

Literacy and Georgia

Only [one-third of GA's 4th graders](#) can read proficiently. That means two-thirds of them do not have the skills that enable them to **read to learn**, a method to independently gain knowledge. Thus, they do not have the skills to meet Georgia's workforce needs.

Increasing literacy across a learner's lifetime does not require rocket-science interventions. **Every person**, except those with severe cognitive difficulties, [can become a fluent reader](#). There is over 50 years of research on evidence-based best practices in literacy instruction. We know what to do – we just aren't doing it.

Evidence-Based Interventions & Why Literacy is a Pipeline

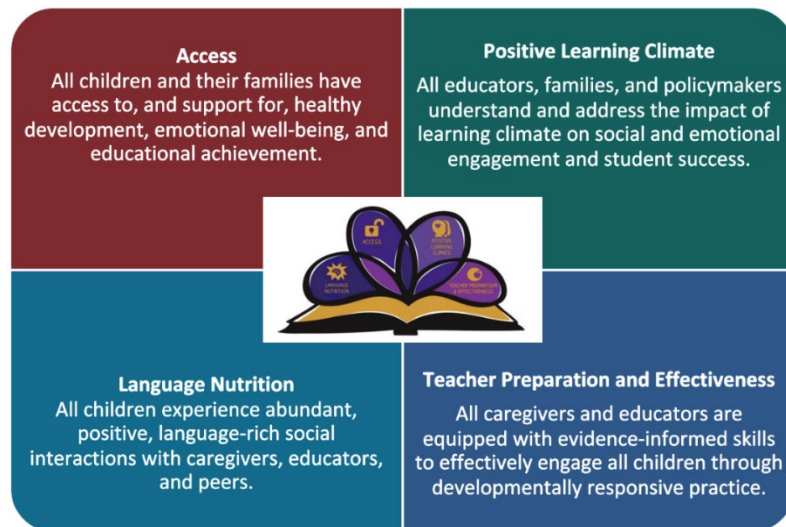
There is a significant body of evidence-based best-practices that can improve outcomes, ensure all Georgians are proficiently literate, and enable systems to teach literacy right, the first time, saving money and resources.

Evidence-based Practices (EBP)

Every intervention and curriculum claim to be based on evidence. An [evidence-based best-practice](#) is [generally agreed upon](#) by researchers to be a practice that is studied via rigorous trials (trials with control groups that have significant numbers of participants from the target population), replicated in multiple settings, and withstands the test of peer-review (i.e. have been published in academic journals).

Four Pillars: Evidence-Based Best-Practices for Improved Reading Outcomes

Evidence-based best-practices to improve reading outcomes all along the pipeline are not just instruction methods, but rather programs that address at least one of [Get Georgia Reading Campaign's Four Pillars](#): language nutrition, access, positive learning climate, and teacher preparation and effectiveness.



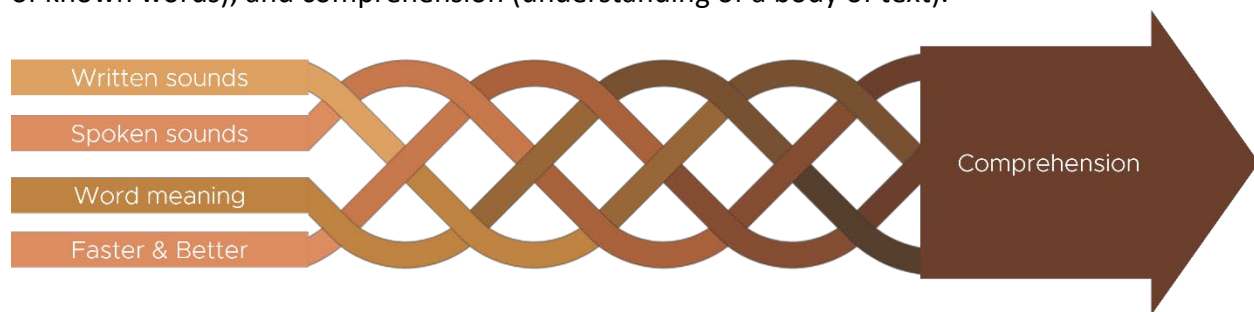
The Get Georgia Reading Campaign's Four Pillars: language nutrition, access, positive learning climate, and teacher preparation and effectiveness

Example evidence based best-practices include:

	Language Nutrition	Access	Positive Learning Climate	Teacher Preparation and Effectiveness
<i>All kids who need them have glasses and hearing aids</i>		X	X	
<i>Post-partum mental health care for mothers</i>	X		X	
<i>Talk with me baby</i>	X			
<i>Reading Resource Coordinators</i>			X	X
<i>Broadband Access</i>	X	X		

Evidence-Based Best-Practices in Literacy Instruction

Just as it takes four pillars to improve literacy outcomes, it takes five instruction components, working together, to create proficient learners: phonemic awareness (spoken sounds), phonics (associate written letters to spoken sounds), fluency (read text accurately), vocabulary (a body of known words), and comprehension (understanding of a body of text).



A person has to be taught spoken sounds associated with written sounds and a comprehensive set of words meanings. They have to practice this so they can recognize words and word meanings with reasonable speed. Together – this leads to reading comprehension.

Proficient Readers

There are two components to being a proficient reader: being able to read the words and then understanding what the words mean. Fluent readers can easily sound out the words and know what those words mean – so then they have left over brain space to comprehend what the text is telling them. The fluent kid can read to learn, the low-literacy kid cannot.

Imagine a fluent 4th grader reading a book on the space shuttle, and encountering the word ‘fuselage’, which she never seen before. As a fluent reader, she can easily sound it out, and then read the included definition: “the fuselage is the place where the crew lives and works” and learn a new word. And when someone asks her later about the book – she can say “space shuttles take people into space and where a crew can live and work while doing experiments.” A struggling 4th grader will say “I dunno” because while she might have read every word in the book, it took so much energy to stumble through the words she can’t comprehend it.

