Ready Set Learn Program Report 2026

Ready Set Learn: Building Literacy Skills and Confidence

Ready Set Learn (RSL) is a free summer tutoring program for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 who are struggling with reading, writing, or math. RSL helps children access the support they need to strengthen their learning skills and build confidence. Since 2001, the program has supported 17,680 children.

Increasing Access to Learning Support

In 2026, all elementary schools across Prince Edward Island could refer children to RSL, including those in English, French Immersion, and Francophone programs. Each school had a set number of referral spaces based on its student population.

Participating children received eight weeks of one-to-one tutoring, with 50-minute sessions held at a public library or community center. By offering free tutoring in community spaces, RSL helped families access learning support closer to home.

In 2026, we received 970 referrals, and 672 children took part in the program. Another 165 children remained on the waitlist because the program did not have enough spaces. A further 133 families declined a place because of scheduling conflicts, travel issues, or health concerns.

These numbers show the strong demand for RSL and the need for continued investment to help children across PEI access the learning support they need.

"I learned that I am smart and can do hard things."

- RSL Student

672 children accessed free, personalized learning support to strengthen their literacy skills, build confidence, and develop a foundation for lifelong learning.

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Helping Children Build Skills and Confidence

RSL tutors worked one-on-one with children to support their reading, writing, math, and social emotional skills. Trained by education experts, tutors created personalized lesson plans based on each child's needs. Tutors created safe, positive, and engaging spaces where children could practice new skills, ask questions, and learn at their own pace.

Through this support, children had opportunities to build the skills and confidence needed to face challenges and keep learning.

Helping Parents Support Learning at Home

Parents and caregivers received weekly emails with practical tips and resources to support their child's learning through social emotional development at home. RSL also provided a *Resources for Parents: Social Emotional Learning* webpage with information to help families support their children's learning, confidence, and willingness to try new things. Visit **peiliteracy.ca** to learn more.

"I've seen a huge difference in my daughter's confidence in her ability to read."

- RSL Parent

What the Evaluation Found

A third-party evaluation of the program found that RSL 2026 supported children's literacy skills and confidence. Students, parents, and tutors reported positive changes, and parent's noted that their children showed more interest in reading at home.

Highlights from the *RSL Outcomes Evaluation Report* (attached) include:

- **88% of students** said RSL helped them feel better about learning
- **96% of parents** reported improvements in their child's reading, writing and math skills
- **82% of parents** noticed that child felt more confidence about learning
- **77% of tutors** observed children practicing social emotional learning strategies

Literacy opens doors. *We work to strengthen literacy by increasing access to learning opportunities and championing the power of literacy so that all people in PEI have the skills they need to thrive.*

2026 Ready Set Learn Tutoring Program Outcomes Evaluation Summary

Prepared by Nishka Smith Consulting for PEI Literacy Alliance

1. Introduction

The PEI Literacy Alliance's Ready Set Learn program provides free summer tutoring to children in kindergarten through Grade 6 to help them maintain and develop their literacy and learning skills. The program aims to address the *summer slide*, which refers to the loss of learning and academic skills that some children experience over the summer months when they are away from school. This can be particularly challenging for children who are already struggling in school. With this in mind, the program gives priority to children who need the most support when determining who will participate.

Through individualized support and engaging activities, the program provides opportunities for children to practice reading, writing and math while also building confidence and developing positive attitudes toward learning. The program aims to help children continue learning over the summer and feel better prepared for the return to school.

2. Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Evaluation Approach

This report outlines the outcomes of the 2026 program, highlighting its impact on participating children and its contribution to the PEI Literacy Alliance's second strategic goals:

- Children and youth living in PEI with low literacy skills have increased access to support that foster literacy skills and lifelong learning.

The evaluation explored outcomes related to children's literacy and learning skills, confidence and persistence, and attitudes toward learning. Feedback from students, parents and tutors were considered together to provide a broader understanding of the outcomes experienced by children participating in the program.

2.2 Evaluation Process

The evaluation process was participatory in nature, with the PEI Literacy Alliance and evaluation consultant working together to develop and implement the evaluation. The data sources used for this report included the following:

- Student surveys: At the end of the summer program, tutors conducted a survey with students to collect feedback on their experience with the program and what they learned about themselves. A total of 522 students from kindergarten to Grade 6 completed the survey.
- Parent midpoint survey: An online survey was conducted with parents midway through the summer program to collect feedback on their child's experience with the program. A total of 210 parents completed the survey.
- Parent final survey: A second online survey was conducted with parents at the end of the summer program. It collected feedback on their child's experience and the changes parents observed in their child's learning and confidence. A total of 78 parents completed the survey.
- Tutor final survey: At the end of the summer program, tutors completed a survey about their experience providing tutoring services. The survey included questions related to their ability to support students' literacy, math and social-emotional learning, as well as the changes they observed in their students. A total of 22 tutors completed the survey.

3. Evaluation Findings

The findings are presented through a combination of descriptive statistics, participant comments and key themes and are organized around three main outcome areas: developing and maintaining literacy and learning skills; building confidence and persistence as learners; and developing positive attitudes toward learning.

3.1 Developing and Maintaining Literacy and Learning Skills

One of the clearest outcomes of the program was the development and maintenance of children's literacy and other academic skills. When students were asked what they had learned about themselves through the program, improvement in academic skills was the most common theme. Reading was identified in 154 responses, math in 129 and writing in 96. Another 41 responses related to French-language learning, including improvements in reading, writing, vocabulary and speaking.

“I learned that my writing and reading improved over the summer.” (Student Survey Respondent)

“I am better at math than I thought and reading.” (Student Survey Respondent)

“I learned that I can sound out words pretty good, and that it's easier for me to read a word than write a word.” (Student Survey Respondent)

“I learned that I can read! And that I can always try again when I make a mistake.” (Student Survey Respondent)

Parents also noted improvements in their children's learning over the course of the summer. When asked in the final parent survey whether they had noticed improvements in their child's reading, math and learning skills, 96% (75/78) noted they had (63% answered yes and 33% somewhat). Parents' comments provided further examples of these changes, including children reading more at home, showing greater interest in books, sounding out words independently, and demonstrating improvements in reading, math and comprehension.

“He's been reading a lot more and feels more confident with it.” (Parent Survey Respondent)

“He has more love for books and is reading more at home for pleasure.” (Parent Survey Respondent)

“I have noticed a big difference in my [son's] reading and his math!” (Parent Survey Respondent)

These findings were supported by tutors. All tutors felt they were able to help their students maintain literacy through fun and interesting activities, while 95% (21/22) felt they were able to teach their students math. Tutors also spoke about seeing academic progress over the eight weeks and watching students succeed in areas they had previously found difficult.

“Seeing the progress that my students made over the course of eight short weeks filled me with immense pride and their personal happiness with their accomplishments was incredible to witness!” (Tutor Survey Respondent)

3.2 Building Confidence and Persistence as Learners

In addition to developing academic skills, the findings suggest that the program is helping children become more confident in themselves and their abilities as learners. Overall, 73% (378/522) of students felt the program helped them feel better about learning, while another 15% (78) felt it somewhat did. When asked what they learned about themselves, 83 responses reflected increased confidence, pride or recognition of their abilities. Another 42 spoke specifically about persistence, practice, learning from mistakes or continuing when something was difficult.

> *"I learned that I am really capable. Because even when things look hard I keep trying and I eventually get it." (Student Survey Respondent)*

> *"I learned that I can read! And that I can always try again when I make a mistake." (Student Survey Respondent)*

> *"I learned that I am smart and can do hard things." (Student Survey Respondent)*

Parents also noticed positive changes in their children's confidence with learning. When asked in the final parent survey whether they had observed improvements in their child's confidence, 82% (64/78) noted they had (60% answered yes and 22% somewhat).

> *"I've seen a huge difference in my daughter's confidence in her ability to read throughout this program." (Parent Survey Respondent)*

> *"I found that she was more interested in reading at home and seemed more confident." (Parent Survey Respondent)*

There was also evidence that students developed skills that can help them when learning becomes difficult. Students talked about asking for help, managing frustration, staying positive, learning from mistakes and becoming more aware of how they learn best.

> *"I learned that when I get frustrated, I should take a break and let my mind calm down and then come back to it." (Student Survey Respondent)*

> *"I learned that we can ask for help and that if we make a mistake we can try again." (Student Survey Respondent)*

Tutors also observed students developing and applying social-emotional learning skills, including asking for help, managing frustration, taking breaks when needed, and learning from mistakes. Eighty-two percent (18/22) felt their students understood the social-emotional learning strategies. When asked whether students were practising these strategies, 77% (17) answered yes and 23% (5) somewhat.

3.3 Developing Positive Attitudes Toward Learning

Another important outcome of the program was helping children experience learning in a positive and enjoyable way. In the mid-point survey, 35 of the 210 parents specifically commented that their children looked forward to tutoring or were excited to attend, while in the final survey, 90% (70/78) of parents indicated that their children looked forward to their sessions.

> *“My son looks forward to the sessions weekly—it's never a battle to get him to go, which means a whole lot!” (Mid-Point Parent Survey Respondent)*

> *“Both my child and myself are very happy with the experience... She comes home happy and confident after the sessions and looks forward to going each week.” (Mid-Point Parent Survey)*

> *"She looked forward to her lessons and I could always hear her laughing and having fun throughout." (Final Parent Survey Respondent)*

> *“Honestly, no. This is the first year my child has been really excited each week to go to tutoring!” (Mid-Point Parent Survey)*

Students also described discovering that learning could be enjoyable. When asked what they learned about themselves, 68 students shared comments about enjoying tutoring or discovering an interest in different subjects, while another 53 highlighted games and interactive activities as especially fun. Students also identified new or growing interests in reading, writing, math, French, science, animals, art and other areas.

> *“I learnt that learning can be fun.” (Student Survey Respondent)*

> *“I enjoy learning new things through playing games.” (Student Survey Respondent)*

“I learned that I like reading books and that my favourite subject is art.” (Student Survey Respondent)

4. Overall Contribution to the PEI Literacy Alliance Strategic Goals

Overall, the 2026 evaluation findings suggest that the Ready Set Learn program is contributing to the PEI Literacy Alliance's second organizational strategic goal. Across the student, parent and tutor surveys, the findings consistently indicate that children are developing and maintaining literacy and other academic skills, building confidence and persistence, and developing more positive attitudes toward learning.

The consistency of findings across the different surveys is particularly important. Students recognized improvements in their own skills and abilities, parents observed changes in their children's learning and confidence, and tutors described seeing academic progress and growing confidence among the children they supported. The findings also suggest that these outcomes are connected. As children developed their skills and experienced success, they became more confident in their abilities and, in many cases, more positive about learning. There were also indications that this interest extended beyond tutoring sessions, with parents describing children reading more and showing greater interest in books at home.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the program is doing more than helping children maintain their academic skills over the summer. It is also helping them recognize their abilities, experience success, and develop the confidence and positive attitudes that can support them as they continue their education. This reflects both aspects of the Alliance's strategic goal — supporting children's literacy skills while also fostering lifelong learning.