



The Upstream Readiness Strategy Brief

Core Message

The Challenge: Most Literacy Systems Start Too Late

But third-grade reading success does not begin in third grade. It begins years earlier, with language, vocabulary, oral interaction, listening comprehension, songs, stories, print awareness, family routines, and early learning experiences that shape how ready children are when they enter school.

That creates pressure across the system. Teachers are asked to close gaps that started before school entry. Intervention teams carry heavier caseloads. Tutoring becomes more urgent. Families need more support. Leaders are expected to improve reading outcomes with a strategy that often begins after the most powerful readiness window is already underway.

Districts can strengthen literacy outcomes by moving support upstream.

The Cost of Waiting

