

BEARS Reading Vision

The research is clear: students who are behind need to spend more time listening to stories and reading just right books. Children are receiving reading instruction during the day; yet, they must spend time after school using their skills to read and enjoy books to significantly improve their abilities.

The BEARS program has a unique opportunity to make a huge difference in poor children's lives. This is because the children most likely to need extra reading experiences, poor children, spend hours with BEARS during the summer and after school. It is precisely at these non-school times that the achievement gap opens up. It must be one of BEARS top priorities to provide the children in the program enjoyable experiences listening to and reading stories. If BEARS can provide just an extra half hour a day of listening to and reading stories, it would have the more potential for closing the achievement gap in reading than any other district initiative. We must, therefore, continually support the teachers of the BEARS programs and design the program so that these 30 minutes of beyond-the-school-day reading happens.

Below is our internal checklist of structures that need to be in place to create a positive and productive reading environment:

Structure Needed:

- An uninterrupted time and routine for 15 minutes of read aloud
- An uninterrupted time and routine for 15 minutes of reading 'just right' books
- An easy place to store book and retrieve books daily.

Read Aloud Check-list

- Is there a set time for read aloud each day?
- Is the teacher being guided by Hoyt's book or structure?
- Did the teacher hold the student's interest with the reading?

Independent Reading Time

- Are the books set up so they are easily accessible?
- Is there a quick routine that begins the reading time?
- Are most students reading 'just right' books?
- Is the teacher moving around listening to students read?
- Are nearly all the students spending at least 10 minutes reading?

Drafted by Tom Prince, BUSD Literacy Coach