

Literacy/Read by Third Grade

With the knowledge that reading skills are an essential foundation and is harder to remediate after the third grade ABEC chose to focus on what could be done to improve literacy, particularly in the early grades. To do this the Read by Third Grade Committee of ABEC looked at those schools (in the 1997-1998 school year) below the 39% in reading in the fourth grade on the standardized test(the Terra Nova) and 75% or more of their students were on free or reduced lunch. There were ten schools identified. The ten schools are Alamosa, Armijo, Barcelona, Dolores Gonzales, East San Jose, Emerson, Eubank, Kit Carson, Lowell, and Valle Vista. It must be noted that some of the schools have since this time raised their test scores above the 39% but still there is a need to seeing all students are reading well. Interviews were conducted at each of the schools to learn what was being done and what was needed. From the interviews the following recommendations and actions were taken.

***Raise money for books.**

Schools all stated the need for additional money to purchase books to enhance their literacy strategy.

- ABEC through the Philips Semiconductors contribution for at-risk youth or monies raised has distributed \$130,000 over a five-year period, \$13,000 to each of the ten pilot schools to purchase books. Some 20,313 students have been served over with the purchase of over 36,000 books in the five-year period. The books were used in a variety of ways: several as incentives for students to read; as a part of specialize instruction and integrated into reading instruction. All schools reported improved reading skills as observed by teachers and some referenced test scores.

***Enhance services provided by the Before and After School Programs.**

- ABEC convened all the providers of the before and after school programs, that group designed a training program around how literacy skills can be incorporated into recreational activities. The training was provided for the site supervisors to provide to their staff.
- ABEC, with the volunteer work of Dr. Marion Tonjes and KNME developed and piloted the use of a monthly literacy activity calendar with the City Playground programs, at 32 sites and serving some 2300 elementary age children.

***Enhance the teacher preparation.**

- The College has hired new faculty and staff in reading, language arts and literacy.
- The College is improving basic courses in the teaching of reading and adding a course for dealing with language diversity.
- The College is developing performance-based measures of what teachers should know and be able to do in the teaching of reading.

***Preschool Programs**

- The City of Albuquerque had a study of the various child development programs in Albuquerque. See gallery page for the report, "Long Term Follow-up of Child Development Programs in Albuquerque", Dr. Richard P. Boyle.

*** Public Information-Read to Me Campaign**

The committee is focusing on a campaign to encourage families to read to their children just 10 minutes a day. The emphasis is on families with children from birth through elementary age. The campaign works through a network of programs and groups that serve the targeted audience, providing them with flyers, bookmarkers, "Once Upon a Time" storybook and posters to utilize with the families they serve. All materials are in English and Spanish. In addition the group has developed an email system to communicate and share ideas and resources that may be of interest to the group. The group has engaged in a media campaign to reinforce the work of the partners. The media campaign has included radio and television PSA's; water bill inserts, advertisement in local movie theaters, and local events that involve families. The group has also engaged in getting books in the hands of children whose families may not be able to afford books, through book grants and through our annual book drive.