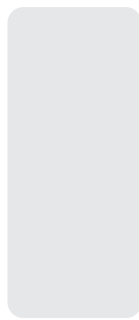


RESEARCH BRIEF

K–3 students show improvement in early literacy at the beginning of the school year, but readiness has yet to match pre-pandemic levels.



How many students are at risk for not learning to read?

The following table shows the percentage of students in each grade who were assessed as being far behind (in need of intensive intervention) in early literacy skills. They include the most recent data from the beginning of the current school

The data show that in most grades and demographic categories, there are now (beginning of year 2023–24) fewer students at risk (needing intensive intervention) in learning to read than there were two years ago (beginning of year 2021–22), but still more than there were four years

Among kindergarteners, the most recent data (2023–24) shows 40 percent of Black and 47 percent of Hispanic students are far behind, compared to 37 percent of white and 19 percent of Asian students. Compared with the low point of the pandemic (2021–22), there was a decrease of 13 percentage points for Black and 17 percentage points for Hispanic students, and smaller decreases of 5 percentage points for white and 4 percentage points for Asian students. As with the percent of students on track, fewer kindergarten students are now at risk than prior to the pandemic (2019–20) for all subgroups but white students, who remain 2 percentage points more at risk.

In first grade, the most recent data (2023–24) shows 39 percent of Black and 36 percent of Hispanic students are at risk for not learning to read, compared to 25 percent of white and 11 percent of Asian students. Compared with the low point of the pandemic (2021–22), there was a decrease of 15 percentage points for Black and Hispanic students, and smaller decreases of 4 percentage points for white students and 1 percentage point for Asian students. While all students are still performing worse than before the pandemic, Hispanic students have experienced greater improvement since the year prior to the pandemic (2019–20) than white students, whereas Black students have seen slightly smaller declines than white students.

In second grade, the most recent data (2023–24) shows 43 percent of Black and 36 percent of Hispanic students are at risk for not learning to read, compared to 26 percent of white and 11 percent of Asian students. Compared with the low point of the pandemic (2021–22), there was a decrease of 9 percentage points for Black students and 8 percentage points for Hispanic students, and smaller decreases of 4 percentage points for white students and 1 percentage point for Asian students. All students are

Recommendations

Despite progress, many students in grades K–3 are still at risk of not learning to read and urgently need support. The good news is that science-based reading instruction reduces the need for intervention and enables children to move forward as capable, confident learners.

Educators serving students in grades K–3 need data-driven insights into students’ reading development and instructional practices that are based in the Science of Reading. They also need support helping students who have fallen behind and require more targeted instruction and intervention to catch up. **To help educators where they need it most, it is important that schools and districts invest in a reliable universal screener, high-quality core curriculum, evidence-based interventions, and professional development.** As the school year begins, Amplify

recommends districts make integrated plans to ensure that schools:

- Administer benchmark assessments three times per year to monitor levels of risk for reading difficulties.
- Allocate resources to support students who are at risk, spending additional time in literacy instruction beyond grade-level instruction.
- Regularly monitor progress for students who are at risk, making adjustments as needed.
- Ensure all students receive grade-level instruction that is evidence-based, and support instructional staff in gaining knowledge about the Science of Reading.
- Instill a love of reading and books during all school-based programs, with the support of caregivers and the community.

Types of instruction

Scheduling/formatting options

Which students

Grade-level core instruction focused on

For more information on mCLASS,
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