

CASE STUDY

Tutoring with SPIRE Improves Reading and Vocabulary Development in Children

Everyone Reading, Inc., New York City, NY



The Catching Up and Getting Ahead Summer Program

Everyone Reading, Inc. aims to provide children and adults with dyslexia and related learning disabilities the resources and education needed to become successful readers, spellers, and writers. In July 2018, Everyone Reading partnered with the Museum of the City of New York to host the Catching Up and Getting Ahead tutoring and museum education program.

Catching Up and Getting Ahead was an intensive three-week program designed for third-grade students to catch up on basic reading skills and get ahead of their peers in fourth-grade social studies curriculum. The program included 15 daily, three-hour sessions at the Museum of the City of

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New York from July 5th-27th. Thirty third-grade students participated in the program with a 98% attendance rate. Each Catching Up and Getting Ahead session included 90 minutes of uninterrupted small group tutoring and 90 minutes of New York City-themed museum education.

During the 90 minutes of small group tutoring, students spent 60 minutes working in SPIRE and 30 minutes working on other essential literacy skills. SPIRE is a reading intervention program founded on the Orton-Gillingham approach to reading instruction. SPIRE's 10-step multi-sensory approach integrates phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and handwriting instruction. In the additional 30 minutes, tutors worked with students on oral language development and read-aloud activities.

During the 90 minutes of museum education, students learned about New York City's rich history and geography. The students studied the city's waterways, bridges, parks, and buildings and learned about each exhibition at the museum. Students participated in New York City-themed activities, such as map and model making, photography, and exhibition design. These activities were an important source of knowledge and engagement during the program, encouraged students' confidence and interest in reading and contributing to their vocabulary growth and development.

Students participating in the Catching Up and Getting Ahead program showed dramatic improvement in reading ability and vocabulary development.

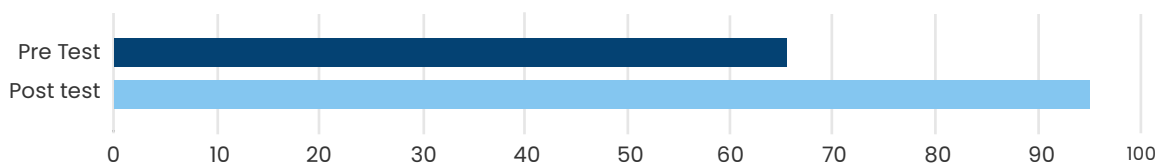
Methodology

Students participating in the Catching Up and Getting Ahead Summer program took the SPIRE Placement Test at the beginning and end of the 15 tutoring sessions. The SPIRE Placement Test identifies reading gaps and determines at which level of SPIRE a student should begin. After taking the initial placement test, the Catching Up and Getting Ahead students were placed with a tutor in homogeneous groups of three. Students completed 15 60-minute sessions of SPIRE during the month of July. At the end of the program, students took the same placement test to measure improvement in reading ability and vocabulary development.

Findings

When students took the SPIRE Placement Test at the beginning of the program, an average of 65 words were read correctly. When the students took the Placement Test after 15 sessions with SPIRE, an average of 95 words were read correctly. See the figure below for details. According to these results, students averaged 30 additional words read correctly after only 15 sessions of work with SPIRE. As these additional words represented distinct sound/symbol patterns, those students were then able to also read many more words containing those patterns. By learning phonological patterns and practicing decoding and encoding, as well as acquiring a rich vocabulary from their museum education activities, students were able to easily read and understand more words.

Average Number of Words Read Correctly on SPIRE Placement Tests



“She isn’t afraid to approach ‘sounding out’ a word she is having difficulty reading. Reading no longer threatens her as much as it used to.”

–Parent

Parent Evaluation of the Catching Up and Getting Ahead Summer Program

At the end of the summer, Everyone Reading sent a survey to the parents and guardians of the Catching Up and Getting Ahead students. Twenty-six parents responded to the survey with feedback about whether they felt their child’s reading and vocabulary development had improved because of the summer program.

Some of the survey data below demonstrates how parent responses were encouraging and confirmed the successes of the program and SPIRE curriculum.

Parents were also able to write specific feedback about their child’s growth and experience with the Catching Up and Getting Ahead program.

One parent wrote that her daughter “isn’t afraid to approach ‘sounding out’ a word she is having difficulty reading. Reading no longer threatens her as much as it used to before she walked through the doors of the Museum of the City of New York on July 9, 2018.”

Another parent wrote that her child “has improved in her desire and eagerness to read” and is now “willing to take more chances when writing and writes more often on a variety of topics.” The same parent attributed the child’s growth to the SPIRE tutoring that took place during the Summer program. Other parents commented that their children are now reading independently and without difficulty.

The positive results of the Catching Up and Getting Ahead summer program also had a big impact on their parents. One parent shared: “I got teary-eyed last night because I walked by her bedroom and saw her reading a book she got as a gift from the Everyone Reading program. There she was reading, because she wanted to, because she was enjoying it. She wasn’t reading because I was nagging her to do it.”

With the help of their sponsors, Everyone Reading was able to use SPIRE to achieve its goal of helping students become successful readers, writers, and spellers.

QUESTION

“Does your child show any improvement in reading or vocabulary development?”

Response: 23 of 26 parents said Yes.

QUESTION

“Participating in the Everyone Reading Summer tutoring program requires tremendous commitment on the part of the parents. Has it been worth it?”

Response: 23 of 26 parents said Yes.

QUESTION

“Would you recommend this program to others?”

Response: 24 of 26 parents said Yes.

“First and foremost, she has improved in her desire and eagerness to read, which is monumental. She is now willing to take more chances when writing and write more often on a variety of topics. I am attributing this to the vocabulary work that was done in your program.”

-Parent

Program and Museum Sponsors

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