

READS: Helping Children Become Summer Bookworms

READS for Summer Learning is a school-supported, at-home reading program that provides 10 free, carefully-matched books to disadvantaged elementary-school children over the summer. It's about more than books, however, requiring family engagement, classroom instruction and comprehension activities. READS is backed by more than a decade of rigorously conducted research by James Kim, professor at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. Here's an overview:

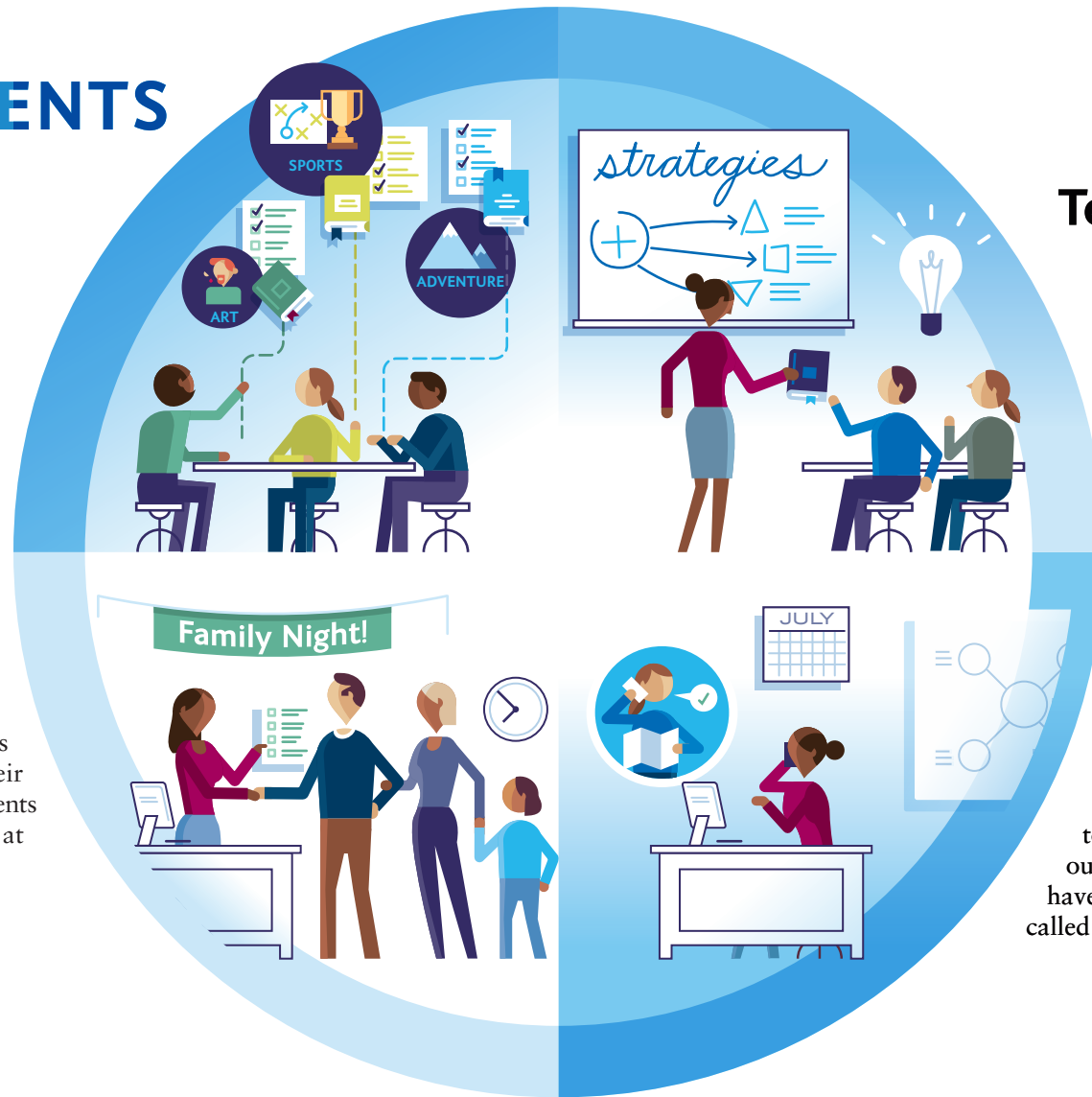
FOUR COMPONENTS

Match the books to the child.

READS uses a computer algorithm to match books with each student's interests and reading level. Students receive 10 free books over the summer by mail, one every week.

Engage families.

Schools host a family literacy event where parents learn about READS and how to encourage their child's participation over the summer. When parents understand the comprehension routines taught at school, they can better support their children's at-home reading.



Teach a reading comprehension routine.

Before the summer, students receive classroom instruction in how to read effectively on their own. Teachers model a before-, during- and after-reading routine that guides children in using vocabulary words to figure out main ideas in non-fiction books and plot turns in fiction. A tri-fold brochure mailed with every book—and to be filled out and returned—reminds students of the routine and includes reading comprehension questions.

Nudge kids over the summer.

Weekly tips by text and email remind parents to encourage their child's participation and to fill out and mail back the tri-folds. Students who haven't returned a tri-fold by mid-summer may be called by a teacher reminding them to do so.

KEY FINDINGS

Kim's research found that READS can have a meaningful impact on the reading skills of children living in the poorest communities.

READS children in high-poverty schools gained nearly 1.5 months of reading skills compared to non-participants.

1.5

The magnitude of the benefit was comparable to that of school-year literacy programs in high-poverty schools.

Carrying out READS proved feasible and straightforward in a range of districts. It required minimal teacher training and no additional staffing.

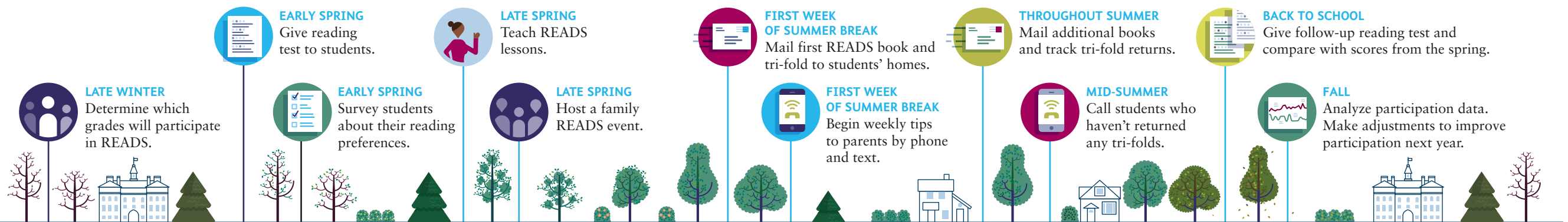
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READS costs \$250-\$480 per student.

TIMELINE

Bringing READS to your school

READS schools carry out a number of tasks from late winter through the fall.



This infographic illustrates key points from *READS: Helping Children Become Summer Bookworms*, a research summary available free of charge at www.wallacefoundation.org. An online READS toolkit, including learning modules for each component, sample tri-folds, lesson scripts, and materials for the family event, is available at : <https://www.readslab.org/>.