

AARP Foundation Experience Corps (AARP EC)

2016-2017 Evaluation Report Summary

Study Overview

The AARP Foundation Experience Corps (AARP EC) tutoring program pairs elementary school students with reading tutors ages 50 and over. As an intergenerational volunteer-based tutoring program, AARP EC aims to support Kindergarten to third-grade students who are reading below grade level to improve their reading abilities by the end of third grade.

This brief summarizes selected findings from the 2016-17 program evaluation study conducted by the Office of Research & Evaluation (ORE), which focused on fidelity of implementation, satisfaction with the program, and the impact of students and classrooms. The full report is available upon request.

Four main research questions were the focus of the study:

1. How satisfied were teachers, tutors, and students with the AARP EC tutoring experience?
2. In what ways did teachers find the AARP EC program beneficial to students and the learning environment?
3. Did students in the AARP EC program demonstrate improvements in literacy outcomes? Was there a relationship between dosage and outcomes?
4. How did AARP EC student perform in comparison to a matched sample?

Why is this study important to SDP?

- **Research has shown that one-on-one tutoring is effective for the literacy growth of new readers.** One-on-one tutoring programs that utilize community volunteers have been found to help improve the reading ability of lower performing beginning readers.¹
- **Student participation in EC has been linked to improved reading outcomes in other settings.** A pilot evaluation investigated the role of participating in EC on students' Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) during the 1999-2000 SY. Findings show that third grade students who participated in EC had statistically higher scores on the MSPAP than their peers who had not participated in the EC program.²

AARP EC in Philadelphia

During the 2016-17 school year, 195 tutors served 1,353 students in 204 classrooms and 22 schools that participated in AARP EC.

AARP EC tutors provided an average of 25 hours of tutoring per student and an average of 62 hours of whole class literacy assistance per classroom.

Two-thirds of students (64%) who received support from an EC tutor tested in Tier 3 (Intensive Intervention) and 22% tested in Tier 2 (Strategic Intervention) on their baseline (fall 2016) AIMSweb assessment, indicating a need for additional support.

¹ Meier, J., & Invernizzi, M. (2001). Book Buddies in the Bronx: Testing a model for America Reads. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 6(4), 319-333.

² Rebok, G. W., Carlson, M. C., Glass, T. A., McGill, S., Hill, J., Wasik, B. A., et al. (2004). Short-term impact of Experience Corps Participation on children and schools: Results from a pilot randomized trial. *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 81(1), 79-93.

Findings

1. Teachers, tutors, and students were generally satisfied with the AARP EC program.

- Both new and returning EC tutors were satisfied with their experience of working with the EC program.
- Teachers valued the additional support they received from the EC tutor as well as the positive attention their students received.
- Students were overwhelmingly positive in response to survey questions about their tutors: 87% reported that working with their tutor makes them feel good.

2. Teachers reported that their students demonstrated improved literacy skills and self-confidence.

- Teachers perceived that EC tutors had a positive influence on improving student and literacy performance (68%) and providing the teacher with extra time to assist students who are struggling academically (66%).
- In open-ended comments, teachers (n=10) shared their appreciation for the EC tutors and the positive change that individualized attention made in their students' educational experience.

3. On average, AARP EC K-3 students demonstrated improvements in National Percentile Rank (NPR), Accuracy, and Tier Placement between fall and spring but these changes are not related to the amount of tutoring students received.

- AARP students demonstrated improvements in their average National Percentile Rank (NPR) (+4%) and accuracy (+33%) scores from fall 2016 to spring 2017
- AARP EC students in need of a Tier 3 intervention decreased by 10% from fall 2016 to spring 2017.

4. On average, K-3 students who received AARP EC tutoring did not have AIMSweb³ scores that were statistically significantly different from similar students who did not have AARP EC tutors. There was no relationship between changes in student performance and the number of hours of tutoring.

- Third grade students in the matched comparison group had statistically significantly higher spring raw scores and national percentile ranks compared to third grade students receiving AARP EC tutoring. The effect size was small.
- K-3 students in the AARP EC group demonstrated greater improvement in accuracy scores from fall to spring when compared to students in the matched comparison group. The difference was statistically significant and the effect size was small. The overall difference can be attributed to the statistically significant score increases of two subgroups- African American/Black males and students who initially tested in Tier 2. (Note: students can improve their accuracy (n correct/ N attempted) but not improve their raw score or national percentile rank, which are better indicators of students' progress).
- There was no significant correlation between the treatment students' rate of improvement (ROI) and the number of hours of tutoring received.

³ "Aimsweb is a universal screening, progress monitoring, and data management system that supports Response to Intervention (RTI) and tiered instruction. Aimsweb uses brief, valid, and reliable measures of reading and math performance for grades K-12, which can be generalized to any curriculum." For more information, see <https://www.aimsweb.com/about/faqs>.