

Integrated Beginning Reading Supplement Produces K-Readiness

In October 2014 Chappell Riverside School, one of eight Chappell Child Development Centers in Jacksonville, FL, implemented the Sunform™ Alphabet System in a Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) classroom. The Chappell administrators were seeking a way to better prepare their 4 year olds' kindergarten readiness reading skills.

Sunform

Sunform's innovative, brain-based approach to beginning reading and letter formation is research-based, and developmentally appropriate for four year old children. The lessons are engaging and fun for young children, and they do not steal valuable development play time away from the curriculum. The materials are non-consumable and very durable.

"My parents got excited when their children saw street signs and started blending letters and sounding out words in the car! The parents are ecstatic! I cannot say enough positive things about this program."

Kim Villanueva,
Teacher

Maureen Stafford, Sunform's regional Professional Services Director, provided a half day training session for teacher Kim Villanueva.

VPK 4 Year Olds Blending After Just Eight Weeks

Villanueva delivered the Sunform lessons 20 minutes per morning, five days each week, from the end of October through December. The initial outcomes were very promising:

"Eight of my 12 students are already at the blending stage", said Villanueva in January. "They learned all 26 letter pictures in just two weeks. Watching the children who struggled a little bit more at first, figuring out the picture names, was really neat. Having this pre-reading edge going into kindergarten will be very beneficial for the students, and also for their teachers".

VPK Midyear Assessment Outcomes—Riverside

Outcomes after 6 weeks of Sunform instruction—
Four Year Olds

Letter recognition	When shown a group of letters, can accurately identify the letter that is named.	100%
Letter naming	When shown an uppercase or lowercase letter, can accurately say its name.	100%
Name all letter sounds	When shown a group of letters, can accurately identify the letter of the sound given.	83%
Name all letter sounds	When shown a letter, can accurately say the sound the letter makes.	83%

Based on these initial outcomes, Chappell CEO Nancy Dreicer purchased Sunform for six additional sites including South whose students include English Language Learners. Those teachers attended a group training workshop late in February. The students received approximately 9 weeks of Sunform instruction during the spring semester.

At year end, Dreicer was extremely pleased with the improvement in student scores between the September and late spring Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment – and particularly with the Phonological Awareness measure.

The following fall, 90% or more of the students at five sites scored "Ready" for kindergarten on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS), and 100% of the students at the other two sites scored "Ready".

Implications for Kindergarten Readiness

Policy-makers have focused on closing the achievement gap by boosting the rigor of pre-K standards, despite the long-standing tension between early childhood academic achievement and broader developmental goals (Bassok, Latham & Rorem, 2015). This debate is nothing new; in the late 1980s, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) expressed concern over the perceived mounting academic demands in early childhood and called for more child-oriented, play and discovery-based instruction to help develop the social and regulation skills that are also established predictors of longer term outcomes (Stipek, 2006).

Sunform's uniquely effective integrated pedagogy solves this conundrum by rapidly teaching beginning letter-sound correspondences to automaticity, in a fun, game-like way.

"I even saw it with my own son", said Suzanne Beevers, Riverside Director. "He could only write the letter a. After just one month of Sunform, he sat down one day and said 'I'm going to write my name for you.' He wrote his first name, and then he wrote his last name!"

Achieving kindergarten readiness is critical for all students because mastery of phonemic awareness, along with print knowledge and oral language/vocabulary, are the best predictors for conventional early reading ability (NCFL, 2009). "I saw it for myself at graduation... this year they were all reading, and doing poems—it was amazing!" said Nancy Dreicer.

About Sunform

Sunform's unique integrated pictograph mnemonic-based approach to alphabet instruction establishes the foundational letter sound proficiency necessary for the subsequent development of automatic word recognition and word memorization. Daily 10–15 minute lessons enable students to master the 26 beginning letter sound-symbol correspondences to automaticity. Most English speakers will begin blending after just 8–10 weeks of instruction. This approach is consistent with the latest evidence (Roberts, 2021) and produces dramatic literacy gains in Pre-K, K-2 and remedial settings.

About Ventris Learning

Our linguistically responsive instructional and assessment resources help educators better meet the needs of all students including those who become underserved in literacy.

Spring 2015 VPK Phonological Awareness

Level:	Below	Meets	Exceeds
Riverside			
Pre	62%	6%	31%
Post	0%	0%	100%
Riverplace			
Pre	89%	5%	5%
Post	0%	0%	100%
Deerwood Group A			
Pre	40%	13%	47%
Post	0%	0%	100%
Downtown			
Pre	65%	20%	15%
Post	6%	56%	39%
Deerwood Group B			
Pre	42%	33%	25%
Post	8%	17%	75%
FSCJ North			
Pre	71%	24%	6%
Post	33%	44%	22%
FSCJ South			
Pre	60%	20%	20%
Post	50%	22%	28%

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