Nations First Reading Readiness Snapshot

The results of the first-of-its-kind national Reading Readiness Snapshot were recently released at the Library of Congress, Center for The Book symposium exploring the connections between literacy and health.

The Snapshot was produced by Nemours Reading BrightStart!, which is part of the larger Nemours Children's Health System and based in Jacksonville, and analyzed the results of more than 3,500 respondents to the reading readiness screener available at www.readingbrightstart.org. Parents from all 50 states and Washington, D.C. completed the screener in order to learn more about the progress their 3- to 5-year-old children were making toward developing the skills that will help them becoming proficient readers.

Out of a possible 31 points, the Nemours BrightStart! Preschool Reading Screener found average scores for 3-year-olds of 18.1; for 4-year-olds, 22.9; and for 5-year-olds, 25.8.

With the recent focus and controversy surrounding what preschool and kindergarten children should be taught and at what pace, this snapshot shows how America's preschoolers are actually doing in reading readiness, according to the people who know them best: their parents. Early brain research has established that the development of the human brain in the first years of life has a significant impact on later learning and intellectual growth.

With Nemours Preschool Reading Screener data, parents and caregivers can help to better determine where each individual child is on their journey to becoming a reader and ensure they are on track for reading success. By the end of pre-K (4 to 5 years-old), children should know 18 upper-case letters and 15 lower-case letters to be on track for adequate reading skills by the end of first grade, yet research shows that 20% or more of preschoolers score below average on measures of vocabulary, letter knowledge, or both.

Child's Age	Names Letters	Recognizes Letters Sounds	Average Screener Score	Maximum Screener Score
3	81%	-	18.1	31
4	88%	71%	22.9	31
5	92%	86%	25.8	31

"Children learn to read best through fun exposure to books, language, drawing, and writing from birth," said Dr. Laura Bailet, operational vice president, Nemours BrightStart! "Parents have told us that it's empowering and motivating for them to know whether their child is on track, or behind, especially when easy tips and tools are right at their fingertips. It's never too early to help their children develop a love of language and reading, in fact the earlier the better to build a solid foundation for future reading success."

Not surprisingly, 3-year-olds earned most of their points on oral language items, including skills such as, "continuously understands and uses new words" and "connects own feelings and experiences to stories we read together." For 4-year-olds, increasing skills were evident in all areas. Growth of letter knowledge was especially striking. Importantly, nearly 69% of 4-year-olds were able to identify at least 18 upper case letters, a benchmark that is vital for reading success as children move into kindergarten. Five-year-olds were good at identifying two words that rhyme (83%), and nearly 73% of them could say a word that rhymes with a word named by the parent. Blending words was easier for 5-year olds than breaking them apart and 66% could blend two words into a compound word, whereas 56% could break compound words apart.

For more information on the Preschool Screener and this report, visitwww.readingbrightstart.org.

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