

INTRODUCTION

Large systematic differences in the home learning environments of young children (Hart & Risley, 1995; Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo & García Coll, 2001; Levine, working paper) have significant consequences for individuals and society as a whole (Anderson, 2006; Heckman, 2006). Ready4K™, a text messaging program for parents, complements traditional parenting supports by leveraging insights from the behavioral sciences and widespread technology. The Ready4K™ approach has been shown to increase child literacy outcomes by 0.15-0.30 SD, with greater effects for initially low-achieving students (York & Loeb, 2014; Doss, Fahle, Loeb & York, 2017).

READY4K™

Ready4K™ is an evidence-based text messaging program for parents of newborns, 1-, 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds. Each week, parents receive fun facts, easy tips, and encouraging messages to support their children's learning. Ready4K™ activities build on the things that parents already do with their children -- like getting dressed, meal time, and bath time -- to make supporting child development fast, fun, and easy. Ready4K™ text messages cover early literacy, early math, and social and emotional skills, and they are currently available in English and Spanish.

MODEL

Linked to the child's age to ensure developmental appropriateness, Ready4K™ is structured as a year-long parenting program, with embedded curriculum design techniques, including “shaping” and “spiraling.”

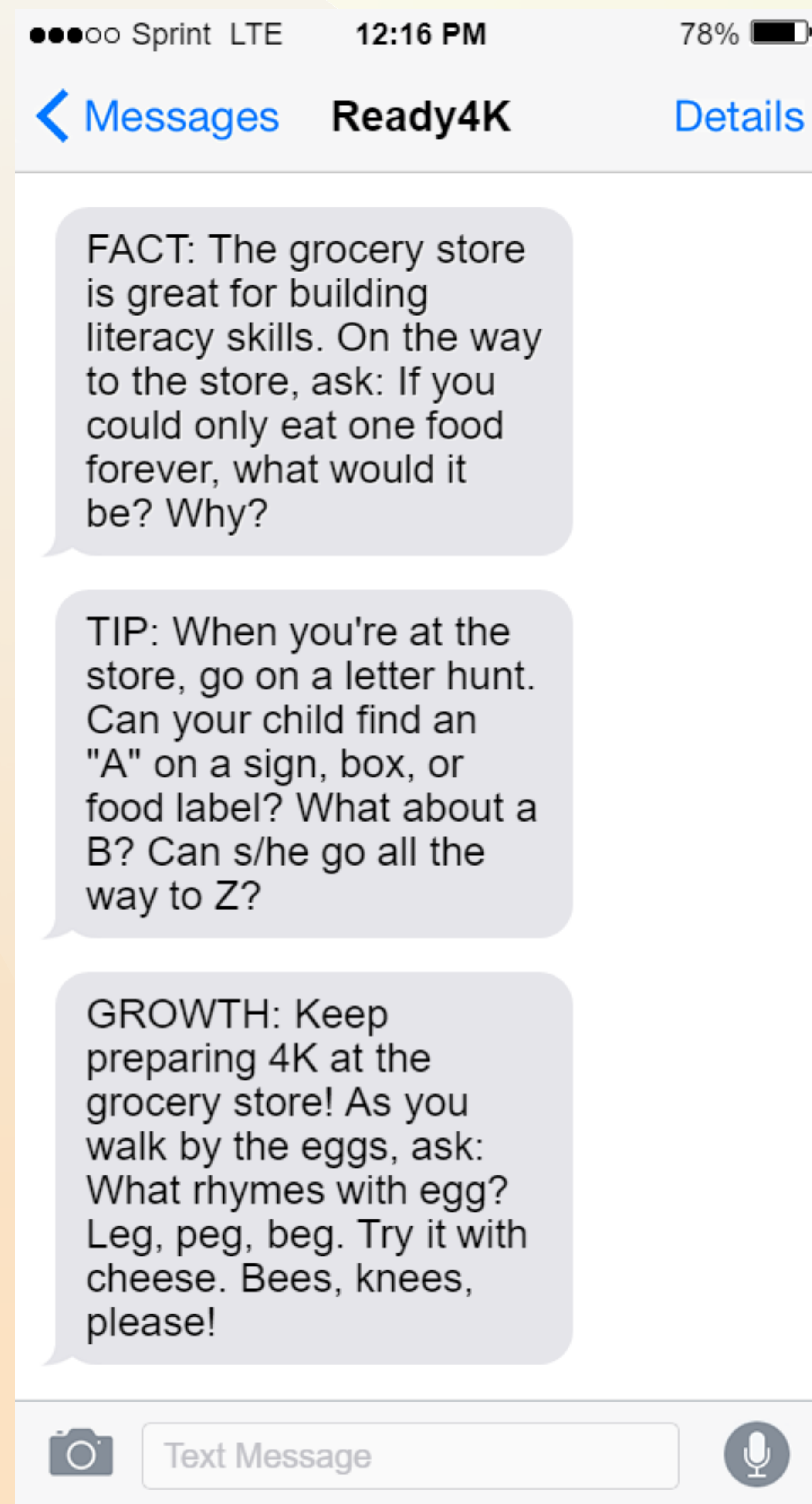
- On Mondays, parents receive “FACT” messages to help close information gaps and motivate parents by highlighting the importance of the skill of the week.
- On Wednesdays, they receive “TIP” texts, which include recommendations for fast and fun child development activities that build on existing family routines.
- On Fridays, parents receive “GROWTH” messages for reinforcement, encouragement, and scaffolding.

Ready4K™ is aligned to the early learning standards of states across the country.

WHY TEXTING?

Through texting, we can support the hardest-to-reach parents in an effective way:

- 97% of American adults under 50 have cell phones
- 98% of cell phone owners can access texts
- Texts have a 95% open rate
- Traditionally under-served adults text with the highest frequency



**Texting has demonstrated efficacy in healthcare (e.g., Rodgers et al., 2005) and education (e.g., Bergman, 2014), it's low cost, easy to implement, and the 160-character constraint ensures that information is broken down into bite-sized pieces.*

METHODS

The Ready4K™ approach has been studied through three randomized controlled trials (RCTs), generally drawing on variants of this randomization site fixed effects model:

$$Y_{is} = \beta_1 T_{is} + \gamma s + \beta_2 Z_{is} + X_{is} \beta_3 + \varepsilon_{is}$$

- Study 1: Literacy text messages vs. placebo texts
- Study 2: Personalized texts vs. general texts
- Study 3: A literacy-math-sel program vs. placebo

RESULTS

Through the studies described above, the Ready4K™ approach has been shown to increase parental involvement at home and school, ultimately leading to child learning gains. Here is a selection of some of the results:

- Helpful: Parents who received program texts found them to be very helpful and were likely to strongly recommend them to other parents (effects of up to 0.50 to 0.60 SD).
- Engagement: These parents also engaged in more home literacy activities (effects of 0.20-0.30 SD) and were more involved at school (effects of 0.10-0.20 SD).
- Child outcomes: Ultimately, children of parents who received literacy texts gained 2-3 moths of learning in important areas of early literacy. Personalized texts were even more effective, as children of parents in the personalized group were 50 percent more likely to advance a reading level. The literacy-math-sel program also had a positive effect on children's end-of-year literacy assessment scores -- about 0.15 SD on average, with even bigger effects on children below the median of the achievement distribution.

IMPACT AT SCALE

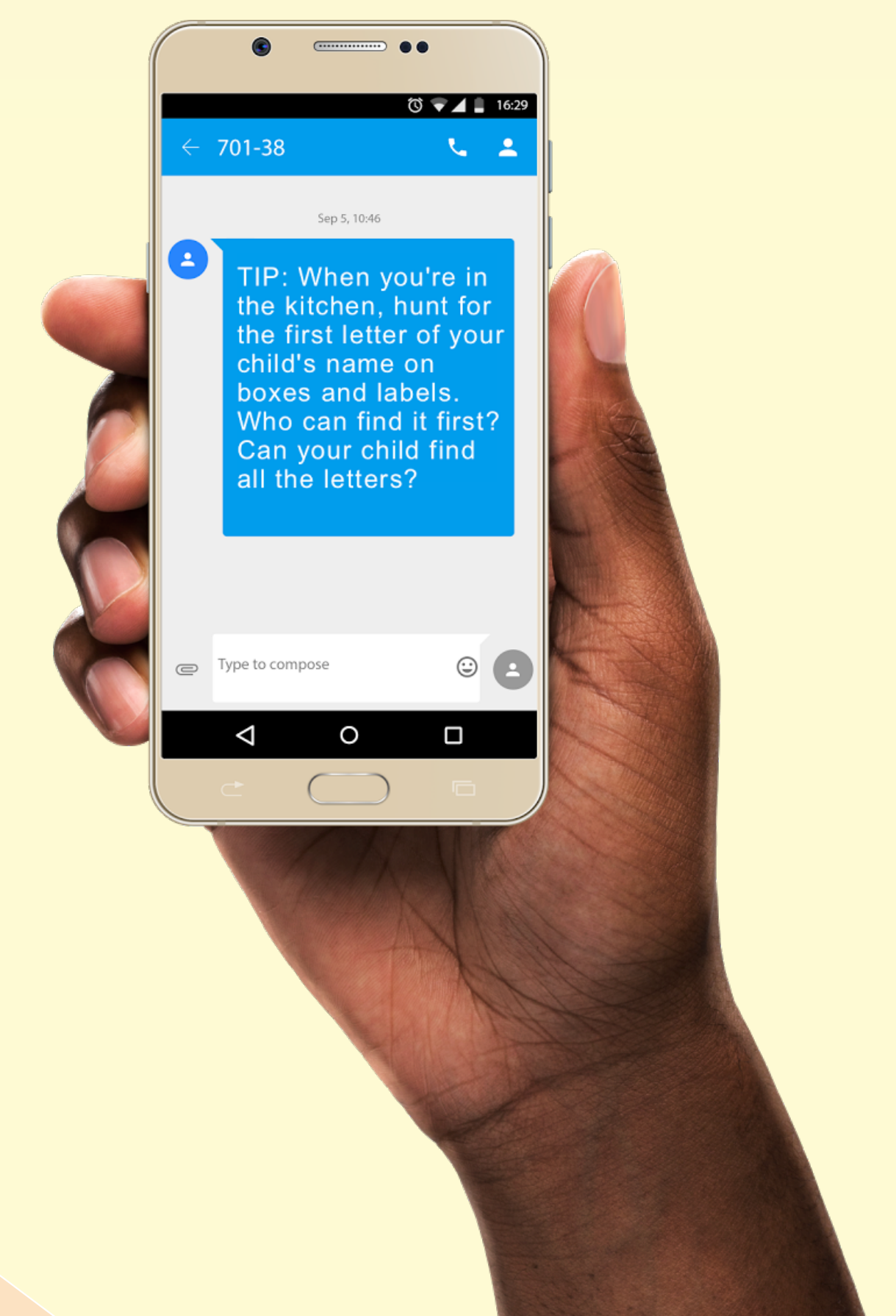
Today, ParentPowered PBC is supporting over 75,000 parents in 38 states and Singapore with Ready4K™ text messages. As we scale Ready4K™, we will continue to refine the program. Through a research partnership with Stanford University, we have several on-going and planned RCT studies; and, we also have a robust internal learning agenda. By 2020, we aim to serve 20 million families globally, deepening the way parents engage with their children.

CONCLUSION

From birth to two, economically disadvantaged children are less likely to be caressed, kissed, hugged, and read to than wealthy children (Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo & García Coll, 2001). By the age of four, these children hear 30 million fewer words at home (Hart & Risley, 1995). While traditional parenting supports have clear strengths, they also have a number of limitations, including participation rates that can be below 50%, dropout rates as high as 50% (Brotman et. al, 2011), or costs upward of \$10,000 per family per year (Aos, Lieb, Mayfield, Miller & Pennucci, 2004). Ready4K™ is an effective and inexpensive complement to existing approaches.

CONTACT

To ensure equal access to Ready4K™, which is at the heart of our social mission, the core literacy program is **FREE** for all interested parents and organizations. To learn more, contact Tiffany Graham at: tiffany.graham@parentpowered.com



To sign up for Ready4K™, go to: www.ready4k.com

**Ready4K™ is a program of ParentPowered Public Benefit Corporation*

***Note that Tiffany Graham contributed to the creation of this poster but is not a co-author of the studies described herein.*