



# Stern Center for Language and Learning

## Early Literacy Collaborative for English Language Learners (ELL)

### Description

In 2005 over 100 Somali Bantu refugee children resettled in the Burlington area, coming from a culture with no written language. These children, unable to read or speak English, were mainstreamed into the Burlington public schools. In order to meet their literacy needs, the Stern Center collaborated with the Burlington School District to design a program to address the complex needs. The goals included:

- Providing students with one-on-one explicit instruction in basic literacy skills at levels pre-kindergarten - 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Collaborating with classroom and ELL teachers on ways to enhance the literacy skills of these students.
- To ultimately establish a program in which school personnel could independently and successfully address the complex needs of these students.

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### Program

- Twenty three students from three schools received one-on-one explicit and small group instruction in reading and writing through a multi-sensory, structured language approach.
- Teachers observed the instruction and collaborated with Stern Center professionals to expand their own skills .



### Results

**Students** demonstrated statistically significant gains from fall to spring in:

- Reading
- Spelling
- Phonological Awareness
- Sound-Symbol relationships

### Teachers

- Up to 80% felt student literacy had improved dramatically.
- 92% rated the program as “extremely” worthwhile.
- 83% felt students progressed “very much” to “extremely” as a result of the program.
- 92% felt Stern Center training provided benefits to students above and beyond the ELL program.
- Most teachers felt the program reinforced their ability to work with this population

Teachers felt strongly about the success of the program saying, “*It gave the students a strong foundation for literacy and really gave them the extra boost they needed.*”