

2013

Nemours BrightStart!
2012-2013



Nemours® BrightStart!

About Nemours BrightStart!

Children are most likely to become successful readers when they begin kindergarten with strong reading readiness skills. Since 2005, Nemours BrightStart! (NBS!) has worked with Jacksonville childcare centers and schools to identify preschool-age children who are behind in these skills and help them catch up. Because children learn in different ways, NBS! develops teaching tools and lessons that stimulate multiple senses, including sight, sound, touch, and movement. The program is named the NBS! Complete Program for Early Literacy Success, Level 1.

Nemours BrightStart! and Duval County Public Schools

Four years ago, NBS! began a partnership with Duval County Public Schools (DCPS).

Results for the 2012-2013 school year are just out and are again exceptional. Children in 58 pre-kindergarten classrooms across 33 DCPS schools were tested for reading readiness in the fall of 2012. Those who scored low received the NBS! small-group enrichment program. All classrooms were in Title 1 (high poverty) schools, where the majority of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

At the end of the school year, teachers retested all their students. In all, 793 children were tested for reading readiness skills in both the fall of 2012 and spring of 2013. Of these, 102 boys (52%) and 94 girls (48%) took part in the NBS! program.

Reading Readiness Gains

Figure 1 shows results on Get Ready to Read (GRTR), the 20-item screener that was used. Children who participated in NBS! are referred to as the Intervention group. Their peers who did not are called the Non-Intervention group. The average fall GRTR score for the Intervention group was 7.59, and the Non-Intervention group averaged 14.25. By spring the Intervention group jumped 9.45 points to an average of 17.04, showing that NBS! students increased their skills significantly. Their improvement equates to an average 124.5% gain in reading readiness.

During the same period, children who did not require intervention also improved their GRTR scores, by an average of 32%. The NBS! Intervention group therefore made tremendous strides in closing the achievement gap with their classmates. With only about 20 hours of extra help during one school year, by trained classroom teachers and a proven curriculum, they were only 1.77 points away from the 18.81-point average achieved by the Non-Intervention group.

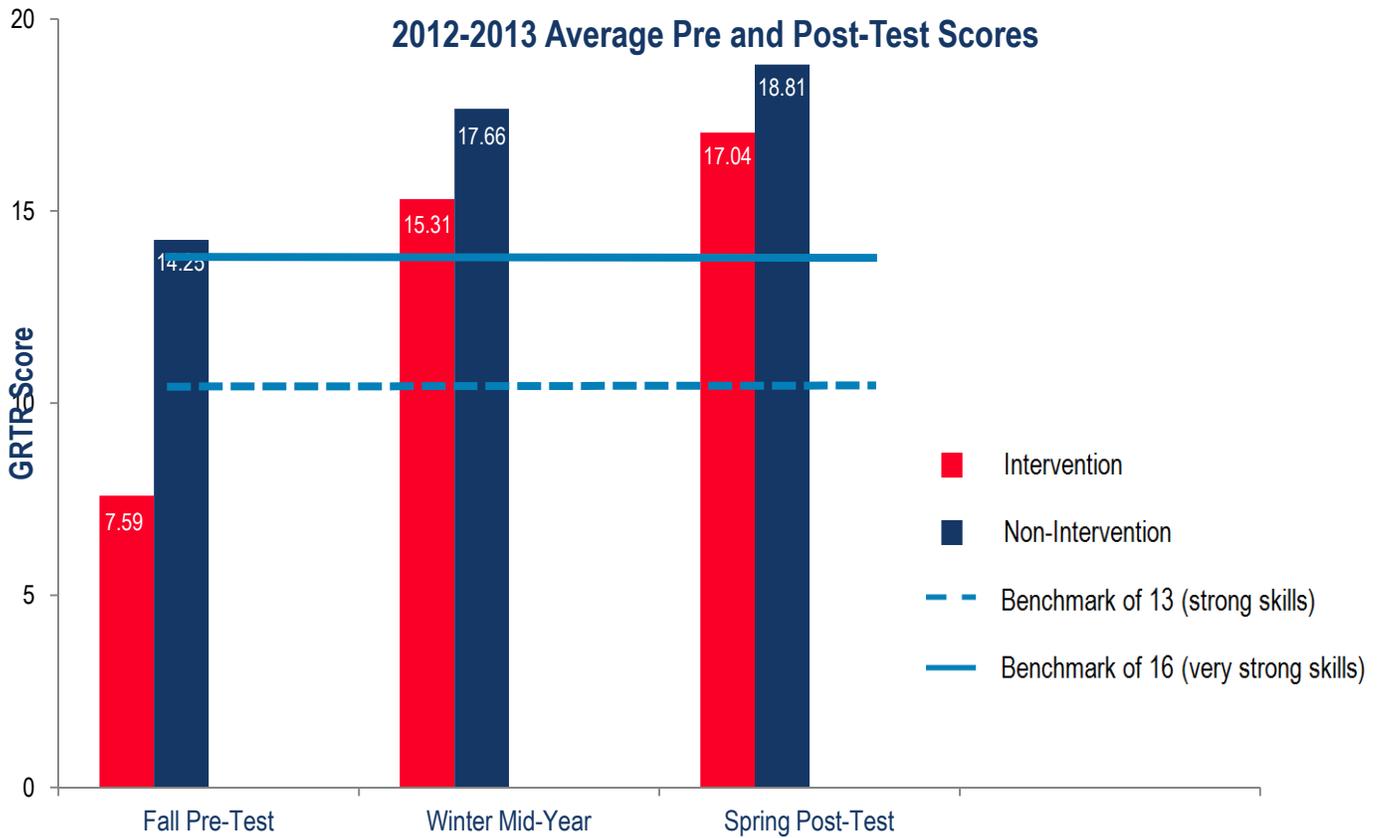


Figure 1: DCPS 2012-2013 Get Ready to Read gains for children receiving Nemours BrightStart! instruction and those who did not.

Tracking Growth Against Benchmarks

Another way to measure reading readiness growth is to track the number of children reaching a set benchmark of “strong skills” (GRTR score of 13 or higher) and “very strong skills” (GRTR score of 16 or higher). Table 1 shows the percentage of children who met these benchmarks. For 75% of the NBS! enrichment children (all previously at risk) to achieve the highest benchmark, reflects the power of strong teachers and curricula, at the earliest possible age, to prevent reading failure.

Table 1. Spring 2013 Post-Test Benchmark Results

	Met Benchmark \geq 13		Met Benchmark \geq 16	
	Strong Skills		Very Strong Skills	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Intervention	175	89.3%	147	75.0%
Non-Intervention	593	99.3%	576	96.5%

Summary

The partnership between NBS! and DCPS provides significant benefits for pre-kindergarten children who struggle with reading readiness skills. During the four years of the program, children who were identified as at-risk for reading difficulties at the beginning of the year made impressive gains after they participated in the NBS! enrichment program taught by DCPS classroom teachers. In the 2012-13 school year, participating children improved their reading readiness scores by nearly 125%. DCPS results are similar to results from many NBS! projects across the country and show the positive effect of a strong reading readiness curriculum combined with committed teachers and a proactive school system. Learning to read is essential for school and life success and also is strongly associated with adult health outcomes. By screening and intervening early, these at-risk youngsters are more likely to succeed in reading and lead healthier lives.

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