

THE **POWER4Kids** Reading INITIATIVE

Frequently Asked Questions



WHAT IS THE **POWER4Kids** Reading INITIATIVE?

POWER4Kids is a strategic results-driven plan to take the guesswork out of schoolwork. It is an Initiative designed to provide empirically verifiable evidence about which programs and methods succeed at teaching the highest percentage of children the basic skills necessary to become proficient readers. In particular, the first **POWER4Kids** Initiative will study the at-risk children who have fallen a year behind in their age-appropriate reading aptitude, identify the specific weakness(s) in the way they learn, and determine the most effective targeted intervention program to boost this type of weakness and, therefore, accelerate their reading ability to a normal level.

Reading remediation programs will kick off the **POWER4Kids** Initiative. In time, a series of clinical studies in math and writing skills development will be introduced and added.

As our scientific research team presents us concrete evidence as to which programs and methods emerge as the most effective, we will proceed to mobilize these results to parents, teachers and policymakers — enabling them to offer and teach the most effective reading programs in their school and afterschool programs. **POWER4Kids** will provide a clear understanding on how skills develop, specific obstacles that arise for many children, and how effective evidence-based instruction can overcome these obstacles.

The lack of previous public support on this issue is understandable because the public is generally unaware of instructional options and their differential effectiveness. Parents and others have been lead to accept that the failure of a great many students to learn to read is due to deficits in the children. The general public has no way of knowing that children's achievements in reading are largely a function of how they are taught. However, **POWER4Kids** will change this. The ultimate goal of the Initiative is to ensure that our nation's children succeed academically and not waste critical developmental years in programs that provide minimal or no results.

WHY IS *Reading* IMPORTANT?

- 1) ALL children want to read; how they are taught is crucial to whether or not this is accomplished.
- 2) Reading is the mandated foundation for academic and societal success. Students succeed in school when they are able to read fluently to gather knowledge and information, comprehend then proceed to make inferences and draw conclusions.
- 3) A society of educated citizens is a powerful society. Knowledge is power — power for the nation, the communities, its businesses and, most importantly, power for the children, for they are America's future.
- 4) History has shown that ignorance breeds hatred and unrest in society.
- 5) American schools are seriously failing in the basic education in reading. Ultimately, this will weakening our ability to remain a strong nation.



We live in a complex text driven, information-age society. We must take the steps necessary, regardless of how difficult, to give every American child the basic education essential to survive in this world. It is only through unyielding education of our citizens that we enhance our nation's ability to continue with its progress and its freedom. No country can sustain domestic peace or success when thirty to forty percent of its population is disenfranchised because the system failed to provide them with the basic, mandatory tool to succeed—reading.

Shockingly, 20 million of 52 million school children in this country do not read proficiently and are at risk for academic failure. They will fight an uphill battle throughout their education and will continue to lose their desire and chance to be a contributor in our society.

POWER4Kids can change this.

WHO IS **POWER4Kids** ?

POWER4Kids is a collaborative effort of **strategic partners** and **alliances**, both private and public, coming together to build a grassroots movement to discover and implement programs that produce profound academic improvement. As importantly, **POWER4Kids** Partners will leverage this new knowledge, through a powerful mobilization strategy, into schools throughout America. THE HAAN FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN, a non-profit organization dedicated to developing and implementing educational solutions, has organized the **POWER4Kids** Reading Initiative.

The best way to achieve educational progress is to build a grassroots infrastructure, community by community, that will demand and act upon scientific facts that clearly provide the empirical evidence necessary to better teach our nation's children. Together we will ensure that only those programs proven by verifiable data are taught to our children— no more fads or hunches taught in early elementary classrooms; no more feel-good educational philosophies taught in our colleges of education— only solid programs that are guaranteed to build the basic skills required for a child to academically succeed in the schooling environment throughout their educational careers.

WHY IS POWER4Kids IMPORTANT?

FACT: According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2001), **thirty-eight percent** of America's fourth graders cannot read and understand a simple paragraph from an age-appropriate book.

FACT: Recent research by the NICHD has concluded that **when properly instructed, ninety-five percent** of children who are reading disabled or at risk for reading failure can become average or above average readers. This is accomplished through early identification and effective instruction.

FACT: For the most part, schools are in a quandary because they do not have the scientific facts to compare and contrast programs. Having this knowledge would allow them to make intelligent decisions, implement choices, and react quickly to underachieving students.



In testimony before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce in May 2000, Dr. Reid Lyon testified, “historically, education research has not had a significant impact on educational practices.” One reason is that policymaker’s do not have the resources or knowledge on the scientific finding (if there are any) and, therefore, frequently rely on soft information and marketing promotions. Thus, their decisions are often based on incomplete and inaccurate data that reflects not what research has revealed, but on biases of program administrators and supporters.

POWER4Kids POINT: Lead by Dr. Joe Torgesen, the top reading researchers and leading scientists in the world will conduct the **POWER4Kids** Reading Initiative. Working together, this unprecedented corroborative of intellectual expertise will bring into being standards of EVIDENCE to assist educators in making decisions about how to improve student reading achievement—unbiased, independent and with the highest integrity of scientific rigor.

POWER4Kids POINT: Once the research has concluded, **POWER4Kids** Partners will mobilize this EVIDENCE into every community and school in this country, making these facts widely known and available. Teachers and principles have traditionally found it difficult if not impossible to access reliable information on effective practices. This little known fact directly hampers America’s ability to improve learning. With **POWER4Kids** every parent and policymakers can *demand* and find the evidence-of-success from a program before a child wastes critical development years and is potentially lost forever in the system.

POWER4Kids POINT: The knowledge gained from the **POWER4Kids** Initiative will be used to *Empower The Teachers* with awareness and professional development on the programs, methods and strategies found to be superior in producing lifelong reading skills. With training, practice and feedback, both preservice teachers and inservice teachers will help change the course of education. America’s teachers are ready for the facts and eager to begin.



WHY POWER4Kids IS SO IMPORTANT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

At the core of the POWER4Kids Initiative is a challenge to the dynamic of American education. Parents and the communities have trusted educational philosophies, influenced more by social and political contingences, to decide how our young are taught. It was naïve and, in many regards, tragic. We ask ourselves, “How could we let this happen?”



Regardless of the reason, it has happened and millions of American children are seriously underserved. However, until the very recent past we did not have the skill or the aptitude to analyze the complexities of reading attainment. Now we do—our fate is in our hands. We are blessed with this opportunity to create a major research body-of-evidence, with empirical data, which will award us the necessary knowledge and information to make sweeping changes in local school curriculum and implement afterschool instructional programs. Knowledge is crucial followed by change, which is

seemingly urgent, to ensure acceptable progress in the achievement level of ALL American children.

YOUR COMMUNITY: Your community’s passion and ownership in the POWER4Kids study is essential; and, ultimately, through your participation, you will have the power to implement new programs in your school curriculums and afterschool programs. It is incumbent on every community to provide their young with the basic skills needed to become productive members of the population—to become a resource for local companies as they enter the job market. POWER4Kids enriches all citizens: every neighborhood; every special interest group; every club; every organization; every district; and, every person. It works to everyone’s benefit and no one’s detriment.

In terms of goals, objectivity, subjects and data, your community will be *proud* and *honored* to be supporting POWER4Kids. It is the most utilizable reading research ever undertaken. This quantitative range and depth of information will enhance your community and will help millions of American children lead a productive life.

ALL COMMUNITIES: To facilitate this change, our research team of educational experts needs to conduct instructional evaluations at forty geographic sites across the country in a community-by-community approach. We will not conduct this study in a lab, but in real classrooms and clinics across America. Each site consists of fifty children who are already experiencing a reading difficulty—more than one grade level behind their peers. These students will be assessed for their strengths and weaknesses, be provided a specific instruction program, taught and observed, monitored for the degree of improvement, compared against other students in their own and other programs, and tested and followed over time to determine sustainability of the success of their new skills. POWER4Kids is designed to involve state and local school boards, teachers, principles, parents, students, policymakers and community leaders.

*The success of POWER4Kids will come from involvement—
participation by your community and every community in the country.*

*This Initiative is the sum total of all of its community partner—
truly a grassroots approach to "new learning" and education improvement.*

WHAT WILL THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DO TO HELP?

The Congress has approved a new Education Reform Plan. The pending Federal Legislation (H.R.1/S.1) Education Bill has incorporated three criteria that States must satisfy to qualify for Federal grant monies: challenging standards, accountability, and student assessment.

Standards define what students are expected to know and be able to do. **Accountability** requires that each state demonstrate that it has developed and implemented a system for ensuring that all local educational agencies, elementary and secondary schools make adequate yearly progress. This progress is defined by the standards and measured with annual student **assessments** against various objectives to determine the performance of the schools in the overall performance of each State.

The accountability criteria include annual measurable objectives for consistent and significant improvement against goals that meet or exceed the State's proficient level of performance on the State assessments. Schools and States that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap will be honored with awards from a "No Child Left Behind" school bonus fund.

The new Education Bill will highlight each school's achievement or lack thereof, which will consequently generate a huge demand for trustworthy information—information on which programs and methods ensure consistent growth in achievement levels. This will be compulsory for States and schools to receive continued Federal support.



**Now, more than ever in their history, education boards and local policymakers need
POWER4Kids.**

POWER4Kids will furnish the facts and **EVIDENCE** the States need to make informed decisions on early elementary school reading and remediation programs— outstanding programs that must be employed to guarantee all students are prepared to receive an education in history, science, geography, mathematics, social studies, humanities... .

We must never forget that *reading* is the mandated core of education.

Without building a solid foundation in the complex rudiments of reading, state and local school administrators will have an impossible task meeting and exceeding objectives for student performance.

POWER4Kids will empower America to maximize her children's education experience.

To meet the high standards of achievement, legislators, state boards, businesses, and community groups must ensure educational practice is based on performance facts.

POWER4Kids will help kids get connected in school and stay connected
so that "No Child is Left Behind"

WHAT WILL POWER4Kids ACHIEVE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

Within the next five years, the POWER4Kids Initiative will have studied and compiled performance data on the most widely distributed instruction and intervention programs used in this country. We will also study the most recent reading programs that have been developed, through scientific grants, by teams of scientists in the language centers of research universities around our country.

Thousands of students across a variety of settings and geography will participate. This research will provide not only the empirically-based facts on which programs meet the bar of excellence in teaching American children to read, but will provide five essential components of education that are vitally important as practical and trustworthy tools necessary in the evolution of academic performance:

STANDARDS FOR GROWTH to give the local education boards reliable benchmarks on “appropriate and reasonable” progress that can be expected in the reading skills of children who are currently falling behind.



COMPARATIVE MATRIX to provide unbiased evidence, which compares instructional reading programs by the following factors: the time a student will spend in a program; the grade-level gain in reading skill; and, the cost of the program.

LEARNING PROFILES to establish understandable categories of the most familiar learning differences in our nation's children (strengths and weaknesses).

TARGETED INTERVENTION TOOLS to give educators up-to-date knowledge on which programs and methods specifically accelerate skill development in areas of weakness within a child's Learning Profile.

CLASSROOM SETTING LIMITATIONS to supply concrete guidelines on the student-teacher ratio needed for a program to effectively produce sound improvement in a student's reading ability.

The POWER4Kids Reading Initiative's initial focus is the evaluation of public school and private clinic reading programs for children ages 7-12 (second through sixth grade) who have already fallen a year behind their peers in their reading ability. The second focus is on public school reading programs for ages 5-8 (K through second grade). As the research studies move to completion, we will commence the next phase of this project, which is to 1) construct professional development training (Real and Virtual Interactive Teacher Training/Seminars) on the programs that meet the bar of excellence in teaching reading education; and, 2) begin mobilization into the school and afterschool programs.

*Once this phase is fully funded and underway (Fall 2002),
we will begin assembling the team of intellectual experts to study math and writing programs*

HOW YOU CAN BECOME A POWER4Kids PARTNER

The ultimate goal of POWER4Kids is to unite the energy and passion of a multitude of private and public supporters who care about the future of America and her children.

There is no better way to guarantee progress or to defend our country and its freedom than through an educated population of citizens.

POWER4Kids gives us the power, the tools necessary for the continuum of our unparalleled life in America — it provides us with unprecedented knowledge that will stop the erosion of the basic skill of reading in this country. POWER4Kids' knowledge, coupled with a coalition of partners who will leverage this knowledge, will change the course of the lives of millions of American citizens and future generations.



POWER4Kids is looking for community and private foundations as well as corporations and private individuals who are interested in significantly changing the direction of elementary education. POWER4Kids Partners are needed to contribute funds to directly support this essential study. Community-focused organizations can sponsor program-sites in their respective communities. Professional and educational organizations can rally their support and influence behind POWER4Kids. Publishers can take research findings and support the development of new programs. Business organizations can support local efforts for POWER4Kids evidenced-based education. Teachers can join the POWER4Kids, EMPOWER THE TEACHERS professional development and receive accreditation in the POWER4Kids' programs of excellence. Parents and policymakers can join POWER4Kids and demand the EVIDENCE before basic-skill-development programs are taught in early elementary school, and community organization volunteers can come together for local fundraising drives and advocacy issues.

Additionally, POWER4Kids is looking for private and corporate sponsor partners who wish to align themselves with the positive public image that will be associated with improving achievement levels for all students. These partnership opportunities include sponsorship of creative advertising and media for public education of the issues and the POWER4Kids solution.

**There is a world of children that we are losing because
they are shut-out by the written word.
Isn't it time we took control of our children's education and our nation's future?**



**JOIN US,
BECOME A
POWER4Kids
PARTNER**

THE
HAAN
FOUNDATION
for children