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Version of Slides  
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# An Overview of Research Surrounding Early Literacy

Prepared for State of Wisconsin Legislators

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## Upcoming Sessions

**Week 2:** The Neuroscience Behind How the Brain Learns to Read, presented by Professor Mark Seidenberg, Ph. D.

**Week 3:** Teacher Preparation, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, and Early Literacy, presented by Professor Gloria Ladson-Billings, Ph. D.

**Week 4:** Early Literacy: Birth to Age 3, presented by Dr. Dipesh Navsaria, M.D.

**Week 5:** A Survey of Early Literacy Policy Initiatives in Other States, presented by the Education Commission of the States

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## Outline of Our Session

- Understanding the benchmarks
  - reading by third grade in Wisconsin
  - the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth-grade reading test
- Getting children to these benchmarks:
  - Overall approach
  - Research-supported in-school practices
  - Building teacher capacity
  - Classroom resources
- Outside-of-school practices that promote literacy development

## Understanding the Benchmarks: Wisconsin

From the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*:

“Wisconsin student test scores see slight decline in both math and reading, new data show” by Devi Shastri, published September 12, 2019

## Activity

From the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
English Language Arts Item Sampler Grade 3  
[https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/assessment/pdf/EWI215\\_GR03\\_ELAS\\_17\\_SAMP.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/assessment/pdf/EWI215_GR03_ELAS_17_SAMP.pdf)

Please read the short story provided.

We will ask you four comprehension questions about the story using polling.

As you read and respond to the questions, please consider what children need to know and be able to be successful in this task.

The event organizers showed the passage “Rainy Day Surprise” (pages 14 – 15 of the Sampler) and posted questions 1, 2, 3A, and 3B. I shared poll results.

## Understanding the Benchmarks: NAEP

### NAEP Fourth-Grade Reading in Wisconsin

- 1992: 71% basic and above
- 2019: 66% basic and above
- 1994: ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation
- 2019: ranked 27<sup>th</sup> in the nation

source:

<https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2020/02/05/education-the-return-of-phonics/>

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I shared the the NAEP fourth-grade reading released passage “Little Great White” and two medium difficulty items from that passage, one close-ended (multiple choice) and the other open-ended (written response).

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**Box 1.**

The range of knowledge, skills, and dispositions entailed in state reading tests presents a formidable task for classroom teachers. Among other things, teachers need to develop children's

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ■ print awareness/concepts of print    | ■ syntactic awareness                         |
| ■ phonological awareness               | ■ text structure analysis                     |
| ■ decoding and word recognition        | ■ executive skills (e.g., inhibitory control) |
| ■ word-reading strategies              | ■ genre knowledge                             |
| ■ comprehension monitoring             | ■ comprehension strategies                    |
| ■ reading fluency                      | ■ literal comprehension                       |
| ■ vocabulary knowledge                 | ■ inferential comprehension                   |
| ■ vocabulary strategies                | ■ critical comprehension                      |
| ■ morphological analysis               | ■ scanning and skimming                       |
| ■ science and social studies knowledge | ■ text navigation and search                  |
| ■ graphophonological semantic          | ■ reading stamina                             |
| cognitive flexibility                  | ■ facilitative reading attitudes              |

[https://nasbe.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/2019/05/Duke\\_May-2019\\_Standard.pdf](https://nasbe.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/2019/05/Duke_May-2019_Standard.pdf)

From Duke, N. K. (2019). Reading by third grade: How policymakers can foster early literacy. *The State Education Standard*, 19(2), 6-11.


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## Overall Approach

- I suggest a public health mindset.
- There is no silver bullet.  Showed image of a snake-oil salesman.
- We need a multi-faceted approach.
- The weight of the research evidence should drive decision-making.

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## Research-supported in-school practices in the classroom

[Image of a dishwasher]

## Research-supported in-school practices

- Explicit instruction
- Lots of opportunities for application in purposeful reading and writing
- A supportive environment
  - Relationships
  - Culturally responsive practice
  - Physical conditions

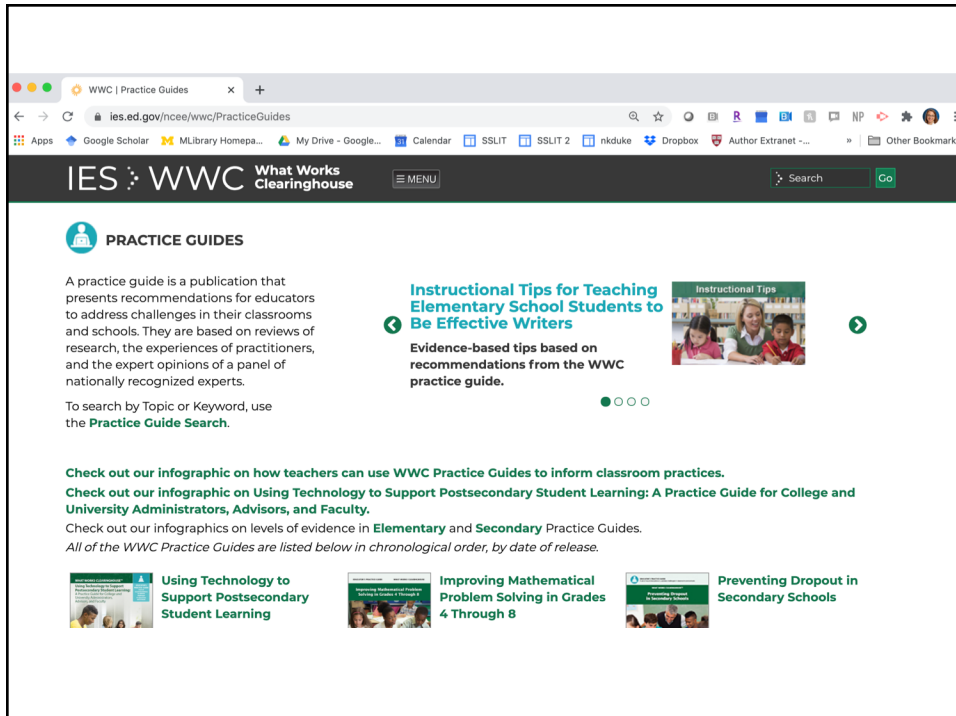
*And not at the expense of other domains!*

Available on YouTube directly or at <https://www.socialstudies.org/tssp/speaking-science-and-social-studies>

[literacyessentials.org](http://literacyessentials.org)



I showed, as an example, one page from the *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: K to 3* document, specifically the page with practices 2 – 5.



WWC | Practice Guides

ies.ed.gov/hcee/wwc/PracticeGuides

IES WWC What Works Clearinghouse

**PRACTICE GUIDES**

A practice guide is a publication that presents recommendations for educators to address challenges in their classrooms and schools. They are based on reviews of research, the experiences of practitioners, and the expert opinions of a panel of nationally recognized experts.

To search by Topic or Keyword, use the [Practice Guide Search](#).

**Instructional Tips for Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers**

Evidence-based tips based on recommendations from the WWC practice guide.

Check out our infographic on how teachers can use WWC Practice Guides to inform classroom practices.  
 Check out our infographic on Using Technology to Support Postsecondary Student Learning: A Practice Guide for College and University Administrators, Advisors, and Faculty.  
 Check out our infographics on levels of evidence in **Elementary** and **Secondary** Practice Guides.  
 All of the WWC Practice Guides are listed below in chronological order, by date of release.

Using Technology to Support Postsecondary Student Learning

Improving Mathematical Problem Solving in Grades 4 Through 8

Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools

## Research-supported In-School Practices in intervention

Students are below proficient on state and national tests for many different reasons.

## Multiple Causes. . .

- dyslexia
- dysteachia (multiple kinds)
- content knowledge and vocabulary
- language processing
- executive function
- motivation and stamina
- and more!

Match the intervention to the strengths and needs!

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## Teacher Capacity

Shown photo of an E.R. physician; relayed argument that teaching a diverse classroom of first graders to read and write is akin in complexity to being an E.R. physician, but for historical reasons, E.R. physicians receive far more training, one reason why teachers should be provided with ongoing professional learning opportunities. (See Duke, N. K. (2019). Reading by third grade: How policymakers can foster early literacy. *The State Education Standard*, 19(2), 6-11.)

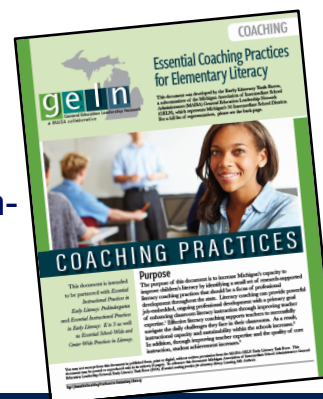
## Teacher Preparation

- Prioritize being safe to practice
- Establish rigorous standards, for example:  
[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Lower\\_Elementary\\_PK-3\\_Education\\_Preparation\\_Standards\\_649824\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Lower_Elementary_PK-3_Education_Preparation_Standards_649824_7.pdf)
- Maximize course credits
- Narrow grade bands, if needed
- Incorporate lots of field work

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## Ongoing, Research-Aligned Professional Learning

- Physician analogy
- Ineffectiveness of most professional learning
- Effectiveness of some professional learning
- The effectiveness of (research-aligned!) literacy coaching



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## Coaching

- You need more coaches (fewer than 14 teachers/coach? see Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011).
- Research support for coaching is considerable.
- But some kinds of coaching are more effective than others.
- Coaching is hard to scale (e.g., Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018).
- Coaches need considerable support.
  - process of coaching
  - content of coaching

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## Classroom Resources

- Books
- Curriculum materials
- Technology
- Class size
- Other

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## Beginning from Birth

For example:

- Home visitors
- Book delivery programs (e.g., Imagination Library)
- Reach out and read

Photo of infant with book; photo of father and children at a restaurant with books.

## Continuing into Preschool

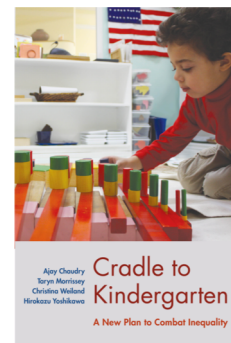
**NIEER** NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH

State of Preschool State(s) of Head Start Publications Research

### State Profiles

Click a state below to view its profile as a PDF document.

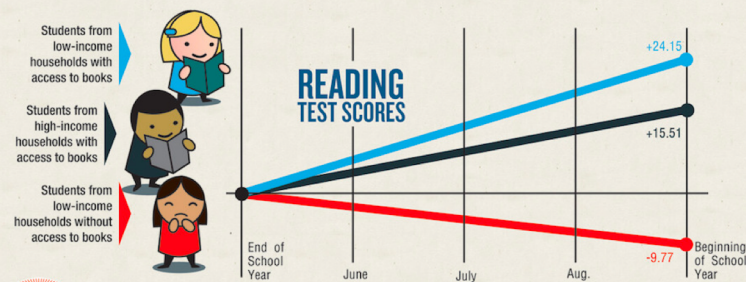
[http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Wisconsin\\_YB2019.pdf](http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Wisconsin_YB2019.pdf)



# Summer Reading <https://firstbook.org/>

## KIDS WHO READ BEAT SUMMER SLIDE

Studies show that access to books during the summer prevents a drastic loss in reading skill – especially for kids in need.



SOURCES: 1. Change in scores between end-of-year and following year testing as shown by the California Aptitude Test. (States, S. L., Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., & Olson, L. S. (2012). Counteracting summer slide: Social capital resources within socioeconomically disadvantaged families. Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 17(3), 165.)

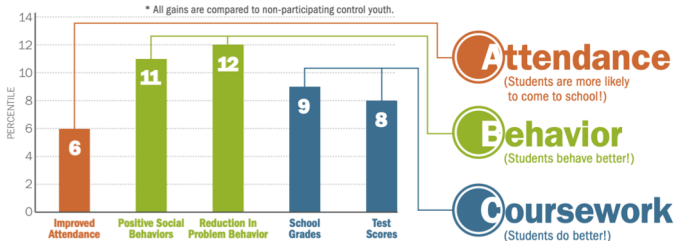
## And After School. . .

### High Quality Afterschool Programs ACCELERATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Research shows that high quality afterschool programs can lead to increased **Attendance**, **Behavior** and improved **Coursework**. This means that students participating in a high quality afterschool program went to school more, behaved better, received better grades and did better on tests. These ABCs are critical factors to student engagement and achievement.

High quality afterschool programs are proven to accelerate student achievement:<sup>1</sup>

\* All gains are compared to non-participating control youth.



**Attendance**  
(Students are more likely to come to school!)

**Behavior**  
(Students behave better!)

**Coursework**  
(Students do better!)

Portion of infographic

[http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/ExpandedLearning&Afterschool\\_Infographic.pdf](http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/ExpandedLearning&Afterschool_Infographic.pdf)



## Take-Home Points

- In Wisconsin, performing well on the third-grade English Language Arts test requires
  - a broad range of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in students
  - tremendous knowledge and skills in teachers
- Significant improvement will require a multi-faceted approach in and outside of the classroom
- Research points to many promising initiatives

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*I hope that Wisconsin's legislative imagination won't be limited by what other states have done. Wisconsin can do better.*

# Q & A