Evidence-Based Practices in the SIPPS® Program

The SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) program is a multilevel program that develops the word-recognition strategies and skills that enable students to become independent and confident readers and writers. A choice of entry points across the levels of the program allows teachers to tailor instruction to a class in which there is a broad range of decoding ability.

The SIPPS program aligns to the science of reading by providing a structured literacy approach to foundational skills instruction through explicit, systematic instructional routines focused on phonological awareness, phonics, and sight words, with immediate application to reading connected text and to spelling. Students benefit from the program’s design; they are placed in small groups where they are actively engaged in the instructional routines and receive immediate, strategic feedback. They demonstrate mastery of learning at regular intervals through criterion-referenced tests, read controlled-vocabulary text to practice the words and concepts taught, and engage with books at appropriate levels to build fluency and increase confidence. The systematic scope and sequence supports students who struggle with decoding, including students identified with dyslexia, using an accelerative approach.

As a nonprofit organization, Collaborative Classroom heavily relies on the findings of the National Reading Panel (2000) and the What Works Clearinghouse Institute of Education Sciences Practice Guides to inform the development of our work. In addition, the Evidence Base and Impact of SIPPS meets the criteria for ESSA Level 3. This document is designed to bring forward the connections between the research and the instructional practices in the SIPPS program. We strongly recommend that it is reviewed alongside each of the identified practice guides. You will find the following sections in this document:

• Connecting the SIPPS Program to the IES Practice Guide: Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten through Third Grade
• Connecting the SIPPS Program to the IES Practice Guide: Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades
• Resources
• References

Collaborative Classroom is committed to the ongoing research of our programs. At the time of this publication, we are engaged in a quasi-experimental study with our partner, SEG Measurement, and are applying for an Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) grant for a randomized control trial, longitudinal study with our partners at American Institute of Research (AIR) to study the SIPPS program. We continue to seek research partners who will help us study the efficacy of our programs and will continue to commit ourselves to studies that show the power of our work on students’ literacy achievement.
### RECOMMENDATION 1
Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language and vocabulary knowledge.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIPPS Level</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Instructional Indicators</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Morphemic Transformations Routine</strong>—Students read polysyllabic words as affixes are added or changed. The base word is transformed several times, with students reading each new word. This routine helps readers recognize syllables that are affixes, and understand how they affect the pronunciation and use of base words.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A-B-C List Options</strong>—The ability to decode polysyllabic words depends to a significant extent on readers’ vocabulary. When readers encounter words outside their listening vocabulary, they have no way to verify a tentative pronunciation from just the printed word. In Challenge Level, a choice of three word lists is offered so that the appropriate vocabulary level is provided for each group of students. The word lists are composed of the highest-frequency words in academic language from all content areas in elementary and middle school. The three lists differ in vocabulary level and in the number of longer polysyllabic words included.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Blog: <a href="#">Explicit Teaching of Academic Language—SIPPS Challenge Level IES-WWC</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>White Paper: <a href="#">The Settled Science of Teaching Reading</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive Studies</strong></td>
<td>See Appendix D, “Rationale for Evidence Ratings” in the IES Practice Guide for corresponding effect sizes in the following studies: Baker et al., 2013; Duff et al., 2014; Justice, Meier, &amp; Walpole, 2005; Simmons et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2009</td>
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**RECOMMENDATION 2**
Develop awareness of the segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters.

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<tr>
<th>SIPPS Level</th>
<th>Beginning, Extension, Plus</th>
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**Instructional Indicators**

**Phonological Awareness**—Through activities that do not involve print, students first distinguish words and syllables, then onsets and rimes, and last, phonemes. The activities, generally in a sequence of increasing difficulty, are (a) oral blending of words, syllables, onsets and rimes, and phonemes, (b) orally segmenting, pronouncing, and counting words and syllables; segmenting beginning, middle, and end sounds; segmenting onsets and rimes; and segmenting all the phonemes in a word, (c) recognizing and producing rhyming words, and (d) adding and substituting phonemes.

**Phonics**—Explicit and systematic instruction ensures that students thoroughly learn spelling-sound relationships and further develop phonological awareness. New spelling-sound relationships are introduced, and then reviewed with those that have been previously taught. Then students practice blending and reading decodable words.

**Resources**

**Blogs:**
- Developing Awareness of the Segments of Sound in Speech—SIPPS Instruction IES-WWC
- Connecting the Dyslexia Conversation to the SIPPS Program

**White Paper:** The Settled Science of Teaching Reading

**Supportive Studies**

See Appendix D, “Rationale for Evidence Ratings” in the IES Practice Guide for corresponding effect sizes in the following studies: Hagans & Good, 2013; Lane et al., 2007; Mitchell & Fox, 2001; Nelson, Benner, & Gonzales, 2005; Nelson et al., 2005; Oudeans, 2003; Oullette & Senechal, 2008; Rashotte, MacPhee, & Torgesen, 2001; Savage et al., 2009; Scanlon et al., 2005; Torgesen et al., 2010; Walton et al., 2001
### RECOMMENDATION 3
Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words.

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| **Instructional Indicators** | **Phonics and Decodable Words**—Students are introduced to new spelling-sounds and are taught to continuously blend (“sound out” without stopping or pausing between sounds) to decode words. At the word level, the routine shifts from Blending Decodable Words (Beginning) to Reading a Mixed List (Extension) to Reading by Syllables and Reading Entire Words (Challenge). Readers learn to identify syllables and morphemic units, as well as strategies for decoding polysyllabic words (Extension, Challenge).  

**Sight Words**—Regular and irregular high-frequency words are introduced to students with the goal of mastery (Beginning and Extension). Instruction includes both new sight words and daily review of previously taught sight words.  

**Guided Spelling**—This routine provides students with the opportunity to develop segmentation skills and to apply and reinforce decoding through encoding. The Guided Spelling routine also teaches students to “think ahead” when there is more than one way to represent a sound (e.g., the long /a/ sound can be represented in three common ways: _a_e, ai, and ay_).  

**Reading a Story, Fluency Practice/Individualized Daily Reading**—Hybrid text, which includes a combination of sight words and decodable words, are used early in the program (Beginning, Extension) so students learn to read with accuracy and automaticity. Later, students transition to easy-to-read trade books for continued application and practice (Extension, Challenge). |

| **Resources** | Blogs:  
Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words: SIPPS and IES/WWC Instruction (Part 1)  
Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words: SIPPS and IES/WWC Instruction (Part 2)  
Connecting the Dyslexia Conversation to the SIPPS Program  
White Paper: The Settled Science of Teaching Reading  

| **Supportive Studies** | See Appendix D, “Rationale for Evidence Ratings” in the IES Practice Guide for corresponding effect sizes in the following studies: Coyne et al., 2004a; Gunn et al., 2005; Savage et al., 2009; Torgesen et al., 2006; Torgesen et al., 2010; Tse & Nicholson, 2014; Vadasy & Sanders, 2011; Vadasy, Sanders, & Tudor, 2007; Wright & Jacobs, 2003 |
**RECOMMENDATION 4**
Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

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**Instructional Indicators**

- **Reading a Story**—Reading stories chorally and blending decodable words helps students move beyond context to using spelling-sound relationships as their primary reading strategy when reading connected text. In each lesson, students read a new story that uses words that are decodable and sight words that have already been taught.

- **Fluency Practice/Individualized Daily Reading**—Because students need extensive practice applying polysyllabic decoding strategies in their individual reading, they engage in reading self-selected trade books at their appropriate level for at least 30 minutes a day.

**Resources**

- **Blogs**:
  - [Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension - SIPPS and IES/WWC instruction](#)
  - [Connecting the Dyslexia Conversation to the SIPPS Program](#)

- **White Paper**: [The Settled Science of Teaching Reading](#)

**Supportive Studies**

See Appendix D, “Rationale for Evidence Ratings” in the IES Practice Guide for corresponding effect sizes in the following studies: Begeny et al., 2010; Case et al., 2010; Case et al., 2014; Christ & Davie, 2009; Denton et al., 2013; Martens et al., 2007; Mathes et al., 2005; May et al., 2013; O’Connor, Swanson, & Geraghty, 2010; O’Connor, White, & Swanson, 2007; Reutzel, Fawson, & Smith, 2008; Scanlon et al., 2005; Schwartz, 2005; Swanson & O’Connor, 2009; Sylva et al., 2008; Vandasy & Sanders, 2008; Vandasy & Sanders, 2009
CONNECTING THE SIPPS PROGRAM TO THE IES PRACTICE GUIDE:
Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades

RECOMMENDATION 1
Screen all students for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year. Regularly monitor the progress of students who are at elevated risk for developing reading disabilities.

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<td><strong>Instructional Indicators</strong></td>
<td>Placement — The SIPPS Placement Assessment is designed to assess students and place them at the appropriate starting point. Mastery Tests — Assessment is crucial in monitoring content mastery, determining the optimal pacing of instruction, and in periodically documenting overall growth over the course of the school year. Mastery Tests are given after every 5–10 lessons, and help the teacher decide if students are ready for the next group of lessons. Progress Assessments — Progress in polysyllabic decoding is more complicated than in single-syllable decoding; therefore, in Challenge Level, progress is monitored for growth rather than mastery. Monitoring Individual Students — Listening to students read during Fluency Practice or Individualized Daily Reading is an additional way to gauge students’ progress.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td>Blog: Key Points of Effective Intervention in Reading White Paper: High-quality Interventions to Ensure Literacy for All Students</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive Studies</strong></td>
<td>See Appendix D, “Rationale for Evidence Ratings” in the IES Practice Guide for corresponding effect sizes in the following studies: Ehri et al., 2007; Gunn et al., 2000; Jenkins et al., 2004; Lennon &amp; Slesinski, 1999; Mathes et al., 2005; Vadasw et al., 2005; Vaughn et al., 2006</td>
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### RECOMMENDATION 2
Provide differentiated reading instruction for all students based on assessments of students’ current reading levels (tier 1).

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| **Instructional Indicators** | Students are grouped according to their level of reading development. As lessons are taught, groups should be further rearranged as some students may progress faster than others. 

*SIPPS* is the aligned tier 2/tier 3 program to the tier 1 program, *Being a Reader*. Both programs utilize the same instructional scope and sequence for foundational skills. |
| **Resources** | Blog: [Key Points of Effective Intervention in Reading](#) 

White Papers: 
[High-Quality Interventions to Ensure Literacy for All Students](#) 

[Aligning a System of Support to Reach All Readers](#) 

[The Settled Science of Teaching Reading](#) |
| **Supportive Studies** | See Appendix D, “Rationale for Evidence Ratings” in the IES Practice Guide for corresponding effect sizes in the following studies: Ehri et al., 2007; Gunn et al., 2000; Jenkins et al., 2004; Lennon & Slesinski, 1999; Mathes et al., 2005; Vadasy et al., 2005; Vaughn et al., 2006 |
**RECOMMENDATION 3**
Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening. Typically these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20–40 minutes (tier 2).

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<td><strong>Instructional Indicators</strong></td>
<td>The SIPPS program provides intensive, systematic instruction in phonological awareness, phonics, and sight words. The recommended group size range is six to eight students, with ten as an absolute maximum. Lessons may take 20–40 minutes. Intervention instruction should occur four times per week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Resources** | **Blogs:**  
[How Can I Help My Students with Dyslexia?](#)  
[Key Points of Effective Intervention in Reading](#)  
**White Papers:**  
[High-Quality Interventions to Ensure Literacy for All Students](#)  
[The Settled Science of Teaching Reading](#) |
| **Supportive Studies** | See Appendix D, “Rationale for Evidence Ratings” in the IES Practice Guide for corresponding effect sizes in the following studies: Ehri et al., 2007; Gunn et al., 2000; Jenkins et al., 2004; Lennon & Slesinski, 1999; Mathes et al., 2005; Vadasy et al., 2005; Vaughn et al., 2006 |
**RECOMMENDATION 4**
Monitor the progress of tier 2 students at least once a month. Use these data to determine whether students still require intervention. For those still making insufficient progress, school-wide teams should design a tier 3 intervention plan.

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<td><strong>Instructional Indicators</strong></td>
<td>Assessment is crucial in monitoring content mastery, determining the optimal pacing of instruction, and in periodically documenting overall growth over the course of the school year.</td>
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<td><strong>Mastery Tests</strong>—Mastery Tests are given after every 5–10 lessons, and help the teacher decide if students are ready for the next group of lessons.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Progress Assessments</strong>—Progress in polysyllabic decoding is more complicated than in single-syllable decoding; therefore, in Challenge Level, progress is monitored for growth rather than mastery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For students that make insufficient progress, the Intensive Multisensory Instruction for SIPPS Handbook offers enhancements for intensifying SIPPS instruction.</td>
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**RECOMMENDATION 5**

Provide intensive instruction daily that promotes the development of various components of reading proficiency to students who show minimal progress after reasonable time in tier 2 small group instruction (tier 3).

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**Instructional Indicators**

For students who show minimal progress toward reading proficiency after a reasonable time in tier 2, the *Intensive Multisensory Instruction for SIPPS Handbook* offers enhancements for further intensifying SIPPS routines.

| **Resources** | 
|----------------|---|
| **Blog:** [Connecting the Dyslexia Conversation to the SIPPS Program](#) |
| **White Paper:** [High-Quality Interventions to Ensure Literacy for All Students](#) |

| **Supportive Studies** | 
|------------------------|---|
| See Appendix D, “Rationale for Evidence Ratings” in the IES Practice Guide for corresponding effect sizes in the following studies: Ehri et al., 2007; Gunn et al., 2000; Jenkins et al., 2004; Lennon & Slesinski, 1999; Mathes et al., 2005; Vadasy et al., 2005; Vaughn et al., 2006 |
RESOURCES

White Papers

Aligning a System of Support to Reach All Readers

High-Quality Interventions to Ensure Literacy for All Students

The Settled Science of Teaching Reading
https://public.cdn.ccclearningportal.org/program/resources/field-team/MKT4419-settled-science-whitepaper.pdf

Blogs

Connecting the Dyslexia Conversation to the SIPPS Program
https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/connecting-the-dyslexia-conversation-to-the-sipps-program/

Developing Awareness of the Segments of Sound in Speech—SIPPS Instruction IES-WWC

Explicit Teaching of Academic Language—SIPPS Challenge Level IES-WWC

How Can I Help My Students with Dyslexia?
https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/how-can-i-help-my-students-with-dyslexia/

Key Points of Effective Intervention in Reading
https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/key-points-of-effective-intervention-in-reading/

Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words: SIPPS and IES/WWC Instruction (Part 1)

Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words: SIPPS and IES/WWC Instruction (Part 2)

Program Resources

SIPPS Scope and Sequence
https://public.cdn.ccclearningportal.org/program/resources/field-team/sipps-scope-and-sequence-all-levels.pdf
Program Resources (continued)

SIFFPS Logic Model
https://public.cdn.ccclearningportal.org/program/resources/field-team/sipps-logic-model.pdf

SIFFPS Theory and Research

SIFFPS Evidence Base and Impact

Structured Literacy and the SIPPS Program

Third Party Research


The Impact of SIPPSS Instruction on the Development of Students’ Reading Skills (April 2021)

Louisiana Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool (2019)

REFERENCES
