



Since 2006 **Save the Children's Early Steps to School Success (ESSS)** has been providing parent/caregiver education and support, home visiting and pre-literacy and language development services for parents and caregivers in rural, geographically isolated communities. Save the Children's ESSS program model is built on an evidence based model to achieve the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program benchmark, "Improvements in school readiness and achievement." Our curriculum, adapted for rural communities, is based on *Zero to Three's Cradling Literacy: Building Teachers' Skills to Nurture Early Language and Literacy from Birth to Five*. Over the past 8 years, ESSS's third-party evaluation results have consistently demonstrated the program's positive impact on children's well-being in a variety of domains: promoting healthier births, increasing children's language acquisition (as measure by PPVT scores), and improving home learning environments through parental involvement.

Healthy Births

Enrolling children before birth allows Home Visitors to coach mothers about healthy pregnancy practices to reduce the chance of birth outcomes that put the child at developmental risk. Thirty two percent of ESSS children are enrolled before birth. The incidence of low birth weight and preterm births was much lower for that group.

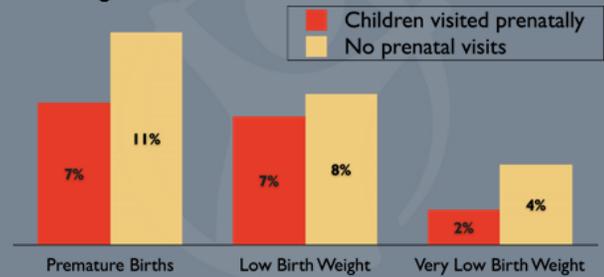
Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

At ages 3 and 5, ESSS uses the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-IV) to measure a child's vocabulary acquisition. Of the group of 1,037 children who have met the testing criteria¹ since the program began, 80% of 3 year olds and 85% of 5 year olds scored average or above. The average standard score was 95.9 and 98.4 respectively as compared to a national mean of 100. Those who had been in the program 4 years or more had the highest average scores (101,110). According to Dunn & Dunn (2007) these results show promise that ESSS is as effective, or more effective, than other nationally-recognized early childhood programs.

Helping Parents Teach Their Children

Teaching parents about the ways young children learn and the things they need for stimulation is an important strategy of the ESSS program. The benefits children enjoy from being read to are many, including improved bonding and attachment, language development, knowledge of books, sequencing stories and enjoyment of books. ESSS parents track the number of times they read with their children. Parents and children in the ESSS program are reading together daily on average.

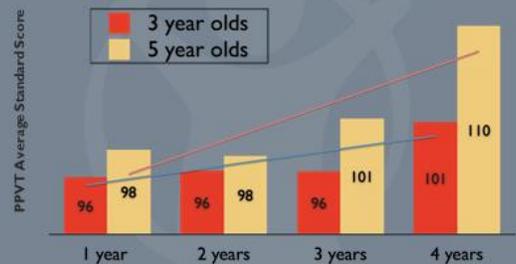
Birth Outcomes are Better When Home Visits Begin Before Birth



PPVT Average Standard Scores

	Number of children	National Norm	2013 Average standard score
Cumulative: All eligible 3 year olds years PPVT	1037	100	95.9
Eligible 3 year olds this year	169	100	94.7
Cumulative: All eligible 5 year olds	129	100	98.4
Eligible 5 year olds this year	80	100	98.4

PPVT Scores Trend Upward with Length of Time in the ESSS Program

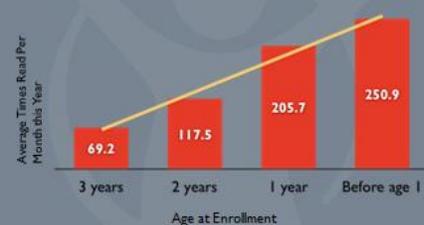


Parenting Outcomes

	Result 2012	Result 2013
Average # of times 0-3 children are read to per month	31	34
Average # of times 3-5 children are read to per month	19	17

★ Parents and 0-3 children are reading together daily on average

Length of Enrollment Positively Impacts Times Read



¹ Children are tested at ages 3 and 5; only children who have participated in the program for at least one year are included in the testing sample.



Early Steps to School Success (ESSS): Research Base

Caldwell & Bradley, University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Used by ESSS, the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Inventory was designed to measure the quality and quantity of stimulation and support available to a child in the home environment, and the child's stimulation from objects, events, and people occurring in the child's home. The intent is to understand the child's opportunities and experiences; in essence, to understand what life is like for the particular child in the child's most intimate surroundings. The HOME Inventory has been extensively used in studies of the cognitive development of children.

Caldwell, Bettye M., and Robert H. Bradley(2001) Home Inventory Administration Manual, Third Edition, 2001. Little Rock, AR: University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Dunn & Dunn, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. At age 3, ESSS uses the standardized and widely used Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-IV) to measure a child's vocabulary acquisition. Research tells us that vocabulary is a strong predictor of school success or failure. The national mean for the PPVT is 100 and the aggregated average standard score for ESSS is 97.5. By way of comparison, a study of Early Head Start comparable children found an average standard score of 83.

Dunn, Lloyd M. & Dunn, Douglas M. (2007) Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Fourth Edition (Forms A and B). Pearson Assessments pearsonassessments@pearson.com. P.7

Im et al., ZERO TO THREE. Curriculums for pregnant moms and infant/toddler home visiting as well as parenting and parent/child groups are an important component ESSS. This evidence-based curriculum grew out of Zero to Three's *Cradling Literacy: Building Teachers' Skills to Nurture Early Language and Literacy From Birth to Five* which was piloted over a 2-year period using a quasi-experimental design and was found to have significant positive effects on both caregiver and child outcomes. The curriculum is being further evaluated through a randomized controlled evaluation currently being implemented in Eastern Kentucky and funded through the U.S. Department of Education.

Im, J. H., Osborn, C.A., Sanchez, S.Y., Thorp, E.K. (2007) *Cradling literacy: Building teachers' skills to nurture early language and literacy from birth to five*. A ZERO TO THREE training curriculum. Washington D.C.: ZERO TO THREE.

Schweinhart et al., High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. ESSS focus on language and early literacy is a response to research that highlights the critical disparities between what children know and can do before they enter kindergarten. School success is built on a solid foundation in language and literacy which begins from the earliest moments of a child's life. Research shows that participation in intensive, high quality early childhood programs can improve school readiness skills. Children in such programs are shown to be less likely to drop out, repeat grades and need special education; and, as adults, are less likely to commit crimes, more likely to be employed and have higher earnings.

Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C. R., & Nores, M. (2005). *Lifetime effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 40*. (Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 14). Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.