

Helping Young Children Learn Informational Text

The Role of Digital Media

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Introduction

Informational Text (IT)

- + Oral or written text designed to inform
- + Essential to daily life and fundamental to literacy
- + Many young children lack opportunities to use and develop IT
- + One approach: Educational media designed to support children's IT exposure and use



Molly of Denali

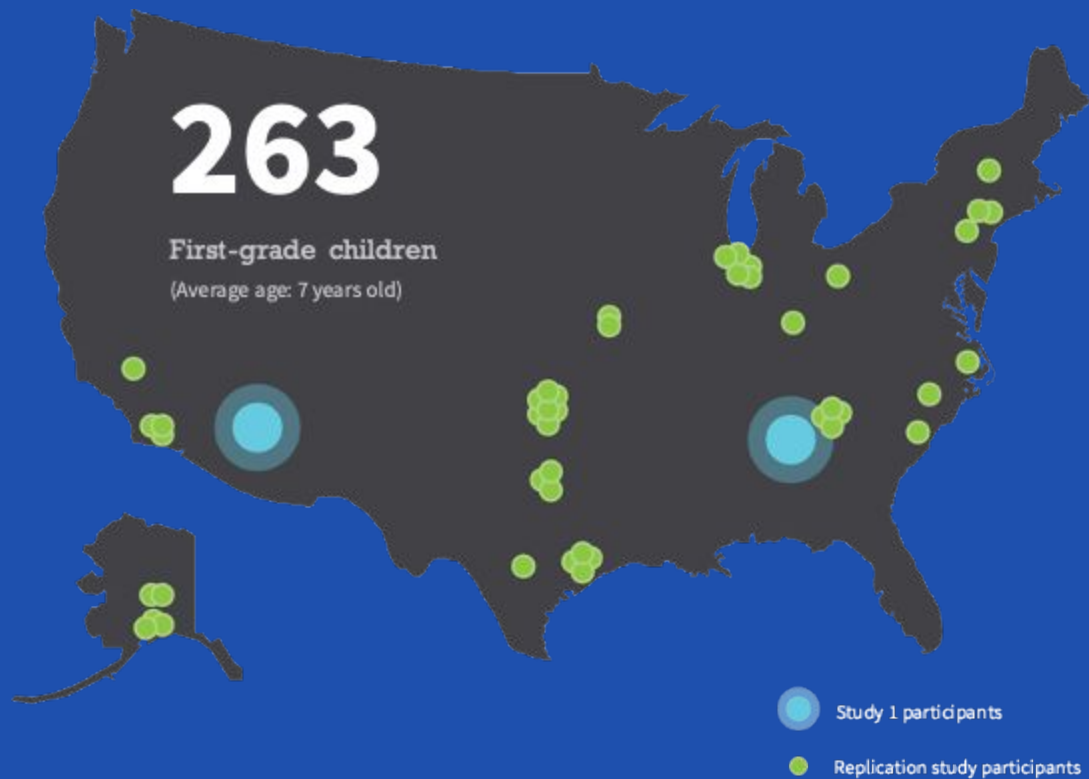
- + Designed to help children ages 4-8 develop IT skills
- + Developed as part of the Ready To Learn Initiative
- + Includes videos and digital games



Researching the Impact

Two studies to examine whether providing families with low incomes across the U.S. with *Molly* resources supported children's ability to use IT

Participants



Children

48% were female

16% spoke a language other than English at home

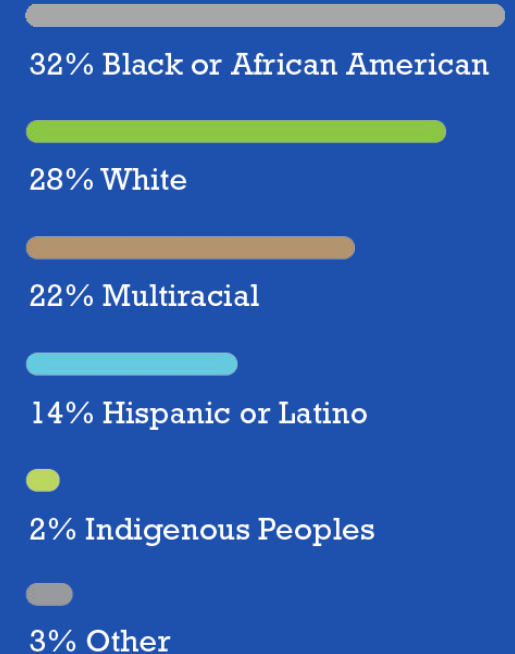
17% had an IEP or received other special education services or supports

Parents

23% had up to a high school diploma or a GED

69% had an annual household income of \$50,000 or less

Families' Race/ Ethnicity



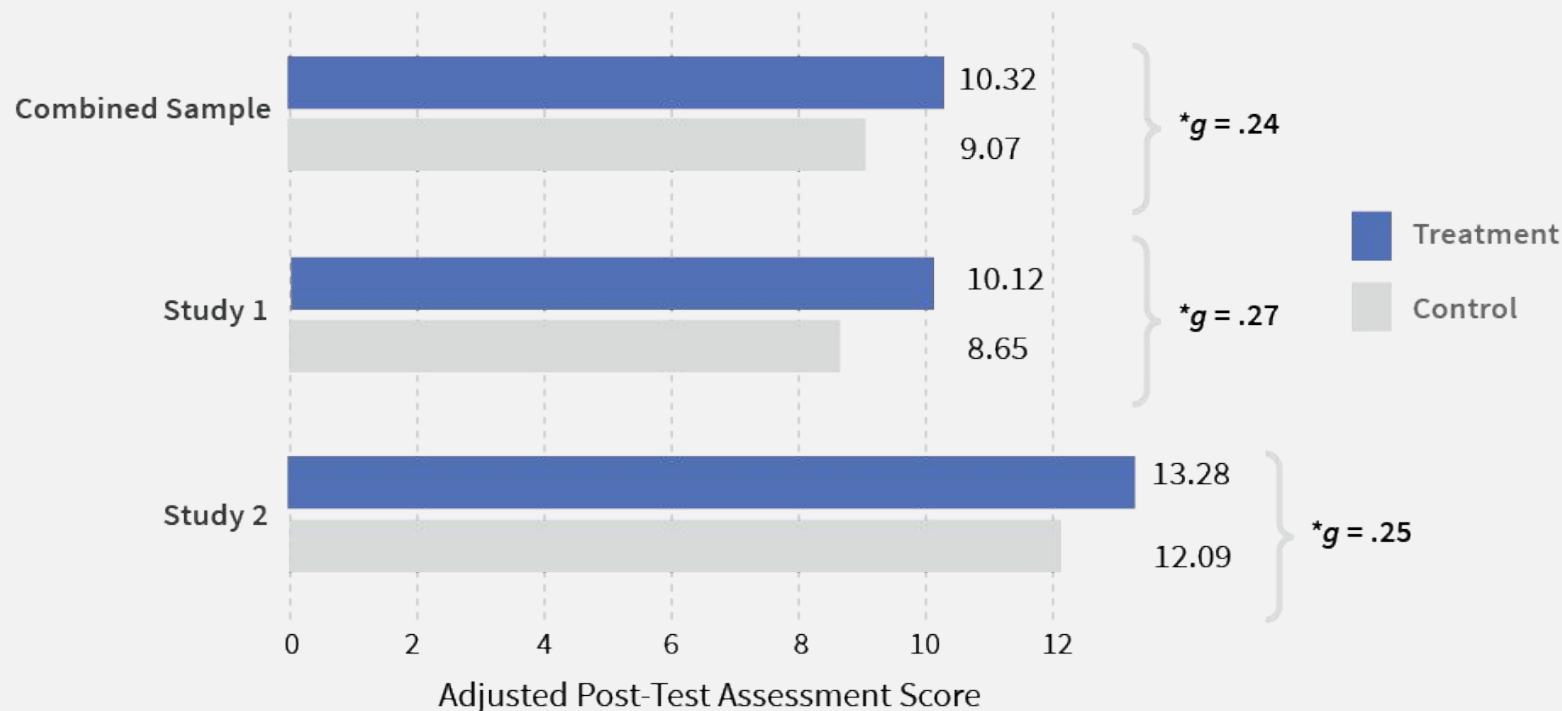
Research Design

Participants in both nine-week randomized controlled trials received data-enabled tablets and were randomly assigned to either the treatment or control group

Families Received...	Treatment Group	Control Group
Samsung Galaxy II tablet with a 9-week data plan	✓	✓
Instructions to use the tablet for about 1 hour a week	✓	✓
Text message reminders	✓	✓
Family guide to study	✓	✓
<i>Molly of Denali</i> resources: Videos, digital games, and hands-on activities	✓	
Introductory videos for parents	✓	
Access to PBS KIDS and other informational text apps blocked		✓

Increased Ability to Use Informational Text

Impact of Access to Intervention Resources, by Study



Notes:

* $p < .05$

g is Hedge's g , a measure of effect size. Adjusted Post-Test Assessment Score is the average ITSI score at post-test, adjusted for estimated effects of child characteristics which varied across the samples. These include pre-test score, gender, age, ethnicity, IEP status, family income, parent education, and urbanicity.

Findings



Children with access to *Molly* resources outperformed children in the control group on their ability to use IT to answer questions and solve real-world problems



The more time children spent with the *Molly* resources, the better they performed on the post-test assessments



Well-designed digital media can support children's learning at home



Public media offers a free, widely accessible, and flexible way to provide educational content to every child with access to a television or web-connected device



Thank You!

For more information, see our article in the
American Educational Research Journal:
<https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312221113326>

You can also learn more at
our website:
<https://cct.edc.org/rtl>

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