



Text Messaging Service Aims to Improve Children's Kindergarten Readiness

The more parents and caregivers talk and listen to young children, the easier it is for them to learn to read and write when they start kindergarten. This is because simple activities each day such as singing and playing every day help kids develop the cognitive and language skills they need to do well in school and beyond.

Unfortunately, not all parents have time to develop learning activities for their little ones, creating a school readiness gap that impacts children from under-resourced families disproportionately. A text messaging service aims to change this, helping children learn through simple, everyday interactions.

The service, called TALK: Text and Learn for Kindergarten, sends two text messages each week suggesting activities that parents and caregivers can easily incorporate into daily routines with their children. The service also notifies parents of free activities and services at the library. Parents and caregivers of children ages 5 and under can sign up by either texting TALK to 75547 or registering online at www.textandlearn.org.

TALK is derived from the research-based program Every Child Ready to Read, which promotes five daily practices to build essential pre-reading skills: talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing. Each message begins with one of the five practices and details an activity parents can use to help their child develop early literacy skills. But content goes beyond literacy and helps parents build other important skills such as pre-math and social emotional skills. While the service is available and valuable to every family, the goal is to reach parents who may not otherwise have the time or the ability to attend library programs. It is available in English and Spanish.