What is Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention?

The Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention is designed to provide at-risk kindergarten and first grade children with an intervention to improve reading achievement. A teacher or teacher assistant delivers 30-minute daily lessons to small groups of 2-5 students. This intervention is comprised of 126 lessons distributed across approximately 30 weeks of instruction. The components of the intervention include four teacher guides, teacher resource packages that accompany each teacher guide (e.g. games, letter cards, picture cards), an assessment handbook, Diz the Dinosaur puppet, Diz decodable storybooks, student write-on/wipe-off cards, student activity books, and student manipulatives (e.g. letter tiles and letter cards).

This Early Reading Intervention is organized in a carefully planned sequence of skills and the explicit instruction and systematic review are intended to ensure student success. The instructional materials are well organized and the teacher guides provide detailed lesson plans that are easy to follow. The 30-minute lesson consists of seven activities, with each activity designed to last only three to five minutes. The first 15 minutes of the lesson focus on phonological awareness and alphabetic understanding and the next 15 minutes center on writing and spelling. Each activity is labeled with the amount of time it should last, helping teachers pace instruction. The lessons also provide immediate reteaching strategies for students who do not initially grasp the material.

A comprehensive assessment plan is an important part of this intervention. Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention recommends administering a formal screening assessment, such as Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), during the fourth to sixth week of the school year. Kindergarten and first graders who fall into the bottom 25% on this formal assessment should be targeted for instruction in the Early Reading Intervention. The Assessment Handbook that accompanies the Early Reading Intervention provides the tools needed to make instructional decisions before the intervention is implemented (the placement test), during the intervention (progress monitoring), and after the intervention is completed (an exit test). The placement test assists teachers in determining how to group students and at which lesson to begin. Four progress monitoring assessments help teachers know if students are ready to advance to the next part of the program. Weekly student progress checklists also help teachers monitor progress and determine if more intensive instruction is needed. The exit test allows teachers to determine whether or not students have appropriately achieved the targeted skills and are ready to end their intervention lessons.
Is Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention aligned with Reading First?

Reading First identifies five instructional components essential for reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention is designed to provide students with the necessary skills to prepare them to become proficient readers. Phonological awareness and phonics comprise a majority of this program’s activities. Both phonological awareness and phonics follow the appropriate developmental hierarchy, and instruction is delivered in an explicit and systematic manner. The focus of each of the four teacher guides illustrates this systematic, developmental hierarchy: 1) Learning Letters and Sounds, 2) Segmenting, Blending, and Integrating, 3) Reading Words, 4) Reading Sentences and Storybooks. Each teacher’s guide provides a scope and sequence delineating an overview of skills taught and the specific lesson at which each skill is introduced.

The first 15 minutes of each lesson focuses on phonological awareness and alphabetic understanding. Here, activities related to letter-names, letter-sounds, and phonological awareness are implemented in a game-like fashion. Writing and spelling are the focus of the last 15 minutes of each lesson. These activities begin with students learning how to write the letters that correspond to the letter sounds they have learned and progress to using these letter-sounds to spell words. Fluency regarding letter-sounds and reading words is a consistent part of this intervention. Vocabulary is addressed throughout the intervention and focuses on word-learning strategies. After approximately 100 lessons, students are reading controlled text comprising approximately 3-5 word sentences.

The professional development includes a 15-minute video delivered by the authors and researchers of the program, Drs. Deborah Simmons and Edward Kame’enui. This video includes an overview of the intervention and information related to the design and results of the supporting research. There is also a videotaped classroom demonstration lesson showing a teacher implementing an Early Reading Intervention lesson. Professional development cards consisting of questions related to the implementation of the intervention accompany this videotape and can be used as a basis for discussion among teachers who will be implementing the program. The teacher highlighted on the videotape also gives commentary at the end of the lesson that describes each activity and provides teacher tips for effective implementation.

Research Support for Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention

Project Optimize is the underlying research that supports what is now called Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention (Simmons, Kame’enui, Harn, Edwards, & Coyne, 2001). Beginning in 1999, Drs. Simmons and Kame’enui of the University of Oregon conducted Project Optimize, a five-year longitudinal research program designed to address two questions: 1) What types of instruction and intervention strategies are most effective with the bottom 25% of kindergarteners? and 2) How intensive should the intervention be (in terms of time, duration, and instructional delivery) for students to reach satisfactory goals and maintain them over time? The sample for this study included 441 kindergarten children from seven Title I schools in the Pacific Northwest. The percentage of students from these schools receiving free or reduced lunch ranged from 37 to 63. These students were screened for onset recognition fluency and letter naming fluency (Kaminski & Good, 1998, 1996). From this sample, the students who scored in the bottom 25% on
both criteria were invited to participate in an “extended day” kindergarten intervention (N= 112). Students were randomly assigned to one of three interventions.

Instruction for each intervention was delivered by a certified teacher or teacher assistant to small groups of 2-5 students in daily, 30 minutes sessions. Pre- and post data were collected and progress was monitored on a monthly basis. The three instructional interventions varied systematically along two dimensions: emphasis and specificity. Intervention A, the *Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention*, was implemented as previously described in this report. The content of this intervention had a code emphasis and was highly specific in terms of time, duration, and instructional delivery. Intervention B, Phonological Awareness/Vocabulary Comprehension, included a code and comprehension emphasis and was highly specified. Intervention C, a Sounds and Letters Module from a Basal Publisher, incorporated a code emphasis and was moderately specified.

Results from this study indicated that students who participated in all three interventions exceeded the phonological awareness benchmark of 35 phonemes per minute at the end of the year. Further, the students who participated in the *Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention* (Intervention A) exceeded the benchmark at least two months earlier and showed greater achievement than the students in either Intervention B or C. This growth is illustrated in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention A Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention</th>
<th>Intervention B Phonological Awareness/Vocabulary Comprehension</th>
<th>Intervention C Basal Publisher: Sounds and Letters Module</th>
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With regard to the alphabetic principle, only students who participated in Intervention A and Intervention B exceeded the benchmark of 25 letter-sound correspondences per minute. Further, those in Intervention A showed the greatest achievement, surpassing the benchmark by 56%. Additionally, the researchers found that 97% of the kindergarteners who participated in Intervention A experienced faster
achievement rates and were able to sustain that level of achievement into second grade.

The research that supports the efficacy of this intervention illustrated that instructional emphasis and specificity matter. That is, how instructional time was used affected outcomes and phonological and alphabetic tasks affected achievement (emphasis). Students participating in highly specified instruction made comparable gains in a shorter amount of time than those who received less specific instruction (specificity).

To summarize, the content and instructional design of the *Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention* is aligned with current scientifically based reading research. Scientific research supports the use of this intervention to prevent reading difficulties in kindergarten and first grade students.

**Strengths & Weaknesses**

**Strengths of Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention:**
- The efficacy of this intervention is based on longitudinal scientific research.
- The instructional design is based on the current research of teaching beginning reading.
- The activities are delivered in a game-like fashion, which can be motivating and fun for students.
- Assessment is an important part of the program and utilized to make instructional decisions.
- This program would be appropriate to implement as an immediate intensive intervention for those kindergarten and first graders who score in the bottom 25% of a formal screening assessment.
- Review is cumulatively built into the program providing students with ample practice opportunities and immediate teacher feedback.
- With appropriate professional development, a teacher or a teacher assistant can effectively implement this intervention.

**Weaknesses of Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention:**
- None were noted.

**Which Florida counties have schools that implement Scott Foresman Early Reading Intervention?**

Duval County 904-390-2115   
Santa Rosa County 850-983-5062   
Broward County 954-765-8851   
Highlands County 863-471-5578

**For More Information**

References


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