

EARLY LITERACY AND NUMERACY STRATEGY OVERVIEW



T.L.L. TEMPLE FOUNDATION
EST. 1962
BUILDING A THRIVING RURAL EAST TEXAS

OBJECTIVE

All East Texas students have access to high quality Pre-K and early grade programs that enable them to meet or exceed third grade education standards in reading and mathematics.

CHALLENGE

Kindergarten-readiness predicts third grade school achievement, and third grade reading proficiency predicts future academic success. Children in East Texas are starting kindergarten behind, and once they reach school, they are not getting the instructional literacy and numeracy support they need to catch up.

Compared to the entire state, the T.L.L. Temple Foundation's East Texas service area is more rural and has a higher percentage of students in low-income households. Consistent with the expected impacts of high poverty rural contexts on children's early development, East Texas students score lower than their peers across the state on standardized kindergarten-readiness and third grade reading and math scores. In 2019, approximately two-thirds of the school districts within the T.L.L. Temple Foundation's rural service area lagged the low state average, which is only 45%, for third graders reading at grade level. The COVID-19 pandemic has strained an already inadequate rural early education and care system, further disrupting the lives and learning pathways of young children. These challenges are limiting opportunities for children and undercutting efforts to build a thriving East Texas.

OPPORTUNITY

Disadvantaged children receive the most benefit from high-quality early learning interventions, and society receives the highest rates of return by investing in children most in need.¹ In those critical early years, the quality of a child's early learning environment and stimulation propels them forward or holds them back. In East Texas, teachers, school leaders, researchers, and educator preparation programs are developing cutting-edge instructional methods and new models tailored to propel young rural students forward. East Texas school districts are expanding access to high-quality full day Pre-K. Innovative read-aloud literacy and numeracy programs that engage parents in their child's learning and development are being piloted and evaluated for their impacts in rural communities. Teacher preparation programs are equipping pre-service teachers with rigorous, evidence-based competencies in early grade literacy and numeracy instruction. Education partners are adapting in-service teacher trainings to accelerate students' acquisition of fundamental reading and math skills. From early education to third grade — in homes, classrooms, and campuses — the T.L.L. Temple Foundation is advancing high-impact programs to ensure every East Texan is on an early trajectory for academic and life success.

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¹ <http://heckmanequation.org/content/resource/early-childhood-education-quality-and-access-pay>

STRATEGY

The T.L.L. Temple Foundation envisions a rural East Texas where all students — and particularly those from low-income families, minorities, and special populations, such as Dyslexic or English language learners — have access to high quality Pre-K and early grade programs that enable them to meet or exceed third grade education standards in reading and mathematics.

The T.L.L. Temple Foundation is searching for educational partners that recognize and understand the unique challenges and unprecedented opportunities facing our rural East Texas communities. Fundamental to the strategy are strong partnerships founded on a shared commitment to achieve transformational system-level impacts, incorporate equitable access to opportunity, promote the science of teaching reading and numeracy, pursue evidence-based innovation and practices across institutions and sectors, and embrace data-driven accountability for results.

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FOCUS AREAS

- **Instructional Effectiveness:** Strengthen the capacity of Pre-K and elementary schools to deliver high quality instruction that increases third grade early literacy and numeracy.
 - Redesign teacher preparation programs to effectively teach evidence-based early literacy and numeracy.
 - Train in-service teachers on evidence-based strategies to teach literacy and numeracy.
 - Support training in evidenced-based early literacy and numeracy practices for school district and college leaders.
- **Quality Programs:** Increase student access to high quality full-day Pre-K and early grade programs with special attention to early literacy and numeracy.
 - Expand high-quality full-day Pre-K in districts.
 - Develop and scale high-quality full-day Pre-K and early grade models, emphasizing the science of teaching reading and numeracy.
 - Explore and fund evidence-based literacy and numeracy models.
 - Support quality programs that increase kindergarten readiness.

MONITORING PROGRESS

To ensure we are accelerating change and achieving results, the Foundation is monitoring 3rd grade reading and math proficiency rates, Kindergarten readiness, participation in quality Pre-K programs, and early literacy and numeracy proficiency scores:

- By geography: In school districts and early learning centers participating in project investments, in our service area, and in Texas
- By socio-economic status, race, gender, and special populations, such as English language learners.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about T.L.L. Temple Foundation or about this strategy, please refer to our website tlltemple.foundation or call **936-634-3900**.