

Providing guidance for leaders dedicated to children's literacy development, birth to age 9

# WHAT LEADERS NEED TO KNOW AND DO

**The Issue:** While site leaders are eager to advance children's literacy development, they often lack the deep understanding of literacy needed to improve instructional practice and children's outcomes. To ensure that reform results in improvement and not just change, leaders must be well educated on children's literacy development and the specific needs of their populations.

## What Are Some Common Pitfalls That Impede Impact?

Common Pitfalls	What We're Learning
1. The site leaders encourage educators to improve literacy instruction, but the leaders are not clear on what quality instruction looks like.	1. The site leaders need to develop their own professional knowledge base in literacy, and deeply understand what good instruction looks like.
2. Much of leaders' time is taken up on managerial and operational work that is removed from day-to-day instruction.	2. When leaders' time is primarily focused on instruction, educators are more effective and committed, and children's literacy outcomes improve.
3. Educators are held accountable for promoting children's literacy development, but often not provided with adequate support or training.	3. Educators need support to deliver high-quality instruction. Site leaders are responsible for ensuring structures are in place to provide that support (Memos 8 & 9).

### For More on This...

Much of the guidance provided here is drawn from *Building a New Structure for School Leadership* by Elmore

You can also find guidance from:

*Strategy in Action: How School Systems Can Support Powerful Learning and Teaching* by Curtis & City

*Making Assessment Matter: Using Test Results to Differentiate Reading Instruction* by Lesaux & Marietta

## What Are Key Decisions and Strategies for Impact?

Improvements will occur at scale only when the leaders at each site:

- understand the specifics of literacy development,
- interpret student literacy data,
- know their site's instructional strengths and weaknesses,
- and can translate these understandings into corresponding guidance for educators.

## Build Your Professional Knowledge to Inform Your Literacy Improvement Efforts

### Develop a comprehensive knowledge about *literacy*

- Understand the categories of literacy competencies (skills-based and knowledge-based) and the intricacies of literacy development (Memo 4)
- Learn about best practices for comprehensive literacy instruction at each grade level
- Understand how to interpret different types of assessments (e.g., diagnostic, screening, and outcome), in order to provide instructional guidance and plan for professional development (Memo 7)

### Develop a comprehensive knowledge about *your site's literacy strengths and needs*

- Analyze children's literacy data trends over time and use that data to determine instructional plans that match your population's needs
- Observe and support educators in your setting and discuss best practices for literacy instruction
- Examine your site's practices around family partnerships and target efforts to meet children's specific literacy learning needs (Memos 10 & 11)

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