



Evaluation Report

Summer 2021

Submitted To:

NewAlliance Foundation

Submitted By:

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November 2021



“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2021

I. INTRODUCTION

The NewAlliance Foundation’s, “READY for the Grade” (RfG) program has completed its ninth summer 2021, during the continued challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. This follows two interval years, 2019 and 2020 which have preceded an expected 3rd three-year cycle of funding summer reading programs at multiple libraries. As stated in prior evaluation reports, the goal of RfG is to provide students with consistent and comprehensive reading support and instruction during the summer to help participating students enter school in September ready to learn, solid in their retained reading skills, and with the same literacy advantages as peers who have been able to maintain their reading skills throughout the summer. This remained the goal for summer 2021, but additionally participating libraries sought to help students who had lost ground during an entire school year characterized by varied access to direct instruction, and who were craving opportunities to interact routinely with instructor and other children. Once again there were site-specific constraints for RfG summer 2021, and participating libraries again developed customized responses to meet overall RfG goals. Customized comprehensive evaluation was continued as well. This report includes details of the site-specific strategies and results and longitudinal findings as well where possible.

Through the first two cycles and two interval years, the program had served 1,316 children (including some who participated in multiple years), and their families. An additional 89 children and their families fully participated during summer 2021. Despite the challenges of continued pandemic restrictions, READY for the Grade continued to provide a solid model that could be (and was) modified as needed to fit local conditions, including use of virtual strategies and curated literacy kits. There were planned variations in implementation, and there were continued efforts to try and adhere to or restore many of the core elements of the program (regular, structured individual and group tutoring, family engagement opportunities, involvement of rising 1st – 3rd graders who have economic challenges and are reading below grade level).

- Hamden, initiated their 6-week in-person program at the Brundage Community Branch Library. A total of 9 children participated in group and individual instruction and their family members were invited to weekly family nights. Books and other incentives were distributed.
- Killingly conducted in-person programming including one-on-one and small group instruction at the main library site, and outdoors at the Village at Killingly. A total of 31 students participated and received books and other incentives and had access to the library. Family events were restored.
- RfG Manchester was suspended for Summer 2021.
- New Haven again conducted a fully virtual 7-week program with all key elements (group and individual tutoring, family engagement and distribution of literacy supports and books), for 24 children. Parents were provided with direct assistance to help their children.
- Rockville Public Library collaborated with Skinner Road Elementary School, Vernon, CT (the home school of instructor Maureen Kearney) to bring RfG to 12 children who participated in in-person small group and individualized instruction. Transportation was provided and multiple books were distributed. Ms. Kearney also provided virtual instruction to 2 children who were not able to participate in person. No family events were held.
- RfG West Haven was made available through distribution of 6 weekly literacy kits. A total of 31 children were enrolled, 80 literacy kits were distributed, and 11 children/families participated consistently throughout the summer. No in-person instruction was provided though staff were available on request to support involvement and each kit included specific guidance for caregivers. A culminating family event was held and family games were included in materials.

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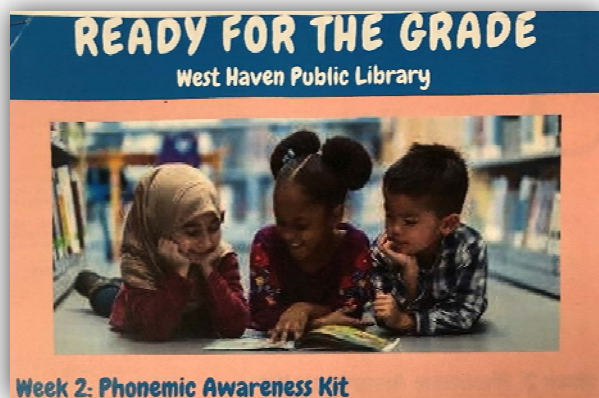
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Summary of Key Findings

- The programs were conducted for a total of 89 participants from urban, suburban, and rural settings. This included 9 children from Hamden, 31 children from Killingly, 24 children from New Haven, 14 children from Rockville, and 11 children from West Haven. This represents continued, unavoidable decrease in participation as compared to pre-pandemic years, but achievement of projected participation goals for modified summer 2021 plans.
- All five programs incorporated effective curricular and, with the exception of West Haven, pedagogical practices to support reading skill development. All five programs made books and other materials available to families over the summer.
- Site representatives from all the programs, including West Haven which did not provide direct instruction, reported substantial family involvement by parents/guardians/grandparents and often siblings. This included promoting active involvement, engaging with children in assignments, helping children access virtual learning, and participating in reading and games to promote skill development.
- At all five programs, substantial support from the library and effective program management were apparent. Other partnerships (e.g., with other enrichment providers) varied and continued to be understandably more limited.
- Staffing varied according to revised plans, but all sites had experienced personnel, and in the case of all but Hamden (which was new) and West Haven, staff with ongoing RfG involvement. The desired population was being served, and all sites met site-level goals and returned to pre-pandemic recruitment criteria (though recruitment strategies remained similar to those used 2020).
- Most participants, including several who returned from 2020, had very consistent attendance, and parents who provided feedback clarified that available RfG services were meeting important goals for them and their children. The use of incentives helped promote good attendance and each of the sites devised strategies that made processing and delivery possible.
- Multiple assessment strategies were used, but all five sites tested children before and after program participation, and all reported that participants enhanced/revitalized their reading skills. With the exception of Rockville where no surveys were administered, parents/guardians confirmed children’s skill development, acknowledging that access to RfG had been very helpful.



Hamden fully initiates its program, 2021



Cover page of an RfG literacy kit, West Haven, 2021

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II. FINDINGS

As described in the Summary of Key Findings, despite challenges, RfG programs were implemented and they produced positive results. This section of the report presents detailed findings for summer 2021, and where applicable limited longitudinal results as well. The evaluation design again had to be modified (see below for details), but as for each of the past eight years, program design and delivery, enrollment, attendance, and achievement were reviewed, and as for Summer 2020, parent input was also obtained.

Evaluation Summer 2021

Most data collection for summer 2021 was conducted virtually. Each site provided details on their summer practices and submitted photographs and other documentation for independent review.

- Hamden, the newest site provided summarized enrollment, attendance and achievement data, administered parent feedback surveys and hosted an in-person evaluation site visit.
- Killingly provided copies of enrollment and attendance data and achievement results, hosted an in-person evaluation site visit, and administered parent feedback surveys.
- New Haven sent copies of enrollment and attendance data and achievement results, allowed the evaluator access to individual and group tutoring sessions and family events, administered parent feedback surveys and had their staff participate in an online interview.
- Rockville provided enrollment and attendance data and achievement summaries, and participated in both pre-program and follow-up interviews.
- West Haven provided enrollment data (for all families) and copies of weekly submissions and achievement data for the 11 families with consistent participation. They also provided multiple online check-ins with the evaluator and administered parent feedback surveys.

All sites were fully responsive to evaluation requests which facilitated cross-site summaries. Virtual and in-person visits where possible and comprehensive interviews provided details regarding program delivery, student and family feedback and outcomes (see section C for additional site-specific details).

A. Program Design, Operations and Outcomes Overview

The overall program design for summer 2021 was consistent with past cycles but reflected the shifts imposed by continuing responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. As shown in Table 1, RfG was undertaken in five communities during summer 2021, including Hamden, Killingly, New Haven, Rockville and West Haven; Manchester suspended all programming.¹ The RfG sites represent urban, suburban and rural communities and both new and continued collaborations with public schools and other governmental and nonprofit partner organizations. **[For the remainder of this report ALL sites = all but Manchester.]**

¹ It was hoped initially that Summer 2021 would have been the beginning of the 3rd cycle of three-year cohorts; the 2013 – 2015 cohort included Killingly, New Haven and Rockville; the 2016 – 2018 cohort adding Manchester, West Haven and Wallingford (which discontinued participation after summer 2018). The 2021 cohort was expected to include Killingly, New Haven (with two sites Wilson Branch and the newly designed, but now postponed Stetson Branch program), Rockville, Manchester, West Haven and Hamden (new in 2021). Any cross-site summaries/trends should be compared carefully as the number of programs has changed and conditions since 2020 are unique.

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As shown in Table 1, the five program models all adhered to the core elements of the RfG program to the degree possible, but of course there were differences between the communities and as compared to summer 2020 or 2019 or before (see also Evaluation Reports 2019 and 2020). Despite ongoing restrictions, a substantial amount of programming was offered across sites with variations as needed. Summer 2021 also saw a return to pre-pandemic target population recruitment (i.e., incoming 1st – 3rd graders) and more involvement with families. Opportunities for session-based family involvement with RfG program staff were made available at all sites but Rockville, and sites, including Rockville encouraged parents, guardians, siblings and other family members to continue helping students engage virtually (where needed) and by playing educational games, reviewing homework, and engaging in reading practice. Staffing varied by site, and in comparison to past summers including 2020, (see site-specific reports), but all sites, used personnel experienced with reading skill development and all but Hamden, which was new, and West Haven, used personnel familiar with RfG. Multiple instructor-selected curricular materials were used and shared, different incentive strategies were undertaken effectively, and all sites provided books for children to read and keep. As stated previously:

- Hamden, initiated their 6-week in-person program at the Brundage Community Branch Library. A total of 9 children participated in group and individual instruction and their family members were invited to weekly family nights. Books and other incentives were distributed.
- Killingly conducted in-person programming including one-on-one and small group instruction at the main library site, and outdoors at the Village at Killingly. A total of 31 students participated and received books and other incentives and had access to the library. Family events/support were provided.
- New Haven again conducted a fully virtual 7-week program with all key elements (group and individual tutoring, family engagement and distribution of literacy supports and books), for 24 children. Parents were also provided with direct assistance.
- Rockville Public Library collaborated with Skinner Road Elementary School, Vernon, CT (the home school of instructor Maureen Kearney) to bring RfG to 12 children who participated in in-person small group and individualized instruction. Transportation was provided and multiple books were distributed. Ms. Kearney also provided virtual instruction to 2 children who were not able to participate in person. No family events were held.
- RfG West Haven was made available through distribution of 6 weekly literacy kits. A total of 31 children were enrolled, 80 literacy kits were distributed, and 11 children/families participated consistently throughout the summer. No in-person instruction was provided though staff were available on request to support involvement and each kit included specific guidance for caregivers. A culminating family event was held and family games were included in materials.



Instructor working one-on-one outside, Village at Killingly 2021

As clarified by the Program Directors at the October 2021 RfG Library Convening, the site-specific strategies and changes described above, resulted in good fits for local conditions and restrictions.

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Table 1: REAdy for the Grade Implementation Summary, Summer 2021

Site	Direct Instruction	Kits/Book Distribution	Family Support/Events	# Weeks/Days	Incentives	# Students	# Staff**	Parent Feedback	Achievement
Hamden	✓	✓	Weekly	6 weeks (3x/week)	✓	9	Prg. Dir. Coordinator 3 tutors	Very +	All improved or maintained
Killingly	✓	✓	1 Author Event Guidance	7 weeks Main (3x/week) VAK (2x/week) 2 hrs	✓	31	Prg. Dir. 2 reading teachers, 2 reading assistants	Very +	All improved or maintained
Manchester	Program Suspended 2021								
New Haven	✓ (virtual)	✓	4 Events 1 focused on Guidance	7 weeks 2 group up to 2 individual	✓	24	Prg. Dir. Coordinator 3 teachers Specialists	Very +	All improved or maintained
Rockville	✓	✓		6 weeks 3x/week	✓	12 in person 2 (virtual)	Prg. Dir. Coordinator Assistant, Youth vols	No Admin.	All improved or maintained
West Haven	Parent guidance	✓	Culminating Guidance	6 weeks – Curated Literacy Kits	✓	11*	Prg. Dir Coordinator Assistant, Youth vols	Very +	All improved or maintained
TOTAL						89			

*A total of 31 individuals were enrolled, 80 literacy kids were distributed, 11 children participated consistently throughout the summer.

**The Coordinators at the New Haven and Rockville sites also provided direct instruction to children. The staff at the New Haven site included specialists in special education and parent involvement.

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Table 1 also shows important summary data about program and participant outcomes across all sites. Parents/guardians provided positive feedback about how the programs operated and what they and their children got out of it, and program staff reported achievement by participants.

- All sites obtained very positive feedback from parents/guardians (see site-specific reports for details) who reported that the work students did helped them gain confidence in reading abilities, develop interest in reading for learning and enjoyment, and helped develop or maintain key skills including comprehension and sounding out words and identifying sight words. Even though most sites also had other options for children in the summer (e.g., free summer school, ½ price camps), parents pointed out that RfG focused on reading skills students would need to be successful in the new school year, which continues to include many unknowns. Parents appreciated that continued focus and also the opportunity for small, safe programs.
- Different tests were used to determine achievement, but program directors at all five sites (including West Haven where no in-person instruction was provided) administered initial and final assessments and all indicated that all or almost all of the students who participated maintained or improved (mostly improved) their reading skills.

Direct observations were only conducted at Killingly, Hamden and New Haven (virtually), but site Coordinators were asked to describe how they worked with children, including how they made decisions about what to include in the literacy kits distributed to children in West Haven. A summary of specific teaching and learning strategies that were observed or described during observations or interviews are shown below in Table 2. It can be seen in the table that many effective practices were used at each of the sites and coordinators/directors reported they used these strategies and others regularly. Specific examples are described in the site-specific reports that are available in Section B. Further, the use of virtual and on-demand digital strategies as well as physical space at the Hamden, Killingly and Rockville sites was quite extensive. Many books and other instructional materials were made available to participating families at all sites.

Table 2: Use of Effective Practices, Summer 2021

	Hamden	Killingly	New Haven	Rockville	West Haven
Building phonetic skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Children reading silently	✓	✓	Homework	✓	Homework
Children reading to instructor/group	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Choral/Guided reading*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Children discussing reading**	✓	✓	✓	✓	with parents
Identifying vocabulary (sight words, new words, unusual words)	✓	✓	✓	✓	with parents
Making connections to previous lessons/personal experiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	with parents
Writing, movement or craft activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	with parents

* Done with small groups (2 – 3 students) only.

**This included making predictions, stating preferences, checking comprehension.

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B. Enrollment

Registration data were submitted for 89 enrolled students. This included 32 (36%) of whom were rising 1st graders, 28 (31%) of whom were rising 2nd graders and 25 (28%) who were rising 3rd graders. (Participants also included a few students (n=4, 4%) who were rising kindergarten students from West Haven.) The grade level compositions of the sites were different, with each responding to specific needs/requests of the populations that engaged them, but all sites returning to the core RfG target group of rising 1st – 3rd graders.

Table 3a: Number of Registered Participants by site by Fall 2021 Grade Level

Site	PK/K	1st	2 nd	3rd	TOTAL 2021	TOTAL 2020	TOTAL 2019
Hamden	0	2	2	5	9		
Killingly	0	13	11	7	31	25	31
Manchester						25	8
New Haven	0	8	7	9	24	30	41
Rockville	0	6	5	3	14	5	46
West Haven*	4	3	3	1	11	3	33
TOTAL	4 (4%)	32 (36%)	28 (31%)	25 (28%)	89	88	159

* These numbers reflect only those from West Haven who participated consistently throughout the summer.

The demographic characteristics of the 89 summer 2021 students are shown in Table 3b (following). This total number of students was substantially lower than the number of students in pre-pandemic years, but comparable to Summer 2020, though the sites providing services changed summer 2021. As in the past, there were also some key differences in the composition of the cohort across sites, for summer 2021. Specifically:

- A total of 58% of all students in 2021 were female and 42% were male. Summer 2021 involved slightly more girls than Summer 2020, but was similar to other past years.
- The racial/ethnic composition of the student group for whom there are data (excludes West Haven) was fairly diverse: 6% of students were identified as Asian, 21% were identified as Black/African American, 19% of students were identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 36% were identified as White, 10% were identified as bi- or multi-racial, and 4% were identified as “other.” Racial/ethnic diversity was more pronounced at some sites than others (see individual site summaries).
- Proportionately fewer students were identified as Hispanic/Latinx than for 2019 or 2020 and slightly more students identified as White. (In 2019 and 2020, 25% of students were identified as White, in 2021 36% of students were identified as White.) Changes in group composition are likely due to differences in site profiles, **but this should be monitored** (all comparisons should be made very carefully – recruitment and enrollment continued to be limited by pandemic constraints).
- The primary language used at home for a total of 76% of the summer 2021 students was English, but 14% spoke Spanish as their primary language and 10% spoke another language (such as Arabic, Urdu, Gujarati, Telugu) at home. The variety of languages, and the fact that almost 25% of students do not speak English as their primary language at home continues to signal a need for

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attention to language-related staff skills and materials for future summers. Additionally, there is a likely need to address how to effectively recruit those families who do not speak English as the primary language at home as they may be in need of RfG programming, but not accessing the program.

Table 3b: Demographic Characteristics of Total Enrollment

	2016 N=177	2017 N=225	2018 N=261	2019 N=159	2020 N=88	2021 N=89
Grade in Fall						
PK/Kindergarten*	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%	4%
First Grade	30%	38%	29%	26%	35%	36%
Second Grade	41%	39%	40%	37%	25%	31%
Third Grade	26%	20%	27%	31%	32%	28%
Fourth Grade*					6%	
Gender						
Female	44%	55%	55%	56%	53%	58%
Male	56%	45%	45%	44%	47%	42%
Race/Ethnicity**					N=87	N=77
Asian	5%	6%	7%	5%	7%	6%
Black/African American	24%	23%	20%	17%	25%	21%
Hispanic/Latinx	36%	32%	33%	42%	32%	19%
Native American	2%	1%	1%	1%	0	3%
White	33%	34%	28%	25%	25%	36%
Biracial	NA	4%	11%	11%	9%	10%
Other						4%
Primary Language at Home					N=62	
English	73%	72%	73%	66%	68%	76%
Spanish	21%	21%	19%	22%	21%	14%
Other	6%	7%	8%	12%	11%	10%

* Siblings in PK and 4th grade were allowed to officially participate for summer 2020

** Note all reported racial/ethnic data were recoded into single race/ethnicity categories to facilitate over-years comparisons, students in the “other” category 2021, identified themselves as *Arabic*.

Assessment of participants’ initial instructional reading levels were conducted as summer programming began at all five site and participants at the Hamden, Killingly and Rockville sites also reported available entering reading levels. Outreach for summer 2021 continued to include connections with families that had participated in prior years, or among families that were known to have students reading below grade level (roughly ¾ of participants were specifically identified as being below or well below grade level and key staff from all five sites indicated most of those participating definitely needed the help). Additionally, some parents, concerned about their children falling behind due to lack of consistent instruction during the 2020-21 school year, enrolled their children. Directors/Coordinators and family members reported that all or almost all (about 85%) of the participants they worked with were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

C. Attendance and Achievement

In addition to running engaging programs, the sites also promoted regular attendance. Each program tracked and reported attendance somewhat differently (see site specific results for details), but all indicated that many/most participants attended consistently and took advantage of available programming (despite in most cases, the availability of other summer learning options including family vacations that had been skipped summer 2020 at the initial height of the pandemic). All the sites also pushed participants to achieve, to maintain and in many cases to enhance key reading skills. Sites used different assessment strategies that focused on different skill development for summer 2021, but as shown in Table 4, it was clear that overall, participants did demonstrate desired results (see also site-specific results for additional details). **For the 78 cases where both a pre- and post-test was administered: 62% of the post tests showed improvement and an additional 36% showed no change (i.e., no loss of reading skills). All but two RfG participants (98%) for summer 2021 achieved the desired stability and expected readiness for the next school year.**

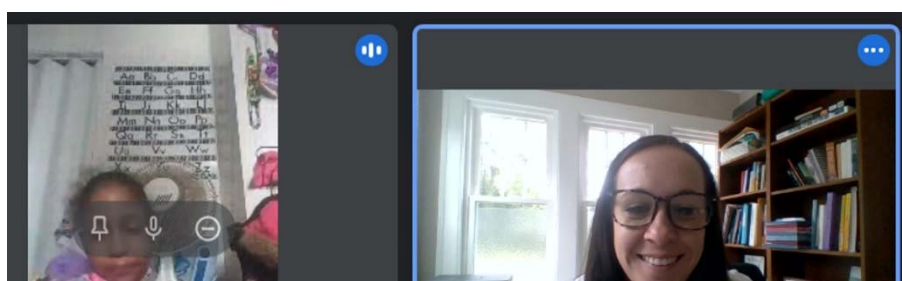
Table 4: Summer Reading Goal Results

Program	# Tests	Decreased Reading Score	Maintained Reading Score	Increased Reading Score
Hamden	7	0	4	3
Killingly	25	0	9	16
New Haven	24	0	7	17
Rockville	14	0	8	6
West Haven	8	2	0	6
TOTAL★	78	3%	36%	62%

★Children took different tests. This is a basic assessment of change across sites.

D. Site Specific Results

All five sites accomplished key outcomes for summer 2021 and provided important RfG benefits for participating families. The way they delivered services and what they accomplished specifically varied somewhat by site. Details for each site follow.



New Haven Instructor working one-on-one via Zoom, 2021

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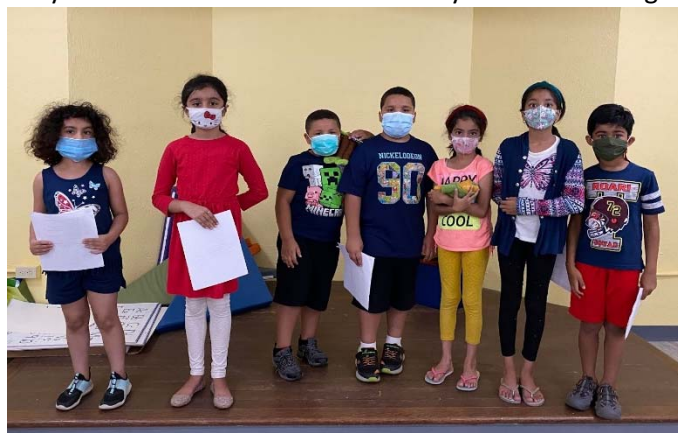
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HAMDEN

Hamden, initiated their 6-week in-person program at the Brundage Community Branch Library. A total of 9 children participated in group and individual instruction and their family members were invited to weekly family nights. Books and other incentives were distributed. The program was designed and overseen by Marcy Goldman, Head of Children’s Services of the Hamden Public Library, with Project Coordinator Tiffany Lee and staffed by three local tutors (full curriculum plan available on request). Though they encountered some first-year and pandemic-related recruitment challenges, the program met enrollment and attendance goals² and was well received by both the children and their family members. Although it was the inaugural summer, participants in Hamden, just like those from other RfG sites received the support they needed to maintain or build up their reading skills, they increased their confidence regarding reading, they accessed instructionally appropriate books, earned incentives, and were excited to come to the program to participate. Details follow.

Program Implementation

Individual and Small Group Instruction. The Hamden Library ran their READY for the Grade program Monday through Thursday from 9:30 until 12:00 for a total of 6 weeks, and most students came several times per week. Teachers used worksheets, sight-word bingo, and other literacy-based activities throughout each session to provide both small group and some individualized instruction. Each week the group would read a chapter from *Frog and Toad* focusing on reading and fluency and there was a different activity that went along with the story (see appendix for an example of a weekly lesson inspired by *Frog and Toad*). Teachers worked in groups and individually with each child. The children also used a small stage in the room to participate in *Readers Theater*, and they had opportunities for brief outdoor breaks and even a local field trip (see appendix). Lunch was provided each day before participants went home at 12:00, and some students also did activities in the *Alphabet of Activities* booklet created for the program as take-home extensions of class activities.



Children reading from scripts on the stage at Hamden RfG program, Summer 2021

Parent Engagement. In addition to the small group sessions, there were 6 family night events that were held via Zoom on Thursday evenings from 7:00 – 8:00. Family nights included guest appearances and special fun activities for participants to do together (see images from a Parent session in the appendix).

Incentives. On their first day, all participating children received water bottles and backpacks with the READY for the Grade logo. Additionally, each participant was able to take home a free book each day they attended and \$10 gift cards were awarded to raffle winners at each of the family nights. At the end of the program, families that participated for the entire summer received \$25 gift cards to Old Navy and to Walmart.

² Hamden RfG had to compete with summer school, and parental in-person program jitters. While initial plans had called for participation by a larger group, site officials decided the smaller, very well-staffed group would be optimal for initiating the program during pandemic times.

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Enrollment

As shown in table 5a, a total of 9 students were enrolled for the initial Hamden READY for the Grade Summer program 2021. It can be seen in the table that the descriptive characteristics of those who participated were similar to participants from other sites. These initial data will be useful to monitor trends for future summers.

- The program served rising 1st (22%) 2nd (22%) and 3rd graders (56%). A total of 4 were females (44%) and 5 (56%) were males.
- The student group was diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and representative of the local community; 4 of the participants were identified as Asian (including Indian/Asian), 1 of the participants was identified as Black/African American, 1 was identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 1 was identified as White/Caucasian and 1 was identified as biracial.
- A total of 4 students spoke English as their primary language at home, and the other 5 students spoke English and another language (Arabic, Gujarati and Urdu - 3) as the primary languages at home.

Table 5a: Enrollment Details, Hamden READY for the Grade

	2021 N=9	
Grade in Fall		
PK/Kindergarten	0	0
First Grade	2	22%
Second Grade	2	22%
Third Grade	5	56%
Gender		
Female	4	44%
Male	5	56%
Race/Ethnicity (n=8)		
Asian	4	50%
Black/African American	1	13%
Hispanic/Latinx	1	13%
Native American	0	0
White	1	13%
Biracial	1	13%
Primary Language at Home		
English	4	44%
Spanish and English	0	0
Other (see above)	5	56%

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Attendance

As stated previously, Hamden conducted its program Monday through Thursday from 9:30 until 12:00 for a total of 6 weeks, and students had the option of attending multiple times each week. Review of attendance records for the Hamden READY for the Grade program summer 2021 showed that many participants attended multiple times.

Table 5b: Total Attendance and Book Count, Hamden RfG, Summer 2021

	July (7/6 – 7/29)	August (8/3 – 8/12)	TOTAL
Student Attendance	74	28	102
Family Night Attendance	22	7	29
Book Count	41	31	72

Achievement

Achievement results were recorded for each of the 9 participants including pre- and post *easyCBM* assessments for 7 children (see Table 5c). Each of the tested participants maintained (4 of 7) or improved their scores (3 of 7), and improvements in specific skills were documented for all participants. Like their peers in the other, mature RfG sites, **these participants did not lose ground over the summer**. The program Coordinator and tutors noted that students had improved their confidence, and even those who came to the program with strong skills, improved or maintained those skills while participating. During the observation it was clear that the very small group with available 1:1 assistance made both theme-based group work and differentiated instruction possible. Children were called upon to demonstrate their reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary skills throughout the lesson.

Table 5c: Assessment Results, Hamden RfG, Summer 2021

Grade	Starting Level	Ending Level	Notes
1	E	I	Improved on fluency and sight words and writing skills
1	A	A	Improved letter writing and identification, letter sounds and reciting
2	K	did not complete	Improved fluency and confidence in reading aloud
2	A	A	Improved letter writing and identification and reciting
3	P	S	Improved on fluence and confidence
3	P	did not complete	Improved on/worked on writing and spelling skills
3	S/T	S/T	Strong reading and writing and thinking skills
3	L/K	L/K	Improved in confidence and fluency and sounding out words
3	S	W	Strong reading and writing and thinking skills

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Parent/Guardian Feedback

A total of 5 parents/guardians answered a brief survey³ about the REAdy for first ever REAdy for the Grade summer program in Hamden, 2021. As shown in Table 6d, and the following comments, all or almost all parent respondents verified that their children benefitted from participating in RfG summer 2021. Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders *excellent* and 3 of the 5 reported they planned to sign up again next summer (1 other parent respondent indicated they might sign up again, and the other did not answer the question). Their comments regarding the staff and the importance of the program were especially enlightening (see next page).

Table 6d: Parent/Guardian Feedback, Hamden, REAdy for the Grade, 2021

	2021 N=5
% who rated the program <i>good</i> (1) or <i>excellent</i> (4) on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	5
% who rated the staff <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> (5) on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	5
% who reported the REAdy for the Grade Program was <i>important</i> or <i>very important</i> (5)	5
% who answered yes to the following	
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	5
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	5
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	5

What did you like about the program?	What do you feel your child gained?
<i>Great activities and awesome staff.</i>	<i>Confidence, better comprehension skills.</i>
<i>I loved that he liked going to the program. It wasn't a fight to get him there. Also, I see an improvement in his reading.</i>	<i>Confidence and improved fluency.</i>
<i>It inspires kids to read more and more along with teachers and classmates.</i>	<i>She became more confident as she started reading aloud in class.</i>
<i>Giving kids individual support and teaching time.</i>	<i>My 6 year-old learned more properly how to read with flow and make words.</i>
<i>The variety of Fun ways to improve in reading.</i>	<i>Social experience and the group activities</i>

³ The parent survey was administered by RfG staff in hard copy form and then transferred to Survey Monkey for analysis for this report.

Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

The Hamden READY for the Grade program was welcomed to the freshly renovated downstairs area of the Brundage Community Branch Library for its inaugural year summer 2021. The RfG team used the space very effectively and established strategies for both in-person (student) and virtual programming (parents/family members/students). The Hamden site also initiated outreach and recruitment strategies for staff and participants and initiated their incentives plan, and they fully implemented the curriculum they developed for their original proposal (postponed since summer 2020). While the program was by their own estimations somewhat under-enrolled, (competing programs and in-person jitters kept some families away), implementation and student outcome results mirrored those achieved by the longer-established programs. Additional parent comments (see box at right) show that these efforts were appreciated. The only suggestions for future changes were that extended programming for older students or for longer periods be considered.

Like the other sites, Hamden engaged experienced staff who worked very effectively with students, conducted theme-based literacy activities and provided both home-based activities and meaningful opportunities for parent/family member involvement. There was a continuous focus on reading skill development along with access to appropriate books, as well as group exposure to a shared reading experience. The results, in alignment with those recorded for other sites, illustrated by consistent attendance, positive teacher and standardized reading assessment data and especially positive feedback from parents, provided clear evidence of success.

Hamden fully demonstrated the strength and flexibility of the READY for the Grade model and is poised to build from summer 2021 for future efforts.

Parent Comments about Staff and the Importance of the Program

The staff is awesome. Everyone is so kind and attentive.

All 4 of the teachers seem very excited to be there working with the kids.

Michael speaks highly of his time with Miss T and Ms. J.

They all were very helpful.

They were very helpful and hard working.

Miss T. was very hands on with assisting the family's involvement for the children to improve in their reading. All of the staff were great.

My son was significantly below grade level, so having an opportunity for him to continue with reading and writing over the summer has been helpful to prevent further loss and help make gains.

This kind of program is very helpful to keep kids on reading track during summer.

It was very important because schools were not open properly due to Covid and my KG girl was way behind in reading.

Parent Summary Comments and Suggestions for the Future

A few more hours for better effectiveness and routine.

Nothing, maybe for upper grades.

All is perfect

Everything was really good

Provide more weeks.

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KILLINGLY

Killingly conducted in-person programming including one-on-one and small group instruction at the main library site, and outdoors at the Village at Killingly. A total of 31 students participated and received books and other incentives and had access to the library. The program was designed and overseen by Allison Whiston, Children’s Librarian of the Killingly Public Library, and staffed by two local teachers both of whom had worked with READY for the Grade in the past and two paraprofessionals (one who had worked with RfG before and one who was new). Throughout the summer they conducted engaging literacy-based activities at both sites, provided guidance to parents/family members regarding reading, conducted one special author event for families and encouraged them to take advantage of other recorded programming, and made sure children and their families had access to many books. The program met enrollment and attendance goals⁴ and was well received by both the children and their family members. Just as they had in past summers, participants received the support they needed to maintain or build up their reading skills, they increased their confidence regarding reading, they accessed instructionally appropriate books, earned incentives, and were excited to come to the program to participate. Details follow.

Program Implementation

Individual and Small Group Instruction. Each student worked individually or in a small group in person in the library, or outside at tables in tents at the Village at Killingly (VAK), with assigned staff members. During the sessions each week, the children practiced their reading skills, participated in literacy-based activities (such as games and sight word reviews) and selected books to take home for their personal libraries and extra reading practice. Students were also sent home with mini-books to color and read that came with a lesson plan for parents, and they also received small prizes and take-home craft activities each week and were encouraged to select library books.

Parent Engagement. RfG Killingly (Remarkable Readers 2021) provided guidance for parents/guardians to help them support their children’s reading skill development (see sidebar). Teachers also checked in with parents during pick up and drop off times to get updates and provide assistance as needed, and the site encouraged all parents/family members to participate in a special, virtual family event with author Tracey Hecht and to access other pre-recorded programming. Staff reported that parents remained regularly involved as they were Summer 2020, again grateful for additional support.

Remarkable Readers 2021 - Tails and Tales

Read to Succeed!

How you can help your child *tackle the summer slide.*

- Have your child read at least 20 minutes a day.
- Help your child record the books read on the reading log that we provide. We will also be sharing some literacy activities with you as well.
- We will be giving you a special Remarkable Readers back pack. It will be full of books, incentives and activities. You can leave it at home and we will send activities home each week to add to it.
- To help with reading successes make it a priority to attend your weekly Remarkable Readers tutoring session. A gift card from Target will be awarded at the end of summer for attendance each week. You will receive 10.00 for each week of attendance.
- Make sure to check out our summer programs at www.killinglypl.org and other fun videos on our YouTube channel. We are having a special *Virtual event with Author Tracey Hecht on July 20th 5:30 PM.* You can access it by registering for it on the library’s calendar on our website. We will be offering a special viewing for our Tuesday readers here at the Library and at the Village at Killingly as well.
- We are looking forward to reading with you this summer!



⁴ Summer school and ½ price camps were also available in Killingly Summer 2021, and some families combined those options with RfG.

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Incentives. Children earned \$10 each week for their participation which could later be used for prizes or school supplies. All children also received a backpack at the beginning of the summer and free books weekly. Take-home craft activities, and other prizes related to the theme and other weekly activities were also used as incentives/rewards to help keep children focused during their sessions.

Enrollment

As shown in table 6a, the Killingly READY for the Grade program was back to pre-pandemic enrollment numbers for summer 2021. It can be seen in the table that the descriptive characteristics of those who participated were fairly similar to those who participated in 2019.

- The program served rising 1st (42%) 2nd (35%) and 3rd graders (23%), including 8 who were returning from summer 2020; a total of 52% were females, 48% were males. [Note that 1 4th grade sibling and 1 5th grade sibling also participated, though they are not included in enrollment, attendance or achievement results.]
- The student group was more diverse in terms of race/ethnicity than it had been in 2020 (more similar to the 2019 group); 3% of the participants were identified as African American, 10% were identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 6% were identified as Native American, 61% were identified as White/Caucasian and 19%, were identified as biracial.
- All but three students spoke English as their primary language at home, 2 students (7%) spoke Spanish at home and 1 student identified Russian as his primary language.

Table 6a: Enrollment Details, Killingly READY for the Grade

	2021 N=31	2020 N=25	2019 N=31
Grade in Fall			
PK/Kindergarten*	0	0	0
First Grade	42%	20%	32%
Second Grade	35%	32%	35%
Third Grade	23%	40%	32%
Fourth Grade*		8%	
Gender			
Female	52%	56%	55%
Male	48%	44%	45%
Race/Ethnicity			
Asian	0	0	0
Black/African American	3%	0	3%
Hispanic/Latinx	10%	13%	26%
Native American	6%	0	3%
White	61%	75%	61%
Biracial	19%	13%	6%
Primary Language at Home			
English	92%	92%	27%
Spanish and English	4%	4%	39%
Other (see above)	4%	4%	33%

* Grade level enrollment requirements were relaxed somewhat for 2020.

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Attendance

Killingly conducted its 7-week program at Village at Killingly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 12:30-2:30 and they conducted individual and small group tutoring at the library on Monday and Tuesday afternoons and Wednesday mornings. Children/families picked different times and they had multiple options to choose from. Review of attendance records for the Killingly READY for the Grade program summer 2021 showed that most participants attended regularly (although transportation and the weather definitely made it harder for some families to participate each week).

- In total Killingly provided 243 hours of programming to the 31 students (most library students participated once/week for one hour, some participated more than once, a total of 3 hours per week were available). The students at the VAK could participate one or two days for up to 2 hours each day.
- On average each student participated for 7.8 total hours (range was 2 – 21 hours).
- More than two-thirds of the of the participants (70%), accessed one and sometimes more than one session every week.

As had been the case in summer 2020, all participants were encouraged to do daily practice work and to read regularly between sessions using the books and mini-books provided.

Achievement

A total of 27 students participated in a reading assessment⁵ during initial and final RfG sessions. Of these, all participants maintained (36%) or improved their scores (64%). Like each of the other RfG sites, **these participants did not lose ground over the summer.** The program Coordinator commented further, that students were really holding their own regarding reading levels, that the very small groups and/or individualized tutoring had helped enhance reading confidence, and that participants at both the library and the VAK sites continued to be excited to come to the program. During the observation it was clear that the very small groups and 1:1 time made it easier to work on the specific skills participants needed and that the strategy helped keep students’ attention focused. The three staff members present the day of the observation each had different lessons set up and the students seamlessly went from individual to small group activities reinforcing key skills such as self-correction and recognizing different vowel sounds and sight words.

Table 6b: Achievement Data, Killingly, 2021

Grade	Test Pre	Test Post	RESULT
1	B	B	Maintained
1	D	D	Maintained
1	B	B	Maintained
1	B	B	Maintained
1	D	D	Maintained
1	B	C	Increased
1	C	D	Increased
1	F	H	Increased
1	N	M	Increased
1	J	K	Increased

Grade	Test Pre	Test Post	RESULT
2	D	D	Maintained
2	L	L	Maintained
2	M	M	Maintained
2	J	K	Increased
2	G	J	Increased
2	H	J	Increased
2	H	K	Increased
2	I	J	Increased
2	C	D	Increased

Grade	Test Pre	Test Post	RESULT
3	O	M	Maintained
3	K	M	Increased
3	K	L	Increased
3	K	M	Increased
3	A	B	Increased
3	O	R	Increased

⁵ Teachers elected to return to use of the Pioneer Valley Assessment for Summer 2021.

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Parent/Guardian Feedback

A total of 12 parents/guardians answered a brief survey⁶ about the READY for the Grade (Remarkable Readers) summer program in Killingly, 2021. As shown in Table 6c, and the following comments, all or almost all parent respondents verified that their children benefitted from participating in RfG summer 2021. Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders *excellent* and all reported they planned to sign up again next summer.

Table 6c: Parent/Guardian Feedback, Killingly, READY for the Grade, 2021

	2021 N=12	2020 N=12
% who rated the program <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	100%	100%
% who rated the staff <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	100%	100%
% who reported the Remarkable Readers Program was <i>important</i> (17%) or <i>very important</i> (83%)	100%	100%
% who answered yes to the following		
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	92%	100%
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	92%	100%
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	92%	92%
We will sign up again next summer	100%	92%

What did you like about the program?	What do you feel your child gained?
<p><i>I like the one-on-one attention my child received to work on her reading skills</i></p> <p><i>My daughter can read to me now!!</i></p> <p><i>Teachers were great and it paired reading with activities and crafts</i></p> <p><i>The staff is amazing and my son is reading more. And he loves the crafts too.</i></p> <p><i>Literacy games, Jenga</i></p> <p><i>My son enjoyed going.</i></p> <p><i>Having the consistency of the reading program made my daughter more excited to read during the summer.</i></p> <p><i>The friendly learning environment.</i></p> <p><i>Having my daughter have time learning to read.</i></p> <p><i>This program helping my daughter ❤️</i></p> <p><i>Did lots of reading and activities and everyone was so sweet and open.</i></p>	<p><i>My child is a more confident reader and is picking out books to read on her own. Having this program at the library allows for the community connection with the library and her comfort level at the library.</i></p> <p><i>More confidence.</i></p> <p><i>Surpassed reading level and maintained sight words.</i></p> <p><i>Confidence in reading.</i></p> <p><i>Enforced the importance of reading often.</i></p> <p><i>Confidence with reading.</i></p> <p><i>A little learning with reading.</i></p> <p><i>More reading knowledge.</i></p> <p><i>Reading with someone other than me was a great experience for her.</i></p>

⁶ The parent survey was administered by Evaluation Services for this report. Some parents had more than one child participating.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2021

Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

The Killingly READY for the Grade program shifted the program again for summer 2021. They continued to use the library facility effectively and to make programming available at the Village at Killingly. They incorporated some of the changes from summer 2020, most notably the continued incorporation of one-on-one strategies, but they also brought back small group activities. Killingly RfG also continued their increased focus on helping parents/family members to promote their children’s reading skill development and encouraging home-based reading practice. Once again, they only minimally utilized any virtual programming.⁷ Veteran key RfG staff worked very effectively with students at both sites, literacy-based activities and some complementary art enrichment activities including those students could work on at home were all made possible, and there was a continuous focus on access to appropriate books. The results, illustrated by consistent attendance, positive teacher and standardized reading assessment data and especially positive feedback from parents provided clear evidence of success.

The Program Coordinator reported that despite the challenges of operating during the ongoing pandemic, Killingly continued to work very consistently with children at the library and outside at VAK. Both parents/family members and children were very excited about coming to the program and having the chance to have experienced teachers working with students and to have some small group activities too. Responses to the parent surveys were once again replete with praise for the teaching staff and the program overall. **Killingly was able to deliver the program in a way that can be used successfully for future summers as well: smaller groups, extended programming, continued efforts to involve parents/family members and definitely continuing homework and free levelled book distribution. Additional parent comments (see box at right) show that all changes and continued efforts are welcomed.**

Parent Comments about Staff and the Importance of the Program

Excellent! My daughter loved going.

They are absolutely so sweet!

My child needed help with reading which she found motivating to do with a teacher

My son loves it and it’s helped so much

My child looks forward going to the library each week!

The new books kept my daughter excited for each week.

The books were very motivating for her to return

Important for my son as he greatly enjoyed books and crafts

Parent Summary Comments and suggestions for the Future

The only thing I would change is to make the program longer. A lot of families travel or are not available all summer and my child missed a couple sessions due to this. Maybe offer something throughout the school year too.

Year round

Nothing we loved it. My daughter enjoyed going and looked forward to it each week.

Nothing X4

More days than once a week

⁷ The Killingly site did encourage parents/family members to attend a special author presentation available via Zoom.

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NEW HAVEN

As they had in Summer 2020, New Haven conducted a fully virtual 7-week READY for the Grade program with all key elements (group and individual tutoring, family engagement and distribution of literacy supports and books), for 24 children summer 2021. The program was designed and overseen by Micaela Scelza, a reading specialist who has directed the program for multiple years, and Luis Chavez-Brumell, Deputy Director of the New Haven Free Public Library. Four other local staff members, including veteran READY for the Grade instructors Geoconda Berrios and Eric Glaviano, and specialists Christine Rafferty and Michael Rafferty provided tutoring and academic support throughout the summer. Parents were provided with direct assistance to help their children. The program met enrollment and attendance goals and was well received by both the children and their family members. All 24 participants received the support they needed to maintain or enhance their reading skills, they took full advantage of virtual programming, accessed instructionally appropriate books, earned incentives, and had fun. Details about the program follow.


Program Implementation

Individual Tutoring. Each student was assigned to and then worked 1:1 with one of the staff members in individual 45-minute tutoring sessions each week (parents/guardians signed their child/children up for a maximum of two sessions per week). After an initial assessment of independent reading level, each session was tailored to the students’ reading level and specific areas of focus. All sessions were conducted through Google Meet using *Reading A-Z* <https://www.readinga-z.com/> an online reading program designed to support reading instruction.⁸ Each tutor had a cohort of students (n=6) they worked with throughout the summer.

Group Tutoring. Every Tuesday and Wednesday the New Haven RfG program conducted group tutoring sessions through Google Meet. These community-based sessions brought the students together to provide additional opportunities for participants to read a picture book, practice sight words, and engage in movement and arts-based literacy activities. For Summer 2021, the RfG team also devised a strategy to divide the group so that more and less proficient readers also had targeted instruction.⁹

Family Nights. These popular events were included again summer 2021. Three 1-hour sessions were held online for participants and family members to learn together, and one 2-hour in-person celebration was held the last week.

Incentives. Students who attended family night, at least one individual tutoring and both group tutoring sessions received \$20 gift cards for each week, awarded at the end of the program. Attending every week would total \$120.

FAMILY NIGHTS 5:00 – 6:00			
June 24			July 8th
Introduction to the program, question and answer session.			Join us for a zoom program all about puppets with Nappy's Puppets. Enjoy this virtual show for the whole family!
July 22nd			August 5th
Micaela and the team will plan a family night where we will do literacy activities together. With help from Dr. Rafferty!			Celebration of the program! Fun literacy activities for the whole family. This will be at the Wilson Library.

⁸ As they had for Summer 2020, New Haven RfG used **Google Classroom** a digital safe space that provides a web-based learning environment where students log in to collaborate with their peers and teachers, and **Remind** a communication platform that helped them reach parents via text messages to communicate about meeting links, updates, and questions.

⁹ For example, at the end of one group session, older students connected to a break out room where they discussed and practiced identifying cause and effect references in the book the whole group read earlier in the session. The younger students stayed in the “main room” and continued with their own skill-appropriate activity related to the book.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2021

Enrollment

As shown in table 7a, the New Haven READY for the Grade program served a diverse group of children summer 2021. It can also be seen in the table that the grade levels and descriptive characteristics of those who participated during summer 2021 were somewhat different than the groups that participated Summer 2020 or Summer 2019.

- As shown, all of the 2021 students were rising first (33%), second (29%) and third (38%) graders; a total of 58% were females, 42% were males.
- The students were diverse in terms of race/ethnicity (differently than either of the prior two years); 37% of participants were identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 50% were identified as Black/African-American, 13% were identified as “Other” (both Arabic speaking). No students were identified as White/Caucasian or Asian.
- About two-thirds of the students spoke English as their primary language at home, 29% spoke both Spanish and English at home and two students spoke Arabic at home.

Table 7a: Enrollment Details, New Haven READY for the Grade

	2021 N=24	2020 N=30	2019 N=41
Grade in Fall			
PK/Kindergarten*	0	0	2%
First Grade	33%	40%	22%
Second Grade	29%	33%	34%
Third Grade	38%	17%	41%
Fourth Grade*	0	10%	0
Gender			
Female	58%	60%	68%
Male	42%	40%	32%
Race/Ethnicity			
Asian	0	10%	4%
Black/African American	50%	40%	20%
Hispanic/Latinx	37%	47%	73%
Native American	0	0	0
White	0	3%	2%
Biracial	0	0	5%
Other	13%		
Primary Language at Home			
English	63%	50%	49%
Spanish and English	29%	40%	44%
Other**	8%	10%	8%

* Grade level enrollment requirements were relaxed somewhat for 2020.

** Two students spoke Arabic at home.

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Attendance

New Haven RfG has always included multiple options for participation each week, when the program was in-person and for the two years when the program has been virtual. As shown in Table 7b, once again, many students took full advantage of this for Summer 2021.

- As many as 28 total hours per student was possible, and on average students attended 20 hours (keeping in mind that only some students selected the optional second individual tutoring sessions). Three of the 24 students had perfect attendance and all but one attended half or more of the possible sessions. Attendance at individual sessions was especially consistent, but several families struggled to involve their children in group tutoring as the timing conflicted with summer school. New Haven RfG did not want to turn away any participants who wanted their children in both programs.
- The 24 students participated in a total of 478 hours of instruction/participation during summer 2021 including 88 hours through family nights; 212 through group tutoring and 178 hours through individual tutoring. On average, each student participated in about 4 hours of family night instruction, 9 hours of group instruction and 7 hours of individual tutoring, 20 hours total.

Table 7b: Attendance Details, New Haven Ready for the Grade, Summer 2021, n=24

	Total Hours Available	Total Available per Student	Total Hours Attended	Mean Hours Attended per Student
Family Nights	120	5	88	4
Group Tutoring	288	12	212	9
Individual Tutoring*	264	6 – 11	178	7
TOTAL	672	28	478	20

*Students could elect to participate in one or two individual tutoring sessions each week

Achievement

All students participated in a reading assessment during the first individual tutoring session where their independent and instructional¹⁰ reading levels were determined using the *Reading A-Z* program. Staff used these assessments to customize tutoring strategies and where possible engaged parents/guardians and other family members to help reinforce specific skills. The books used during individual and group tutoring sessions were available online to participating families and all children were encouraged to read silently and to others in between sessions. A comparison of initial session and final session reading levels showed that 7 students (29%) were at the same independent reading level (e.g., June independent reading level = L, August independent reading level = L), 6 students (25%) advanced at least one level (e.g., June independent reading level = L, August independent reading level = M), and 11 students (46%) advanced more than one level. While several students were still reading below their appropriate grade level (hence their need for RfG), **no students lost ground over the seven weeks of the program**. Additional notes showed development of very specific skills such as enhancement of decoding strategies, self-correction recognition of sight words/vocabulary development or comprehension, that had been the focuses of the individual sessions (see Table 7c following).

¹⁰ An independent reading level is the one where the reader knows most of the words and can comprehend the text without too much difficulty. A book at an instructional reading level is more challenging for the reader, but not too hard.

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Table 7c: Examples of Instructor Achievement Notes, New Haven READY for the Grade, 2021

<p><i>A is such a delightful young lady; patient, polite and charming. In the group tutoring sessions, she was a role model for the younger students. In individual tutoring sessions, A came to each session prepared to learn. She is an inquisitive reader with excellent comprehension skills. She is an excellent decoder and is learning to look for words within words, patterns, prefixes and suffixes to decode multisyllabic words that she is unfamiliar with. She reads with fluency and intonation and is reminded to pay attention to punctuation in order to best comprehend the reading material.</i></p> <p><i>A's school this past year was remote for the full year. She began tutoring constantly looking for affirmation from her mother in her attempt to read but she is interested in reading and her confidence has improved as the weeks went on. A has improved in her ability to use tools to decode words (what letter does the word start with, what sound is that, does that make sense?, look at the picture.) She benefits from reading patterned books and using the pattern to create her own books with pictures that she chooses. Sight words are inconsistent and not immediate.</i></p> <p><i>Although A's reading level stayed the same, her word attack skills and fluency in her sight words has greatly improved.</i></p> <p><i>B has been in our program for three years. This is her last year. The tutoring sessions this year focused on fluency and comprehension. B did a great job maintaining her level.</i></p> <p><i>D did a wonderful job this summer. He started with very little sight word knowledge and word identification skills. Now he uses picture clues and sounding out strategy to help him with unknown words. He also has a great number of sight words under his belt.</i></p> <p><i>J's confidence in reading is improving. She has a tendency to look at what she is to read and focus on the word(s) that are difficult. She is motivated to learn but when working on an instructional level, she will become distracted and request other diversions. Her sight words have improved greatly and with positive reinforcement she will become a great reader.</i></p> <p><i>Such growth this summer! His ability to decode complex words is a huge strength for him, he applies strategies to attack words and he also reads closely to read endings of words. He grew a lot also with his identifying parts of speech, nouns, verbs, adjectives. His reading level is very high, but he is also in only first grade....so content is something to be aware of.</i></p>	<p><i>WOW!! What a remarkable young man! His focus, attention to details, application of strategies, willingness to learn are what we go into education for. His growth is due to his hard work and strong desire to become a better reader. His decoding has come a long way, able to decode 4-5 syllable words. He thinks about what he is reading and that is guiding him to his great literal comprehension. It was a complete honor getting a chance to see him grow and to watch him blossom into a great reader.</i></p> <p><i>J is such a hard worker! She has shown growth in her short vowels and VCE words. She applies strategies taught from tutoring and self corrects and rereads. Her growth in monitoring for comprehension was tremendous. She is a gem!</i></p> <p><i>J did a wonderful job with his sight words, closed and open syllables. He rereads, self- corrects and monitors for his own comprehension. He even decoded some multi syllabic words during his testing.</i></p> <p><i>J works hard. Even though he stayed in level G, his reading fluency improved a lot and he feels confident at what he reads.</i></p> <p><i>K has worked hard with vocabulary and connecting words to text. She moved to level J. I am so happy to see her blossom. She was able to correct words when she made mistakes. Reading fluency has improved too.</i></p> <p><i>M attended bilingual classes last year. Learning two languages is a little difficult, however, she has improved with sight words and the alphabet. It is always a challenge as a child to learn both languages at the same time but big reward at the end.</i></p> <p><i>M had a great summer, he was in summer school for the entire length of the program. He did not go up in his test but he was able to improve his fluency and literal comprehension.</i></p> <p><i>N is an incredibly focused and hard working student. She always applies strategies that were taught in her one on one tutoring. She really excelled in decoding multisyllabic words and reading much more complex texts. It was such a thrill to see how much she grew from last year and also this summer.</i></p> <p><i>S came into her first day of the program not knowing any letters of the alphabet. We were able to work on the letters of the alphabet and even work on reading letter books. S was able to really become more confident as the program progressed. Even though her level did not go up her alphabet knowledge has greatly increased.</i></p>
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“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

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Parent/Guardian Feedback

A total of 14 parents/guardians answered a brief survey¹¹ about the READY for the Grade summer program in New Haven, 2021. As shown in Table 7d and the following comments, as they had in Summer 2020, all or almost all Summer 2021 parents verified that they and their children benefitted from participating in RfG. Additionally, all respondents agreed that program leaders were helpful and that they planned to sign up again.

Table 7d: Parent/Guardian Feedback, New Haven READY for the Grade, 2021

<i>% who answered YES to the following questions</i>	2021 N=14	2020 N=12
Did your child read more over this summer?	93%	100%
Do you feel more confident with helping your child read?	100%	100%
Does your child feel more confident as a reader?	100%	92%
Did your family read more over the summer?	86%	92%
Were the program leaders helpful?	100%	100%
Will you sign up again next summer	100%*	100%

*Includes 7% who said “maybe.”

What did you like about the program?	What do you feel your child gained?
<p><i>Everything X2 The whole program everything about it.</i></p> <p><i>The sight word song and the advice on how to help my child read.</i></p> <p><i>All of it and the intentional time my child got to improve.</i></p> <p><i>Our child felt so encouraged with the one-to-one positive reinforcement.</i></p> <p><i>Organization, meeting all children where they were and incorporating groups to better meet the students’ reading abilities.</i></p> <p><i>All especially the teacher reading the book with individual.</i></p> <p><i>The one-on-one tutoring.</i></p> <p><i>Teachers are so nice and helpful.</i></p> <p><i>I feel that the way teacher taught my kids and group tutoring. My kids like to read more.</i></p> <p><i>The fun way of teaching was wonderful and my girls now are more interested in reading.</i></p>	<p><i>Sounding out words X2 His reading skills X2</i></p> <p><i>More confidence and more understanding</i></p> <p><i>Her 1:1 helped with her confidence in reading</i></p> <p><i>Confidence in his own reading ability. X2</i></p> <p><i>N- comprehension; J- phonetics</i></p> <p><i>She learned to stop listen and pay attention to what she’s reading</i></p> <p><i>We’re feeling great and he’s always loved to join this program.</i></p> <p><i>I feel like my child has a better understanding of the usage of punctuation marks. It helped her become better at reading. My child also gained the hunger to explore different books that never interested her.</i></p>
<p><i>The thing I loved about the program was the balance of learning and fun. The children were able to have group discussions on the books, but they were also allowed time for games. Also, I enjoyed how they involved the entire family for family night on Thursdays. I really enjoyed our guest speaker, he helped me personally understand and resolve some of the barriers I faced as a parent when helping or teaching my children school work. I loved the one-to-one sessions as well. All the staff were professional, patient and kind.</i></p>	

¹¹ Note that the parent survey was administered by the New Haven RfG program. Some parents had more than one child participating.

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Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

New Haven RfG was able to readily re-boot their virtual program for Summer 2021 using the online reading curriculum and virtual platforms they used Summer 2020. Though several families were new, the program maintained its welcoming, familiar feel and family appeal, and once again accomplished important results. They successfully recruited and engaged 24 students, continued to help students effectively use their online learning skills, and maintain or in most cases advance specific reading abilities. Staff reported that technology in 2021 was more of a challenge than in the previous summer. Fewer students had access to laptops or tablets from their schools or libraries, and families had to resort to phone sharing to support connections. RfG New Haven staff added the use of Jamboards (a Google app that makes it easy for students and educators to join by phone, tablet, or Chromebook) to conduct sessions, and again used games, encouraged children to write, reinforced proper etiquette for digital learning, and relied heavily on the *Reading A-Z* program.

Staff confirmed again that *Reading A - Z* was easy to use and that they did not experience any technical challenges using it. They continued to appreciate being able to send books and worksheets to families after sessions. Further they added to their programming with other online/video and live-stream programming (e.g., Sightword Rap), and used interactive activities (such as treasure hunts, movement activities and writing and games supported through *Reading A-Z*). Despite the additional challenges of continued pandemic restrictions, and balancing multiple summer programming options, parents, as staff pointed out remained very receptive and engaged with their children’s involvement. They changed their schedules around, juggled calendars to ensure children’s participation and made phones available as a way to connect, even if sessions had to proceed in the car on the way home from summer school. RfG staff also added individual sessions well into the evening to accommodate students’ scheduling needs.

Although they were using the same plan as Summer 2020, the staff reported they continued to meet weekly and continued to use group chats and other features of the online programs to help them adapt and keep the program on track. They all felt very supported by each other and problem-solved together to address challenges like the need to make the groups smaller and more focused on specific needs during group tutoring, and working to manage schedules that had to accommodate other programs and technology sharing. They continued to miss being in-person with the children and families, and were especially glad to be able to conduct at least the final session outside at the library (see images in the appendix). The staff also continued to recognize benefits to the virtual strategy (such as not needing transportation or child care for younger siblings, lots of individualized attention) and agreed that their decision for Summer 2021 had been appropriate. Further they recognize that the system they developed can be replicated for ongoing use and borrowed from as needs and opportunities change. **Staff are hopeful that next year will provide opportunities for RfG students and families to be back at the library (maybe even at two libraries) and perhaps also engaged in hybrid programming as needed. Parents weighed in again as well. Their responses to the question about what should change for next year (most parents said *nothing*) are shown below.**

What would you change about the program?

*Nothing X 9 Maybe to add a math sector Nothing just wish it was in person In person/hybrid would help
If possible we would like to have holidays in our religious holiday (Eidday) in this program. And also to include some math*

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ROCKVILLE

Rockville Public Library collaborated with Skinner Road Elementary School, Vernon, CT (the home school of instructor Maureen Kearney) to bring RfG to 12 children who participated in-person (total original enrollment goal was 15 students). Transportation was provided and multiple books were distributed. Mrs. Kearney also provided virtual instruction to 2 children who were not able to participate in person. No family events were held. The program was designed and overseen by Maureen Kearney, a reading specialist with 36 years of teaching experience who has directed the RfG program for multiple years, with Jennifer Johnston, Library Director of the Rockville Public Library. One other paraprofessional who has also worked with RfG and Ms. Kearney for many years also worked with the children, and a 5th grade former participant helped as a volunteer. Through both the Rockville Public Library and the RfG program, families had access to books to use for at-home reading practice. The school district made sure there was space and transportation for participants and the Rockville Library helped ensure that all needed supplies were readily available and families got the incentives provided for participation. The program met enrollment and attendance goals and was well received by both the children and their family members. All 14 participants received the support they needed to maintain or enhance their reading skills, they took full advantage of available programming, accessed instructionally appropriate books, earned incentives, and had fun. Details about the program follow.

Program Implementation

Small Group and Individualized Instruction. The program ran for 6 weeks, every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8:30-11:30 (no lunches served, but snacks were provided). During the sessions each week, the children practiced their reading skills using pre-packaged levelled books, participated in themed literacy-based activities (such as games and sight word reviews) and themed art enrichment activities (e.g., the theme for week 3 was the Olympics – see appendix for examples). Each week children selected books to take home for their personal libraries and extra reading practice. The students had opportunities to work as a group and individually, and to receive individual instruction from both staff members, and they got help with their craft projects from the student volunteer too. In addition to the group at the Elementary School, the instructor also Zoomed with 2 students 1-2 times a week for 4-5 weeks. Each virtual lesson was 1 to 1 for 30 minutes and the instructor dropped any needed additional materials at their homes.

Parent/Family Member Involvement and Incentives.

Parent/Family member events were not conducted during summer 2021 as parents are not allowed into the school (Covid), but the instructor sent home activities for parents/family members to work on with children, and they were encouraged to read together nightly. Plans to conduct virtual family events summer 2022 are under development. Books and small prizes were used as daily incentives and all 14 participating families got gift cards from Rockville Library at the end of the summer.

Rockville RfG’s New Location

The Rockville Public Library was not able to host a program for summer 2021, but the Skinner Road Elementary School library turned out to be the perfect location for RfG Rockville 2021.

Program staff had access to a large classroom space in the library where students could remain socially distant and easily access additional books. Bus transportation was also made available. There was a private restroom, plenty of space for storing materials and snacks and for students to stretch out to participate in activities. Masks were required, but children were able to participate in group activities.

The school principal reported to the director that he loved the program and was interested in expanding it.

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The new Rockville RFG classroom, summer 2021



Reading nook in the new Rockville RFG classroom



Individually packaged books for students to use during independent reading time had to be prepared in advance.



Books, books and more books available for students and connected to the weekly theme. Children had lots of choices.

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Enrollment

As shown in table 8a, the Rockville READY for the Grade program was still relatively small due to pandemic restrictions summer 2021. It can also be seen in the table that the descriptive characteristics of those who participated were somewhat different than those who participated back in 2019, the last year there was group instruction.

- The program served rising 1st (43%) 2nd (36%) and 3rd graders (21%), all Skinner Road Elementary School students known to the instructor as in need of additional support. This included 1 virtual student who returned from summer 2020. A total of 64% were females, 48% were males.
- The student group was diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and reflective of the local community (though somewhat different from the 2019 group); 1 (7)% of the participants were identified as Asian, 2 (14%) were identified as African American, 2 (14%) were identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 0 were identified as Native American, 7 (50%) were identified as White/Caucasian and 2 (14%), were identified as biracial.
- All but three students spoke English as their primary language at home, 2 students (14%, including 1 from Mexico and 1 from Chile) spoke Spanish at home and 1 student identified Telugu as his primary language.

Table 8a: Enrollment Details, Rockville READY for the Grade

	2021 N=14	2019 N=46
Grade in Fall		
PK/Kindergarten*	0	0
First Grade	43%	26%
Second Grade	36%	39%
Third Grade	21%	30%
Fourth Grade*		
Gender		
Female	64%	50%
Male	36%	50%
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	7%	2%
Black/African American	14%	20%
Hispanic/Latinx	14%	16%
Native American	0	0
White	50%	36%
Biracial	14%	25%
Primary Language at Home		
English	79%	93%
Spanish	14%	0
Other (see above)	7%	7%

Note: full registration data were not collected summer 2020.

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Attendance

As stated above, Rockville conducted its six-week program at the Skinner Road Elementary School for three days each week from 8:30 to 11:30 (a total of 54 possible hours/student, 9 hours each week, covering much of the “out-of-school summer time”). Review of attendance records for the Rockville READY for the Grade program summer 2021 showed that most participants attended regularly.

- In total Rockville provided 465 hours of programming to the 12 students who attended in-person, and made at least 12 hours of virtual programming available to the two students who connected via zoom.
- On average each of the in-person students participated for 38.8 total hours (range was 21 – 51 hours).
- All but one student attended more than half of the possible hours, attending multiple days each week for multiple weeks (6 students attended three-fourths or more of the possible hours).

For summer 2021, as has always been the strategy for Rockville RfG, all participants were encouraged to do daily practice work and to read regularly between sessions using the books provided.

Achievement

All 14 students, including those attending virtually, participated in a reading assessment¹² during initial and final RfG sessions. Of these, all participants maintained (57%) or improved their scores (43%). Like each of the other RfG sites, **these participants did not lose ground over the summer.**

Table 8b: Achievement Data, Rockville, 2021

Grade	Test pre	Test post	RESULT
1	B	B	Maintained
1	C	E	Increased
1	C	D	Increased
1	B	B	Maintained
1	C	C	Maintained
1	C	D	Increased
2	H	H	Maintained
2	F	G	Increased
2	H	H	Maintained
2	H	I	Increased
2	F	F	Maintained
3	M	N	Increased
3	L	L	Maintained
3	F	F	Maintained

Results in bold are for virtual students

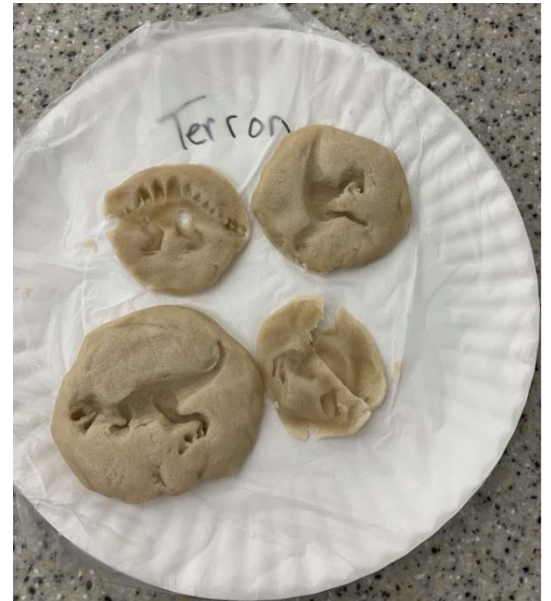
¹² The instructor elected to use the F&P reading assessment for Summer 2021.

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Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

After a challenging year summer 2020 (including power outages and very restricted digital interactions), Rockville RfG summer 2021 ran efficiently and effectively. As assessed by Ms. Kearney, the program “*worked like a dream.*” Parent surveys were not administered, but future efforts should include data collected directly from them. Comments made to Mrs. Kearney and reported through her confirm that the program met parents/family member and student needs and everyone was excited about and grateful for the option to participate. The Rockville Public Library and Skinner Road Elementary school collaboration worked well and the program is definitely on board again, hopefully with extended participation, for summer 2022.

Dinosaur Week Images, Rockville RfG, Summer 2021



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WEST HAVEN

RfG West Haven was made available through distribution of 6 weekly literacy kits. A total of 31 children were enrolled, 80 literacy kits were distributed, and 11 children/families participated consistently throughout the summer. No in-person instruction was provided though staff were available on request to support involvement and each kit included specific guidance for caregivers. A culminating family event was held and family games were included in materials. The program was designed by Amanda Welsh, children’s librarian, supported by Carrie, and overseen by Colleen Bailie. While the West Haven Library staff had hoped more families would fully participate, (the initial goal was about 30), they were pleased that many families connected and 11 took full advantage of the available supports. Among those regular participants, completed assignments and some photographs were submitted and final surveys were completed verifying the program was used and well received. Additionally, assessments were conducted for 8 of the 11 regular student participants and those also verified that almost all participants maintained or enhanced their reading skills. Details about the program follow.

Program Implementation

Literacy Kits/Parent Engagement/Incentives

The literacy kits were designed to provide multiple activities to promote regular literacy skill practicing. They included selected books, games, and other supplementary materials. Each week enrolled families could pick up their kits (see sidebar) and after week one, bring back their packets with any completed work and any pictures of their children using the kits to receive a free book and gift card. Each kit also included a list of the contents (in English and Spanish) and basic directions, and in Weeks 4, 5 and 6, detailed information for parents/family members to help them help their children with fluency, vocabulary development and comprehension. The RfG staff developed colorful packets with pictures and simple directions, including one for the summer program overall and one for each kit. They also posted a video on the West Haven Library’s Youtube page with more simple directions and contact information. Parents were encouraged to work through however much of the package they could with their children, and to have them work for at least one total hour of practice activities. At the end of the summer, West Haven Library hosted an outdoor celebration event with Grammy-nominated children’s performer Judy Pancoast (see appendix for more details).

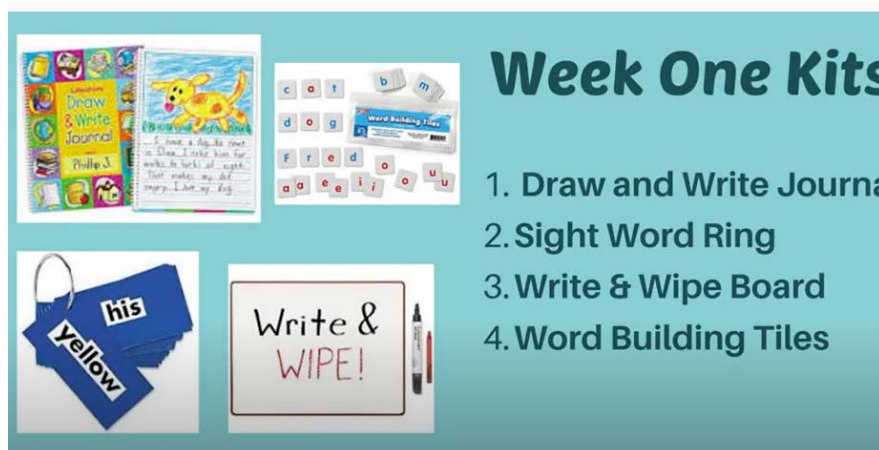
Each kit included:

- Literacy games and crafts
- A weekly journal prompt for children to respond to in their drawing journal
- Word Building Tiles and a suggested word list
- A sight word ring and write and lap board for sight word practice
- Weekly practice worksheets
- Leveled books for the child to practice reading at home



Weekly Literacy Kit Contents

Week	Focus
1	Welcome to Summer Literacy!
2	Phonemic Awareness Kit
3	Phonics Practice Kit
4	Fluency Practice Kit
5	Vocabulary Practice Kit
6	Reading Comprehension Practice



Week One Kits

1. Draw and Write Journal
2. Sight Word Ring
3. Write & Wipe Board
4. Word Building Tiles

Games & Crafts












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Enrollment

As shown in table 9a, the West Haven READY for the Grade program engaged 11 children for multiple weeks during summer 2021. A total of 31 children registered at some time and as stated previously, a total of 80 kits were delivered. RfG this year helped to inspire literacy involvement at home and served as an outreach strategy to promote connections with the West Haven Public library and future RfG programming.

- The program served 4 rising Kindergarten students (36%), 3 rising 1st graders (27%), 3 rising 2nd graders (27%) and 2nd grade and 1 rising 3rd grader, (9%). Students were affiliated with 6 different schools in the West Haven area.
- A total of 8 students (73%) were females, 3 (27%) were males.
- A total of 8 participants spoke English as their primary language at home, 2 spoke Spanish and English, and one did not answer the question about home language.

Table 9a: Enrollment Details, West Haven READY for the Grade

	2021 N=11	
Grade in Fall		
PK/Kindergarten	4	36%
First Grade	3	27%
Second Grade	3	27%
Third Grade	1	9%
Gender		
Female	8	73%
Male	3	27%
Language		
English	8	80%
Spanish and English	2	20%
Other	0	

Note that race/ethnicity data were not requested on the registration form.

Attendance and Achievement

Most of the 11 students (n= 7) brought back completed packets for at least 5 of the 6 weeks the kits were being distributed (although some others may have participated but not turned in their work). Among the regular participants, a total of 8 students completed pre- and post-program reading assessments¹³ as they picked up and dropped off their kits. Of these, 6 improved their scores (75%). Like those from other RfG sites, **these participants did not lose ground over the summer.**

¹³ The West Haven site used the *easyCBM* test to assess reading for Summer 2021.

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Table 9b: Achievement Data, West Haven, 2021

Grade	Test pre	Test post	RESULT
K	50	43	Decreased
1	42	39	Decreased
1	56	71	Increased
K	61	94	Increased
1	20	36	Increased
2	11	13	Increased
2	42	86	Increased
K	96	104	Increased

Parent/Guardian Feedback

A total of 10 parents/guardians answered a brief survey¹⁴ about the READY for the Grade summer Literacy Kits program in West Haven, 2021. As shown in Table 9c, and the following comments, all parent respondents verified that their children benefitted from participating in RfG summer 2021. Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders *excellent* and all reported they planned to sign up again next summer.

Table 9c: Parent/Guardian Feedback, West Haven, READY for the Grade, 2021

	N=10
% who rated the program <i>excellent</i> on a scale ranging from poor to fair to good to excellent	100%
% who rated the staff <i>excellent</i> on a scale ranging from poor to fair to good to excellent	100%
% who reported the Remarkable Readers Program was <i>important</i> (10%) or <i>very important</i> (90%)	100%
% who answered yes to the following	
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	100%
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	100%
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	100%
We will sign up again next summer	100%

¹⁴ The parent survey was administered by RfG staff in hard copy form and then transferred to Survey Monkey for analysis for this report.

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What did you like about the program?	What do you feel your child gained?
<p><i>The games were great and fun. We can do them as a family.</i></p> <p><i>It gives me ideas how to help her learn more. Also, a goal. It also encouraged her to read more to her younger sister.</i></p> <p><i>The topics and games.</i></p> <p><i>The activities to gain more confidence.</i></p> <p><i>Kits, books, reading material, reading helps, gift card, arts and crafts kits, helpful. All meaningful.</i></p> <p><i>The games and crafts</i></p> <p><i>Constant sight word recognition</i></p> <p><i>The games and printable worksheets were excellent tools. Plus the leveled books were so engaging and appropriate.</i></p>	<p><i>To be involve and not just stay home and play.</i></p> <p><i>Practice letters, improve skills</i></p> <p><i>My child gained more practice with sight words.</i></p> <p><i>She learned how to read fast. The reading resources and helps were great.</i></p> <p><i>Having fun and learning</i></p> <p><i>Kept my child reading during summer</i></p> <p><i>She gained more confidence and practice</i></p> <p><i>Confidence in reading</i></p>

Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

Given indoor space-use restrictions and other community-level challenges, the West Haven Library was not able to mount any in-person programming since summer 2019. The Literacy Kit distribution strategy allowed West Haven to continue READY for the Grade programming that helped parents/family members to promote their children’s reading skill development and encouraged home-based reading practice. The program also served as an opportunity to conduct outreach and solidify community ties for future summers. Key RfG staff worked very hard to construct the kits and very effectively with families as they checked in, which was verified by parent responses (see below). Though the program was under-enrolled, there were consistent participants and there were definitely literacy-based activities, complementary art enrichment activities and a continuous focus on access to appropriate books. The results, illustrated by standardized reading assessment data, completed packets, and especially positive feedback from parents provided evidence of success.

Additional Parent Comments about Staff and the Importance of the Program

Amanda is great. If you need any help she always there to help. She helped my daughter out a lot this year.

Everyone was excellent. Carrie, Amanda, staff caring, giving, resourceful thank you all.

Amanda and Carrie are always so helpful and great librarians at West Haven, very nice people

The staff was ah-mazing! Carrie and the girls were friendly and informative and always willing to do more.

I love it. I want to keep her mind fresh and ready when school starts again.

This increased her reading skills

It force myself as the parent to put the effort in my child reading journey.

With Covid - literacy opportunities were modified in her kindergarten classroom and it was important to continue having engaging literacy activities over the summer.

My daughter needs the extra learning help. This really keeps her going during the summer months.

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III. CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

Despite continuing pandemic-related challenges, READY for the Grade was successfully conducted during summer 2021. This included initiation of a new site (Hamden), and restoration of programming (fully at Killingly, through Literacy Kits at West Haven, and in partnership with a local school for Rockville). All the sites faced enrollment challenges due to competing summer school and camp programs and limitations and hesitancy regarding indoor programming, but each of the five communities¹⁵ successfully developed plans and engaged multiple families for multiple weeks. Program implementation varied considerably by site, but all operating sites were effectively able to deliver important supports to local families. At all five sites, participants had positive achievement outcomes and parent/guardian feedback across the board was decidedly positive as well. In every case, parents/guardians reported directly or through RfG staff that RfG experiences were making an important contribution to sustaining and advancing student literacy skill development. The distribution of books and other literacy materials with suggestions and instructions regarding their use were especially well-received by all. Once again, the sites brought quality instruction, experienced staffing stability (in Killingly, New Haven and Rockville) or brought on new highly skilled staff in the cases of Hamden and West Haven. As stated throughout the report, the individual sites, were able to customize their programs¹⁶ to meet local needs while still implementing most or all of the key components of the RfG model: the sites were able to discern what was needed, make and shift partnerships and maintain RfG presence and programming designed to once again help participating students enter school in September ready to learn.

The Program served 89 students during summer 2021 (about half the number served in 2019, but comparable to the number served summer 2020). In total there have been 1,405 participants (duplicated count) across the nine years RfG has been operational. Each year this has included students with various racial/ethnic identities (Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American and White). Almost all of these students were receiving free or reduced-price lunch and most of those recruited were reading below grade level. Following continued instability during the 2020-21 school year, all students were potentially behind for fall 2021, and outreach was more challenging, but each program (except West Haven where rising Kindergarten students participated) returned to a focus on rising 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade students for summer 2021. Total hours of programming varied by site and in accordance with specific strategies, but each of the programs provided opportunities to engage students for multiple hours weekly throughout multiple weeks during the summer. All sites sustained participation over the summer, and they encouraged and supported the efforts of families and students to continue reading and using their skills at home and after the programs concluded. At all five sites there was clear evidence that students maintained or enhanced reading skills. Despite the many challenges “READY for the Grade” continued to provide powerful opportunities to promote literacy skill development and academic preparation.

¹⁵ The Manchester READY for the Grade program suspended operations for summer 2021 due to restrictions.

¹⁶ Hamden kicked off its new program in-person with a small group, Killingly restored in-person individualized and small-group programming at two sites, New Haven replicated its summer 2020 virtual program, Rockville returned to a more traditional in-person program, for a small group at a new location, and West Haven brought services back and built new connections through distribution of finely curated Literacy Kits which promoted parental support for children’s learning.

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Challenges and Next Steps

Summer 2021 was another challenging year, and yet there were many accomplishments including development that will continue to inform future programming.

- Changes, challenges and future options varied substantially by site.
 - Hamden, the newest site, fully implemented their program, effectively established space in the library for programming and identified and engaged key staff. Outreach and recruitment of families/students was challenging though and the program was somewhat under-enrolled. All other elements of the program (instruction, family engagement, participant attendance and skill development outcomes) were very effective and the full structure is ready for ongoing replication with specific attention to enhanced and targeted outreach to those families/students most in need of the services.
 - As planned, the Killingly site incorporated some of the summer 2020 strategies for both students and parents/family members. They continued individualized instruction, but were also able to bring back small group interactions and to incorporate in a virtual family program. Outdoor requirements for the Village at Killingly made programming there susceptible to weather interruptions, but RfG managed to provide full summer experiences at both locations, attendance was reasonably good and all students had positive achievement results. Killingly was able to deliver the program in a way that can be used successfully for future summers as well: smaller groups, extended programming, continued efforts to involve parents/family members, and definitely continuing homework and free levelled book distribution. As for all other sites, Killingly will also need to continue to pay specific attention to ensuring that families/students most in need of the services participate.
 - The New Haven site replicated its fully digital version of the regular program complete with family engagement opportunities. They modified group tutoring practices to ensure some differentiated group instruction for summer 2021, and they remained very pleased with the online reading program they utilized and strategies to effectively interact as a team and with students and families using Google products. Limited availability of laptop technology this summer made it trickier for families to participate, but RfG program staff developed new ways to ensure instruction was available through mobile applications. Outreach, especially to those who live in the community immediately surrounding the Wilson Branch of the New Haven Public Library was also more difficult this summer due to both the unavailability of technology and increased availability of summer school programs that operated at the same times. Despite challenges, staff confirmed that the fully digital version of RfG or a return to in-person or hybrid programming can be used for future summers and to extend participation options in other locations in New Haven as needed (site establishment at the Stetson Branch is possible for summer 2022). As for all other sites, New Haven will need to continue to remain vigilant to ensuring that families/students most in need of the services participate.
 - The Manchester site suspended all programming summer 2021. Plans for 2022 are TBD.

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- The Rockville site restored in-person instruction at a new location for summer 2021. Through a partnership between the library and the Skinner Road Elementary School in Vernon Ct., full instructional programming for students was re-established though pandemic-based group size limitations restricted enrollment. The model and new site location can be used for future summers, and efforts to extend the program to more students, possibly even more students from different locations if pandemic restrictions are eased, as well as to incorporate additional parent/family member programming are under consideration for summer 2022. As for all other sites, Rockville will need to continue to remain vigilant to ensuring that families/students most in need of the services participate
- The West Haven site was not able to provide any in-person instruction, but did engage both students and parents/family members through distribution of finely curated, sequential Literacy Kits and provision of in-person assistance by library staff on request. Many kits were distributed and there were 11 families that consistently picked up and used the kits. West Haven also conducted a final family engagement event and was able through the program to re-establish REAdy for the Grade connections in the community. Though the library continues to face other challenges, the site will definitely be able to build off of summer 2021 efforts to re-establish future RfG programming. As for all other sites, West Haven will need to continue to remain vigilant to ensuring that families/students most in need of the services participate
- Grade level reading will remain very challenging for future participants especially given the probable continued interruptions, remediation focus, and restrictions on in-person instruction many students will experience. In the pre-pandemic summers, while all students being served were reading below grade level, at least some were only a little behind and needed the summer programming to help them develop skills and keep from backsliding. For the foreseeable future, many or maybe even all potential RfG students may be substantially behind and in need of support and this will likely be disproportionately true for students who do not speak English as their primary language at home.
- Recruitment and outreach were challenges faced by all sites, including Manchester where the challenge resulted in a suspended program. Small shifts in the demographic profiles of participants and RfG staff reports all indicated that there are likely students and families in each of the communities who do not know about RfG or were not able to participate in available programming.
- Summer 2021 became another Interval year and while it was the third year for Evaluation Services oversight of evaluation tasks, once again individual site strategies had to be employed to summarize initiative outcomes. All sites facilitated evaluation throughout the summer and made it possible to share detailed findings about this continued atypical period, this year with more cross-site consistency than for summer 2020. Assuming programming returns to in-person implementation, it is the plan for summer 2022 to return more fully to cross-site evaluation strategies (including on-site observations where possible, and collection of standardized enrollment, attendance and achievement data). Staff interviews and parent surveys will be continued, and the evaluation reporting timetable will continue to operate on the regular Board schedule (so reports are available for the November NewAlliance Foundation board meeting).

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APPENDIX

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Appendix Table 1: Staffing by Site, 2021

Site	# Coordinators	# Professional (Teachers/Specialists)	# Support Staff (paraprofessionals)	# Volunteers and Interns
Hamden	2	3	0	0
Killingly (both sites)	1	2	2	0
New Haven	1	4	0	0
Rockville	1	0	1	1
Manchester				
West Haven	1	0	1	2
TOTAL	6	9	4	3

Summer 2021 - Important Images

Hamden

The Brundage Community Branch Library made a special downstairs meeting room available for RfG students for summer 2021. In preparation, the room was freshly painted, floors were repaired and modular furniture just right for early learns was acquired.



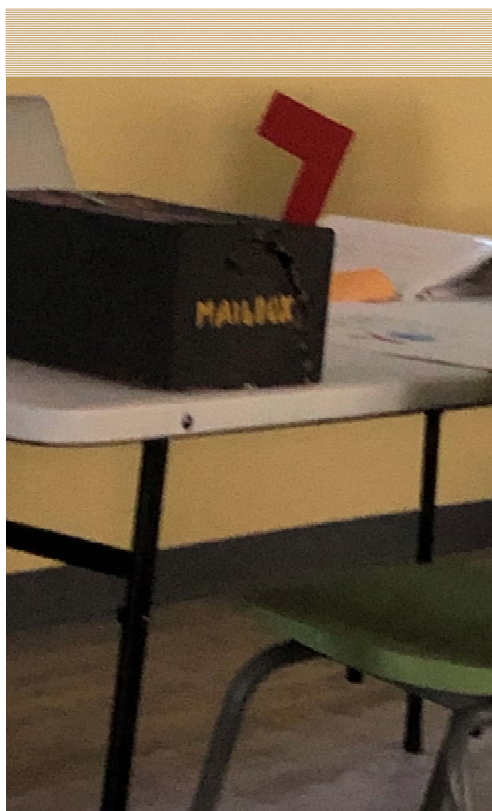
Great light, new space, Hamden RfG, 2021. Brundage Community Branch Library

“REAdy for the Grade” Summary Results Report

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The RfG room includes a mini-stage (see left) and several modular, tables to facilitate group and individual activities. There is plenty of space for books and snacks and storage too.



During a 2021 evaluation site visit, RfG students were learning about communication after having read a chapter in Frog and Toad that involved sending a letter. They were writing letters to one other assigned student in the group, addressing their letters, affixing “stamps,” and placing them in the classroom mailbox. They heard a story about Delivering Mail, and read through directions about the sequence of writing a letter.

Once their letters were “mailed,” their lesson on communication continued with discussions about older strategies (phones, faxes, newspapers, letters), and newer strategies (social media, texting, direct messages), and assistive strategies such as Braille and Sign Language. This involved listening to the teacher read, watching a short video, students reading out loud and trying out ASL signs. This was all followed by an outdoor break.

When the students returned, they found the mail was ready for pick up and one child was identified as the mail carrier. He delivered the letters to each child and they took turns reading them out loud. Each letter included a greeting (Hello Mike) and a sentence or two with nice adjectives (e.g., you did a very good job reading out loud today, or you are a good artist). Each reader thanked the sender of his/her letter, and all were eager to put the letters in their backpacks to share them with their parents.

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Summer 2021- Important Images (continued) – Hamden



Hamden RfG students got a special treat one afternoon when the Firemen were outside (right next door) and invited the kids in for a tour of the firehouse and truck!



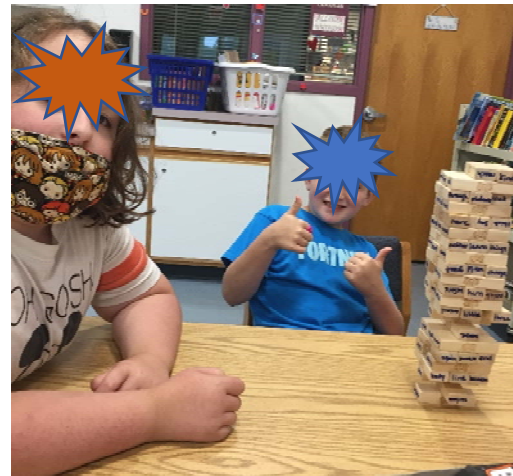
Zoom family night. Reading *The Pot that Juan Built* and making pottery with the art teacher from Spring Glen School in Hamden.

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Summer 2021- Important Images

Killingly

Students got the chance to be in the library or outside at the Village at Killing, working one-one-one with a tutor, but this year they also got the chance to do some games and activities with other children in small groups too. Literacy-based art and games continued to be key.



Virtual Family Night, Summer 2021



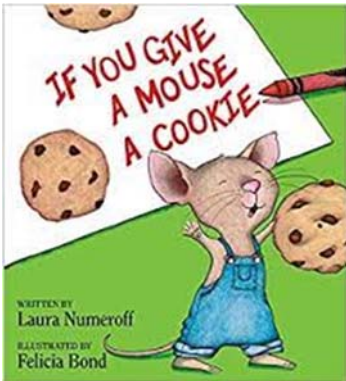
A very cool participant tale/tail.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2021

Summer 2021 - Important Images (continued)

New Haven continued to maximize their use of virtual technology to host individual and group tutoring, family nights and staff meetings.



Family Night 7/22/21

Read Aloud with Ms. Micaela

JamBoard Presentation

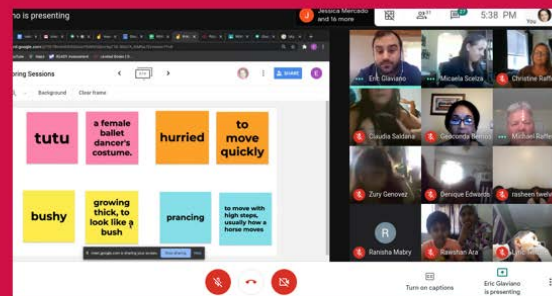
And Art Activity



Group Tutoring

- Community based activity to bring the students together.
- Group tutoring schedule
 - Attendance
 - Reading a picture book
 - Sight word practice
 - Literacy activity
- Every Tuesday and Wednesday from 3:00-4:00 on Google Meet.
- The link for the meeting will be the same for the entire program.
- We will send the link on Remind and Google Classroom.

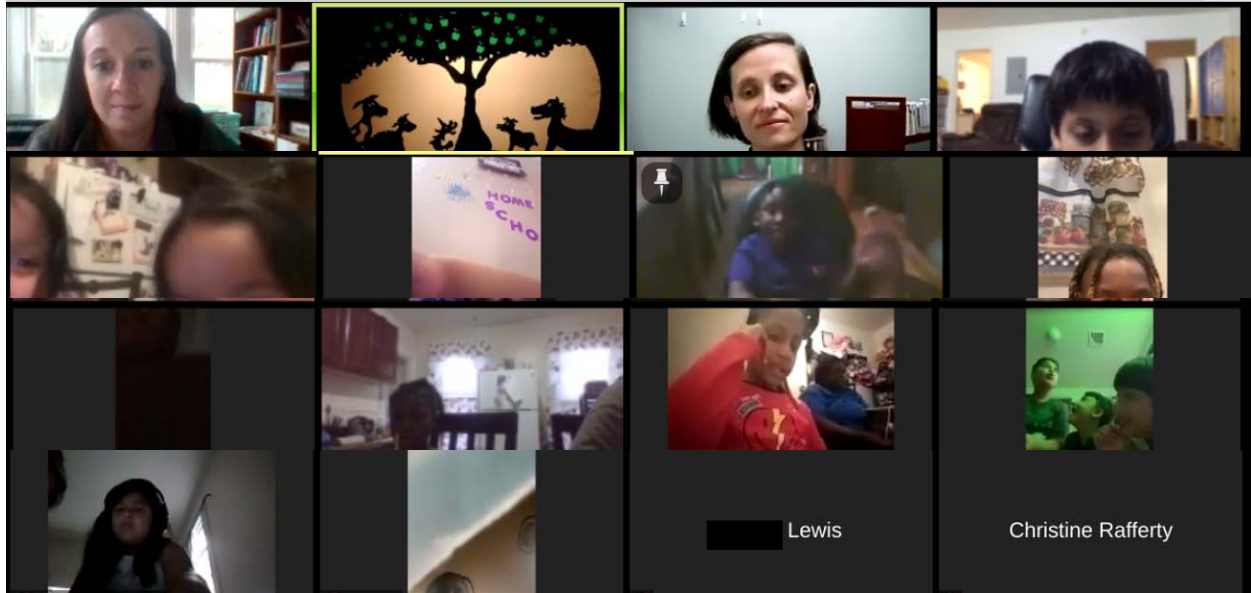
To be prepared for the group tutoring session the student only needs paper and a writing utensil.



“REAdy for the Grade” Summary Results Report
Evaluation Services, 2021

Summer 2020 - Important Images (continued) – New Haven

Family Night with Nappy and his shadow box puppets is always a hit.



It was another successful Virtual summer, but everyone was happy to get together again in person for the final family night celebration, outside at the library.



And there were many other images of children working online. Contact New Haven for a copy of their full slide show.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2021

Summer 2020 - Important Images (continued) – Rockville

The new classroom in the Skinner Road Elementary School (Vernon), library is shown in the main report. Throughout the six-week program, the RfG instructor used weekly themes, made sure children had snacks, and supplemented all literacy activities with art enrichment.



Though lunches weren't served, staff, concerned that children were very hungry, made sure students had regular access to individually packaged snacks. Each day all materials for class, including art supplies were also prepared in sanitized individual packages.

Art activities were used regularly to supplement theme-based literacy activities. Multiple images of children's products are available from RfG Rockville staff.



Summer 2020 - Important Images (continued) – Rockville

Students learned about the Olympic games while they were going on in Tokyo, Summer 2021.

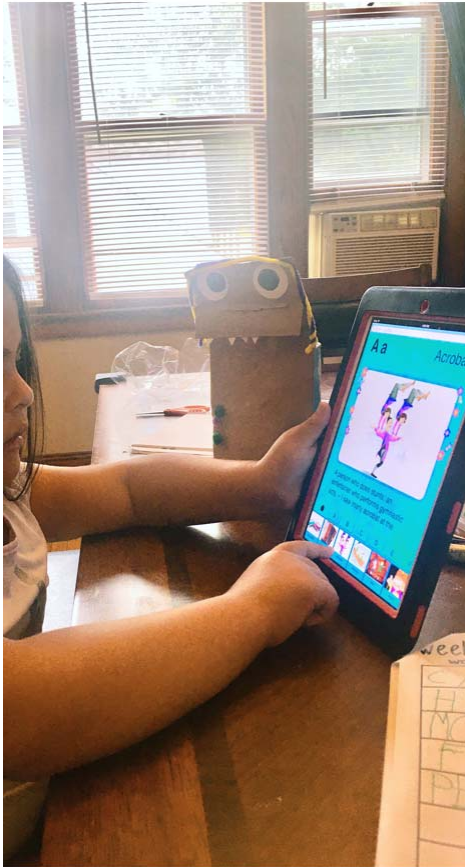


“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

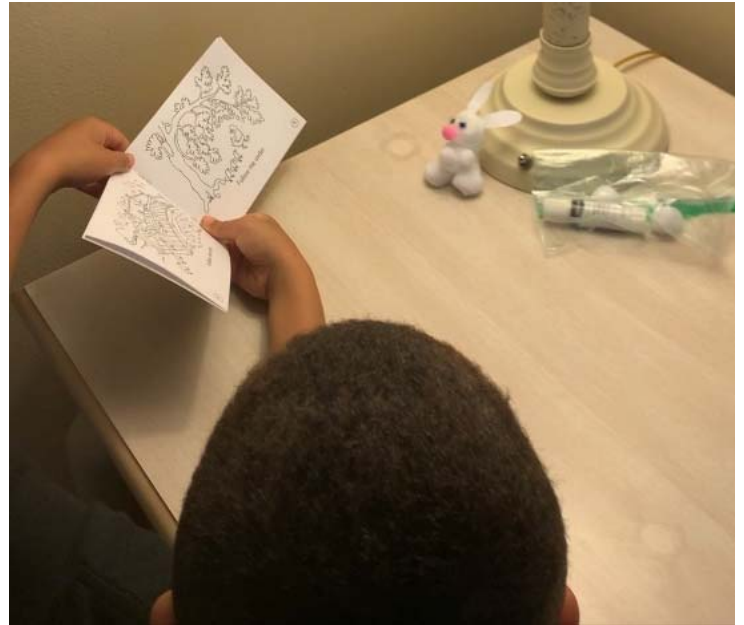
Evaluation Services, 2021

Summer 2021 - Important Images (continued) – West Haven

Children and families used the READY for the Grade Literacy Kits to practice literacy-based skill development each week in West Haven.



Note the completed art project, and writing practice in this image of a child using a mini-tablet from an RfG literacy kit, summer 2021



Participating student reads his mini-book to the fluffy rabbit he made using materials from his RfG literacy kit, 2021.



“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2021

At the end of the summer, participating families were treated to a concert by Judy Pancoast to celebrate literacy and their involvement with the library.



As stated on her website, Judy Pancoast's Masters Degree in Education/Reading informs all of her songwriting and helps to make her the ideal choice as a library program presenter. Since 1996, she has performed at hundreds of libraries all over the United States, and has been on the select roster of the New Hampshire State Library's "Kids, Books & the Arts" Summer Reading Program six times. Librarians rave about her lively, original and interactive musical programs which can be adapted for any Summer Reading theme.



Students and their families dance at West Haven Library, during the RfG final event, 2021