

FACT SHEET

Between the Lions: Mississippi Literacy Initiative

Note: more info is available at www.asc.upenn.edu/childrenmedia
under the "Content Comprehension" button

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ANNENBERG 2007-2008 STUDY

- ◆ Post-test, children in the treatment group surpassed the *National Head Start* with scores that are predictive of later reading success in the second grade.
- ◆ A larger majority of children in the Treatment Group were able to identify any Lower Case Letters – 81.9 percent compared with 61.3 percent in the Control Group at the post-test.
- ◆ 75.2 percent of children in the Treatment Group compared with 50.5 percent in the Control Group at the post-test were able to identify any Letter Sounds based on the PALS preK assessment.
- ◆ Pre-test, 64.1 percent of the Treatment Group was unable to complete the PALS preK assessment for Lower Case Letters vs. 69.4 percent of the Control Group. Post-test, only 18.1 percent in the Control Group was unable to complete the PALS preK Lower Case Letter assessment, vs. 38.7 percent in the Control Group.
- ◆ The General Classroom Environment was most positive for teachers in the Treatment Group who received more training and mentoring. Children were also provided with more opportunities for choice and for taking initiative and teachers used more positive management strategies, which in turn, enhanced the overall classroom environment.
- ◆ Treatment teachers engaged in more and longer full-group and one-to-one book-reading sessions; modeled writing; provided writing assistance and opportunities for writing; and set aside time for children to look at books alone or with a classmate.
- ◆ The study findings indicate that teachers who are new to the *Between the Lions Preschool Literacy Initiative* are primed and able to make changes to the structural features of their classrooms including general classroom management abilities, specific

environmental features that are necessary for literacy support and increased opportunities for literacy activities.

- ◆ Conclusions from the study indicate children from low-income and minority backgrounds spend more time watching television and report that the experience is of more value in comparison to children from middle income and majority backgrounds. As such, *Between the Lions* curriculum can be a powerful tool for these children when learning to read.

STUDY BACKGROUND

- ◆ Dr. Deborah L. Linebarger, Director, Children's Media Lab at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania was lead investigator in the *Between the Lions: Mississippi Literacy Initiative* study conducted in 2007 – 2008. Mississippi State University conducted pre- and post-testing.
- ◆ Participants were 319 children in preschools and child care centers (Mean Age=59.93 months, SD=16.87 months) living in low-income areas in the state of Mississippi.
- ◆ All children participated in the assessments at their child care centers, 24 in total, which predominantly serve the economically disadvantaged.
- ◆ The *Between the Lions Preschool Literacy Initiative* partners include MPB, WGBH Boston, Sirius Thinking, Ltd., Corporation for Public Broadcasting, U.S. Department of Education, Barksdale Reading Institute and Rotary International.