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“Anything that will help identify and improve a student’s reading weaknesses is worth trying...”

Josie Bowles gains two grade levels and a love of reading

Michelle Bowles first noticed her daughter, Josie, struggled with reading in first grade. Josie’s teachers noticed, too. At school, Josie was identified as needing reading support services, which continued through fourth grade.

“She came to my reading program in second grade and received early literacy group instruction,” said Jennifer Adams, Josie’s reading teacher. “She made gradual progress every year. She’s a hard

worker but she never made that leap we were looking for in reading.”

To improve her skills, Josie tried reading with other students at school and with her family at home. “My mom makes me read a book every night and my grandma helps me read,” she said.

But as Josie entered fourth grade in fall 2007, she still continued to struggle.

continued



Fast ForWord[®]

Family of Products

“At the beginning of school when we took turns reading aloud from a text, Josie was very halting in her reading, very unsure of herself,” said Judy Wallich, Josie’s fourth grade teacher. “She had no fluency. I would try to coach her through words and let her continue at her pace. I knew she needed more patience, so she would not feel stressed or that she was not keeping up.”

The Fast ForWord program

In October 2007, Josie was identified to try something new at school — the Fast ForWord® program. Fast ForWord is a family of educational software products that accelerate learning by developing the student brain to process more efficiently.

“Josie likes working with the computer, so I thought it was a good opportunity for her,” said Michelle. “Her teacher also seemed excited about it.” In fact, all of Josie’s teachers were excited about the Fast ForWord program.

“As soon as I saw the documentation and the data on the Fast ForWord program, I was on board,” said Adams. “I was very interested in working with it.”

“I was very excited,” said Wallich. “Anything that will help identify and improve a student’s reading weaknesses is worth trying. What I like

most about the Fast ForWord program is that it is individualized, so students can immediately reflect on what they’re doing and whether or not it worked.”

“When I first saw the Fast ForWord program, I thought it was excellent,” said Julie Wall, a coach in the school computer lab. “I thought if it could do one-tenth of what we were told it could do, it was well worth it. And I’ve seen it; I cannot tell you the progress I’ve seen in our kids!”

Working in the computer lab

Josie began working on the Fast ForWord program for 30 minutes per day, 5 days per week. She liked it immediately. “I thought it was fun and that it helped me read better,” she said.

“She became very proud of her accomplishments and recognized the Fast ForWord program was a powerful piece in her improvement,” said Wallich.

Josie also noticed the Fast ForWord program had a positive effect in the classroom. “I realized it whenever we were reading in class out loud,” she said. “I saw myself reading more fluently and understanding more words.”

Achieving gains at school

Josie’s teachers have noticed improvements as well. “Josie is doing remarkably well,” said

Wallich. “Reading has actually become her best subject because her comprehension and fluency have improved through every part of the curriculum, from reading to social studies to science to math. Her ability to follow directions has improved as well. She can now understand what she’s doing. I think it’s because of her ability to focus, which is what the Fast ForWord program taught her to do.”

Josie’s improvements are evident in her scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, which Wallich administered in fall 2007 and spring 2008. In vocabulary, Josie’s grade level equivalency score rose from 2.5 in September to 4.7 in May. Similarly, her score in comprehension increased from 3.5 to 5.5.

“That’s a huge jump,” said Wallich. “Josie is definitely one of our glowing examples of success. And I no longer consider her an at-risk reader.”

Adams has seen similar results. “I pulled Josie from her classroom to give her the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) and it showed she’s working on grade level. She sounded fluent. She seemed interested in the story. She was excited to read to me and to talk about what the story had said,” said Adams.

“Her focus is better. She seems calmer. She pays attention and stays on task, which is helping her in all areas.”

Josie also showed improvement on the written portion of the DRA2. “Josie didn’t mind sitting down to write at all,” said Adams. “I can remember a couple years ago, when she would have been very unhappy that I gave her a pencil and paper and told her to write about the book she just read. Her focus is better. She seems calmer. She pays attention and stays on task, which is helping her in all areas.”

From the computer lab to the classroom and beyond, Josie’s teachers see the Fast ForWord program as a critical component in her success.

“We couldn’t be happier,” said Wallich. “Josie is so thrilled. She was one of the leads in our class play in May and was able to express herself so eloquently.”

“We’ve really enjoyed being a part of the Fast ForWord program,” said Adams. “I’m very glad our district bought it.”

Realizing improvements at home

Josie’s family has also seen positive changes at home. “After the Fast ForWord program, Josie has more interest in reading, more fluency, and is a happier kid. And we’re all happier when it comes to sitting down and reading and doing homework now,” said Michelle. “We’ve definitely seen an improvement in Josie. It has helped her improve her grades, especially in this last quarter of the year.”

In addition, Josie is reading more independently. “She’s taking more initiative,” said Michelle. “She’ll sit down with a book and read silently to herself. She also likes to read with me and, when we do read together, I noticed she’s more fluent. She isn’t making up words as often as she was before, and her reading pace has picked up from the beginning of the year, that’s for sure.”

Michelle and Josie plan to read continuously throughout the summer to maintain Josie’s gains before she goes back to school in the fall.

“If you give Josie a challenge to meet a goal, she’s going to do everything in her power to make sure she reaches it. That’s her attitude about life,” said Michelle. “Josie’s very confident and she loves the Fast ForWord program. The whole thing has been a good experience for her.”

Josie agrees. “Thank you to whoever made up the Fast ForWord program because it has really helped me and I believe it’s going to help everybody else,” she said. “I used to not like to read but now I love to read because of the Fast ForWord program. I think it changed my life.”

For more success stories and further information on reading intervention, contact Scientific Learning at 888-452-7323 or visit our website: www.scientificlearning.com

