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Addressing Pandemic-Related Learning Gaps, New Research Shows Benefits of Innovative Teacher Coaching For Young Learners

SEEDS of Learning's rigorous teacher development model increases early reading proficiency among students in Bay Area schools, a game changer for countering systemic discrepancies and racial inequities after a year of remote learning

Oakland, CA – As schools begin reopening, teachers are facing an intensified challenge of how to support students' varied learning experiences and progress. Newly released research shows that an innovative and replicable model in Bay Area classrooms is giving teachers the tools they need to understand, target and close the opportunity gaps and address social and emotional needs that have emerged or worsened over the last year. And it all starts with a teacher and a coach.

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation partnered with Kidango to pilot the SEEDS of Learning literacy program. A program of CARES for Learning, SEEDS is a relationship-based professional development and coaching model that equips teachers with data-driven, emotionally responsive, and equity-promoting strategies and tools to support children's social emotional development and increase literacy. By focusing on teachers and their professional development, SEEDS goes straight to the source, ensuring that adults in classrooms are equipped to understand, target and close opportunity gaps.

After years of promising results in Oakland schools, the Rainin Foundation engaged NORC at the University of Chicago to conduct a rigorous, objective, longitudinal study on student outcomes. The NORC study was a randomized control trial study, the gold standard for determining the causal impact of a program on desired outcomes, on a large scale across 26 Kidango preschools. The study divided Kidango's sites into schools where teachers received this extensive coaching support and where they did not, and results indicate that SEEDS creates significant improvements on student literacy outcomes.

The research found that:

- A single year of SEEDS training for teachers was shown to produce statistically significant, positive changes in teacher knowledge and student early reading skills.
- When the SEEDS schools were compared to similar, randomly assigned control schools, the SEEDS schools had significantly higher early literacy student scores.
- When SEEDS was introduced to the comparison schools in the second year of the study, they saw significantly increased early literacy student scores (about three-quarters standard deviation impact).

"In order for children to learn, they first need to feel safe and that they belong," said Scott Moore, CEO of Kidango. "Students may need to readjust to classroom settings and would benefit from solutions tailored to their learning. Kidango has prioritized the adoption of the SEEDS program to coach and empower our teachers to meet students where they are. With mental health consultation, we create an environment that supports children's social emotional development."

SEEDS of Learning is based on current research in early childhood education, child development, emergent literacy and effective teaching. Its high-quality strategies produce statistically significant, positive changes in early reading skills for students of all backgrounds, regardless of gender, race/ethnicity, or dual language learner status.

“This is a systems change opportunity,” said Shaheena Khan, Director, Education Strategy & Ventures at the Kenneth Rainin Foundation. “This game-changing solution is scalable and replicable. If more California preschools and transitional kindergartens adopted this approach to invest in teachers and their ability to drive literacy, we could create significantly more equitable opportunities for students in underserved communities to learn and flourish,” she added.

“Data from our cluster randomized controlled trial shows that teachers who receive a single year of SEEDS training can produce a significant and substantial impact on preschool students’ emergent literacy skills,” said Marc Hernandez, Principal Research Scientist at NORC at the University of Chicago’s Academic Research Centers. “This ongoing study will examine the potentially cumulative effects of multiple years of SEEDS training and coaching on teacher and student outcomes. These initial results suggest that programs like Kidango can achieve significant impacts quickly.”

The NORC research brief and color charts can be found [here](#).

See an overview of the NORC and Rainin Foundation Early Childhood Collaboration [here](#).

A Kidango research brief can be found [here](#).

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About the Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Kenneth Rainin Foundation is a family foundation that collaborates with creative thinkers in the Arts, Education and Health. The Foundation believes in taking smart risks to achieve breakthroughs. It supports visionary artists in the Bay Area, creates opportunities for Oakland's youngest learners, and funds researchers on the forefront of scientific discoveries. [More at krfoundation.org](http://www.krfoundation.org).

About Kidango

Kidango is an Early Learning nonprofit committed to setting every child on a path to thrive in Kindergarten and in life. As the largest childcare provider in the San Francisco Bay Area, we provide thousands of children, especially those from low-income families, with safe, healthy, nurturing environments and relationships. Our goal is to make sure all children have the social, emotional, and academic skills they need to learn, grow and realize their potential. [More at kidango.org](#).

About NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC at the University of Chicago is an objective, non-partisan research institution that delivers reliable data and rigorous analysis to guide critical programmatic, business, and policy decisions. Since 1941, NORC has conducted groundbreaking studies, created and applied innovative methods and tools, and advanced principles of scientific integrity and collaboration. Today, government, corporate, and nonprofit clients around the world partner with NORC to transform increasingly complex information into useful knowledge. [More at norc.org](#).

About CARES for Learning

CARES for Learning is the sole service provider of SEEDS of Learning programs. The CARES mission is to ensure every child can read fluently by third grade through evidence-based professional development. SEEDS of Learning programs are proven to move students to identified targets for later reading success. Through quality interactions that strengthen academic, social, and emotional development, children and adults are confident and capable. More at [seeds-learning.com](#).