

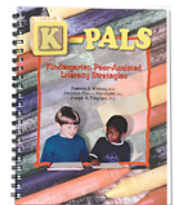
Florida Center for Reading Research

Kindergarten Peer-Assisted Literacy Strategies (K-PALS)

What is K-PALS?

Kindergarten Peer-Assisted Literacy Strategies (K-PALS) was developed for kindergarten students to enhance the existing reading curriculum. *K-PALS* is intended to increase the amount of time students are engaged in critical early reading skills by engaging the entire class in three 20-minute sessions each week for 20 weeks. Each *K-PALS* session incorporates two components through whole group and paired student activities. In the first part, entitled Teacher Games, the teacher introduces the higher-level phonemic awareness and alphabetic skills during a five-minute whole class lesson. In the second part, called Student Games, students are paired for 15-minutes to practice skills centered on letter knowledge, phonological and phonemic awareness, and phonics. These pairs of students work together in a reciprocal role of coach and reader with the higher performing student modeling the activity for the lower performing student.

After the initial training phase where students learn the *K-PALS* tutoring procedures and games, the teacher conducts the lesson using the Teacher's Manual and the Daily Direction Cards. The manual and cards offer teachers detailed verbal directions to introduce new skills and guide the students through the activities on their Game Sheets. The Game Sheets for *K-PALS* consist of 60 separate lessons developed to provide systematic and explicit instruction around the three skill areas: letter knowledge (all letter names, seven letter sounds); phonological and phonemic awareness (rhyming, initial and final sound isolation, phoneme blending and segmenting); and phonics (sounding out words then reading them quickly). Each Game Sheet includes four activities based on one of the three skill areas. Activities one and four ask the students to say the letter names. Activity two begins with rhyming, changes to blending sounds to say a word fast, and then to segmenting or stretching the sounds in a word. Activity three includes initial or final sound isolation tasks. During each activity the teacher monitors on-task behavior, start and stop times, student progress, and peer interactions. Students are encouraged to help their partners reach mastery by using the error-correction procedure: TELL the correct answer, ASK your partner to repeat the answer, and START AGAIN from the beginning. To encourage positive peer interactions, the teacher models affirming statements and behaviors while praising students who demonstrate affirmations with their partners. Partners also share a Scorecard to record the points they have earned by completing the Game Sheet, working cooperatively, and following the *K-PALS* rules.



Included in the *K-PALS* manual is the information and materials needed to implement the program in a kindergarten classroom, including Daily Teacher Direction Cards, Student Game Sheets, a sound pronunciation guide, and motivational Scorecards. Assessment materials are not included in the program. Teachers monitor student progress on the Game Sheets and provide additional, one-on-one review of the skills for students who are not achieving 100% mastery within the lesson time.

How is K-PALS aligned with Reading First?

K-Pals is not designed to address all five components of reading, but focuses on phonological and phonemic awareness and beginning phonics. It aligns with current reading research in that instruction is structured to move from simple to more complex tasks with new information linked to previously taught skills. Concepts are taught by the teacher using a direct instruction model then practiced with peer guidance to develop fluency. Consistent instructional routines are evidenced through teacher-led presentations, modeling, and error correction procedures.

During the training phase, the teacher introduces the lesson routine, words that rhyme, and initial sounds in words. The program uses pictures to represent words for each phonemic awareness activity making it appropriate for students who are not yet reading. Additional phonological awareness and phonics skills are taught during the six Teacher Games: upper and lower case letter names, sound blending, final sound, segmenting words, seven letter-sound correspondences (m, a, c, t, s, r, f), and sounding out words. The teacher uses explicit strategies for each activity. For sounding out words, the teacher emphasizes each sound in the word by saying it slowly and using finger cues to aide students in isolating phonemes. Using the Teacher Game format, there are three weeks for the students to learn a new skill before they are expected to practice it with a partner. *K-PALS* does not provide leveled materials for differentiating the instruction for students who repeatedly meet mastery level or do not master the skill within the allotted time.

The *K-PALS* manual provides systematic training procedures and highly structured lesson plans. Professional development is provided separately by trainers selected by the author of the program, Dr. Patricia Mathes. The one and a half day training can be arranged through Sopris West or Dr. Mathes.

Research Support for K-PALS



K-PALS was published in 2001 based on the research support for peer-assisted learning strategies and foundational early reading skills (Fuchs et al., 2001; Maheady, Mallette, & Harper, 2006; McMaster, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2006; National Reading Panel, 2000; Santi, Menchetti, & Edwards, 2004).

The design and content of the program are derived from a strong research base. However, empirical demonstration of its effectiveness as a kindergarten program still awaits the design and execution of research to support its efficacy.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths of *K-PALS*:

- Systematic and explicit instruction and review designed to build skills to mastery.
- All students are simultaneously engaged in reading related activities that serve to increase academic engaged time with peer support.

Weaknesses of *K-PALS*:

- Accommodations for diversity in student's skill level are lacking because all students work from the same Student Game Sheet.
- Assessment materials and professional development are not available for teachers who would like assistance in establishing peer-tutoring pairs and routines in the classroom.


Which Florida districts have schools that implement K-PALS?

Alachua	352-955-7880	Okeechobee	863-462-5000
Hamilton	386-792-1228	Orange	407-317-3202
Highlands	863-471-5564	Putnam	386-329-0510
Holmes	850-547-9341	St Lucia	772-429-3925
Indian River	772-564-3150	St Johns	904-819-7502
Leon	850-487-7147		

For More Information

<http://store.cambiumlearning.com/ProductPage.aspx?parentId=019000520&functionID=009000008&site=sw>

References

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Maheady, L., Mallette, B., & Harper, G.F., (2006). Four Classwide Peer Tutoring Models: Similarities, Differences, and Implications for Research and Practice. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 22, 65-89

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Lead Reviewer: Mary VanSciver, M.S.

Date Posted: August, 2006

Important Note: FCRR Reports are prepared in response to requests from Florida school districts for review of specific reading programs. The reports are intended to be a source of information about programs that will help teachers, principals, and district personnel in their choice of materials that can be used by skilled teachers to provide effective instruction. Whether or not a program has been reviewed does **not** constitute endorsement or lack of endorsement by the FCRR.

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