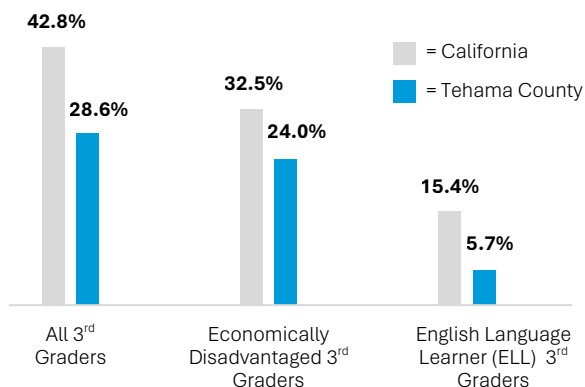


Closing the Gap: Supporting Early Literacy in Tehama County

Reading is a gateway to academic and life success but many young children in Tehama County are not on track. The best way to grow strong readers is by bringing together support from families, schools and communities. That's why First 5 Tehama empowers families and partners with the community to build the early foundation of literacy from the ground up, and help children thrive.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDS IN TEHAMA COUNTY?

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency



In a First 5 survey*, Tehama families reported reading an average of 1.5 times per week with their child (n = 209).

Parents in Tehama who read to their children less often were also less likely to understand how children grow and how to support their social and emotional needs.

*First 5 Tehama serves families from diverse socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds.

Less than 1 in 3 Tehama 3rd graders read proficiently.

28.6% of 3rd graders read at grade level, well below the California average of 42.8%.

Reading gaps are even wider for economically disadvantaged 3rd graders.

Just 24% of economically disadvantaged 3rd graders in Tehama are reading at grade level, compared to 32.5% statewide.

For English learners, reading proficiency is especially low.

5.7% of Tehama 3rd graders who are English Language Learners are reading at grade level, far below the statewide average of 15.4%.

Why is Early Literacy Important?

Early literacy is the foundation for success in school and life. Children who don't read proficiently by 3rd grade are 4x more likely to drop out of high school. On the other hand, children with strong literacy skills are more likely to succeed in terms of academics, emotion regulation, social skills, educational attainment, and lifetime earnings.

Children who develop early literacy in both their home language and English are especially likely to thrive. Strong bilingual skills are linked to lifelong cognitive benefits such as better problem solving and memory.

WHAT DO CHILDREN NEED TO BECOME STRONG READERS?

All Children Need:



Housing and food security



Secure and stable environment

Foundations for Learning:



Access to books



Shared reading routines



Play-based learning



Responsive caregiving



Everyday interactions



Home language support

HOW IS FIRST 5 TEHAMA RESPONDING?

Increasing Early Identification and Support for Literacy Development

Literacy Support

Families received resources to promote early literacy and developmentally appropriate interactions. As a result, parents improved their understanding of child development and the importance of reading together.

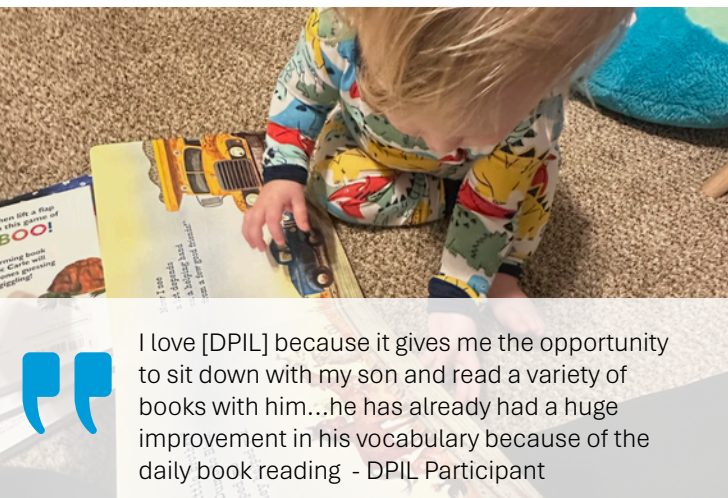
71% of PAT home visiting families improved teaching behaviors, such as shared conversations and play.¹

45% families reported more frequent reading and **28%** reported more library and book store visits.

Developmental Screenings

839 children received ASQ screenings, which assess all areas of development including communication and pre-reading skills. Families with identified needs were connected to supports and services.

Expanding Access to Books and Fostering a Love for Reading



I love [DPIL] because it gives me the opportunity to sit down with my son and read a variety of books with him...he has already had a huge improvement in his vocabulary because of the daily book reading - DPIL Participant

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL)

Tehama County children received **7,800+** books to promote parent-child interactions and early literacy through DPIL.

1,014 of Tehama County children under age 5 participated in DPIL, representing **22%** of the county's children (0-5).

Broadened reach with **19%** of families opting for bilingual books and **24%** of families located in rural locations.

90% of surveyed families (n = 30) said DPIL increased how often they read with their child.

Community Literacy Connections

First 5 Tehama helped make early literacy more accessible and valued through events, book give-aways, and community partnerships:

8+ local and regional agencies (e.g., police, fire, EMT) participated in the Badges with Books program to engage families in literacy activities and promote community helpers as literacy role models.

36 businesses participated in the Businesses with Books program, offering reading spaces or a free book to take home - a **38%** increase since the launch of the program.

Families were connected to literacy resources through Book Club Outreach activities (e.g., invitations to literacy events, pop-up events, and online communications).

Family Bilingual Literacy Opportunities

First 5 Tehama partnered with the Tehama County Library to launch Bilingual Story Hour, a family-friendly program that promotes biliteracy through stories, songs and games.

600 bilingual books purchased by First 5 Tehama to expand bilingual offerings at the Library.

