

## **BUILDING BLOCKS FOR LITERACY®**

**A Professional Learning Program to Prepare Children for Reading Success across Tiers**

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### **Abstract**

This poster session will present a combined research study and program description for BUILDING BLOCKS FOR LITERACY®, a professional learning program for early care and education providers that is research based and research proven to increase children's future literacy success. Developed as a Tier 1 initiative in Vermont, we have brought the program to scale and extended the curriculum to Tiers 2 and 3.

This research study investigated the potential benefits of offering childcare providers professional development to promote preliteracy skills in preschool children. It was hypothesized that direct instruction to providers, through rigorous training based on early literacy research followed by onsite mentorship, would increase children's opportunities for reading success across tiers of learning needs.

The preliteracy skills of 88 children from childcare programs were assessed before and after BUILDING BLOCKS training. A control group of children was assessed during the same time frame. Results demonstrated that target children showed significantly greater preliteracy gains than did controls. More importantly, a larger proportion of at risk children rose from below to above a level considered vulnerable for reading failure (Podhajski and Nathan, 2005).

BUILDING BLOCKS, taught live and now available free online, is based on recommendations from the National Research Council and National Early Literacy Panel. This poster session will also show how BUILDING BLOCKS can help providers adjust instructional content, intensity, duration and scaffolding to meet individual ability levels across tiers. Through the application of play-based strategies that promote development of phonological awareness, shared book reading emphasizing vocabulary, and the speech to print connection including alphabet knowledge, early care and education providers can strengthen children's readiness for reading and support the transition to kindergarten within an RTI model using tiered levels of intervention.