



C8 Sciences Computer Program Riveting and “Cool” for Kids in New Haven Reads

New Haven Reads was founded out of one woman’s desire for more literacy in the city of New Haven, Connecticut. In 2001, Christine Alexander started by giving away free books and later added free after-school tutoring. Today, 300-plus New Haven Reads tutors work with over 400 kids during the school year.

In the four years Ethel Berger has been a tutor for New Haven Reads, she noticed that once the children she was working with understood the phonics piece of reading, they were still often left with comprehension issues.

“So many times while working with the children I tutor, I wished I could have some help in teaching them to organize their thoughts,” said Berger. “Then C8 Sciences came along and offered us the opportunity to use their computer program with our New Haven Reads summer class. I wanted to try it because their program offers the possibility of teaching kids problem solving skills, which hits a lot of different cognitive pieces.”

Another reading tutor, Kate Carter, who is an English major at Yale and works in one of the elementary schools in New Haven, added, “We see a lot of kids who haven’t developed the mental rigor to organize lists of things in their heads, or have the mental discipline to remember that ‘this is the list of stuff I need to do today,’ or are able to sit still and focus on something really hard for 15 minutes. The need for that type of mental exercise underscores the value of the C8 program. It develops a child’s attention span and ability to focus. It gets children to multitask in a way that’s fun and helps them learn categorization, pattern recognition and inductive thinking.”

C8Kids computer programs are based on the pioneering research done by Yale professor and senior research scientist Bruce Wexler, MD in his neurocognitive research lab. The computerized programs are designed to improve cognition in all children and help children who have learning problems like ADHD, by leveraging the brain’s ability to rewire itself through neural activity stimulated by the environment.

C8 programs adjust their difficulty up and down every 10 seconds to maintain the optimum challenge for each child. They not only know when a child makes a correct response or a mistake, the programs figure out what kind of mistakes they’re making through online error diagnostics. If a child makes the same mistake repeatedly,



C8 Sciences founder Bruce Wexler, MD watches Dylan reach the next level in the C8Kids computer program designed to improve cognitive abilities in children.

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the computer program gives them suggestions on how to avoid that mistake. This provides individualized teaching for every child.

“There’s memory involved in doing the program,” Berger explained. “When you have the two-ball piece, you have to remember the ball that came before. There’s categorization in the butterflies. And when you get to a certain higher level, you’re not just doing one thing you’re doing two things. And you need to focus on everything, especially as it speeds up. When you start hitting them right, the program speeds up and goes extremely fast at times, which gets other pieces of thinking. ‘What Comes Next’ makes you look at the pattern, figure out what the

pattern is, and do it relatively quickly. If you jump ahead to a much higher level, it's extremely hard. I can tell you from personal experience. But if you go along and move through the program as it's meant to be moved through, you can do it."

In the New Haven Reads summer program, it only took six weeks of children using the program three days each week, for tutors and parents to see positive results.

"When Dylan first came in, he couldn't sit still," Berger reflected. "Like a lot of other kids, he would pause a lot, get up and use the restroom a lot. Watching Dylan go from being somewhat hyper to being absolutely glued was amazing. On our last day of summer class, Dylan asked if he could stay longer to do an extra piece of the program. That was a magical moment."

Dylan's older sister Lyandra said, "The coolest thing about the program is all the levels. There are three main program levels: What Comes Next, Catch the Ball and Butterflies." Her favorite? "Butterflies, because I got to level 102." How did that make her feel? "Excited." If she were talking to a friend about the program, what would she tell them? "You should try it, because it's a lot of fun."

"Lyandra really loved watching her level go up and being able to say that she got to level 102," Carter shared. "That is important for her. Whether or not she's succeeding in school, this shows her that she is good at something and that she has the mental powers to do something cool. The levels work for the kids. They like being able to track their progress."

Lyandra and Dylan's mom said she had "absolutely seen a difference at home" in her kids ability to focus and listen.

"That's such a big piece of the value of this program besides kids learning to think," said Berger. "There are so many kids we see in the school system that people describe as having attention deficit; whether it's an actual attention deficit or not I don't know, but they have real trouble focusing. Whether it's a language barrier or it really is an attention deficit, if this could help kids in that situation, this is just enormous. It's huge."

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Ethel Berger, Tutor

If you have any questions or comments or if you would like to request a demonstration of the software, please email the C8Sciences team at info@c8sciences.com, or call us at 203-665-8809.

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