



The Impact of First Book

Louis Harris Unveils Dramatic Results Found in Study of First Book. Over the years, First Book has focused substantial resources towards ongoing evaluation to ensure that First Book is making a real difference in the lives of children and accomplishing that goal with the greatest possible efficacy. The year 2002 marked the conclusion of a two-part national study designed by noted public opinion analyst Louis Harris. Evaluating every element of First Book, the Harris study validated First Book's mission and confirmed its effectiveness.

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Study Shows: High Interest in Reading Soars with First Book. Confirming the results of the first study, the 2002 evaluation found that when First Book works with a local literacy organization serving the most disadvantaged children, the impact is profound. First Book's results are compelling. According to the study:

With the involvement of First Book, the number of children who previously had a "low interest" in reading fell dramatically from 43% to 15%, while those children with a "high interest" in reading more than doubled from 26% to 55%.

Study Confirms: Ownership of New Books Is a Powerful Tool to Engage Children. First Book has always believed in the power of putting new books in the hands of children. The Louis Harris study confirmed the relevance of this belief. After receiving three or four books of their own through First Book, 92% of children stated that they "love" receiving books with their own names on them and 80% specifically reported that it "means a lot to receive something new and not used." These statements support the importance of distributing new books rather than

hand-me-down books generally donated to programs serving and children from low-income families.

Study Highlights: First Book in the Home Literacy Environment. The importance of books to children's literacy is well established. The only variable that correlates significantly with reading scores is the number of books in the home. Yet, previous studies indicate that 61% of low-income families have no age appropriate books for their children in the home. For this reason, First Book has always required that the books they provide to children are taken home, thereby improving the home learning environment. The Louis Harris study confirmed the wisdom of this strategy. After receiving three to four books from First Book, 76% of the children reported that they had "showed the book to someone at home." Perhaps even more powerfully, 72% of children receiving First Book books liked "to share reading experiences with friends, other kids, and family" and 71% liked "to talk about what he/she has read."

Study Finds: First Book "Very Important to Child's Decision to Read More and to Learn to Read Better." According to the study, for 69% of the children who had received three or four books, "the impact of the First Book program was very important in a child's decision to read more books and to learn to read better." Perhaps most importantly, children themselves report a marked improvement in their interest in reading: 63% are "not unhappy to have to take time away from play to read" and 80% "really like to read books on their own."

