

# What Works Clearinghouse



## Success for All

### Program description<sup>1</sup>

*Success for All (SFA)* is a comprehensive reading, writing, and oral language development program for students in pre-K through eighth grade. Its underlying premise is that all children, including those with limited English proficiency, can and should be reading in English at grade level by the end of third grade. (*SFA* can impact Spanish literacy as well, though these outcomes fall outside the scope of this report.) Initial reading instruction is delivered

in 90-minute daily blocks to students grouped by reading level, across classes and grades. Certified teachers provide daily tutoring to those students who are having difficulty reading. In addition, Family Support Teams and full-time *SFA* facilitators train teachers, oversee student assessments, encourage parental involvement, work to decrease absenteeism, and assist with decisions about group placement and tutoring.

### Research

One study of *SFA* met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards with reservations.<sup>2</sup> The study included 324 English language learners from kindergarten to first grade who attended elementary schools in the District of Columbia, New York, Arizona, California, and Illinois.<sup>3</sup>

The WWC considers the extent of evidence for *SFA* to be small for reading achievement. No studies that met WWC evidence standards with or without reservations addressed mathematics achievement or English language development.

### Effectiveness

*Success for All* was found to have potentially positive effects on reading achievement.

	Reading achievement	Mathematics achievement	English language development
Rating of effectiveness	Potentially positive	na	na
Improvement index <sup>4</sup>	Average: +11 percentile points Range: +5 to +17 percentile points	na	na

na = not applicable

- The descriptive information for this program was obtained from publicly available sources: the program's website ([www.successforall.org](http://www.successforall.org)) and the research literature (Chambers et al., 2004). The WWC requests that developers review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review.
- The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.
- Subsample data for Spanish-dominant English language learner (ELL) students were obtained from the study author.
- These numbers show the average and range of improvement indices for all findings across the studies.

## Additional program information<sup>1</sup>

### Developer and contact

Developed by Dr. Robert Slavin, *SFA* is distributed by Success for All Foundation, Inc. Address: 200 W. Towsontown Boulevard, Baltimore, Maryland 21204-5200. Email: sfainfo@successforall.org. Web: [www.successforall.org](http://www.successforall.org). Telephone: (800) 548-4998 ext. 2300.

### Scope of use

*SFA* is used by schools in 48 states, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. According to the Success for All Foundation, more than 1,300 schools in more than 500 districts use the *SFA* program. England, Israel, Canada, Mexico, and Australia have implemented adapted versions of *Success for All*. Information on the scope of use specifically for English language learners is not available.

### Teaching

Teachers at each grade level begin the instructional period by reading literature to students and engaging them in story discussion to enhance comprehension, listening and speaking vocabulary, and knowledge of story structure. In kindergarten and first grade, teachers emphasize the development of reading and

language skills by using storybooks and instruction on phonemic awareness, auditory discrimination, and sound blending.

For most of the day, students in grades 1 through 6 are assigned to heterogeneous, age-grouped classes comprised of approximately 25 students. However, the main component of the *SFA* program occurs during a regular 90-minute reading period, when they are regrouped into reading classes of 15–20 students who all perform at the same reading level. Regrouping allows teachers to teach without having to break the class into reading groups. The study reviewed (Chambers et al., 2004) includes *Reading Reels*, which are video materials developed to enhance the *SFA* program. During the lessons, teachers show their students 30-second to three-minute video skits demonstrating elements of beginning reading. For six months, *Reading Reels* were used daily to supplement *SFA* instruction.

### Cost

The cost for the *SFA* program for a school of 500 children is approximately \$80,000 in the first year of implementation; the price decreases in subsequent years. The cost is \$40,000 in the second year of implementation and \$30,000 in the third year. The cost of the intervention includes materials and training for staff.

## Research

Twenty studies reviewed by the WWC investigated the effects of *SFA* for English language learners who are taught to read in English. One of the studies (Chambers, Slavin, Madden, Cheung, & Gifford, 2004) was a quasi-experimental design that met WWC evidence standards with reservations. The remaining 19 studies did not meet WWC evidence screens.

### Met evidence standards with reservations

Chambers et al. (2004) was a quasi-experimental design that studied 455 kindergarten and first grade Hispanic students from four states and the District of Columbia. Of these students, 324 were English language learners. This report is based on data

pertaining to the English language learners only. The study examined the effects of using the program with embedded video (*Reading Reels*) on reading achievement. Four of the eight schools involved in the study (four experimental and four comparison schools) were included in a national randomized evaluation of *SFA* (Borman et al., 2003).<sup>5</sup>

### Extent of evidence

The WWC categorizes the extent of evidence in each domain as small or moderate to large (see the [What Works Clearinghouse Extent of Evidence Categorization Scheme](#)). The extent of evidence takes into account the number of studies and the

5. Forty-one high-poverty schools participated in a national study of *Success for All*.

## Research (continued)

total sample size across the studies that met WWC evidence standards with or without reservations.<sup>6</sup>

The WWC considers the extent of evidence for *Success for All* to be small for reading achievement. No studies that met WWC

evidence standards with or without reservations addressed mathematics achievement or English language development.

## Effectiveness Findings

The WWC review of interventions for English language learners addresses student outcomes in three domains: reading achievement, mathematics achievement, and English language development. The study reviewed assessed outcomes in reading achievement.

*Reading achievement.* Chambers et al. (2004) reported statistically significant findings based on three outcome measures of reading achievement (Woodcock Reading Mastery Test: Word Identification, Word Attack, and Passage Comprehension), but none of these outcomes were statistically significant according to the WWC analysis. The average effect size across the three student outcomes was, however, large enough to be considered

substantively important according to WWC criteria (that is, at least 0.25).

### Rating of effectiveness

The WWC rates the effects of an intervention in a given outcome domain as: positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative. The rating of effectiveness takes into account four factors: the quality of the research design, the statistical significance of the findings, the size of the difference between participants in the intervention and the comparison conditions, and the consistency in findings across studies (see the [WWC Intervention Rating Scheme](#)).<sup>7</sup>

## The WWC found *Success for All* to have potentially positive effects on reading achievement for English language learners

### Improvement index

The WWC computes an improvement index for each individual finding. In addition, within each outcome domain, the WWC computes an average improvement index for each study as well as an average improvement index across studies (see [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#)). The improvement index represents the difference between the percentile rank of the average student in the intervention condition versus the percentile rank of the average student in the comparison condition. Unlike the rating of effectiveness, the improvement index is based entirely on the size of the effect, regardless of the statistical significance of the effect, the study design, or the

analyses. The improvement index can take on values between -50 and +50, with positive numbers denoting results favorable to the intervention group.

The average improvement index for reading achievement is +11 percentile points, with a range of +5 to +17 percentile points across findings in the one study.

### Summary

The WWC reviewed 20 studies of the effectiveness of *SFA* for English language learners learning to read in English. One study met WWC evidence standards with reservations; the remaining studies did not meet WWC evidence screens. Based on this

6. The Extent of Evidence Categorization was developed to tell readers how much evidence was used to determine the intervention rating, focusing on the number and size of studies. Additional factors associated with a related concept, external validity, such as the students' demographics and the types of settings in which studies took place, are not taken into account for the categorization.
7. The level of statistical significance was reported by the study authors or, where necessary, calculated by the WWC to correct for clustering within classrooms or schools and for multiple comparisons. For an explanation, see the [WWC Tutorial on Mismatch](#). See [Technical Details of WWC-Conducted Computations](#) for the formulas the WWC used to calculate the statistical significance. In the case of *Success for All*, corrections for clustering and multiple comparisons were needed.

**The WWC found *Success for All* to have potentially positive effects on reading achievement for English language learners** *(continued)*

one study, the WWC found potentially positive effects in reading achievement. The evidence presented in this report may change as new research emerges.

**References** **Met WWC evidence standards with reservations**

Chambers, B., Slavin, R. E., Madden, N. A., Cheung, A., & Gifford, R. (2004). *Effects of Success for All with embedded video on the beginning reading achievement of Hispanic children*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

**Additional source:**

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2003). Comprehensive school reform and achievement: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 73, 125–230.

**Did not meet WWC evidence screens**

Chambers, B., Cheung, A., Gifford, R., Madden, N., & Slavin, R. E. (2004). *Achievement effects of embedded multimedia in a Success For All reading program*. Baltimore, MD: Success for All Foundation.<sup>8</sup>

Dianda, M. R., & Flaherty, J. F. (1995). *Report on work station uses: Effects of Success for All on the reading achievement of first graders in California bilingual programs*. Los Alamitos, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED394327)<sup>9</sup>

Hurley, E. A., Chamberlain, A., Slavin, R. E., & Madden, N. A. (2001). Effects of Success for All on TAAS reading scores—A Texas statewide evaluation. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(10), 750–756.<sup>10</sup>

Livingston, M., & Flaherty, J. (1997). *Effects of Success for All on reading achievement in California schools*. Los Alamitos, CA: WestEd.<sup>11</sup>

Nunnery, J. A. (1995). An assessment of Success for All program component effects on the reading achievement of at-risk first-grade students. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 57(01), 155A. (UMI No. 9615378)<sup>12</sup>

Nunnery, J. A., Slavin, R. E., Madden, N. A., Ross, S. M., Smith, L. J., Hunter, P., et al. (1997, March). *Effects of full and partial implementations of Success for All on student reading achievement in English and Spanish*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.<sup>12</sup>

Ross, S. M., & Casey, J. (1998). *Longitudinal study of student literacy achievement in different Title I school-wide programs in Fort Wayne community schools—Year 2: First grade results*. Memphis, TN: University of Memphis, Center for Research in Educational Policy.<sup>10</sup>

Ross, S. M., Nunnery, J. A., & Smith, L. J. (1996). *Evaluation of Title I reading programs: Amphitheater public schools—Year 1: 1995–1996*. Memphis, TN: University of Memphis, Center for Research in Educational Policy.<sup>10</sup>

Ross, S. M., Smith, L. J., & Nunnery, J. A. (1998, April). *Title I as a catalyst for school improvement: Impact of alternative school-wide models on the reading achievement of students*

8. The effects of two interventions were studied: the WWC could not examine the results for the intervention that is relevant to this review.

9. Confound: the analysis could not separate the effects of the intervention from the effects of the school.

10. The sample is not appropriate to this review: data were not disaggregated so that the WWC could not examine the results for the sample that is relevant to this review.

11. The language of instruction differed between groups.

12. The outcome measures are not relevant to this review.

## References (continued)

- at risk. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.<sup>10</sup>
- Slavin, R. E., Leighton, M., & Yampolsky, R. (1990). *Success For All: Effects on the achievement of limited English proficient children* (Report No. 5). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED331585)<sup>13</sup>
- Slavin, R. E., & Madden, N. A. (1998). *Success for All / Éxito Para Todos—Effects on the reading achievement of students acquiring English* (Report No. 19). Baltimore, MD: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED423327)<sup>14</sup>
- Slavin, R. E., & Madden, N. A. (1999). Effects of bilingual and English as a second language adaptations of Success for All on the reading achievement of students acquiring English. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 4(4), 393–416.<sup>15</sup>
- Slavin, R. E., Madden, N. A., Dolan, L., Wasik, B. A., Ross, S. M., & Smith, L. J. (1994, April). *Success for All: Longitudinal effects of systemic school-by-school reform in seven districts*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.<sup>16</sup>
- Slavin, R. E., & Yampolsky, R. (1991). *Effects of Success for All on students with limited English proficiency: A three year evaluation* (Draft). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students.<sup>13</sup>
- Slavin, R. E., & Yampolsky, R. (1991). *Success for All: Effects on language minority students*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students.<sup>13</sup>
- Slavin, R. E., & Yampolsky, R. (1992). *Success for All: Effects on students with limited English proficiency: A three year evaluation* (Report No. 29). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED346199)<sup>13</sup>
- Urdegar, S. M. (1998). *Evaluation of the Success for All program 1997–98*. Miami, FL: Miami-Dade Public Schools, Office of Educational Evaluation.<sup>17</sup>
- Urdegar, S. M. (2000). *Evaluation of the Success for All program 1998–99*. Miami, FL: Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Office of Evaluation and Research.<sup>17</sup>
- Wang, L. W., & Ross, S. M. (2003). *Comparisons between elementary school programs on reading performance: Albuquerque Public Schools*. Memphis, TN: The University of Memphis, Center for Research in Educational Policy.<sup>10</sup>

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**For more information about specific studies and WWC calculations, please see the [WWC Success for All Technical Appendices](#).**

13. Confound: there was only one school in each study condition, so the analysis could not separate the effects of the intervention from the effects of the school.
14. Incomparable groups: there were differences in the amount of native language used.
15. For studies in which outcomes of the intervention appropriate to this review were examined, two had confounds: there was one school in one of the study conditions (Arizona) or one school in each study condition (Francis Scott Key), so the analysis could not separate the effects of the school. Complete data were not reported in one study (El Vista), so the WWC could not calculate effect sizes.
16. For studies in which outcomes of the intervention appropriate to this review were examined, the samples are not appropriate to the review: data were not disaggregated, so the WWC could not examine the results of the sample that is relevant to this review.
17. Complete data were not reported: the WWC could not compute effect sizes.