

## Waterford UPSTART Kindergarten Readiness Program

Waterford UPSTART is an **in-home kindergarten readiness program** that was created by the Utah State Legislature in 2009. The program is implemented by Waterford.org and helps children develop the foundational academic and cognitive skills they need for school success.

- Preschool-age children use **Waterford UPSTART in the home for 15-20 minutes a day**, five days a week.
- Children receive a **personalized curriculum in reading, math and science** with an emphasis on reading.
- **Strong parental engagement.** Each family is assigned a coach; Waterford UPSTART forms a partnership with parents and caregivers to ensure all children obtain the education necessary for success in school.
- **Social-emotional learning** is modeled in the software learning sequence and developed by parents through off-line activities.
- **Computers and internet service are provided** if the home does not have them.

**Standards Aligned, Developmentally Appropriate, Endorsed for Special Education** – Waterford UPSTART is aligned to:

- **Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards;**
- Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework;
- CASEL Social and Emotional Learning Competencies; and
- Endorsed by the Council of Administrators of Special Education.

**Turn-Key Simplicity** – Waterford UPSTART is a turn-key program that includes everything needed for a high-fidelity implementation:

- **Recruitment** – Waterford.org, in partnership with community/civic partners, recruits families.
- **Technology** – Families receive free computers and internet access, if needed.
- **Personalized learning software** – Adaptive literacy, math, and science software also addresses social-emotional competencies.
- **Family engagement** – Onsite parent trainings and ongoing live and responsive coaching.
- **Assessment** – Pre/post assessment documents growth and provides reports.
- **Partners** – Waterford.org collaborates and implements programs with local partners.

**Increased Access to Services, More Parent Options** – By targeting the place where children spend the most time – the home – as well as empowering their parents and primary caregivers to be more effective first teachers, Waterford UPSTART offers an early education solution that addresses affordability, convenience, choice, and accessibility through a program with demonstrated success.

### Waterford UPSTART Overcomes Barriers to Early Learning



Areas (rural & urban) where access to transportation hinders early learning services.



Cultural barriers that can lower preschool participation among at-risk populations.



Children who do not speak English or that could benefit from extra cognitive programming.



Families that are not able to send their children to site-based preschool.



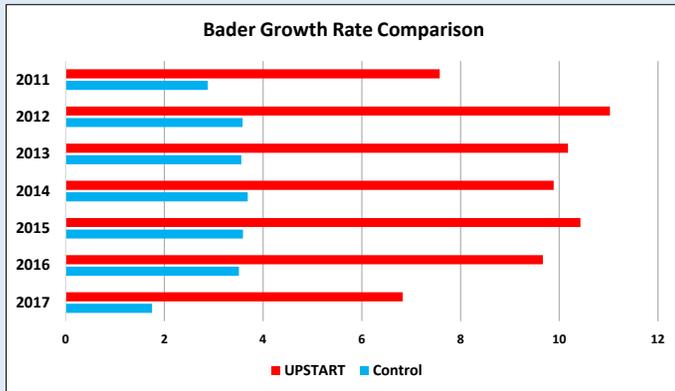
Children who are on wait-lists for prekindergarten programs.



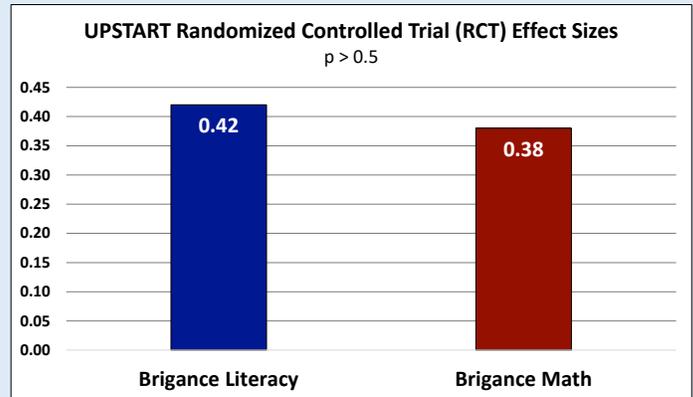
Children (and families) that face a “technology” gap.

# External Evaluation – Demonstrated Record of Effectiveness

**Annual Independent Evaluations** – Third party evaluations show Waterford UPSTART children have **significantly higher learning gains than children from control groups** – as measured over a number of years by the Brigance Inventory of Early Development and the Bader Reading and Language Inventory.

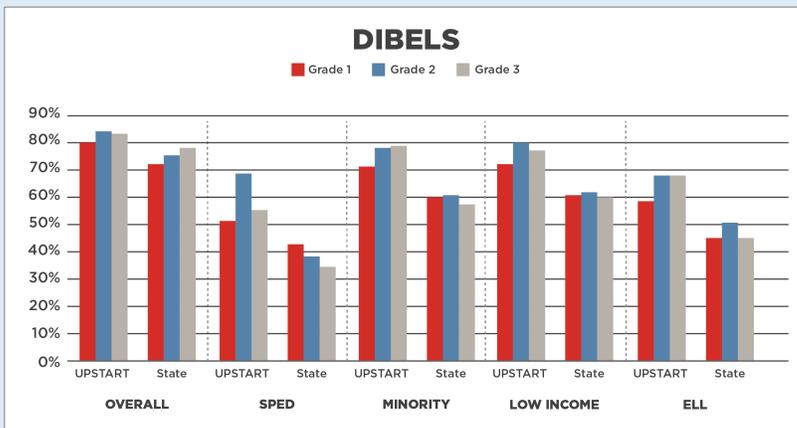


**Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)** – In 2013, Waterford.org was awarded an \$11.5 million **Investing in Innovation (i3) Validation Grant** by the U.S. Department of Education that provided Waterford UPSTART to Utah’s 18 most rural school districts. That grant was used to administer a randomized controlled trial (RCT) that showed, **Waterford UPSTART has a substantial impact on improving student growth and closing achievement gaps for early learners.**



**Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Grant** – Because of the successful implementation of the i3 Validation Grant, Waterford.org was recently awarded (October 2018) a \$14.2 million EIR Expansion grant from the U.S. Department of Education to implement Waterford UPSTART pilots in Great Plains states that do not provide pre-K funding (Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming).

**Longitudinal Evaluation** – The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) conducted a longitudinal evaluation of Waterford UPSTART results. USBE found that **Waterford UPSTART students continually outperformed state averages compared to their non-UPSTART peers** on state standardized tests (DIBELS and SAGE) through the 4<sup>th</sup> grade (highest grade achieved at the time). Significantly, **Waterford UPSTART gains were consistent across all subgroups**, including special education, minority, low-income, and English learner populations.



**Social-Emotional Learning** – Waterford UPSTART outcomes were evaluated as part of Utah’s High-Quality School Readiness (HQSR) Grant. A review of post-program **social-emotional development skills** by program group showed **outstanding results for Waterford UPSTART when compared to both public and private preschool programs.**

### Social-Emotional Development Skills by Program Group

