



Annual Book Fairs: Low-cost program to boost summer reading in grades 1-4 in high-poverty schools (found to increase reading achievement 35-40% of a grade level by 4th - 5th grade).

- **Program:**

The Annual Book Fairs program provides elementary school students with books to read over the summer for three consecutive years, starting at the end of first or second grade. In the spring of each school year, students attend the fair, located in their school building, where they can choose from among 400-600 books in a variety of genres (e.g., pop culture, series books, science). At each fair, students pick 10-14 books to keep as their own, which are delivered to them on the final day of school. Annual Book Fairs is a “universal” program in high-poverty elementary schools – i.e., delivered to all students, not just struggling readers.

- **Evidence rating: HIGHLY PROMISING**

A large, well-conducted randomized controlled trial (RCT) with a sample of 1,713 first and second graders from 17 high-poverty elementary schools in Florida found that the program produced a sizable increase in reading achievement on the state test at the 4th-5th grade follow-up: Treatment group students scored approximately 35-40% of a grade-level ahead of control group students.

A second well-conducted RCT with a sample of 1,525 first-graders from 43 high-poverty elementary schools in rural East Tennessee found a sizable increase in English language arts (ELA) achievement on the state test at the end of 3rd grade: Treatment group students scored approximately 28% of a grade-level ahead of control group students. However, this effect was not statistically significant ($p=0.13$) and is therefore a highly promising but not yet definitive replication of the earlier RCT results.

The sample in the Florida RCT was 89% Black or Hispanic, and 65% low income. The sample in the Tennessee RCT was 90% Caucasian, and 75% low income. (See [full evidence summary](#) of the Florida RCT; a final report on the Tennessee RCT is expected to be public in the near future.)