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Victoria Larios

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How Reading to Dogs Can Benefit Children's Development

Senior Capstone — Spring 2022

Victoria Larios

Advisor: Dr. Pazoe Thao

## **Abstract**

This senior capstone research project investigates the benefits of children's development when they read to dogs. Through literature review, interviews, and anonymous questionnaires, I was able to gather information proving this such as cognitive development, socio-emotional development, increase in oxytocin, and a decrease in cortisol level, among others. Results from my research yielded for more research to be done but all stated the positive impacts reading to dogs and did not mention anything that would dispute the use of dogs to benefit children's development.

## **Introduction and Background**

Reading is a crucial part of early childhood development and plays an extremely important role throughout the entirety of one's life. Additionally, reading throughout the early school years of a child's life creates numerous opportunities later on in life as well. Despite reading being such a valuable asset and tool for everyone to acquire, some individuals are unfortunate and are unable to develop reading comprehension from an early age. This can be the result of numerous situations whether it is parents not reading to children in their early years, kids being discouraged to read, not liking reading, or simply having a general lack of opportunity as well. To combat this issue, programs involving children reading to animals can be an engaging way to reach children who still are not getting the help they need. This is a unique, alternative way for children to develop reading skills and comprehension that will assist them later in life.

It is important to note that, "reading skills and literacy are an important component of academic success for school-aged children... as increased literacy can lead to improved academic performance and attitudes about school" (Linder, Muller, Gibbs, Alper, and Freeman, 2018, para 1). These are very crucial tools as they are the building blocks for early childhood development and set the foundation for what is to come. Focusing on the subject of, "reading in particular, a recent systematic analysis supports that the presence of an animal has been associated with benefits to child readers" (Linder, Muller, Gibbs, Alper, and Freeman, 2017, para 5). With the general consensus being that reading to animals benefits early childhood development, I felt this was a great topic to consider especially after pairing it with my prior experience in a classroom setting.

During my first semester at CSUMB, I was enrolled in a course named Service Learning for Social Change in Education. I chose to do my service learning at a low-income school which

also happened to have low levels of reading comprehension. This was something that really struck me, as I felt reading was a fundamental part of a child's education. After seeing students who were not initially interested in reading for a variety of reasons, I realized not enough is currently being done to reach students in these types of situations and I knew this was something I wanted to research further. My ultimate goal was to find a possible solution for reaching students who are less motivated or altogether struggling when it comes to reading. Currently, "educators are using alternative teaching methods to tackle new expectations, one method being the use of animal-assisted literacy programs." (Krupp and Shupp, 2017, para 6). After some initial research, I came across reading to animals as a fun and unique way to reach children, and ultimately further their development. My main reason for selecting this strategy is my love for animals and children alike, ultimately making it an ideal tool to utilize in a future classroom setting.

With my career path being a teacher, I believe it is important for me to look in all directions to help better assist my future students. The primary research question I will propose is: How does reading to dogs benefit children's development? I will provide evidence that supports children's development after implementation of animal assisted programs through other journals, peer-reviewed articles, interviews, and questionnaires. I will justify the use of animals in the classroom to benefit children's development. My related research questions are as follows: How did reading to dogs come about? To what extent, does it benefit children's development? What does research say about reading to dogs benefiting students' development? What are the benefits of students reading to animals/pets instead of just themselves? Are there local programs which support children reading to dogs? If so, how do they benefit children's development? What

could be done to expand these programs to benefit children's development? Through extensive research, I aim to answer the previously stated questions.

### **Literature Review**

There are a variety of different ways in which children develop while participating in animal assisted reading programs. Despite the many benefits that result from these programs being enacted, there seems to be a general lack of new programs emerging with a need for expansion. Research suggests, “animal-assisted interventions may have benefits for children learning to read, though there is a need for more studies from which a causal inference can be made” (Linder, Muller, Gibbs, Alper, and Freeman, 2017, para 7). In addition to this, “Animal Assisted Activities (AAA) which provide opportunities for motivational, educational, or recreational benefits,” (Krupp and Shupp, 2017, para 2) increase individual's reading abilities and enhance their academic lives overall as well. Current research shows children's development resulting from these programs in three main areas: cognitive, socio-emotional, and language development.

#### Cognitive Development

Conducive to begin reading in the early stages of elementary school, children need some sort of motivating factor to drive them. With regard to “promoting and improving literacy, programs that foster motivation to engage in reading can facilitate improved reading skills.” (Linder, Mueller, Gibbs, Alper, Freeman, 2017, para 2). In numerous cases, “companion animals are likely to be powerful motivators for learning, perhaps due to children learning and retaining more about subjects they are more emotionally invested in, and due to learning being optimized when it occurs within meaningful relationships.” (Purewal, Christley, Kordas, et. al, 2017, para 4). An animal is a great way to motivate children because a relationship develops over time as

well. In turn, “students' interest in dogs can inspire long term intrinsic motivation” (Krupp and Shupp, 2017, para 18), when it comes to increasing their reading development and overall education. This is extremely important because as children develop, they need to continue to maintain high levels of motivation when it comes to reading. In general it can be said that, “animal intervention has a role to play in academic engagement and reading skill” (Brelsford, Gee, and Pfeffer, 2017, para 25). In addition to this, specific studies within the classroom have gone on to demonstrate that, “the presence of animals has been shown to elicit immediate positive effects in testing situations of cognition such as memory, categorization and attention and studies on language, literacy, and reading ability have also shown a similar positive influence of animal presence” (Purewal, Christley, Kordas, et. al, 2017, para 4). To further the argument, “a significant main effect was also found for reading comprehension scores...with the dog group, showing significantly higher comprehension scores than all other groups.” (Brelsford, Gee, and Pfeffer, 2017, para 25). With all those benefits at hand, educators should use it to their advantage with struggling students, “because poor reading abilities are also associated with low reading motivation” (Hall, Gee, and Mills, 2016, para 3). To combat this issue and increase motivation from students, teachers use various methods within the animal assisted programs to help motivate their children to improve their reading skills. For example, “while reading, whenever there would be a comma or period in the sentence, the instructor would have the student stop reading and pet the dog (a quick pet for a comma and a longer pet for a period). This helped the students to learn when to pause while reading, as well as how long to pause.” (Kirnan, Siminerio, and Wong, 2015, para 22). Strategies like these result in multiple benefits all directly relating to the cognitive development of children over time. While animal assisted reading programs have a multitude of tremendous benefits when it comes to the cognitive development

of children, numerous benefits can also be seen with the socio-emotional development of children as well.

### Language Development

An additional important aspect of a child's development is their use of language, as it is something that is used on a daily basis. Language is not only verbal, but also involves reading and writing as well. "It has been suggested that companion animal ownership may facilitate language acquisition and potentially enhance verbal skills in children" (Purewal, Christley, Kordas, et. al, 2017, para 4). In addition to ownership of a companion animal and despite numerous, "challenges that children reading below grade level face, it is a critical task to develop creative programs that can engage youth in reading activities" (Linder, Muller, Gibbs, Alper, and Freeman, 2017, para 3). After implementation, "goals of canine-assisted reading programs include increasing reading fluency, increasing motivation to read, providing encouragement for reluctant readers, and making reading fun" (Lane and Zavada, 2013, para 4). Fung (2017) adds, "canine-assisted reading programs aim to enhance their literacy skills, such as reading fluency and accuracy" (para 5). Evidence published in an International Literacy Association Journal shows, "children's reading fluency improved by 30%, and 75% of the parents reported that their children read aloud more frequently and with greater confidence after the study was completed" (Lane and Zavada, 2013, para 11). In addition to this, "reading aloud to an adult/therapy dog team tended to increase children's scores on a test of oral reading fluency much more than reading to peers" (Krupp and Shupp, 2017, para 24). In an alternative study conducted by Kirnan, Siminerio, and Wong (2015), shows significantly higher scores for reading accuracy and comprehension were found for the dog reading group compared with all other groups in the study (para 32). Furthermore, they state "at the program's conclusion, participants had

significantly improved their oral reading fluency skills, relative to a control group” (Kirnan, Ventresco, and Gardner, 2017, para 6). The study went on to determine that, “AAI settings showed increases in language (evidenced by verbal and non-verbal social behaviours with dog and therapist, greater ability to stay on topic when speaking) and a decrease in negative behaviours” (Kirnan, Shah, and Laletti, 2020, para 15). The majority of, “academic programmes with SEN students in the published literature focused on reading and showed improvements in reading scores, time spent reading, oral fluency and reading rate” (Kirnan, Shah, and Laletti, 2020, para 18). The study concluded that, “academic outcomes might include general measures such as amount of time reading, word rate, book difficulty, preparation for reading with dog, and reading in other settings (home, during classroom free time) or student specific behaviors such as those measured by Konarski (n.d.). These included eagerness to read, recognition of high frequency words, sound-by-sound blending of unfamiliar words, attempting unfamiliar words and rereading words when corrected.” (Kirnan, Shah, and Laletti, 2020, para 58). As a result of implementing dog assisted reading programs, “students became more involved in other school activities, volunteered to read aloud, and were more participatory” (Kirnan, Siminerio, and Wong, 2015, para 21). Further, “research has suggested that children who do not learn to read effectively in primary grades are less likely to achieve full literacy” (Linder, Mueller, Gibbs, Alper, Freeman, 2017, para 1). While it is evident that animal assisted reading programs have numerous benefits when it comes to the language development of children, countless benefits can also be seen when it comes to the socio-emotional development of children as well.

### Socio-emotional Development

Additional benefits can be seen when looking at how children develop socio-emotionally over time when participating in animal assisted reading programs. Brelson, Gee and Pfeffer (2017) explain that animals in these programs have, “contributed to the children’s overall emotional stability, improved behavioral control, and students’ attitudes towards school and facilitated the students' learning in relation to responsibility, respect, and empathy” (para 30). Additional research by Purewal, Christley, Kordas, et. al (2017) reveals, “that young children derive developmental benefits (social competence, empathy, and more positive attitudes toward pets) from their interaction with their companion animals" (para 30). Children receive numerous socio-emotional developmental benefits, “because companion animals both give and receive affection, they can contribute to and partially fulfill attachment needs; therefore, the developmental importance of bonds that children and adolescents form with animals should not be overlooked.” (Purewal, Christley, Kordas, et. al, 2017, para 2). Researchers also see that “interacting with animals has been associated with higher autonomy and self-esteem, potentially as a result of the unconditional acceptance offered by companion animals" (Linder, Muller, Gibbs, Alper, and Freeman, 2017, para 4). Muckle and Lasikiewicz (2017) add that these programs are “providing an avenue for stimulation, reciprocal affection, and external validation” (para 4). Moreover, Hall, Gee, and Mill (2016) “suggest that the non-threatening, non-judgemental presence of a dog improves children’s feelings of support during reading” (para 33). This is something crucial in a child’s development as this is when they are seeking acceptance from those around them, especially their fellow peers in the classroom. Additionally, “if companion animals provide social support and act as catalysts for human social interactions, they may reduce loneliness and increase self-esteem” (Purewal, Christley, Kordas, et. al, 2017, para 3). Similar research suggests, “dogs can serve as an “emotional bridge” to therapists and act

as “social catalysts” for the children as well as their families” (Kirnan, Shah, and Lauletta, 2020, para 15). Beyond these numerous benefits, “research has also found pets to have emotional and social benefits such as quelling anxiety, facilitating coping, and reducing the perception of discomfort for a wide span of ages and populations” (Lane and Zavada, 2013, para 7). Further research also states, “reading to dogs brings improvements to children’s reading abilities and beneficially alters behavioral and emotional processes which may be important aspects in creating a learning environment to best cultivate reading skills. (Hall, Gee, and Mills, 2016, para 36). In general, “these programs are said to create a fun and non-threatening environment in which children can gain confidence in their abilities and develop positive schemas around reading” (Kirnan, Ventresco, and Gardner, 2017, para 5).

After conducting thorough research throughout the entirety of the semester, very little evidence suggested evidence that contradicts the statement that reading to dogs can help benefit early childhood development. As a result of my primary research proving to be beneficial, I was able to apply the methods and procedures the way I wanted.

### **Methods and Procedures**

At the beginning of the semester we were asked what we wanted to do a semester long research project on and so many ideas flooded my mind. One idea that came to mind was looking outside the box to better assist children who are reading at below average levels. This is an idea that I valued doing research on, as I love teaching children and love animals, so the idea of combining both of these seemed like a perfect fit. I chose to focus on elementary school children because I believe this is where the foundation for reading begins. A few weeks into the semester I had an intensive advising appointment with Dr. Thao where he asked very specific questions in order to help me narrow down the topic of my project. At this time he also assisted me in

creating multiple questions that would allow me to begin conducting my research. As I began researching I utilized the library database to find various peer-reviewed journal articles that provided strong evidence on the effectiveness of children reading to dogs and the benefits it has on early childhood development. Not long after that, I began emailing with Olivia (pseudonym) from the SPCA of Monterey County. Olivia is the program coordinator of Paws to Read, a program centered around bringing dogs to children to assist with reading development. With the assistance of Olivia, I was able to interview two teachers and gave anonymous questionnaires to forty students as well.

I began communicating with Olivia back and forth until we found an official date to conduct an interview. On February 26, 2022 Olivia and I met via Zoom to discuss the program in detail and the various experiences she has had while working in her position. During this time she shared the typical duties for her role within the program; a few times a week she takes a small animal, usually a dog, from the shelter and goes into a designated classroom. From there, small groups of children read to the animal for an allotted period of time. Olivia also shared numerous amazing stories of individual student success stories that she has seen excel in the subject of reading due to the program. In the midst of the interview, Olivia and I talked about having me observe one of the sessions of the Paws to Read program in person. She reached out to the teachers who host the program in their respective classrooms and on March 5, 2022 she heard back from the two teachers. At this point in our communication, we decided on an official date in which she saw those teachers and I was available to conduct more interviews.

Interviewing Olivia was very interesting and gave me valuable information, however I was very eager to begin observing the program first hand. On March 18, 2022 I was able to join Olivia in the two third grade classes. Seeing the students light up, just as we walked through the

classroom door with the dog was such a heartwarming, valuable, and an unforgettable experience. We sat at a table in the back of the classroom and had the students join us in multiple small groups. While the students were around the table they received anonymous questionnaires (see Appendix A) in which they would answer how they felt about the program and whether or not they believed it had helped them develop any of their reading abilities.

Throughout my time observing these students take advantage of the program that was brought to them, I had the opportunity to briefly speak with each of the third grade teachers. Unfortunately due to time restrictions and class management, I was not able to interview the teachers in person. Despite this, I was able to send the questionnaire via email (see Appendix B) so I was able to see their perspective on the program and whether or not they had seen continued improvements in the students' development over the course of the program. With the opportunity of this program in their classroom, Teacher A mentioned that “the students began this school year reading at a kindergarten level in English, now [in March] they are reading at a third grade level” (Teacher A, Personal Communication, 18 March 2022). This shows the program can be successful and beneficial to children all over.

### **Results and Discussion**

After some time, my research yielded positive results pertaining to reading to dogs and its impact on childhood development. Several methods of research including journal articles, anonymous questionnaires, and interviews helped answer my secondary research questions and further my knowledge to give perspective on why these programs should be recommended. The questions that will be answered are as follows: How did reading to dogs come about? What does research say about reading to dogs benefiting students' development? What are the benefits of students reading to animals/pets instead of just themselves? Are there local programs which

support children reading to dogs? If so, how do they benefit children's development? What could be done to expand these programs to benefit children's development?

“Bringing the therapy dogs into the school, for which children provided positive feedback, may have become associated with positive views about reading in school and improved their attitudes about academic reading.” (Linder, Muller, Gibbs, Alper, and Freeman, 2017, para 24). This suggests that programs involving reading to animals are deemed successful. To answer the research questions based on evidence from several different sources, the following paragraphs summarize findings on the topic of reading to animals.

*How did reading to dogs come about?* Lane and Zavada (2013) state that using animals for other jobs besides domestication has been found as early as the 1700s but using dogs in a professional setting did not come around until the 20th century. Lane and Zavada (2013) also state in their article that the term “pet therapy” originated from a child psychiatrist, Boris Levinson, in 1961. Brelsford, Gee, and Pfeffer (2017) state that “the use of animals as part of educational and therapeutic interventions..has increased over the years” to benefit \_\_\_ such as psychological and physiological. Lane and Zavada (2013) further stated that researchers have seen increases in oxytocin production as a decrease in cortisol level and blood pressure. In addition, Hall and Mills (2016), stated that the first program which advocated for children reading to dogs was called Reading Education Assistance Dogs, also known as READ, and was established in 1999 (para 2). Fung (2017) states “animal-assisted reading programs, which primarily aim at enhancing children’s reading skills, [have] been more prevalent than animal-assisted humane education programs in schools and public libraries in the past two decades” (para 3). This article is proving that although it is still newer, researchers are seeing benefits.

*What does research say about reading to dogs benefiting students' development?*

Brelsford, Gee, and Pfeffer (2017) mentioned that Austria has recently allowed their teachers to bring their pets into the classroom and they have seen an increase in attention, motivation, socio-emotional development, and cognitive development (para 5). This article also states “working closely with the dog was reported to have had a direct influence on their sense of control by decreasing feelings of helplessness and improving self-confidence” (Brelsford, Gee, & Pfeffer, 2017, para 30). Furthermore, Rollins (2016), asserted that they were able to see improvements in the students who read to dogs for about fifteen minutes once a week, when compared to students who did not. Rollins (2016) also expressed that this helps the students developmentally because this gives them the chance to feel like a leader, such as their teachers would share the book with the students; the student would share the book with the dog. In an article Rollins (2016) mentioned the biggest benefit to the students is for them to develop empathy while spending time with the animals. *South Florida Sun* (2013) published an article stating these programs “help children build confidence in their reading skills, particularly with those who find it difficult or embarrassing to read out loud” (para 12). “Intermountain Therapy Animals launched the R.E.A.D. program as the first comprehensive literacy program whose mission is to improve the literacy skills of children through the assistance of registered therapy teams as literacy mentors” (Krupp and Shupp, 2017, para 7).

*What are the benefits of students reading to animals/pets instead of just themselves?* In an article by Kirnan and Gardner (2017) stated that “data showed significantly higher reading scores for students enrolled in the dog program.” Throughout their article they state that this data proves true in both English language learners and non English language learners, therefore proving that implementing dogs into the academic life can only be beneficial. This is important to note that it

also helps students who do not even speak English, showing just how beneficial these animals can be. In an article by Linder, Muller, Gibbs, Alpgger, and Freeman (2018), they state that after a six week after school program they see a significant increase in the reading attitudes compared to the control group. In an article published by *South Florida Sun* (2013), having children read to dogs instead of just themselves help the students build confidence, this is particularly true with students who are embarrassed or have a difficult time reading aloud. The reason dogs are different from humans, in the article by South Florida Sun (2013), is because they are described as noncritical listeners. Again this is a great opportunity for the students to gain confidence over time and later embody that confidence when they have to read aloud. “The fantastic program helped me because it made me talk more” (Student A, Personal Communication, 18 March 2022).

*Are there local programs which support children reading to dogs? If so, how do they benefit children's development?* Through my research I was able to discover a program called Paws to Read, which was run by the SPCA for Monterey County. After reaching out via email, I was given the opportunity to interview her and asked a few questions in regards to how the program was run, who ran it, and what it consisted of. Through the interview with Olivia (pseudonym) she told me she was the person in charge of running this program, her title at the SPCA is the Community Outreach educator. She said the program had been running for approximately six years. As the Community Outreach educator she is the one who takes the animals to local schools. While at the school she goes into two classes per day and brings the students in small groups to read to the animal. Olivia had great insight on the program as she sees the students throughout the semester and gets to see their improvement. One exemplary example she gave during our interview was about a little girl who became so in love with reading

because of this program. When she began telling me about this little girl she talked about her lacking confidence as well as not being that great of a reader, then she was given the idea to read to animals because of the Paws to Read program. Throughout the school year she was able to see the confidence this student gained and saw her go from not enjoying reading to being in love with it. Her teacher mentioned to Olivia that she would read every night to their dog and from doing so she has gained confidence as well as well increased her reading comprehension level (Olivia, personal communication, 26 February 2022). Teacher A further discussed her experience with the program running in her classroom. During the duration of our interview Teacher A talked about her class as a whole. At her specific school students are in Spanish only classes from kindergarten to second grade; students enrolled in third grade are half English and half Spanish instruction; lastly the majority of students in fourth and fifth grade used English and some Spanish. This teacher taught third grade; therefore some of these students did not know English up until this point in their lives. Teacher A mentions that her students began reading in English at a kindergarten level. Observations were done in March, which is about two months into the second semester. Teacher A mentions that they are all reading at a third grade level in English. She stated that she truly believes this program has helped the students gain confidence and overall helped them achieve success when it came to learning to read in English (Teacher A, personal communication 18 March 2022).

*What could be done to expand these programs to benefit children's development?* An article published by *South Florida Sun* (2013) stated that the reading motivation program is offered in 27 county libraries by the local Humane Society. This is a crucial piece of information as there are many Humane Societies spread throughout the state which can benefit from this type of program. As stated in the article by Rollins (2016), this is a “mutually beneficial program that

gives the children an opportunity to practice their reading while helping timid shelter dogs learn to socialize.” Sandt (2019), mentioned the importance of proper implementation as well as proper planning from the teacher as well as the handler. This is something major because due to lack of planning and implementation there can be negative affects on the students and canines’ health and behavior. Through further research, I was able to discover a program similar to Paws to Read in Santa Clara County; that program was run through the public libraries.

### **Problems and Limitations**

Throughout my research process, I did feel as though I was moving at a good pace throughout the semester to obtain the research I needed to present a well thought out project and answer the previously stated questions. In spite of getting in contact with people as early on in the semester as I could, I experienced a setback by the lack of teachers who responded to my questionnaire. Although I would have liked for more teachers to respond, including those who I personally did not have the opportunity to observe, I believe that from the teachers that did respond, their responses are valid and should be considered nonetheless. Additionally, a limitation I ran into with the teachers was the inability to interview face to face. I was still able to see their perspective on the topic but I was not able to ask on the spot follow-up questions if I felt it was necessary.

An additional limitation I encountered when conducting research was trying to get in touch with an additional program that is run by a local public library. By getting in contact, I was hoping to see any similarities or differences between the two programs. One idea that came to mind while trying to gain more knowledge on these programs was to see the major benefits that each program feels they bring, as they were in two different counties. The reason I believed there

would be a difference in benefits is due to the change in demographics, types of schools in the surrounding areas, and the influence of the types of jobs in these two counties.

A limitation I did not have control over but could have positively affected my project, was the amount of journals that were accessible as this is a newer topic. Many of the articles I read also cited other authors' journals that I have previously read. I believe the articles citing one another helped strengthen my argument, as they all seemed to agree with one another. The only possible negative aspect that researchers stated was a slight lack of evidence, but again, the majority agreed that it was extremely beneficial to children's development overall.

After completing my research and looking back, I would rather have had more time to interview teachers and also observe the program within more classroom settings. I believe the interviews I have now are valid and informative, but without having such a time restriction I believe I would have conducted more interviews with additional teachers. I also think with more time I could have scheduled more time with the Paws to Read program so I could observe different schools as well. Despite all of this, I have seen the possible benefits that come with the implementation of these programs and hope to apply a similar program to my future classroom as well.

### **Recommendations**

As a result of my data collection, I would highly recommend the utilization and implementation of animal assisted reading programs. I believe that children need to be given more opportunities to succeed developmentally, including opportunities that may seem unique. The goal of these programs is to help students benefit developmentally and as Student B states, "the program has helped me read more because reading with a dog is way more fun" (Student B, Personal Communication, 18 March 2022).

I would also recommend these types of programs to humane societies and local shelters. This is a unique approach and another opportunity to reach children in other areas outside classroom settings. If more of these programs get incorporated within places like shelters or similar programs that deal hands-on with animals, more children can utilize these tools and develop over time.

### **Conclusion**

As a result of my research, I have determined that reading to dogs is extremely beneficial when it comes to childhood development especially in the realms of cognitive, language, and socioemotional development. Implementing more programs that incorporate children reading to dogs assists children in their overall growth within these categories. Reading to dogs also allows children to more comfortably approach the topic of reading while assisting more children to get motivated to read as well as proved by one student's response, “the incredible program helped me to like to read” (Student C, personal communication, 18 March 2022). The majority consensus from the students was that the program was helpful to them because it encouraged them to read, as they had the opportunity to pet the animals while doing so. Other students went on to say that it helped them talk and connect more in class.

Reading to dogs is an extremely beneficial tool when implemented in programs that are directed at children, especially those who are struggling. This process allows for children to develop reading skills, literacy, fluency, and ensures children are at or above average for their respective grade levels. Confidence is also strengthened within children as they participate in these programs, which helps them in all aspects of their lives later in life. Implementation of these programs is vital for childhood development and should be considered as a beneficial and unique way to get all students to reach their full potential.

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**Appendix A**  
Students' Anonymous Questionnaire

1. Before starting Paws to Read, did you enjoy reading on your own time?

No- 1    2    3    4    5 -Yes

1. Since you have started Paws to Read, do you enjoy reading on your own time?

No- 1    2    3    4    5 -Yes

1. Do you think Paws to Read has helped you become a better reader?

No- 1    2    3    4    5 -Yes

1. Would you recommend Paws to Read to friends?

No- 1    2    3    4    5 -Yes

1. Which part of the program helped you the most?

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**Appendix B**  
Anonymous Teacher Questionnaire

1. Have you seen improvements in students' attitude since beginning Paws to Read?

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2. Have you seen improvements in students' ability to read?

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3. Would you recommend this program to a colleague?

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4. What is one improvement you have noticed since beginning this program that has stood out the most?

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5. Why do you believe animal assisted programs benefit students' cognitive development, particularly when it comes to reading?

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