

SUMMER LITERACY INFUSION

2025 PROGRAM OUTLINE



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

OVERVIEW

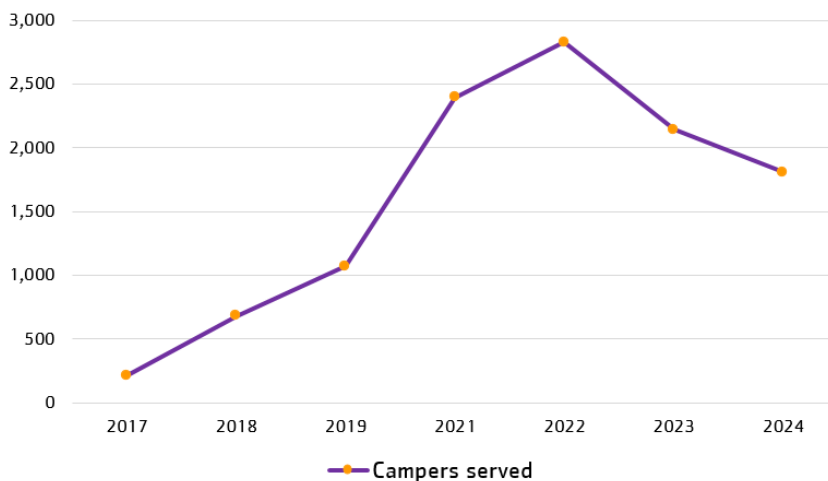
Summer Literacy Infusion (SLI) aims to combat summer learning loss by providing campers in grades Pre-K–5 with opportunities to practice literacy skills, build home libraries, and cultivate a love for reading. Integrated into traditional camp programs, SLI offers 60 minutes of literacy instruction 4–5 days a week. Certified teachers serve as literacy instructors, planning and leading activities while also supporting camp staff in incorporating literacy practices. The program is flexible, designed to fit both half-day and full-day camp schedules.

ORIGIN & HISTORY

Since 2017, the YMCA of Greater Charlotte has embedded literacy practices into summer camps across the Charlotte–Mecklenburg area. A Read Charlotte Transformation Fund grant helped support the integration of literacy-focused activities into YMCA summer camps in 2017 and 2018. The model used in these camps was inspired by the Philadelphia Out of School Time Literacy Initiative (POSTLI), a highly successful program that operated in Philadelphia for nearly two decades. To better align with local needs, the YMCA adapted the POSTLI model for use in Charlotte's summer camps. The pilot program involved several out-of-school time agencies, including the YMCA, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, Discovery Place, and the CMS After School Enrichment Program.

The YMCA has expanded Summer Literacy Infusion to reach more campers throughout the greater Charlotte area. In addition to integrating SLI into our own traditional day camps, we also provide training, materials, and coaching to other agencies, empowering them to implement the model on their own.

Since its launch in 2017, SLI has grown significantly—from serving 214 campers at 3 locations to reaching 1,808 campers at 32 locations in 2024. To date, the program has engaged a total of 11,138 campers in literacy learning during the summer months.



PARTNER AGENCIES

- Alliance Center for Education
- Charlotte's BEST After-School & Summer Camp
- CMS After School Enrichment Program
- CrossRoads Corporation for Affordable Housing and Community Development, Inc.
- Firm Foundations Youth and Family Outreach
- First Baptist Weekday Ministry
- Greater Enrichment Program
- Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation
- Park Road Baptist Church Child Development Center
- St. John's Baptist Church Weekday School
- UMBA Bright Stars, Inc.

Y CENTERS

- Brace YMCA
- Harris YMCA
- Keith Family YMCA
- Lake Norman YMCA
- Lincoln County YMCA
- Lowe's YMCA
- McCrorey YMCA
- Morrison Family YMCA
- Simmons YMCA

CONTACTS

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CAMP SELECTION

SLI is designed to integrate seamlessly into a variety of camp programs, with key features that must be in place to support its success:

- **Half-day or full-day camp:** 60 minutes of literacy activities included within the program
- **Program duration:** Camps operate for 6 or more weeks
- **Data collection:** Camps are required to gather and provide relevant data
- **Family engagement:** Opportunities to engage families within program

Local agencies currently implementing SLI in the greater Charlotte area include churches, daycare centers, parks and recreation sites, and nonprofit organizations.

New and returning agencies are selected to participate through an annual application process. Our goal is to retain our current camps and expand our reach each year.

CAMPERS

The local SLI model was initially designed for campers in grades K–3 to support community-wide efforts aimed at increasing 3rd grade reading proficiency. However, the model can be expanded to include pre-K, 4th, and 5th grades, depending on camp enrollment. To accommodate the developmental needs of both younger and older campers, materials and activities can be adjusted accordingly.

STAFFING

SLI activities are designed to be accessible by a wide range of staff and volunteers, who receive training and coaching for successful implementation. SLI does not require facilitation by a certified teacher, however, the Y invests in hiring certified teachers to support strong program delivery within Y centers and community camps. Our recommended teacher to student ratio is 1:8.

At our Y centers, certified teachers serve as literacy instructors. Instructors are responsible for planning and leading literacy activities with assistance from camp counselors.

At community camps, certified teachers serve as literacy specialists. Each community camp is responsible for staffing their team, however, the Y provides implementation support.

COMPONENTS

LITERACY

Read alouds
Writing
Independent reading
Literacy activities

AGENCY SUPPORT

Books and materials
Training
Ongoing coaching and support

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Promote and incentivize reading at home
Provide books and literacy supplies
Book-a-Palooza events (free book fairs)

SUMMER LEARNING

By 9th grade, two-thirds of the the achievement gap in reading can be attributed to learning losses incurred over the summer.

The lack of equitable access to academic and enrichment opportunities during the summer contributes to significant learning loss in reading and math for many children. The "summer slide," compounded over multiple years, makes it increasingly difficult for students to catch up, further widening achievement gaps between student subgroups.

Providing summer program opportunities, access to literacy activities, and books during the summer months can help mitigate these disparities.

ACCESS TO BOOKS

Many youth live in 'book deserts' where access to age-appropriate books is limited or nonexistent. Nationally, book deserts disproportionately affect children living in poverty.

For struggling readers, the lack of access to books outside of school can have a profound impact, preventing them from practicing and developing essential reading skills.

To help address this issue, the Y hosts an annual book drive to collect new and gently used books. We partner with Promising Pages to prepare these books for distribution.

When building home libraries, we prioritize choice and diversity. Our goal is to empower campers to select books they are excited to read, while also ensuring they see themselves reflected in the stories they explore.

EVALUATION

Campers in grades pre-K–5 are assessed using DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) at the start of camp. Those who remain enrolled through the end of camp complete a post-assessment to track progress in their reading skills. We also promote home reading as a measure of family engagement, and collect feedback from staff, parents, and camp directors to guide program improvements and innovations.

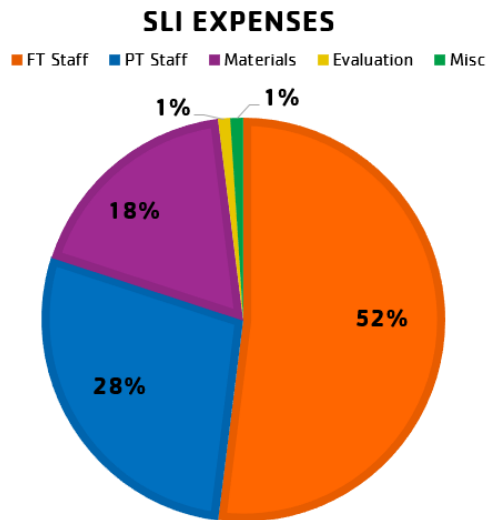
While evaluation is essential to SLI, it's important to note the limitations of the data we collect over the summer. Camp attendance can be highly transient, which affects the sample size of those who complete both pre- and post-assessments. We report results with consideration for dosage and sample size. Dosage is defined as campers who completed both assessments and attended at least 75% of camp weeks. Summer 2024's sample size was a total of 463 students (22% of the total served). Due to a smaller sample, we cannot generalize outcomes to the broader group of camp participants.

For detailed information on the program's outcomes, please refer to our annual impact report, available online at ymcacharlotte.org.

COSTS & FUNDING

The SLI budget is developed annually based on projected service numbers for the calendar year.

The projected cost to operate the SLI model across Charlotte-Mecklenburg in 2025 is \$206,942. The Y invests approximately **\$6,270 per camp** (33 camps) or **\$103 per camper** (2,000 campers). Part-time staff account for approximately one-third of the program cost due to our continued commitment to employ certified teachers.



STAFF
1 Program Director
2 Literacy Coaches
10 Literacy Instructors

The Y is able to offer the SLI model at no cost to camps and families thanks to the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations who contribute to the YMCA Annual Campaign. To learn more about funding sources and explore opportunities to support SLI, please visit www.ymcacharlotte.org/give.

PARTNERSHIPS

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library

The CM Library provides active reading training to our camp teams to ensure staff know effective strategies to use when reading with campers.

Promising Pages

The Y works with Promising Pages to get new and gently used books into students' homes. Each camp hosts a book-a-palooza event where campers select at least 2 books to help build their home library.

Read Charlotte

SLI has been in collaboration with Read Charlotte since the program's inception. Read Charlotte provided funding to pilot and scale the program in 2017, 2018, and 2021. Read Charlotte continues to provide thought partnership on program development and help identify new community partners who would benefit from participating in SLI.

RESOURCE TOOLKIT

In addition to providing direct support to local camps through materials and staffing for Summer Literacy Infusion, the YMCA of Greater Charlotte created the Summer Literacy Infusion open resource toolkit in 2021. Updated annually, the toolkit offers guidance to local and national organizations looking to implement effective literacy practices in their camps. It is available at no cost, in line with the Y's mission to serve all communities.

