

STeps Into Reading (STIR)

Kindergarten teachers, teachers of reading and/or special education, speech pathologists



Reading program stressing phonological awareness for teachers of kindergarten students:

- *Students are screened and recommended for the program which meets each day for 20 minutes with a STIR teacher.*
- *Parent involvement is essential; workshops, Parent Kits, and a daily home book are used to ensure open communication.*

Results



- *The lowest 20% of students who participate in the STIR program have been shown to raise their skill level to that of the next 20%, thereby narrowing the gap between the students who are strong in readiness skills and those who are weak.*
- *Teachers report that the students in STIR are better able to participate in the general classroom.*

The Program

Based on research that has established a clear relationship between children's phonological awareness of language and reading acquisition, STeps Into Reading is designed to promote success in learning to read. The research demonstrates that a kindergartener's skill in phonological awareness is a more accurate predictor of successful early reading than is IQ.

All kindergartners are screened with the Dwyer/Pittman screening by the end of September. Based on the screening results, the lowest scoring 20% of the class is recommended for the STIR program. The children meet with a STIR teacher for 20 minutes a day, four days a week, within the kindergarten classroom. Planned activities that promote phonological awareness are used during the session. Bi-weekly meetings with the kindergarten teachers, the STIR teacher(s), and speech-language pathologists are conducted to discuss how to integrate the program with the regular education program and how to best help individual students. Criterion-referenced testing is used to assess the children's progress.

There is also a strong parent component to the STIR program: meetings and workshops are set up for parents; Parent Kits are distributed; and a daily home book is used for communication.

STIR has been replicated in a number of school districts across New York State.

Professional Development

The 18-hour training is given by two trainers: a speech-language pathologist and a reading specialist. Topics covered during training include background information on the connection between reading and language skills and understanding of the theoretical base of the program. Activities and program implementation ideas are shared, as well as specific training to administer the Dwyer/Pittman screening. It is recommended that adopting districts send all potential STIR teachers and K-1 classroom teachers/paraprofessionals to the training and appoint an in-school coordinator to serve as program liaison with trainers. Follow-up phone and/or e-mail consultations are encouraged and prove an integral part of program implementation. On-site follow-up can also be arranged and is encouraged.

Costs & Funding Options

Training costs are approximately \$3,600 plus travel and lodging expenses if training takes place at the replicator's site. There is a one-time purchase cost of the Dwyer/Pittman screening and criterion-referenced test (\$100 per assessor). Possible funding sources include ESEA Title I funds.

Learning Standards

English Language Arts: 1) read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

Contact

Jane Dwyer Ebaugh
Director of Special Ed.
Rhinebeck Central
Schools
P.O. Box 351
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
845-871-5570 x5512
Fax: 845-876-4963
E-mail: jdwyer1068@aol.com
or
Cece Pittman
Speech-language
Pathologist
Rhinebeck Central
Schools
P.O. Box 351
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
845-871-5224
E-mail: ceeandcee@aol.com