

Research for Action

Children who have not learned to read by the time they enter fourth grade are four times more likely to drop out of school, and this risk is even greater for low-income children.

In 2019, only a third of 3rd grade School District of Philadelphia children reached this important milestone, as measured by the Pennsylvania State Standardized Assessment.

Research for Action recently concluded a three-year external evaluation of the Blueprint for Early Literacy curriculum and professional development that constitute [Children's Literacy Initiatives'](#) supports for pre-K language and literacy, with funding from the [William Penn Foundation](#) and [Anne E. Casey Foundation](#).

"We developed our approach to fill a gap in evidence-based early childhood curricula and support children before they start kindergarten," said CLI's Chief Executive Officer Joel Zarrow. "This study found that our program has a positive impact on pre-K classroom literacy activities and boosts children's vocabulary skills by two-and-a-half months of growth."

CLI's supports combine literacy-based materials and curriculum with professional development for pre-K teachers through workshops on best practices for early literacy instruction and in-person coaching. The [Blueprint curriculum](#) uses best practices in early childhood programs to strengthen language and literacy skills through play-based instruction.

RFA examined the implementation and outcomes of the Blueprint for Early Literacy program in 11 pre-K centers receiving CLI supports. The study follows the 35 classrooms in these centers to track implementation successes and challenges as teachers implemented Blueprint alongside Creative Curriculum. RFA also compared outcomes in these centers to 11 similar centers to understand Blueprint's impact.

"We found evidence of Blueprint's positive impact in the face of implementation challenges that many programs supporting pre-K teachers face. Our report has

broad implications for early childhood educators and policy makers and offers multiple field-driven strategies for the design of effective early childhood workforce supports," said RFA's Director of Quantitative Research Alyn Turner.

As a result of evaluation findings, CLI has developed a comprehensive pre-K curriculum-Blueprint 4.0-broadening content and supports to math, science, socio-emotional learning, and social studies. Additionally, CLI is developing the curriculum for use in both Spanish- and English-instructed classrooms. With funds from the Department of Education, [Research for Action](#) will be assessing impact of this work in Newark and Elizabeth, NJ, including both English-instructed and dual language classrooms.

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