

The Ready4K approach has the strongest evidence base in the field of digital family engagement. With multiple randomized controlled trials and ongoing evaluations with Stanford, Brown and Notre Dame, the Ready4K approach meets Head Start and ESSA Tier 1 standards. Here's what the research has shown:

Parents who received Ready4K texts showed increased involvement at home and at school, and children gained important literacy skills.

2-3
MONTHS
LITERACY
GAINS

Our founder, Dr. Benjamin York, and colleagues from Stanford University first studied the Ready4K approach in a randomized controlled trial in San Francisco Unified School District with the District's Early Education Department, which serves the city's lowest-income preschool families. Parents who received program messages found them very helpful and reported engaging in more home literacy activities with their children. Teachers also reported increased involvement among parents in the treatment group. Children of parents who received program messages gained 2-3 months of literacy skills during the course of the school year, as measured by the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening tool (York & Loeb, 2014)

A version of Ready4K personalized to each child's development level was even more effective.

63%
MORE
EFFECTIVE

In a follow-up randomized controlled trial with San Francisco Unified School District, Dr. York and colleagues studied a personalized learning version of the program that leveraged child assessment data to inform parents of their children's development, along with targeted tips. Children of parents who received the personalized program were 63% more likely to read at a higher level than children in the general texting group. (Doss, Fahle, Loeb & York, 2018)

Parents found Ready4K texts helpful in engaging children in early math skill building.

84%
LEARNED
NEW MATH
TIPS

In a study at the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital, parents received information and resources about the importance of early math skill building behaviors, and were invited to enroll in Ready4K texts. An evaluation of the initiative found that 84% of parents who enrolled in Ready4K said they learned something new from the texts. Specifically, parents cited helpful tips and reminders for engaging their children in early math skill building on a regular basis.

Ready4K outperformed other digital family engagement tools in a head-to-head study.

95%
FOUND
ACTIVITIES
EASY TO DO

In a study in Minnesota, parents received Ready4K text messages, a mobile application, and parent modeling videos. Nearly all parents read the Ready4K messages and found them easy to do and helpful. By comparison, only about half downloaded the mobile application, of which only 60% read the content, and only 55-60% found the activities easy to do and helpful. Only 40% of parents watched the parent modeling videos, of which about 80% found them easy to do, but only 50-55% found them to be helpful.

In addition to these studies, we have multiple ongoing evaluations of Ready4K in partnership with Stanford, Brown, and Notre Dame, Texas A&M, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Read the full research studies here: <http://ready4k.com/research>

Our product extensions also draw on research from the broader field of text message-based family engagement. We have been particularly inspired by these findings:

Embedding multimedia content in text messages increased parents' recall rates.



A study conducted by researchers at Northwestern University compared two different text and multimedia messaging programs designed to support low income parents' engagement with their young children. Researchers found that parents who received multimedia content embedded in the text messages were more likely to recall the content than parents who had to click links in order to access the multimedia content. Parents who received in-text multimedia content also reported practicing the behaviors shown in the content more frequently with their children. (Pila, Lauricella & Wartella, 2019)

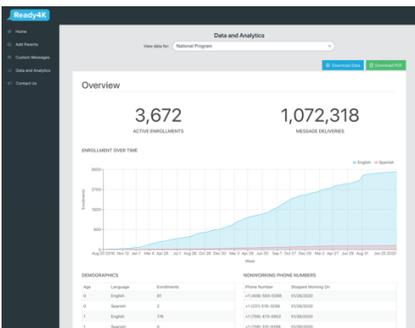
Texting parents during the summer showed positive effects on both child outcomes and family engagement.

In a randomized controlled trial, researchers at Brown University studied a text messaging program aimed at supporting elementary school parents to promote literacy skills with their children during the summer, in an attempt to curb summer learning loss. They found positive effects on reading comprehension among children whose parents received program messages in the summer, as well as increased attendance at parent-teacher conferences. (Kraft & Monti-Nussbaum, 2017)

FACT: Summer is a great time to try new things and have new adventures. When kids try new things, they build confidence and independence.

TIP: In the morning, work together to make a list of ten new things you want to try this summer. Include things like tasting a new fruit or visiting a new park.

Automatically enrolling families in a texting program led to greater participation and impact than traditional enrollment methods.



In a randomized controlled trial, researchers at Columbia University and the Harvard Kennedy School compared three different methods for enrolling parents of middle and high school students in a texting program. Less than 10% of parents who were invited to enroll online or via text signed up for the program; on the other hand, 96% of the parents who were automatically enrolled remained in the program. The parents who chose to enroll via the opt-in methods tended to have higher-achieving children and tended to already be more engaged in their children's education, suggesting that opt-in strategies could exacerbate achievement gaps rather than close them. (Bergman & Rogers, 2017)

Texting families of middle schoolers has demonstrated positive effects on both parent engagement and student outcomes.

Multiple studies have shown that texting middle school parents about their child's grades, assignments, and attendance can have positive effects on students' academic performance (for example, Bergman & Chan, 2019). There is also emerging research on sending families texts to help guide their middle school child's academic trajectory, support SEL skills, and foster positive parent-child interactions (Cortes & Holzman, working paper).

