

Peer-Reviewed Scientific Study Confirms Superkids Superior Results

“It’s a powerful and efficient foundation for literacy.”

In a study published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, the Superkids® Reading Program improved reading achievement more than traditional basal reading programs in a large-scale, treatment/control study. (See citation on the next page.) Dr. Geoffrey Borman, Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin, conducted the study during the 2006–07 school year. A total of 750 kindergarten students in 12 schools in 6 states participated. He compared 23 kindergarten classrooms (390 students) that used the Superkids program as their core reading curriculum to a well-matched group of 20 classrooms (360 students) in the same schools that used traditional basal reading programs often supplemented with leveled readers.

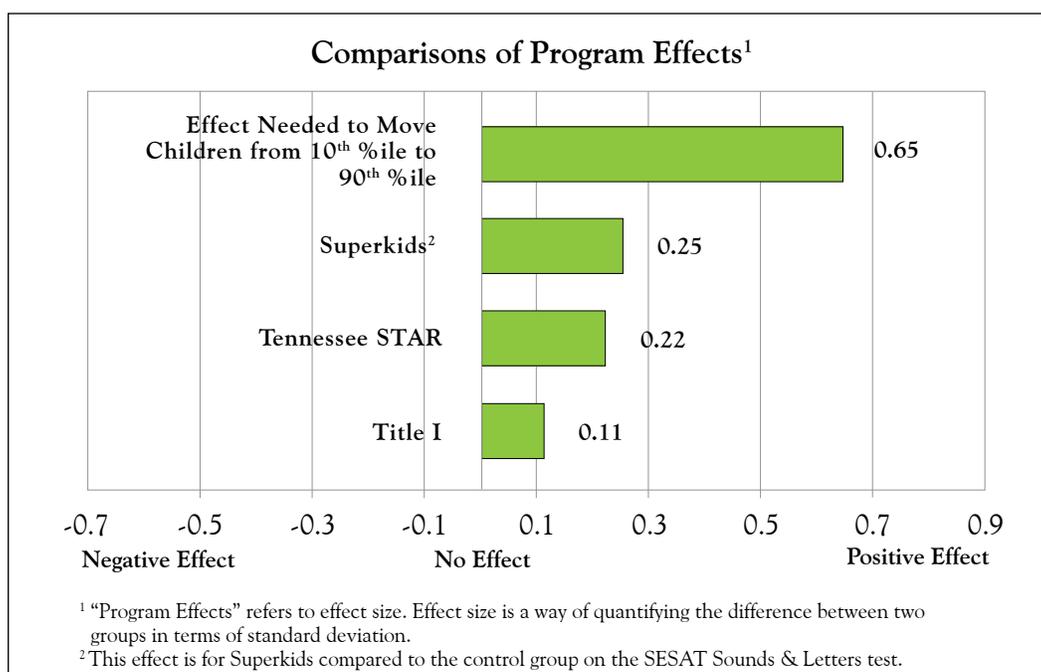
The Superkids students’ performance was superior to the control group’s on all domains tested.

“These results bear serious consideration by any school seeking to improve its reading program,”

said Dr. Borman. “This study demonstrates the potential for widespread improvement of literacy through the implementation of The Superkids—a systematic, phonics-based literacy curriculum. Quantitative studies of published reading programs using such a broad national sample of schools, classrooms, teachers, and students are rare,” he said.

To show the potential power of Superkids, Dr. Borman cited an extreme example. Moving a school from the 10th percentile—in which most children are barely reading—to the 90th percentile would require that a program have an effect size of 0.65. Superkids provided nearly 40% of this effect in just one year of instruction.

Dr. Borman also compared the effect size shown in the study to the effects of other well-known efforts to improve academic achievement. These included Title I, the federal program that has funded the largest remedial interventions in the U.S. since 1965, and Tennessee’s Student-Teacher



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Achievement Ratio (STAR) program, which reduced primary-grade class sizes from 22–26 students to 13–17. The measurable effects of using The Superkids were as great or greater than the effects of these established interventions.

“The Superkids’ effects are both statistically and practically significant,” Dr. Borman wrote. “The pattern of first-year treatment effects we found appears to provide **a powerful foundation** for student literacy.”

A more efficient program

Using The Superkids also proved more efficient. While Superkids teachers reported that they spent about 20 minutes more per day using Superkids than control teachers did using other core reading programs, Superkids teachers spent significantly less time overall teaching language arts. Superkids teachers spent an average of 105 minutes per day teaching language arts, whereas teachers in the control classrooms spent an average of 132 minutes per day. Dr. Borman’s report noted, “The Superkids appeared to offer a more efficient overall language arts program in that it produced **stronger achievement effects, but demanded less overall time to teach.**”

Dr. Borman attributed the efficiency of The Superkids to its **comprehensive structure**. A premise of the Superkids program is that reading skills must be developed in concert with other language skills. The program teaches the five components of reading instruction deemed essential by the National Reading Panel—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension,

and vocabulary. It also incorporates handwriting, spelling, expressive writing, listening, and speaking. “Because skills from multiple strands are taught simultaneously and in support of one another,” Dr. Borman wrote, “**teachers are likely to gain greater efficiency and effectiveness** in teaching the overall language arts curriculum.”

Teachers give Superkids top ratings

Overall, teachers using The Superkids reported a much higher satisfaction rate than teachers in control classrooms using basal programs. Teachers in the study ranked the reading programs they were using across four measures. Dr. Borman wrote: “In all cases, the Superkids teachers reported **greater satisfaction, greater perceived effectiveness, greater perceived motivation among students, and easier implementation** of the Superkids core reading program over the control teachers’ reading programs.”

Diverse student sample

Dr. Borman said that the study was notable for its outcome across large and diverse groups of teachers and children, and because the study lasted a whole school year. Fifty percent of children in the sample were from historically disadvantaged populations.

Sample Characteristics

Schools: 12

Teachers: 23 Superkids, 20 control

Students: 390 Superkids, 360 control

Participation in federal free or reduced-price lunch program: 35%

Minority status: 50%

Borman, G. D. & Dowling, N. M. (2009). Student and teacher outcomes of The Superkids quasi-experimental study. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 14: 207–225.



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