



## **PBS Kids Series Helps Kids in Low-Income Families Read**

**Study found 'Super WHY?' helped improve overall reading performance in select group of children**

By John Eggerton -- Broadcasting & Cable, 5/6/2009 5:40:05 PM MT

PBS Kids series *Super WHY?* is helping kids read, particularly those in low-income families.

That's according to studies conducted by the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and Florida State University's Center for Reading Research for PBS in conjunction with the Department of Education's Ready To Learn grant program (RTL).

That is just the kind of result DOE is looking for, since it revamped RTL several years ago to focus more on curriculum-based education targeted to younger kids, particularly from low-income families, and whose success could be measured.

Among the findings in the Annenberg study--of 171 preschool children in a "large Pacific Northwest city"--were that the show improved overall reading performance, alphabet and phoneme knowledge and comprehension, and improved pre-school, pre-reading letter and sound "naming" skills.

The study broke out the gains for low-income and "working class" children, finding that 46% of those kids did better on standardized tests than a control group of the same category of kids.

*Super WHY?* goes beyond the TV show to include a [Web site](#), curriculum-based reading camps, and, starting this summer, toys and books.

The second study was conducted at 33 reading camps and found that the campers showed improvement in "all literacy skills in the program." Preschoolers, a target population for Ready To Learn, showed an 84% gain in phonics skills.

[http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/231635-PBS\\_Kids\\_Series\\_Helps\\_Kids\\_in\\_Low\\_Income\\_Families\\_Read.php?rssid=20065](http://www.broadcastingcable.com/article/231635-PBS_Kids_Series_Helps_Kids_in_Low_Income_Families_Read.php?rssid=20065)