

My Reading Academy®

My Reading Academy Significantly Boosts Learning Gains and Kindergarten Readiness for Pre-K Students Across Palm Beach County



ESSA alignment has been independently verified by LearnPlatform

Hee Jin Bang, VP, Efficacy Research & Evaluation; Eric Setoguchi, Research Analyst, Efficacy Research & Evaluation

KEY FINDINGS

- Students who used *My Reading Academy*® scored on average 45 points higher on the spring Star Early Literacy™ Assessment in comparison to their peers who did not use the program representing nearly four months of additional learning.
- Students who used *My Reading Academy* made a monthly average growth of 16.3 points on the assessment, more than 4 points above the Florida Department of Early Learning benchmark for monthly learning growth of 12 points, in comparison to 11.9 points by their comparison-group peers.
- Seventy-nine percent of students who used *My Reading Academy* finished the school year with a score of 707 or above, the Kindergarten-Ready cut score defined by the Florida Department of Early Education, in contrast to 63 percent of students in the matched comparison group who did not use the program.
- Nine out of 10 teachers who used *My Reading Academy* indicated that the program had a positive impact on students' sound-to-letter correspondence and letter-recognition skills, as well as on their enjoyment and self-confidence in learning to read.

Background

This brief focuses on the 2023–2024 school-year implementation of *My Reading Academy* by the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County (ELC PBC) that led its deployment in voluntary pre-K (VPK) classrooms across the School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) and independently operated for-profit and nonprofit centers, including Head Start. This study expands upon a [previous research](#) from spring 2023 across seven voluntary pre-K (VPK) centers that historically have had the lowest percentage of students who were kindergarten-ready by the end of the school year. The spring 2023 results indicated that *My Reading Academy* helped close the gap between students who used the program and those who did not by 84 percent on the Star Early Literacy™ Assessment. Encouraged by these results, the ELC PBC leadership expanded the implementation of *My Reading Academy* for the full 2023–2024 school year across all privately operated 256 VPK centers and the SDPBC. Examined is the impact of using *My Reading Academy* on students' year-end achievement on the Star Early Literacy™ Assessment, as well as educators' reports on the impact of the program on students' early reading skills. The average monthly growth made by students on the Star Early Literacy™ Assessment as well as the percent of students ending the school year kindergarten-ready are highlighted given the new VPK accountability standards that have been adopted in the summer of 2024. These new accountability standards set the expectation that each child needs to grow at least 12 points per month, and defines 707 as the score on the Star Early Literacy™ Assessment indicating that a student is kindergarten-ready. This study is the second quasi-experimental study conducted with pre-K students in Palm Beach County and validated by LearnPlatform | Instructure as meeting ESSA Tier II Standards, building on the evidence of effectiveness of Age of Learning solutions.

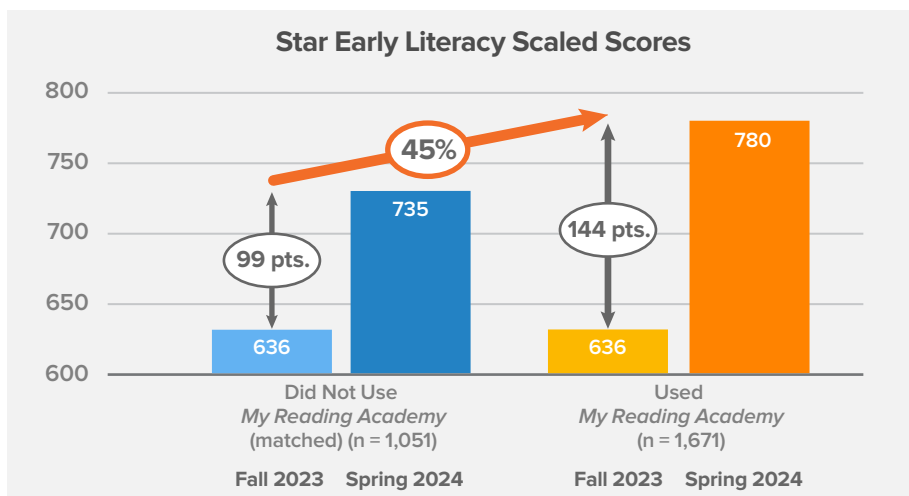
Study Overview

This study focuses on students who had matched fall 2023 and spring 2024 Star Early Literacy™ Assessment scores: 5,491 students who used *My Reading Academy* and 3,031 students

who did not use the program. Students who used *My Reading Academy* for at least three hours each semester (fall and spring) and for at least 10 hours across the school year were considered to have used the program with fidelity (n = 1,671). Using a statistical technique called propensity score weighting, students who used *My Reading Academy* with fidelity were matched with those who did not use the program based on the fall baseline assessment scores and key demographic characteristics (gender, ethnicity, average Classroom Assessment Scoring System score). Among students who did not use *My Reading Academy*, higher weights were assigned to those whose characteristics better matched those of students in the group that used the program, yielding an estimated comparison group of 1,051 students.

Results

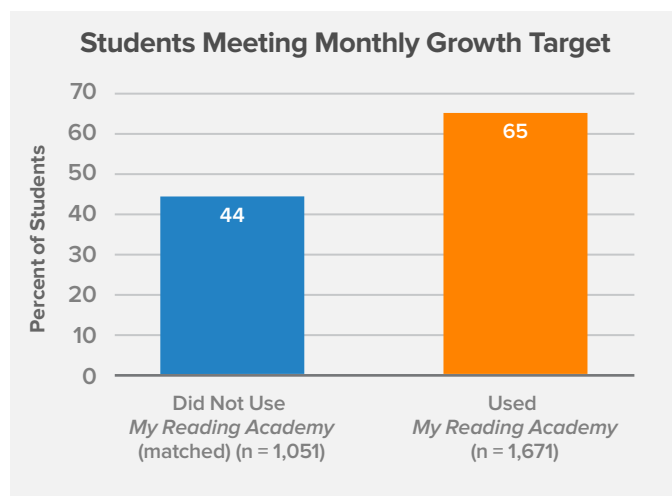
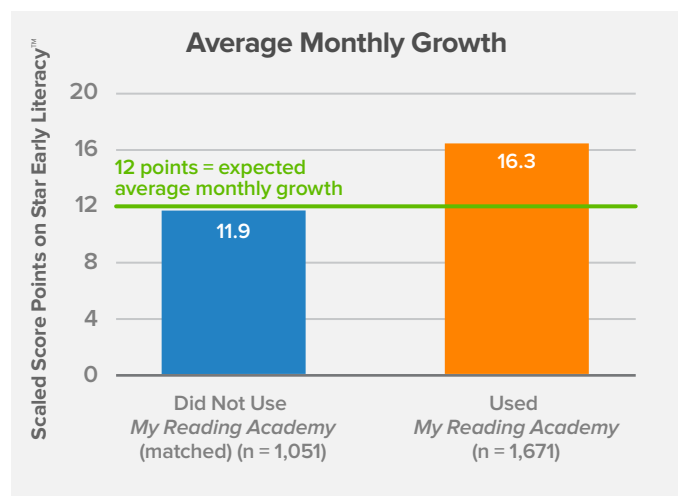
Students who used *My Reading Academy* with fidelity used the program for a total of 16 median hours across 26 median weeks (6.25 months). Relative to the matched comparison group students, those who used the program scored, on average, 45 points (about 45 percent) higher on the spring Star Early Literacy™ Assessment, representing nearly four months of additional learning (effect size = 0.48, $p < .001$).



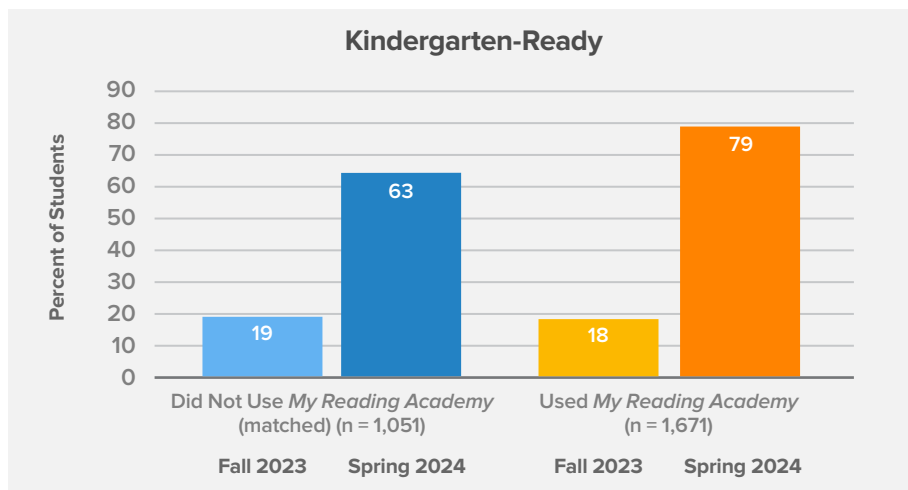
NOTE: The 1,051 students in the matched group comprise an estimated sample from the propensity score weighting procedure.

Those who used *My Reading Academy* made an average monthly growth of 16.3 points on the Star Early Literacy™ Assessment, well above the monthly benchmark of 12 points of growth. This is about 37 percent greater growth in comparison to their matched peers not using the program, who made an average monthly gain of 11.9 points on the assessment (effect size = 0.43, $p < .001$).

Among students who used *My Reading Academy* with fidelity, 65 percent met the monthly target of 12 points of growth on the Star Early Literacy™ assessment, in comparison to 44 percent of students in the matched comparison group (effect size = 0.52, $p < .001$). In other words, students who used the program were about 48 percent more likely to meet the growth target relative to their comparison group peers.



Seventy-nine percent of students who used *My Reading Academy* ended the school year kindergarten-ready as measured by the Star Early Literacy™ Assessment, in comparison to only about 63 percent of students¹ in the matched sample who did not use the program (effect size = 0.50, $p < .001$).



Educator Feedback

A total of 105 teachers completed end-of-year surveys.

- Ninety-five percent of the respondents reported that *My Reading Academy* had a positive impact on their students' ability to recognize letters.
- Ninety-two percent reported the program's positive impact on students' ability to associate sounds with written letters.
- Ninety-two percent indicated the program's positive impact on students' enjoyment in learning to read.
- Ninety percent indicated the program's positive impact on students' self-confidence in learning how to read.

Additionally, 97 percent of respondents indicated that they would like to continue using *My Reading Academy*.

When asked about how *My Reading Academy* has supported their work as educators, teachers highlighted on the program's ability to differentiate instruction as well as its capacity to help them plan instruction.

“My Reading Academy supported my work as a teacher by providing personalized instruction, curriculum resources, assessment tools, professional development, and support for differentiation and intervention. It empowered me to effectively teach literacy skills and support student learning, ultimately helping all students become proficient readers.”

“My Reading Academy has been a valuable asset in my teaching career, allowing me to support my students effectively and foster a love of reading in them.”

“It has supported me by helping my students who need extra practice. It also helps for my kids who are advanced start working on skills we don't work on in prekindergarten.”

“We used My Reading Academy as a center resource, and it's cool to see children explore new features that they've unlocked. It shows their progress and allows them to choose what they want to work on.... One-to-one interaction on the app is pleasant and enjoyable for the children. I look forward to incorporating it more next year.”

¹ The 63 percent is an estimate of the percent of students who would be kindergarten-ready in a sample of students not using *My Reading Academy* with similar characteristics to the group that did use *My Reading Academy*.



Learn More!
AgeofLearning.com/Schools

