- In a partner reading one partner reads the whole book while the other partner listens
- If there is trouble with reading the partner is able to help
- Then the other partner finishes their book and it goes again for around 15-20 minutes

### Small Group Reading

- In a small group, paired with similar reading levels
- The teacher asks what the Title of the book is and ask the students to make a guess of what the book will be about solely from the title
- this helps the kids circulate what readings should be comprehended that matters

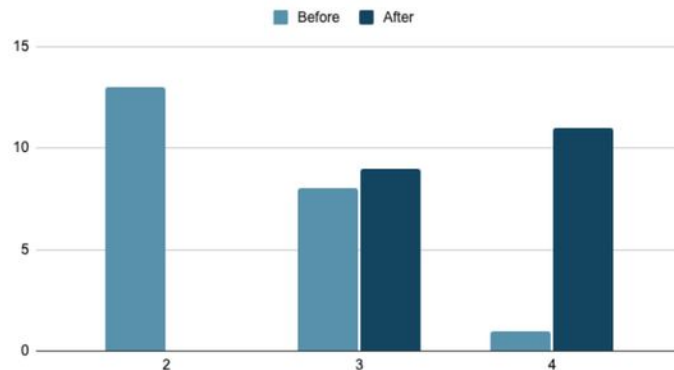
# Project Results

On a scale of 1-5, how well do you know about early literacy difficulties?

1- "you don't know anything"

5- "you know everything"

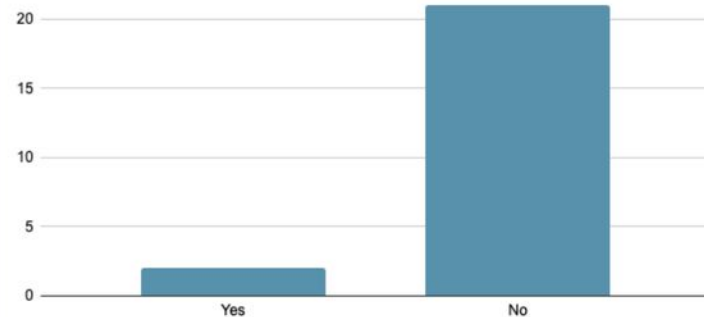
Before and After Results



Do you think that early literacy difficulties are advertised a lot?

Yes: 2

No: 21





03

# Project Result





# Project Results

## Early Literacy Difficulties

Why is Early Literacy so important



### Communication

Communication is key to collaborating with others and also expressing personal emotions. It is important to resolve problems and to build connections with others through communication.

### Comprehension

Comprehension plays a crucial role in supporting learning and communication skills. It helps you make sense of the information and respond appropriately. If you do not comprehend what you're reading or hearing, then it can be hard to retain information or solve problems.



### It Affects Mental Health

Reading, writing, or comprehension can affect mental health due to the feeling of self-doubt, which can lead to social isolation. It can make it hard for children to express their emotions and even make parents feel helpless.

### Learning

Learning is important for personal growth, problem-solving skills, and lifelong development. Through learning, kids understand emotions, build relationships, and learn how to work with others. Early learning helps the brain grow and form connections in everyday life.



## Common Misconception

Just because your child appears to be able to read doesn't necessarily mean they truly can. For instance, they might be able to recognize familiar words or memorize a story, but they may struggle with comprehension or decoding unfamiliar words. A child who can say the words aloud can't always grasp the meaning behind them.

Some believe children will catch up on their own, but early help is key. Others think only struggling readers need support, yet all children benefit from literacy activities. Reading goes beyond just books—talking, singing, and writing all play a role. Remember, if a child doesn't seem to be having trouble, that doesn't always mean everything is okay.

## Signs to be Aware of

Warning: Literacy difficulties can look different for everyone. Just because someone can't spell does not mean that every kid with literacy difficulties can not spell.

Some children struggle with letters, sounds, and vocabulary. If they avoid books or have trouble following a story, early support can help them succeed.

Trouble with rhyming indicates that a child might be struggling with phonological awareness, which is essential for decoding and spelling.

## Affects Mental Health

Kids may feel embarrassed or ashamed if they are unable to read aloud or complete tasks like their classmates. This can lead to self-doubt, withdrawal, and reluctance to participate in activities involving reading or writing.

## EARLY LITERACY DIFFICULTIES

To learn more, visit the FAUSD Promise about Early Literacy to see what they are doing to help!

## How you can Help at Home

Reading together every day helps children with vocabulary

Singing songs and playing rhyming games strengthen their ability to hear sounds

Encouraging your child to scribe and write to practice hand movements

Practicing letter recognition by using Play-Doh to shape letters

Playing literacy focused games to encourage letter recognition

Reading interactive books and storytelling apps to make learning more exciting

## What is it?

Early literacy difficulties are challenges young children face in learning basic reading and writing skills, such as recognizing letters, understanding sounds, or forming words. These struggles can make it harder for them to keep up with reading and writing as they grow.

## Why Literacy is Important

- Literacy difficulties can lead to struggles with other school subjects
- If not addressed, these challenges can affect academic performance and mental health (ex. having low self-esteem)
- It can create gaps in knowledge, making it harder to catch up
- Early reading and writing struggles can affect vocabulary development, comprehension, and critical thinking

## When to Seek Support

If your child struggles despite extra help, talk to their teacher for advice. A reading specialist can assess their needs and provide targeted support. Tutoring or early intervention programs may also help build their literacy skills.

## Stay Positive and Patient

Celebrate your child's progress, no matter how small. Positive reinforcement and encouragement go a long way in building confidence. Make literacy activities fun and low-pressure. The more enjoyable the activity, the more likely your child will engage and want to learn.

# TAKEAWAYS AND NEXT STEPS

## Next Steps:

- Making sure that the front office has enough copies for parents to read
- Spreading the word about early literacy difficulties

## Takeways and Learnings:

- We learned that there are new and better resources for students to receive help (especially PAUSD)
- Helping at home makes such a big difference
- A lot of people were willing to help us and were very helpful during our interview

## Call-to-Action:

- We hope that we have helped advocate through our flyers and brochures
- How PAUSD has helped others

# RECOMMENDED SOURCES

## PAUSD Literacy Promise

- Link: <https://www.pausd.org/promise/priority-areas/early-literacy>
- This site provides information about how PAUSD is helping and strategies to help at home

## Start Early: Champions for Early Literacy

- Link: <https://www.startearly.org/post/12-tips-to-boost-early-literacy/>
- 12 tips to help with improving literacy skills with younger children

## Early Signs of Reading Problems and How to Help Your Child

- Link: <https://www.expressable.com/learning-center/social-emotional-academic/early-signs-of-reading-problems-and-how-to-help-your-child>
- Provides early signs, ways to help, and reading milestones

*Enhance reading proficiency and academic achievement  
within ESRI student groups*



cover image from the PAUSD literacy promise



THANK you  
So much





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