
Promoting Early Language & Literacy: Development of a Tiered Family Engagement Approach

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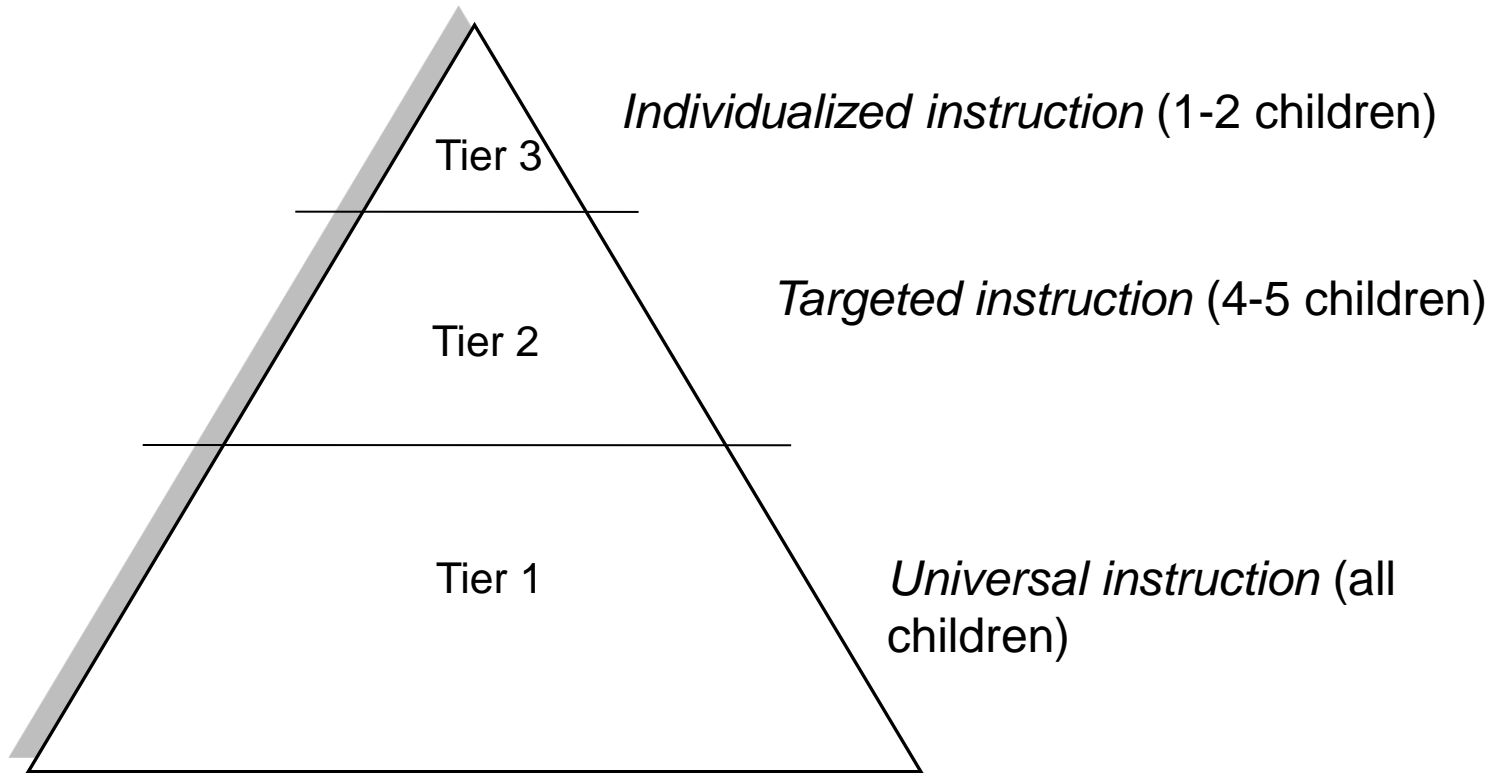
Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools



Purpose of the Pre3T Project

- Over a three year project period, we partnered with teachers, children and families to *develop* and *pilot* a multi-tiered prevention model (universal, targeted, individualized) in early education for children at risk of reading difficulties.
 - The child language and literacy skills that we focused on included: *oral language, phonological awareness, and alphabet knowledge.*
 - We capitalized on existing universal (Tier 1) programming in order to develop and implement effective targeted (Tier 2 and Tier 3) interventions.
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3-Tiered Model



Core elements of Pre-3T Model

- Evidence-based Interventions
 - Differentiated Grouping
 - Progress Monitoring
 - Data-based Decision Making
 - **Family Engagement**
 - Professional Development
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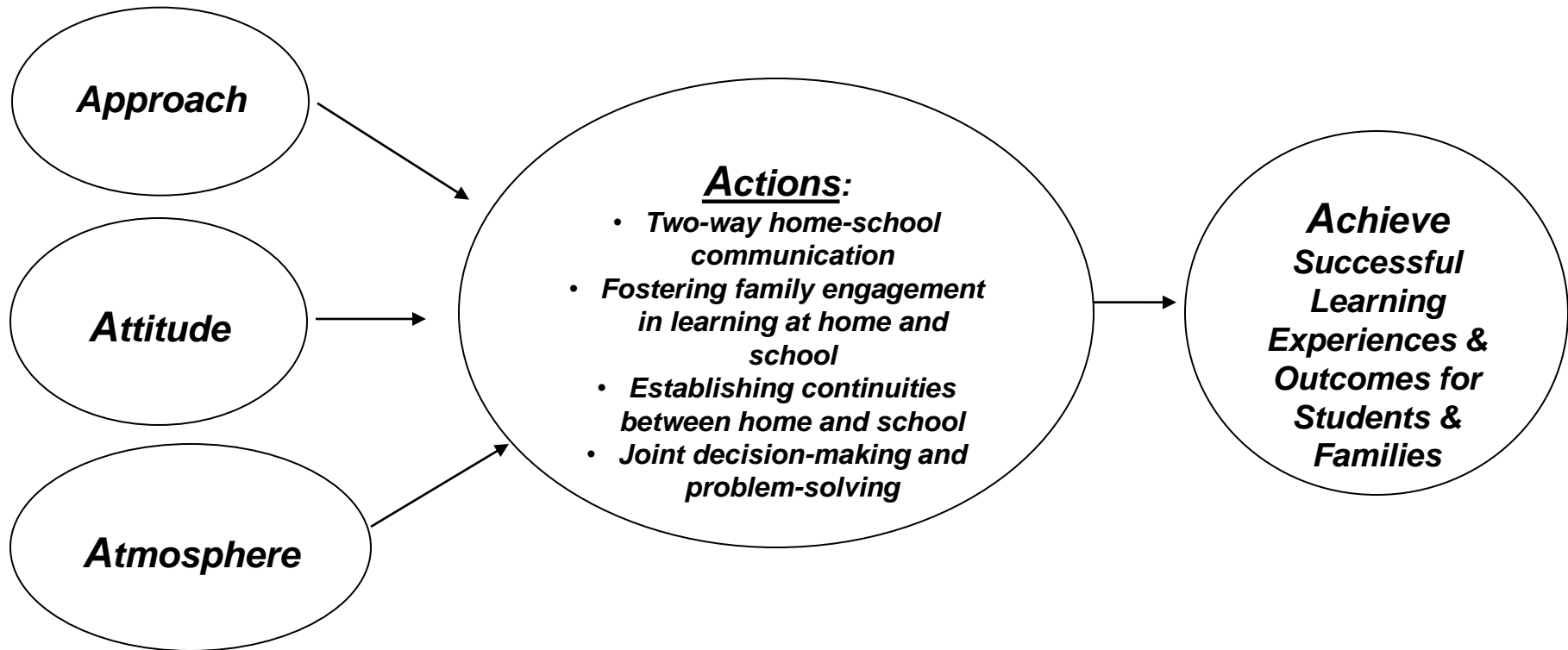
Family Engagement

- Our approach to family engagement moved beyond “involving” families in activities that support their child’s language or literacy to thinking about families as *partners* in their child’s learning.
 - The focus was less on *what* we do with families and more on *how* we work together with families.
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The 5 A's: Pathways to Partnerships

Prerequisite Conditions:

*These "3 A's" must be in place for
Actions to be accepted and effective*



Sample/Setting

- Nebraska – 4 Head Start classrooms in a rural community (3 half-day; 1 full-day)
 - 4 teachers
 - 2 teachers – all 3 years
 - 1 teacher – first 2 years
 - 1 teacher – final year
 - All teachers previously participated in ERF project

 - 85 children and their families
 - All children were 4 years old and Kindergarten-bound
 - English-speaking = 58, 68%
 - Spanish-speaking = 27, 32%
 - Average age of parent = 30 y.o.(range = 19 - 53 y.o.)
 - 83% mothers; 14% father, 3% other
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Table 2. Descriptive statistics for caregiver sample

	Frequency	Percent
Race		
White, non-Hispanic	37	46%
Black/African American	1	1%
White/Hispanic or Latino	35	43%
American Indian/Alaska Native	4	5%
Other	4	5%
Marital Status		
Married	41	50%
Divorced	8	10%
Single, never married	16	20%
Separated	7	9%
With partner/not married	6	11%
Education Level		
Less than 8 th grade	5	7%
High school, but no diploma	25	33%
High school diploma/GED	19	25%
Training beyond high school	17	22%
College degree/Graduate level coursework	10	13%
Number of adults in household		
One	17	24%
Two or more	55	76%
Employment		
Full-/part-time	55	68%
Unemployed	26	32%

Measures

- Child progress
 - Standardized measures (TOPEL, GRTR, Woodcock Munoz, BELA)
 - Progress monitoring tools (CBMs, IDGIs, teacher assessments)
 - Parent reports (Home Language survey, ASQ)
 - Direct observation (child responsiveness to strategies)

 - Parent language/literacy practices
 - Family Literacy Survey
 - Focus group feedback
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Measures cont.

- Teacher Implementation/model feasibility
 - Quality of instruction (Fidelity checklist, CLASS)
 - Implementation fidelity (Tune-up checklist, direct observation)
 - Coach/teacher feedback
 - Focus group feedback
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Tier 1 Family Engagement

- High quality universal interaction/communication
 - Family engagement questionnaire
 - Gather information on home learning/language context
 - Home language survey for dual language learners
 - Regular data sharing

 - Family access to home learning resources/activities
 - Family Literacy Events held at school
 - Books sent home via home visitor with dialogic reading instructions
 - Alphabet and vocabulary cards (in native language) sent home
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Family Engagement Self-Reflection Tool

Information Sharing	Very Poorly	Poorly	Okay	Well	Very Well	Examples
1. Regularly provide family-friendly information about the classroom activities that support language/literacy.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Regularly let parents know how their child is doing with language and literacy skills.	1	2	3	4	5	
Communication						
3. Gather information from parents regarding child's language and literacy skills.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Ask parents what they do to support language and literacy skills outside of school.						
Teaching Partnership						
5. Encourage parents to actively participate in language and literacy activities at home that use their strengths and interests.	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Affirm parents when they do something positive to support their child's language and literacy skills.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. Provide opportunities for parents to actively participate in classroom language and literacy activities (e.g., reading books to the class, sharing family customs).	1	2	3	4	5	
Cultural Sensitivity						
8. Offer language and literacy activities/materials that work for all families in your program taking into account language, age, family composition, race, religion, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	
9. Decide with parents how to support children's language and literacy skills both at home and school, taking into account the culture, values and practices of the family.	1	2	3	4	5	
10. Identify and address potential challenges (e.g., translation/interpretation, transportation, parent reading level) that might hinder parent engagement.	1	2	3	4	5	

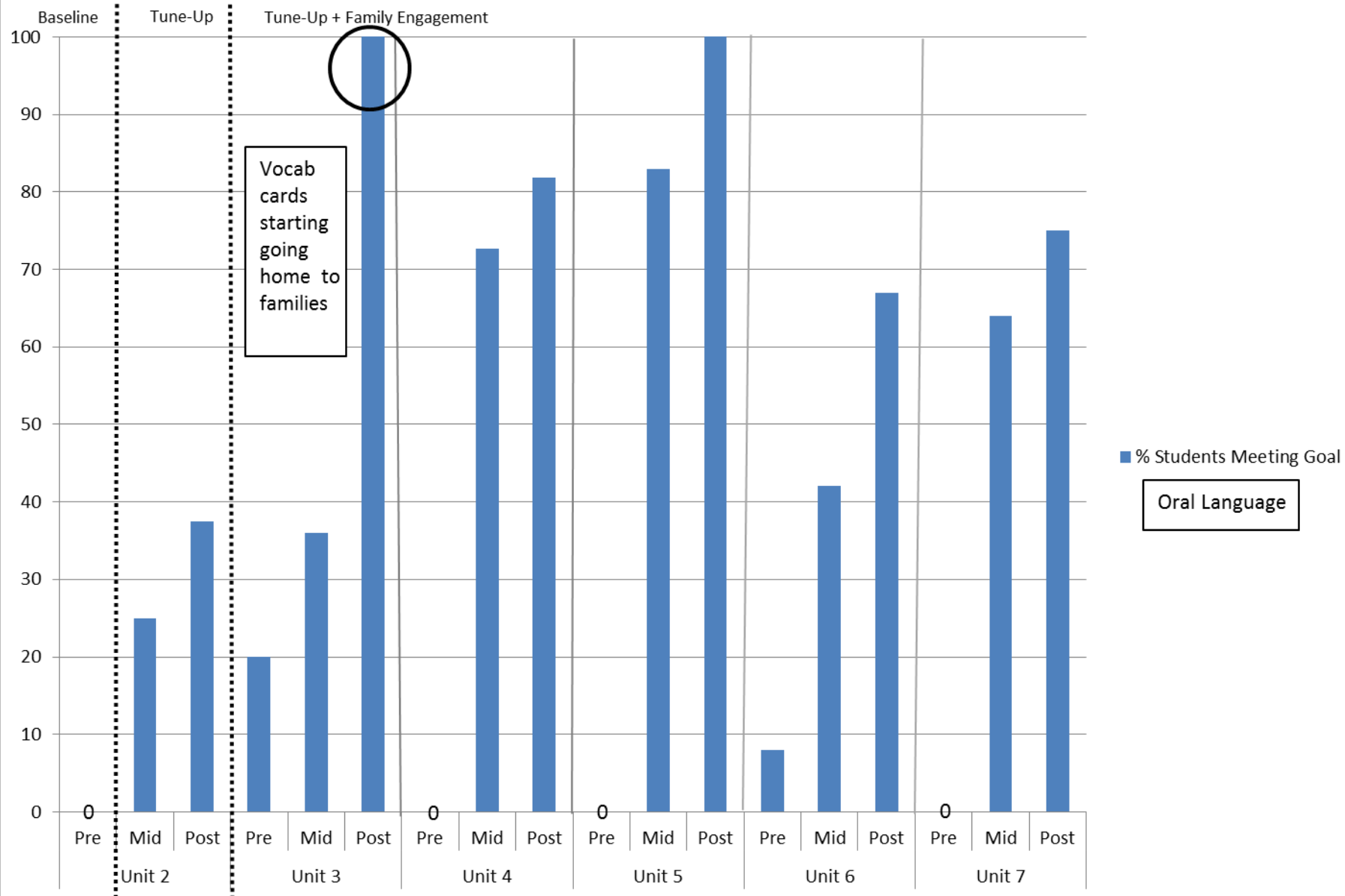
Tier 2 Family Engagement

- Individualized teacher planning to engage families of children in need of extra support
 - Tune-up checklist
 - Increase home learning opportunities
 - More guidance and modeling
 - More frequent information sharing
 - Individualized plans as needed



Classroom: _____ Teachers: _____ Coach: _____ Date: _____ Child(ren)/Group needing additional support: _____ Tune-up Modification Goal: _____ Target Date: _____			Steps and Procedures:	Classroom	Family
Area of need (Oral Language, PA, AK, Print Awareness)			Yes	No	Materials Needed:
Child Considerations			Strategy used with group:		
Does the child(ren) have poor attendance? Can that be improved? Is the child(ren) overly shy or disruptive or inattentive? Briefly describe. Is the child(ren) a first or second year preschool student?					Check in dates:
Opportunities to Learn			Implementation Steps: (fidelity)		
Does lesson plan and instruction reflect strong enough emphasis in the area of need? Can the skill be emphasized during another part of the instructional day?					Frequency of Implementation:
Content of Instruction			Target Date/Date Completed:		
Is there a specific skill(s) within the area of need to be mastered? Is there an opportunity to re-teach the skill? Is there a pre-skill that the children need to learn? Can instruction become more concrete with physical objects incorporated?					Note progress monitoring data/child outcomes:
Grouping for Instruction			Note progress toward goal:		
Do children need to be regrouped to better fit their skill need? Can grouping sizes be changed?					Modification Made:
Explicitness of Instruction			Date Goal Complete:		
Is it possible to include more I do it; We do it; You do it opportunities? Can child response be changed (choral and group responding)? Are there opportunities to better monitor accuracy of child responses and then provide immediate, appropriate, positive feedback?					
Family Considerations					
Have curriculum goals and child's progress been communicated? Has family(ies) had opportunities to participate in activities with enough guidance? Could more support be offered to help family(ies) fully engage?					

Classwide CBM Scores



Tier 3 Family Engagement

- Collaborative problem-solving using Conjoint Behavioral Consultation (CBC; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008)
 - CBC is an evidence-based, indirect consultation model where in the teacher and family jointly engage in a consultant-facilitated collaborative problem solving process to address the specific language and literacy needs of an individual child.
 - Four phase process operationalized by structured interviews
 - Meeting 1 – Building on Strengths
 - Meeting 2 – Planning for Success
 - Plan Implementation
 - Meeting 3 – Checking and Reconnecting
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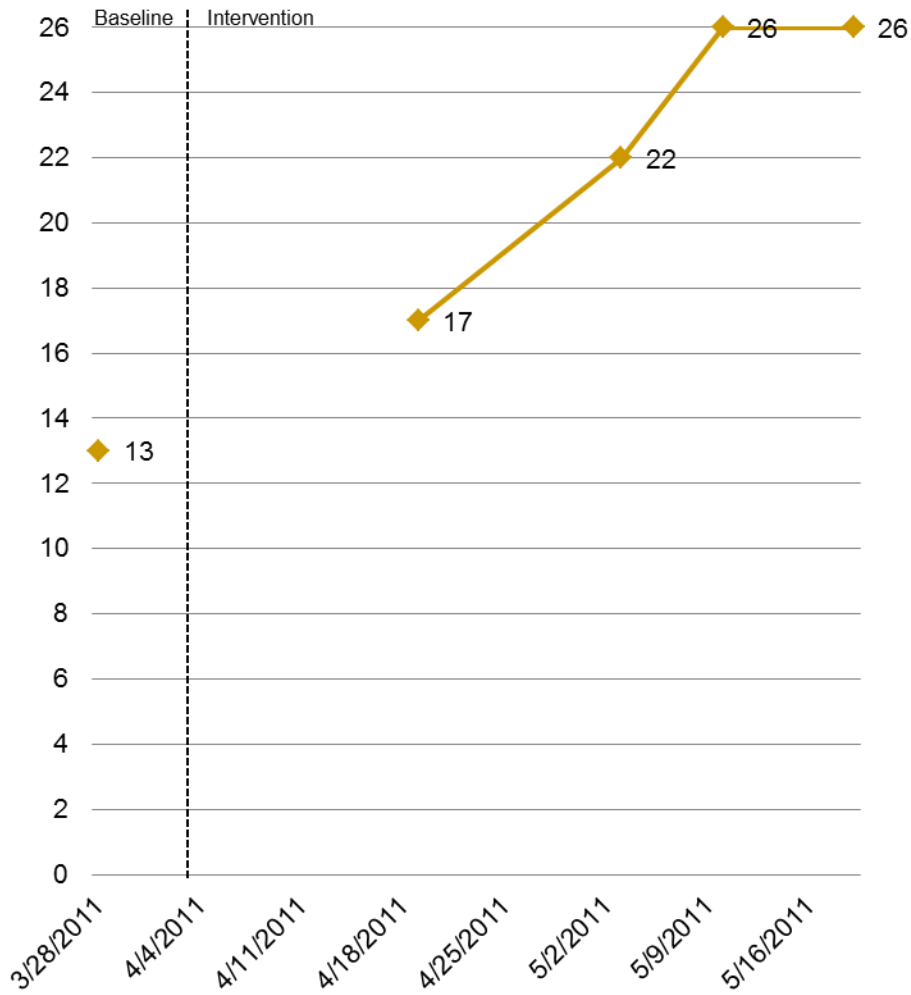
CBC case studies – Amy & Clarissa

- **Children were selected for CBC due to inconsistent letter recognition near end of school year.**
 - **Intervention Description:**
 - Focus on 2 letters every 2 weeks (1 new, 1 transition)
 - Increase individual practice at school (centers, small groups)
 - Positive reinforcement
 - Periodic practice at home throughout the day (finding letters in environmental print, writing in a notebook, play dough, tracing letters)
 - Home-school communication regarding letters to practice and child's progress
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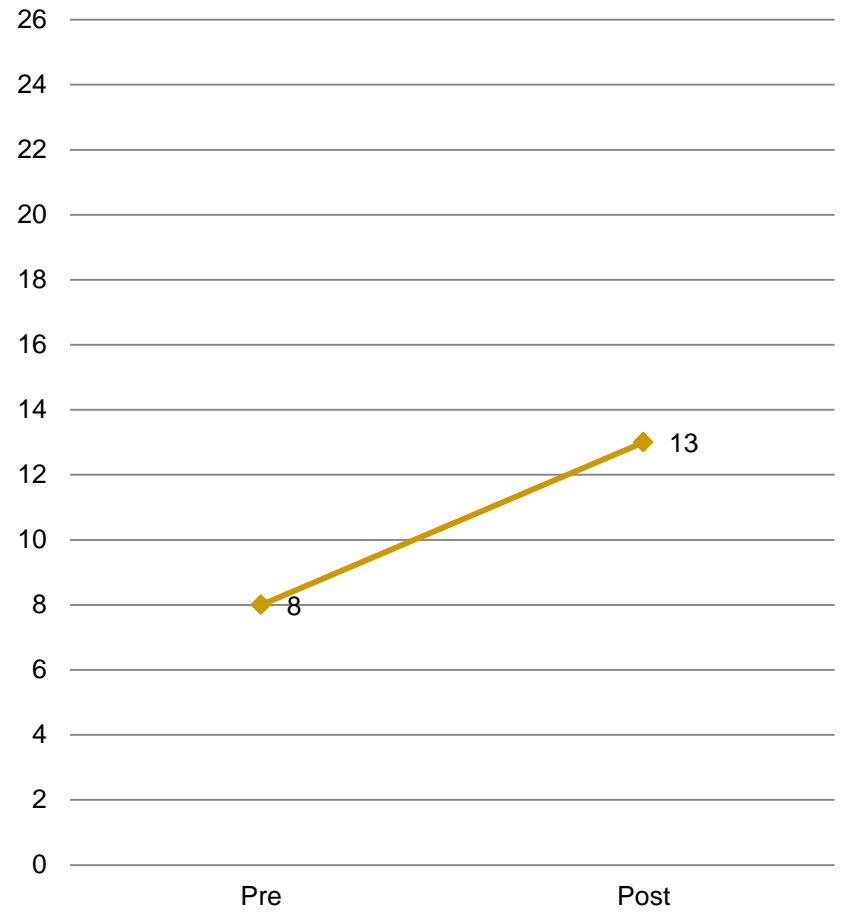
CBC Case studies – Amy & Clarissa

- Amy gained 13 letters in 6 weeks
 - Effectiveness
 - Parent: 5.67 (out of 7)
 - Teacher: 5 (out of 7)
 - Acceptability
 - Parent: 5.67 (out of 6)
 - Teacher: 4.47 (out of 6)
 - Clarissa gained 5 letters in 4 weeks
 - Effectiveness
 - Parent: 6.25 (out of 7)
 - Teacher: 6.17 (out of 7)
 - Acceptability
 - Parent: 5.93 (out of 6)
 - Teacher: 4.93 (out of 6)
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Letter Naming - Amy



Letter Naming - Clarissa



CBC Case studies

- CBC was feasibly implemented by trained literacy coaches with *coaching* from CBC trainer (first author).
 - CBC was rated as acceptable and effective by parents and teachers.
 - When need was greater, CBC was rated slightly more effective and acceptable by parents and teachers.
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Lessons Learned

- Teacher/staff implemented family engagement strategies were more feasible and effective when they were applied using a planful, intentional, individualized approach.
 - When we focused on the approach to engaging families, rather than activities, families appeared to be more engaged and children's scores improved.
 - Parents and children reported using materials sent home
 - Children's CBM scores improved
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Lessons Learned

- CBC can feasibly and effectively be implemented by trained literacy coaches with appropriate coaching (i.e., technical assistance).
 - With high quality universal and Tier 2 classroom and family engagement supports, fewer intensified supports are needed.
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Take home summary

- The development of the Pre3T model was based on a foundation of high-quality universal language/literacy instruction, classroom management, and family engagement.
- Teacher/staff implemented family engagement strategies were more feasible and effective when they were applied using a planful, intentional, individualized approach.
- A multi-tiered family engagement approach can feasibly be implemented in preschool settings to address children's language and literacy needs.

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