Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy

Ready4Success:

Supporting teachers' use of *Read It Again!*

2021-2022 Final Report

Shelby Dowdy
Sunny L. Munn, PhD
Jamie O'Leary, MPA

crane.osu.edu

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
CRANE CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD
RESEARCH AND POLICY

A multidisciplinary research center dedicated to conducting high-quality research that improves children's learning and development at home, in school, and in the community.

Table of Contents

Overview 3

Key R4S Program Demographics 4

Data and Lessons Learned During the Implementation of RIA 5

Early Literacy Assessment Scores Before and After Delivery of RIA 7

Read It Again Participation and the Get Ready to Read Assessment...8

Program Improvements to Support Implementation for the 2022-2023 Year 12

Partnerships to Improve Kindergarten Readiness...13

Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy 14

Overview

Columbus has joined many other cities across the U.S. in understanding the importance of high-quality early childhood learning programs and investing accordingly. Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther's Early Start Columbus (ESC) initiative provides subsidies for eligible four-year-old children to attend preschool for free or at a low cost. In 2021-22, the Ready for Success (R4S) team built upon its relationships and past successes with ESC classrooms to support teachers' use of *Read It Again! – PreK* (RIA), an evidence-based supplemental curriculum to enhance children's early language and literacy skills in four domains (print knowledge, vocabulary, phonological awareness, and building narratives). The R4S program provided professional development through online modules and workshops, coaching, and instructional support to assist teachers' development and ability to deliver RIA lessons to maximize learning for children. Using the Get Ready to Read (GRTR) and Preschool Early Numeracy Screener (PENS), R4S also screened children to better understand trends in early literacy and math skills, which both contribute to kindergarten readiness.

Kindergarten readiness has been identified as a key priority for Franklin County incoming kindergarteners, only 40% of whom enter school prepared, according to Future Ready Columbus. The R4S project and partnership between the Crane Center and the City of Columbus reflect a long-standing shared commitment to elevating literacy practices and outcomes for children in our community. Despite continued challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic – namely, disruptions, closures, and the added stressors facing early childhood teachers, families, and children – the R4S rollout of RIA was successful. The rollout of this easy-to-use curricular supplement provided evidence that it works, can be scaled, and was well-received by participating teachers.

Overall, children in classrooms participating in RIA achieved more skill gains than children in classrooms that did not participate in RIA. The Get Ready to Read (GRTR) pre- and post-assessment were used to illustrate this progress. GRTR post-test scores demonstrated that the most on-target children for kindergarten readiness were in classrooms where RIA was implemented. In classrooms where the full RIA curriculum was implemented, 75% of children scored at the Average or Above Average level.

This report describes the work conducted by the R4S team in 2021-22 and is organized as follows: A) key R4S program demographics, B) data and lessons learned during the implementation of RIA, C) early literacy assessment scores before and after delivery of RIA, and D) program improvements to support implementation for the 2022-2023 year.

Key R4S Program Demographics

As of June 3, 2022, there were 41 ESC community-based provider locations and 67 teachers, 43 of whom participated in RIA. Five additional teachers were onboarded after the February 2022 midyear report. Of the 43 teachers implementing RIA in their classrooms, 10 completed all lessons and all documentation. Another three teachers completed all documentation but not all lessons. Table 1 shows the breakdown of R4S participation as of June 3, 2022.

Table 1. **R4S Participation**

ESC Participant Type	Number as of 6.3.2022
Total Community-Based Provider Locations	41
Total Classrooms	61
Classrooms implementing RIA	43 (64%)
Classrooms with Implementation Notes, Pupil Progress Checklists, and Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for all timepoints	13 (21%)
Classrooms that completed all 60 RIA lessons	10
Total Teachers	67
Teachers implementing RIA and receiving coaching	40 (60%)
Teachers not implementing RIA or receiving coaching	27 (40%)

All ESC teachers had access to a set of R4S professional development modules and were encouraged to complete all modules they still needed to take. For each module a participant completes, 1.5 or 2 hours of credit toward Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) requirements were awarded. Table 2 shows the number of teachers who completed professional development during the 2021-2022 implementation year. Between February and June 2022, two teachers completed the "Strengthening Early Literacy Skills Using *Read It Again* (RIA)" training, 20 completed "Module1: Diversity 101," and seven completed the "Diversity: Module 2" training. There were no other changes in professional development uptake during this time.

Table 2. **Professional Development Participation**

Professional Development Course	SUTQ Credit Hours	February 2022	June 2022
Understanding the Social and Emotional Climate of Your Classroom	1.5	2	0
Challenging Behaviors	1.5	2	0
Authentic and Effective Math Instruction	1.5	3	0
Power Words: Enhancing Children's Vocabulary Development	1.5	3	0
Print-Focused Read-Aloud for Literacy	1.5	2	0
Strengthening Early Literacy Skills Using *Read It Again* (RIA)	1.5	24	2
Diversity 101	2	15	20
Diversity 101 - Module 2	2	14	7

Data and Lessons Learned During the Implementation of RIA

RIA is a simple curriculum that targets the instructional practices important to kindergarten readiness (e.g., print referencing, vocabulary, phonological awareness, and narrative). Evidence indicates that children whose teachers implement RIA to supplement a primary curriculum show significant improvements in language and literacy skills. Implementation of RIA includes two lessons per week or 60 per year using RIA strategies. Each lesson is 15-20 minutes long and uses a corresponding book.

Among the 43 teachers implementing RIA, 772 lessons were documented, with an average lesson duration of 15 minutes. Teachers likely implemented more lessons than they documented, given the documentation challenges described in our midyear report. Variations in implementation are normal due to variations in classroom size, which affect lesson length, student engagement, and the teacher's ability to deliver the lesson.

To measure implementation fidelity, the R4S team collected and measured information using four data collection tools: 1) RIA Lesson Implementation Notes (two per week), 2) Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (three per year), 3) Pupil Progress Checkpoints (three per year), 4) RIA Lesson Observation (3 per year) and R4S Coaching Session documentation (monthly).

As of June 3, 2022, 43 teachers in 43 classrooms documented RIA information using at least one of the four data collection tools. The following sections detail the documentation collected via the four data collection tools.

1. **RIA Implementation Notes:** The Implementation Notes were completed by the teacher after each lesson (2 per week) for 30 weeks. These notes consist of items like the engagement level of the children, lesson modifications, and areas where children had success or needed more practice for that lesson. Implementation Notes could be completed digitally on a tablet provided by R4S or on paper. Of the classrooms implementing RIA, documentation of the lessons for the year included:

Table 3. **Documented Implementation Notes**

Teachers	Documented Lessons
8	No Lessons documented but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)
5	Documented only 1 RIA lesson, but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)
4	Documented lessons between Week 1- Week 5 (2-10 lessons)
3	Documented lessons between Week 6- Week 10 (12-20 lessons)
8	Documented lessons between Week 11-Week 20 (22- 40 lessons)
15	Documented lessons between Week 21-Week 30 (42- 60 lessons) *10 of these teachers documented all 30 weeks of lessons
8	No Lessons documented but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)
5	Documented only 1 RIA lesson, but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)

Many more RIA lessons were probably conducted than were documented. Early in the program year, we identified challenges with teachers' ability to document the RIA lessons digitally. All ESC providers received a tablet to electronically document the RIA lessons. Many teachers shared that the process of electronically documenting lessons was cumbersome and did not fit well with their schedules. R4S coaches worked with these teachers to offer alternative documentation strategies, such as using paper Implementation Notes. Although teachers were provided with an alternative documentation method, some struggled to consistently maintain any documentation.

2. **Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS):** PALS is an uppercase letter identification assessment conducted three times per year. Of the 43 participating classrooms, PALS assessment documentation was submitted for the first assessment by 88% (38), the second assessment by 65% (28), and the third assessment by 30% of the classrooms.

3. **Pupil Progress Checkpoints (PPC):** The PPC details children's progression of the skills targeted by RIA. The PPC is completed by the teacher at weeks 2, 12, and 24 of the RIA program. Of the participating 43 classrooms, 76% (33) documented the 2-week PPC, 53% (23) documented the 12-week PPC, and 48% (21) documented the 24-week PPC. Of the 43 providers implementing RIA, 23 teachers documented lessons to the Week 12 checkpoint, and 15 documented lessons to the Week 24 checkpoint.

4. **Lesson Observations and Coaching Sessions:** The observation and coaching expectation is to meet face-to-face with teachers every 3 to 4 weeks depending on need. Meeting this goal was challenging during the winter months as many classrooms faced staffing shortages and closures due to ongoing COVID-19 infections among children and staff. Initially, the R4S team planned to conduct three observations over the course of the school year. Most teachers completed the first observation. The second and third observations planned for mid- and end-of-year had fewer completions due to scheduling complications. As of June 3, 2022, there were 35 classrooms and 40 teachers participating in R4S coaching. There have been 53 coaching sessions with teachers and 43 RIA observations. Often observations and coaching sessions occur simultaneously.

While there were challenges to implementing RIA in ESC classrooms, the R4S team made adaptations to improve teacher participation and documentation methods so that the 2022-23 implementation will be more user-friendly. Feedback from teachers regarding the curriculum was mostly positive; they appreciated the ease of instruction of each lesson, and the children were very engaged with the activities and selection of storybooks. The implementation challenges expressed by teachers seemed to center on staffing, ongoing pandemic-related issues, or classroom management rather than on the curriculum supplement itself. Overall, the R4S team has found RIA to be a feasible curriculum supplement for the ESC population.

Early Literacy Assessment Scores Before and After Delivery of RIA

Children participating in ESC classrooms were screened using the GRTR assessment and PENS. GRTR measures a child's print knowledge (understanding of books, printed letters, and words); linguistic awareness (understanding of how words and language works); and emergent writing (a child's first efforts to create and use print meaningfully). PENS measures numeracy skills that include counting, numerical relations, arithmetic operations, and numeral knowledge.

The following pre- and post-assessment data contain snapshots of all ESC community-based provider participants, excluding Columbus City Schools (CCS). While CCS are ESC participants, they do not participate in any of the R4S programming. Thus, they are not included as this report is meant to illustrate the impact of RIA across the year among participants. CCS preschools also likely have fundamentally different classroom circumstances, namely less teacher turnover, higher wages (for unionized CCS teachers), and possibly higher-resourced families. It is, therefore, unlikely that these two groups are comparable.

Get Ready to Read (GRTR)

For the 2021-2022 program year, 431 children were screened during the fall 2021 pre-test GRTR assessment. All 431 children received the post-test assessment.

Overall, higher percentages of children scored in the Above Average and Average score bands at the end of the year (post-test) compared to at the beginning of the year. Meanwhile, fewer children scored in the lowest band, Below Average: 34% on the post-test compared to 44% on the pre-test.

Table 4. **GRTR Pre/Post R4S Participant Scores**

Score	GRTR Pre-RIA	GRTR Post-RIA	GRTR % Change
Above Average	56 (12.99%)	68 (15.77%)	2.78% -
Average	197 (45.70%)	218 (50.58%)	4.88% -
Below Average	175 (40.60%)	145 (33.64%)	6.96% ‾
Unmeasured (children too young to score)	3 (0.69%)	0	
	431	431	

Preschool Early Numeracy Screener (PENS)

For the 2021-2022 program year, 431 children were screened during the fall 2021 pre-test PENS. All 431 children received the post-test PENS assessment. Overall, we saw declines in learners scoring in the Below Average and Average bands and a nearly 10 percentage point increase in learners scoring Above Average.

Table 5. **PENS Pre/Post R4S Participants**

Score	PENS Pre-RIA	PENS Post-RIA	PENS % Change
Above Average	49 (11.37%)	91 (21.11%)	9.74% -
Average	185 (43.0%)	157 (36.43%)	6.57% ‾
Below Average	193 (44.78%)	183 (42.46%)	2.32% ‾
Unmeasured (too young to score)	3 (0.69%)	0	
	431	431	

Read It Again Participation and the Get Ready to Read Assessment

RIA was offered to all ESC community-based providers; however, implementation of the curriculum varied among teachers and classrooms. Of the 431 children in community-based providers with both a GRTR pre-test and post-test, 346 children were in a classroom that implemented RIA. Based on the collection of RIA Implementation Notes, implementation of RIA was grouped into seven levels with Level Zero being no RIA implementation and Level Seven being full RIA implementation. Table 6 and 7 show the GRTR pre- and post-test scores by level of RIA implementation level.

Table 6. **Pre-Test GRTR Scores for Children by Levels of RIA Implementation**

Pre-Test GRTR Scores					
	RIA Implementation Level and Documentation Description	**Unmeasured**	**Below Average**	**Average**	**Above Average**
0	No RIA Implementation	1	40	38	6
1	No Lessons documented, but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)	1	26	26	14
2	Documented only 1 RIA lesson, but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)	0	13	17	0
3	Documented lessons between Week 1-Week 5 (2-10 lessons)	0	16	20	2
4	Documented lessons between Week 6-Week 10 (12-20 lessons)	0	12	12	5
5	Documented lessons between Week 11-Week 20 (22- 40 lessons)	0	19	32	4
6	Documented lessons between Week 21-Week 30 (42- 60 lessons)	0	13	17	4
7	Completed all 30 Weeks of RIA	1	37	35	20

Figure 1. **Pre-Test GRTR w RIA**

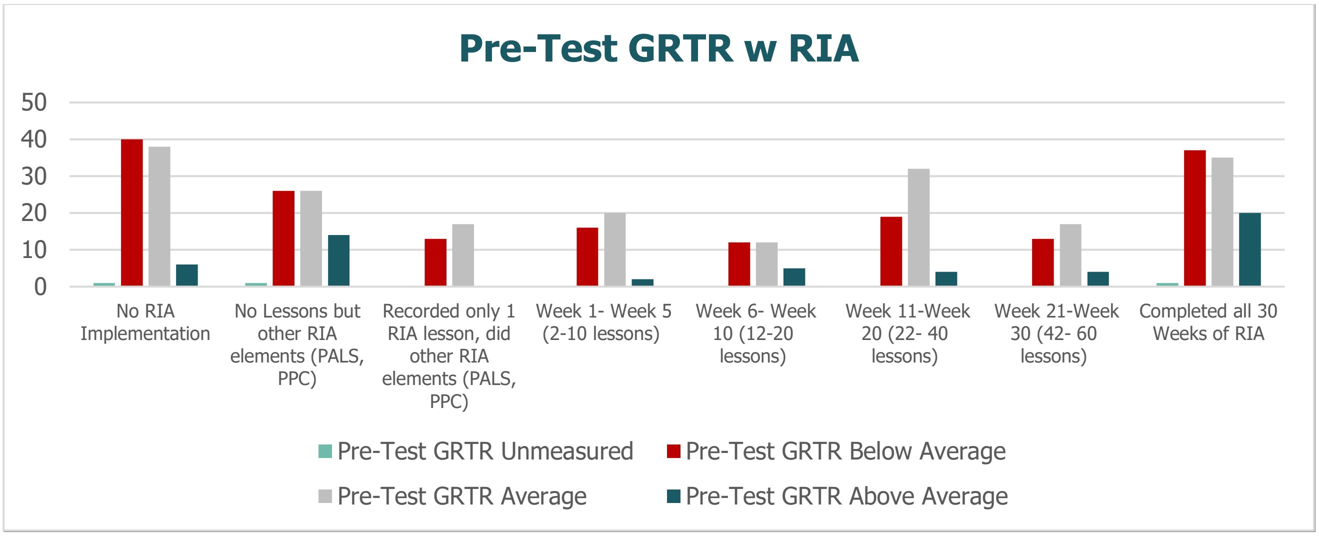
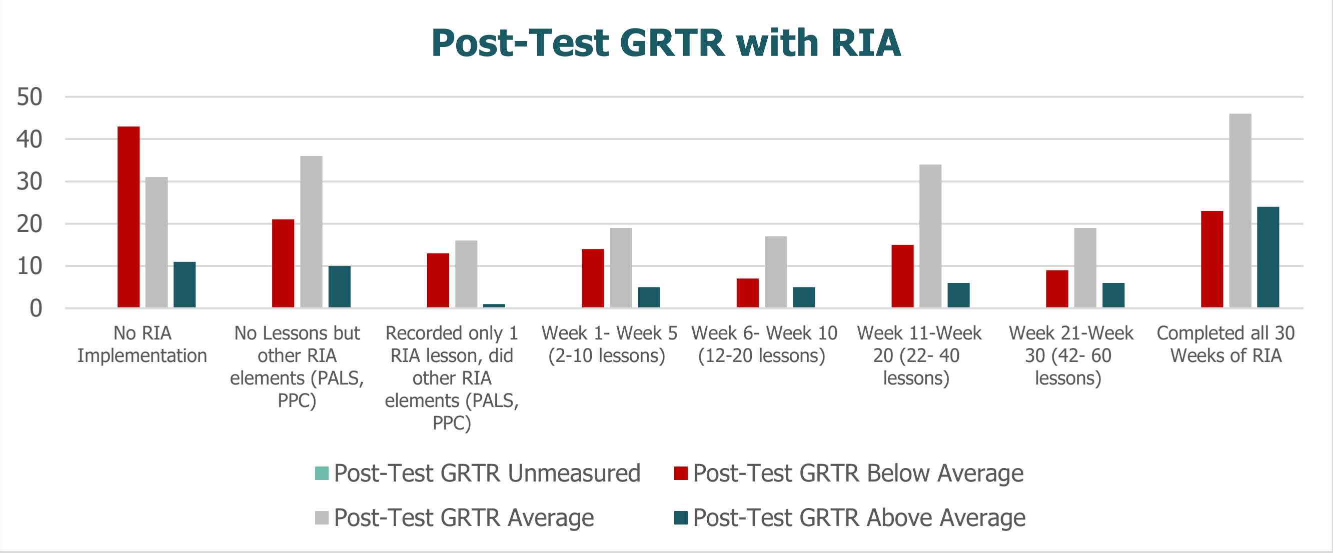


Table 7. **Post-Test GRTR Scores for Children by Levels of RIA Implementation**

Post-Test GRTR Scores					
	RIA Implementation Level and Documentation Description	**Unmeasured**	**Below Average**	**Average**	**Above Average**
0	No RIA Implementation	0	43	31	11
1	No Lessons documented, but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)	0	21	36	10
2	Documented only 1 RIA lesson, but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)	0	13	16	1
3	Documented lessons between Week 1-Week 5 (2-10 lessons)	0	14	19	5
4	Documented lessons between Week 6-Week 10 (12-20 lessons)	0	7	17	5
5	Documented lessons between Week 11-Week 20 (22- 40 lessons)	0	15	34	6
6	Documented lessons between Week 21-Week 30 (42- 60 lessons)	0	9	19	6
7	Completed all 30 Weeks of RIA	0	23	46	24

Figure 2. **Post-Test GRTR w RIA**



To understand the impact of RIA in ESC classrooms, we compared the pre/post GRTR "At Average" and "Above Average" scores of children by the level of RIA implementation. The GRTR scores were used since this assessment measures the early literacy skills consistent with the skills targeted by RIA. Shown in Table 8, findings indicate that children with Average and Above Average performance levels on the GRTR are on target with their early literacy skill development. Children in classrooms that implemented RIA made more gains than those in classrooms that did not implement RIA. The most on-target children at post-test were in classrooms where more RIA lessons were delivered. In classrooms where the full curriculum was delivered, 75.27% of the children scored at the Average or Above Average GRTR performance level at post-test.

Table 8. **Pre/Post GRTR Scores for Children by Levels of RIA Implementation and Percent of Change**

		Pre-Test GRTR		Post-Test GRTR	
	RIA Implementation Level and Documentation Description	**# of children at Average and Above Average Performance**	**% of total children at Average or Above Average Performance**	**# of children at Average and Above Average Performance**	**% of total children at Average or Above Average Performance**
0	No RIA Implementation	0	43	31	11
1	No Lessons documented, but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)	0	21	36	10
2	Documented only 1 RIA lesson, but did document other RIA elements (PALS, PPC)	0	13	16	1
3	Documented lessons between Week 1- Week 5 (2-10 lessons)	0	14	19	5
4	Documented lessons between Week 6- Week 10 (12-20 lessons)	0	7	17	5
5	Documented lessons between Week 11-Week 20 (22- 40 lessons)	0	15	34	6
6	Documented lessons between Week 21-Week 30 (42- 60 lessons)	0	9	19	6
7	Completed all 30 Weeks of RIA	0	23	46	24

Program Improvements to Support Implementation for the 2022-2023 Year

Based on our findings regarding the implementation of RIA in ESC Classrooms this past year, we have several recommendations for improvement, which are reflected in the 2022-23 work plan.

1. **Enhance RIA Tools:** This includes updating the Implementation Notes to a more intuitive, user-friendly document, returning to a paper version instead of digitally entering information on a tablet, and ensuring the notes are useful to early childhood providers to reflect on their practice and learners' receipt of RIA. The RIA manual and supplemental materials have also been refined to ensure that all materials are accurate, clear, easy to understand, and reflect antibias and antiracism (ABAR) practices.
    a. The format of the Implementation Notes was revised to improve clarity and ease of use. The new form clearly defines the time spent on the total lesson, note modifications, and identification of the Learners Ladder strategies used to support the differentiated learning needs of the children.
    b. A Teacher Workbook was created that includes the printed Implementation Notes, PPC, and PALS forms in a single bound workbook. Teachers can utilize the workbook to record lesson notes and complete the required curriculum assessments in a single resource. R4S coaches will review Teacher Workbooks during monthly coaching sessions to provide feedback, support, and monitor fidelity.
    c. The 3rd Edition of RIA Pre-K lessons was revised to reflect ABAR-inclusive practices.

2. **Create Tier 2 RIA curriculum:** This will support children at risk of not achieving foundational kindergarten skills. Children who receive the Tier 1 RIA curriculum and do not demonstrate developmentally appropriate progress in the areas of phonological awareness, vocabulary, print knowledge, and narrative skills, as evidenced by the RIA PPC and the mid-year GRTR assessment will be assigned to receive a Tier 2 (high) level of support. Children in the Tier 2 support group will receive an additional RIA lesson each week that will repeat earlier lessons of the curriculum to provide children with additional exposure to the learning objectives.

3. **Develop RIA-Math:** This will be a 30-lesson companion math curriculum to RIA designed to assist learners in acquiring developmentally appropriate math skills. The new math lessons, tentatively named RIA-M, will build upon our current R4S math professional development course that features the learning progressions and content areas from the math position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. RIA-M lessons will align with RIA storybooks for the 30-week program. Lessons will be implemented once a week. These lessons will be literacy-based that align with RIA books targeting the following math domains and objectives:
    a. Numbers and Operations
    b. Geometry and Spatial Sense
    c. Measurement
    d. Patterns and Algebraic Thinking
    e. Displaying and Analyzing Data

Partnerships to Improve Kindergarten Readiness

In addition to our partnership with ESC, the Crane Center is partnering with Future Ready Columbus to roll out RIA throughout Franklin County, and with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and Ohio Department of Education to provide RIA to all 0-5 early childhood providers throughout the state of Ohio. To support kindergarten readiness statewide, RIA will be provided to as many early childhood providers as possible. Note, the latter two projects (RIA-county and RIA-state) have varying levels of implementation support corresponding to the size and scale of those efforts. R4S remains unique in its intensive professional development and coaching support for RIA implementation, which is made possible through the City's generous support and commitment to the program. The R4S team looks forward to continued partnership with ESC classrooms to improve kindergarten readiness and prepare children for success. We also are grateful for the continued partnership and collaboration with the City of Columbus as we learn more about best practices in literacy instruction, support for teachers, and ways to improve kindergarten readiness.

Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy

The Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy, in the College of Education and Human Ecology at The Ohio State University, is a multidisciplinary research center dedicated to conducting high-quality research that improves children's learning and development at home, in school, and in the community. Our vision is to be a driving force in the intersection of research, policy, and practice, as they relate to children's well-being.

If you are interested in utilizing our measurement and evaluation services, please contact Sunny Munn. Email: munn.12@osu.edu

The recommended citation for this paper is:

Dowdy, S., Munn, S. L., O'Leary, J. (2022). *Ready4Success: Supporting teachers' use of Read It Again!* Columbus, OH: Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy, The Ohio State University.