

# What Works Clearinghouse



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## WWC Quick Review of the Article “Promoting Academic and Social-Emotional School Readiness: The Head Start *REDI* Program”<sup>†</sup>

### What is this study about?

This study examined whether the Head Start *Research-based Developmentally Informed (REDI)* program is more effective than the standard Head Start program at improving the language, emergent literacy, and social-emotional skills of preschoolers.

Head Start centers in three Pennsylvania counties were randomly assigned either to use the *REDI* program or to continue using the standard Head Start program. The study included 44 classrooms and 356 4-year-olds across the two research groups.

The study assessed language development and emergent literacy skills, as well as emotional under-

standing, social problem-solving skills, social-emotional behaviors, and learning engagement.

Assessments were conducted at the beginning and again at the end of the school year for most outcomes.

### WWC Rating

***The research described in this article is consistent with WWC evidence standards***

**Strengths:** The study is a well-implemented randomized controlled trial.

**Cautions:** The authors examined the *REDI* program’s effects on more than twenty outcomes. Estimating effects on a large set of outcomes increases the possibility that some results may be found to be statistically significant by chance. The authors do not adjust for this possibility in their analysis.

### Features of the Head Start *REDI* Program

Aims to improve preschoolers’ language development, literacy skills, and social-emotional development

Delivered using brief lessons, “hands-on” extension activities, and specific instructional strategies

Includes interactive book reading, “Sound Games,” and an alphabet center, to foster language development and emergent literacy skills

Uses the Preschool PATHS curriculum to promote preschoolers’ friendship skills, understanding of emotions, social problem-solving skills, and self-control

Provides teachers with training and ongoing mentoring and support

### What did the study authors report?

The study finds that students in the *REDI* group outperformed control students on one of three measures of language development (effect sizes ranged from –0.07 to 0.15) and two of three measures of emergent literacy skills (effect sizes ranged from 0.16 to 0.39).

In addition, *REDI* program students exhibited greater understanding of emotions, better social problem-solving skills, and higher levels of learning engagement than students in regular Head Start classrooms.

<sup>†</sup>Bierman, K. L., Domitrovich, C. E., Nix, R. L., Gest, S. D., Welsh, J. A., Greenberg, M. T., et al. (2008). Promoting academic and social-emotional school readiness: the Head Start *REDI* program. *Child Development*, 79(6),1802–1817.