

Press Release

The logo for Ready4K, featuring the text "Ready4K" in white inside a blue speech bubble shape.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Early childhood talk program adds school-readiness texting for parents

New partnership between LENA Research Foundation and ParentPowered combines efforts to close the 30-million-word gap

Boulder, Colo., 1/25/17 - LENA Research Foundation and ParentPowered Public Benefit Corporation, the creator of Ready4K text messages, have announced a partnership to help young families talk more with their children. Through the partnership, parents and caregivers who graduate from the [LENA Start](#) parenting program will enroll in Ready4K's free, research-based texting program.

The LENA Research Foundation, creator of LENA Start, is dedicated to increasing talk in the first three years of a child's life when a child's brain develops to 80 percent of its adult size. During this critical window, children from low income families may hear as many as 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers.

[Ready4K](#) is a free program that provides families with fun facts and easy tips via text message that build their children's school readiness skills. The text messages are based on the child's age, and provide suggestions on ways to increase engagement throughout the day. In a randomized controlled trial study in San Francisco Unified School District, Stanford University researchers found that the Ready4K approach increased parental involvement at home and school, ultimately leading to two to three months of child learning gains in literacy (York & Loeb, 2014).

Over the past two years, LENA has dramatically expanded its reach and impact on early talk by partnering with trusted organizations across the country to implement LENA Start, which combines LENA's "talk pedometer" technology with a complete group curriculum that teaches parents simple strategies to talk more with their babies. Outcomes show that babies whose caregivers have participated in the program are building five months of language development in two months' time.

LENA Start is focused on helping parents build good talk habits that will have an impact well beyond the program's 13-week duration, and adding Ready4K will expand on that impact by providing parents and caregivers with a powerful resource to keep talk top of mind. This spring, Ready4K is extending its existing programs for parents of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds to include new content that applies to parents of 1- and 2-year-olds. This extension is ideal to serve as a follow-on for LENA Start, which is offered to parents of children 0 to 30 months.

"As strong as the effectiveness measure data has been for LENA Start, we recognize that it is not an inoculation; it's a great foundation," says LENA President Dr. Steve Hannon. "Ready4K is a targeted,

Advanced technology to accelerate language development and close achievement gaps.

manageable way for parents to continue to learn and grow as they help get their babies prepared for kindergarten.”

Beginning this spring, LENA Start parent graduates will enroll in age-matched Ready4K sequences at LENA Start’s five sites across the country in California, Texas, Iowa, Minnesota, and Alabama.

“Achieving and maintaining gains in early childhood is an ongoing process that requires various supports along the way,” says ParentPowered PBC Co-Founder and CEO Dr. Ben York. “LENA Start provides an excellent foundation for families, and we’re thrilled to offer Ready4K as a follow-on support for parents as they prepare their children for school.”

LENA Research Foundation is actively seeking new LENA Start partners to launch the program in 2017. For information on bringing LENA Start to your community, contact Jess Simmons at 303-441-9048, or email jsimmons@lenafoundation.org.

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About the LENA Research Foundation

The LENA Research Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity based in Boulder, Colorado. Its mission is to accelerate language development to improve the cognitive, social, and emotional health of children birth to five and close achievement gaps. Used by researchers and clinicians all over the world, the LENA System™ measures a child’s language environment and provides vital feedback to parents and professionals in programs dedicated to close the language, learning, and opportunity gap for children. For more information, please visit lena.org.

About Ready4K

Ready4K is administered by ParentPowered, a public benefit corporation dedicated to creating simple tools for great parenting. The program was founded by Ben York and Susanna Loeb, educational researchers with a passion for providing helpful information to all parents. The program builds on several years of research that they conducted while working in partnership at Stanford University. Today, more than 63,000 families in 25 states are receiving Ready4K texts. For more information, please visit www.ready4k.com.