

APPENDIX N

PAVE Intervention Description

PAVEd for Success Vocabulary Program

Overview of the PAVE Intervention

PAVEd for Success (referred to as PAVE) is a preliteracy program aimed at improving children's vocabulary knowledge as a foundation for literacy development. PAVE works to improve children's vocabulary development by improving teachers' literacy instruction. In

particular, (a) Teachers are trained to increase the number and quality of teacher-child conversations. Higher-quality teacher-child conversations involve, for example, a broader diversity of words, more rare words, and more cognitively-challenging talk, than tend to be used in commonly-occurring conversations about routine and concrete matters; (b) Teachers are shown how to engage in more active and more frequent large and small-group book reading. Teachers are trained to engage in frequent and interactive storybook reading and re-reading with children, including asking cognitively-challenging questions, requesting children to predict events and draw conclusions, and making connections to children's experiences. (c) Teachers are also provided with vocabulary units that introduce specific new vocabulary linked to popular kindergarten topics. As part of the intervention, teachers are provided with descriptions of activities designed to reinforce these new vocabulary words. The training provides teachers with specific skills and techniques for focusing on vocabulary in conversations, book reading, and other activities in order to enhance children's word learning.

Why focus on Vocabulary?

The particular emphasis on vocabulary stems from discussions with southeastern state department reading directors and the Director of the Florida Center for Reading Research regarding areas of greatest educational need among students in the southeast region. There was widespread agreement that a vocabulary intervention would be the highest priority for two reasons: (1) children in the region are well behind national averages in vocabulary skills and (2) vocabulary knowledge is an essential component of literacy development that has generally been more difficult to impact than other emergent literacy skills, such as letter knowledge. Difficulties that southeastern children have with vocabulary manifest themselves as they transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Averaging over state report cards of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina, 18% of third and fourth grade children do not meet state standards in reading; by middle school, this issue increases dramatically to 32%. The trend is far worse for African-American and economically-disadvantaged children in the region. Thus, a focus on vocabulary is a good place to start in providing regional access to higher reading achievement.

What is the Evidence that PAVE works?

The PAVE intervention to be implemented in Mississippi builds on a study funded by the U.S. Department of Education, in which PAVE was piloted and carried out in high poverty prekindergarten classrooms in the northeast Georgia region. In the Georgia study, children whose teachers received professional development on all vocabulary components of the PAVE program scored higher on standardized scores of vocabulary than control children

whose teachers did not receive the professional development.

What Does PAVE Offer to Teachers?

Teachers who implement PAVE will participate in a one-day training program in the summer prior to the school year. All teachers will receive formative feedback on their implementation of vocabulary practices from PAVE trainers via an in-person, on-site classroom visit and retraining, if necessary. There will be continuing follow-up and support for teachers through monthly on-line discussions. The school will receive a complete set of 24 vocabulary units for participating pilot teacher's classrooms worth approximately \$750/classroom. These units relate to popular kindergarten topics in the southeastern region. [Pending discussions with the Mississippi Department of Education, we will add information on providing teachers an honorarium and/or continuing education credits for attending the one-day training in the summer and peer discussion groups after school hours.]

How will we know if PAVE makes a difference?

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, data will be collected both on teachers' instructional practices and students' vocabulary and broader literacy development. Data on teachers' backgrounds and student characteristics will also be gathered to examine whether the PAVE intervention is more effective for some groups of teachers or students than for others.

Contact for More Information

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