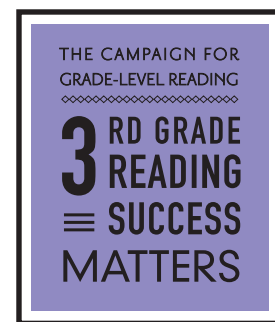


ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN



The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort by dozens of funders and nonprofit partners across the nation to ensure that more of our low-income children succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. The Campaign focuses on the most important predictor of school success and high school graduation—grade-level reading by the end of third grade.

Education research recognizes that proficiency in reading by the end of third grade enables students to shift from learning to read to reading to learn, and to master the more complex subject matter they encounter in the fourth grade curriculum. Most students who fail to reach this critical milestone falter in the later grades and often drop out before earning a high school diploma. Yet two-thirds of U.S. schoolchildren are not reading proficiently when they enter fourth grade. This disturbing statistic is made even worse by the fact that more than four out of every five low-income students miss this critical milestone.

The Campaign understands that schools must be accountable for helping all children achieve. This means schools must provide effective teaching for all children in every classroom every day. But schools cannot succeed alone. Ensuring the academic success of children from low-income families will require a focus beyond school. It will require engaged communities mobilized to remove barriers, expand opportunities, and assist parents in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to serve as full partners in the success of their children.

With this in mind—in addition to insisting on quality teaching and advocating for a more seamless system of care, services, and support—the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading has targeted three challenges to students' reading success that are widespread, consequential, and amenable to community solutions:

- **The Readiness Gap:** Too many children from low-income families begin school already far behind. The research also shows that these children are less likely to be read or spoken to regularly or to have access to books, literacy-rich environments, high-quality early care, and prekindergarten programs. As a consequence, these children may hear as many as 30 million fewer words than their middle-income peers before reaching kindergarten. Research shows that such interactions are critical for language development, an important precursor to literacy.
- **The Attendance Gap (Chronic Absence):** Too many children from low-income families miss too many days of school. Research has found that one in 10 kindergarten and first grade students nationwide misses nearly a month of school each year in excused and unexcused absences. These students can ill-afford to lose time on task, especially in the early years when reading instruction is a central part of the curriculum.
- **The Summer Slide (Summer Learning Loss):** Too many children lose ground over the summer months. Without access to the enriching activities available to more-affluent peers, research shows that children from low-income families lose as much as three months of reading comprehension skills over the summer. By the end of fifth grade, they are nearly three grade levels behind their peers.

For more information on the Campaign, visit the website at: www.gradelevelreading.net, or contact Ron Fairchild (rfairchild@gradelevelreading.net).