



Why existing community programs have not solved the reading problem

How is the Reading Success Movement Different?

Introduction

There are several great community programs that work to address the challenge of why so many students are failing to become proficient in reading. Although many children are helped, far too many children continue to struggle with learning and reading proficiency. Too many children are not receiving the support and full range of learning experiences they need to succeed.

Summary of Reasons

1. Limited resources

- a. Head Start and similar programs can only serve a limited percent of children and families who need more help and cannot afford it on their own.
- b. Many families cannot afford licensed childcare that can provide the needed training environment.
- c. Many children who need help the most do not or cannot attend pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.
- d. For those programs that are successful, limited funding and lack of affordable scalability is the single largest barrier to helping more students.

2. No single program is comprehensive

Most programs do not provide a comprehensive solution. They provide one or several of many essential ingredients, but none fully address all of the factors that are causing the problem. Many students are helped, but not all students receive all of the help they need to succeed.

3. Lack of ongoing relationship with parents

Many programs do not develop an ongoing relationship with parents/families. Parents may receive books or attend a training, but do not take ownership of the solution. There often is no follow up.

4. Most programs do not cover the full age range needed

Some programs work with students only up to age 5, some only work age 6 or 7 and above. The solution needs to cover womb to age 8 with an integrated program focused on prevention and also help older students as needed to catch up.

5. Many parents don't fully understand their role in reading skill development

Many parents believe that teaching their child how to read is the responsibility of the schools. They may hear public service announcements or receive brochures about the importance of reading to their children, but many do not fully understand how important it is to read and talk adequately with their children from womb to classroom. Consequently, they do not take ownership of this responsibility.

6. Family resource constraints

Many parents do not have the time, temperament, skills, or resources to provide adequate learning experiences for their children. Affordable community-driven alternatives must be developed to support families in critical developmental tasks.

7. Programs not integrated

Most programs do not engage all of the community resources and organizations fully to address the challenge. There is not a unified, consistent, and emphatic delivery of the key messages across all family touch points.

8. Lack cognitive skill development element

Most early childhood education and classroom models do not fully understand and properly incorporate the assessment and development of cognitive processing skills and mindset, performance character, and social emotional skills.

9. High mobility

There is often high mobility in Title 1 school communities. Most programs do not track and keep families who have moved from their service area connected to their programs.

10. Incompatible reading curriculum and approach for students who are behind

Most students who struggle entered kindergarten one to three years behind in the foundational skills required to succeed in our education system. These children did not receive adequate exposure and experience with language from womb to classroom, so they started behind in the awareness of sufficient vocabulary, sequencing, phonics, syntax, semantics, and print concepts. Most schools test students starting in kindergarten so they know which students are behind.

Unfortunately, the process also labels and shames children who are behind so they start with a negative experience in reading instruction. Most schools begin with intensive phonics instruction and sight word memorization out of context, which is confusing for most students who don't have the background skills.

How the Reading Success Movement is Different

First, it is important to understand that we are not criticizing any program, school, or families. We are also not suggesting that any program be discontinued. Rather, we are working to lever existing programs, to help improve integration, and to fill in gaps.

- TRSM programs can help any age students to improve reading success. We focus on womb to 3rd grade, but offer online programs to help any age with reading skills.
- TRSM programs include foundational reading skill development, but also include cognitive skill, social emotional, mindset, and performance skill development elements.
- TRSM uses a unique early reading program that helps students who are behind to catch up and have a more positive initial exposure to reading instruction. (<http://readingkingdom.com>)
- TRSM also provides an online math assessment and training curriculum.
- TRSM collaborates with existing community organizations or programs that can help families and promote reading success. TRSM works with families, schools, and community organizations.
- TRSM provides a social media platform to connect with and engage families even if they move to another location.
- TRSM offers affordable and free program elements so all families can be served.
- TRSM works with local organizations to help fill in the gap if families cannot provide all of the learning experiences. For example, we encourage and work with churches to offer reading parties that families can attend so children can experience reading aloud if parents do not have the skills.
- TRSM works with families to develop adult literacy skills as needed through our online programs.
- TRSM collaborates with most major family touch points to help increase the strength of the family reading message and the consistency. Together, we can better inform and engage parents, and raise expectations concerning their critical role in helping their children develop the skills needed from womb to classroom.

No program to date has developed and implemented a comprehensive program that is effective, affordable, and scalable. TRSM is in the early stages of demonstrating a comprehensive model program in Colorado Springs. All of the program elements have been proven independently. The next step is to integrate them into a complete package. Collaborating and integrating with existing programs is key to success.