

**READ A BOOK TOGETHER *2X/DAY***



# ReadWell & Pediatric Literacy Kits Pilot Project Report

## *Summary of the Project*

For the period starting July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017, BookSpring continued our ReadWell program at 30 Central Texas clinics with monthly or quarterly deliveries of new and gently-used children's books for ages birth through five years of age, and expanded the program to 3 new clinics.

We piloted new prescription stickers and instructional materials designed with assistance from faculty and student researchers at the Center for Health Communication at the University of Texas at Austin. This messaging is based on positive mindset messaging (Dweck, 2006. *Mindset: The new psychology of success*), and others) that has been demonstrated to create positive changes in performance, behavior, and attitudes from a minimal amount of intervention. Targeted messages that help listeners understand that they have agency in their own future outcomes, and that the brain and intelligence itself is plastic and improvable, not fixed and pre-determined, help students of many ages learn and perform better in their academic careers.

We completed a pilot study to measure the number of books in the home, the impact of the "read a book together twice a day" prescription, and the patient's satisfaction of care, which provided preliminary support for the effectiveness of the enhanced motivational messaging.

## The goals achieved

	<u>PROJECTED</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE INCREASE OVER GOAL</u>
<u>PARTICIPATING HEALTHCARE CLINICS</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>10%</u>
<u>NUMBER OF BOOKS DISTRIBUTED</u>	<u>31,500</u>	<u>48,208</u>	<u>53%</u>
<u>NUMBER OF CHILD ENGAGEMENTS</u>	<u>27,000</u>	<u>43,668</u>	<u>62%</u>
<u>NUMBER OF PEDIATRIC HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS SUPPORTED</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>56%</u>

## Context of the project

As part of our 20 books by 2020 initiative, BookSpring is aiming to grow all its programs to reach the 80,000 children in Central Texas living in low-income homes. We are aiming to provide at least 3 books per child each year that would build a library of 20 books in their homes over a five-year period. 20 books at home is a predictor of 3 more years of schooling over those who don't have books (Evans et al., 2012). Because of this, we are strategically increasing all our programs by about 10% each year through 2020. As a result, we distributed significantly more books through ReadWell during this grant period than were originally projected. Another alteration from the original proposal is that we changed the metric from "number of children served" to "number of child engagements." This better reflects the reality that there are 14 regularly-scheduled well child exams between birth and age five in Texas, but they are heavily weighted in the first two years of life. That means that some children may get up to five books in one year, where others may only get one. We believe that "child engagements" is a more accurate way to depict the early literacy interventions that our method provides, and will help us measure our impact across all our programs over time.

## Additional developments

One of the benefits that this grant helped support was a very rigorous evaluation of the pilot enhancement program at one of our ReadWell sites. This site is part of a large private healthcare partnership that is a different type of partner than the Federally Qualified Healthcare Providers that we typically serve. While we want to continue to serve these very low-income patients and their families, we know that many low-income families are seen in other healthcare settings, such as this private partnership. Working with this partnership allowed us to examine the following questions:

- 1) **Importance of Reading:** Does the inclusion of a targeted, novel persuasive message, "read a book together twice a day," have an impact on how much

- the patients value books and reading aloud at home? Do they remember and believe in this specific message?
- 2) **Satisfaction with Care:** Does the pediatric literacy intervention positively impact the way that patients perceive the quality of care given to them by their healthcare provider?
  - 3) **Frequency of Reading:** How often do parents report reading or having caregivers read to their children?
  - 4) **Number of Books in the Home:** How many books do families in Central Texas report having in the home, regardless of income? How many do low-income families report having, in comparison to non-low-income families?

We completed phase one of this study which involved 1150 families between September, 2016 and March, 2017, of which 1033 completed paper surveys during or immediately following the visit. Of these, 813 families visited 3 doctors who participated by giving out books and promotional reading messages, and 218 families visited 4 doctors who did not participate in the treatment (2 surveys were not counted due to significant portions of unanswered questions). The participants were offered a \$5 coupon to a local bookstore as an incentive for completing the survey.

Comparing the scores and percentages between participating and non-participating doctors, we found the following results:

Results of ReadWell Phase One Survey 7-1-2017				
	RESPONSES	PARTICIPATING	NON-PARTICIPATING	DIFFERENCE
		N=813	N=218	
How many children's books do you have in your home?	0	0.99%	0.92%	0.07%
	1-5	10.25%	16.13%	-5.88%
	5-10	7.53%	17.51%	-9.98%
	10-20	14.69%	16.59%	-1.90%
	20-50	30.62%	25.35%	5.27%
	More than 50	26.48%	19.03%	7.45%
How often does a parent or caretaker read books to your child?	Every day	44.40%	42.16%	2.24%
	Most days	15.74%	16.42%	-0.68%
	A few days a week	9.28%	16.04%	-6.76%
	A few days a month	2.00%	4.10%	-2.10%
	Not at all	2.09%	2.24%	-0.15%
How important do you consider reading enjoyment to your child's future?	Very important	95.19%	95.24%	-0.05%
	Somewhat important	4.07%	4.29%	-0.22%
	Not sure	0.62%	0.48%	0.14%
	Not very important	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Not important at all	0.12%	0.00%	0.12%
How important do you feel it is to read a book together twice a day?	Very important	74.69%	72.94%	1.75%
	Somewhat important	19.48%	19.72%	-0.25%
	Not sure	4.47%	6.88%	-2.41%
	Not very important	1.24%	0.46%	0.78%
	Not important at all	0.12%	0.00%	0.12%
Please tell us how you feel about today's visit with your provider.	Unsatisfied	0.25%	0.00%	0.25%
	Somewhat unsatisfied	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Satisfied	8.80%	9.39%	-0.59%
	Very satisfied	18.22%	22.10%	-3.88%
	Extremely satisfied	72.74%	68.51%	4.23%
Would you recommend this office to your family and friends?	Yes, definitely	98.63%	96.72%	1.91%
	Yes, somewhat	1.25%	3.00%	-1.75%
	No	0.12%	1.00%	-0.88%

- 1) **Importance of Reading:** The message "read a book together twice a day" was considered "Very Important" by 1.75% more families in the treatment group than

- the control group. In addition, families reported having books read to their children "every day" 2.24% more often than in the control group. The importance of reading enjoyment was nominally different, at .05%, perhaps because the treatment provider included messages about the importance of reading for brain and language development, that are not motivational goals.
- 2) **Satisfaction with Care:** There was a strong positive difference of 4.23% in the providers who delivered books and reading messages over the non-participant providers in families reporting being "extremely satisfied" with their care. However, the number of "very satisfied" went down in the treatment group. In the end, the total of very satisfied and extremely satisfied remained marginally higher in the treatment group; 90.96% to 90.61% in the control group. The benefit of moving from very satisfied to extremely satisfied should be further studied, particularly in relationship to the likelihood of families returning for all their scheduled care. In addition, the office itself was viewed more positively, with a difference of 1.91% in "would you recommend this office to your family and friends."
  - 3) **Frequency of Reading:** Parents reporting that their child was read to "every day" increased by 2.24% in the treatment group. This may reflect self-reporting and intervention bias, but can still be seen as evidence that the importance of reading has at least temporarily increased.
  - 4) **Number of Books in the Home:** On an aggregated report (see **Appendix B**), only 63% of families reported having more than 20 books in the home. When filtered by low-income (Medicaid or uninsured) the number drops to 40%. This suggests that 60% of low-income families with children under 5 in Central Texas have fewer than 20 children's books at home to read aloud to them, and for the children to grab, chew, and play with to become aware of print conventions, letters, and concepts about the world. What's profound about this is 37% of ALL families may have fewer than 20 books in the home, regardless of income. This is an unacceptable condition, when evidence shows that this simple intervention can have such an important long-term impact on educational success.

### **Conclusions or recommendations**

These findings strongly reinforce the urgency to spread the message of the importance of books in the home, reading, and reading aloud for Central Texas families. We are encouraged that Phase One of the ReadWell study showed a positive impact on patient satisfaction of care, a result that should help advocate for the adoption of programs with pediatric healthcare providers, as well as primary care physicians and their administrators. We will also use this data to continue to refine our motivational messages, exploring more emphasis on the positive benefits of parent-child bonding through reading aloud together, which could also address the issues of enjoyment and pleasure that have been shown to create an intrinsic motivation to read and more likelihood that families and their children will become lifelong readers. This, in turn, improves their prospects for health, employment, and overall well-being.