**The Issue:** Educators devote much time and effort to literacy supports and programs that reach many children, but we aren’t making a difference in literacy rates. We need to focus on programs that result in a measurable impact on children’s literacy, and then find a way to increase the number of children served by those programs.

**What Are Some Common Pitfalls That Impede Impact?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Pitfalls</th>
<th>What We’re Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Success is defined by number of children served and/or reported child and family satisfaction.</td>
<td>1. Many programs reach large numbers of children and can report anecdotal stories of success and program satisfaction, but do not impact literacy rates program-wide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Children receive well-designed literacy supports, but the sessions do not last long enough, or meet frequently enough, to make a difference.</td>
<td>2. Finding the right dosage—amount of time on task needed to improve literacy skills—is vital. At-risk or struggling children need intensive literacy support early (Memo 2).</td>
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<td>3. Programs without measurable impact are brought to scale; focusing on “reach”—serving as many children and/or families as possible—before quality.</td>
<td>3. We cannot expect real improvements in children’s literacy outcomes unless we first verify that programs are effective, and then bring those effective programs to scale.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. A high quality and targeted program is brought to scale, but only parts of the program are used, or the program is watered down.</td>
<td>4. Even a model program quickly loses its impact if not implemented correctly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What Are Key Decisions and Strategies for Impact?**

**Identify Key Ingredients**

Conduct ongoing evaluation to:
- understand whether a program or support is working, for whom it works, and under what conditions
- inform adjustments and mid-course corrections

**Provide Sufficient Dosage of High-Quality Programs**

Determine if an increase in any of the following would advance children’s literacy:
- how much time is spent in the program,
- how often it happens, or
- the frequency of contact with participants

**Support High-Quality Implementation**

- provide ongoing professional development (Memos 8 & 9)
- continually monitor quality, ensuring services implemented match the characteristics of the tested program design

**Self-study for Impact: Lead the Conversation!**

Implementation Characteristics: Are we really delivering the program or support?

Key Ingredients: What’s working?

Sufficient Dosage: Are we doing enough to change behaviors, prevent difficulties, and improve literacy rates?

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