

WITS KINDERGARTEN

Started in 2005, WITS Kindergarten (WITSK) serves Chicago Public Schools kindergartners. Students spend 15-20 minutes once a week reading aloud one-on-one with the same mentor, practicing skills, and enjoying stories. WITSK helps students build book and print awareness as well as letter and sound recognition skills. WITSK encourages students to love reading.



THE NEED

- How well a child engages in back-and-forth communication is a strong predictor of whether a kindergarten student will meet 1st grade literacy targets.
- New research emphasizes the need for resources and programs that support students' emotional well-being, which plays a critical role in their academic success.
- Our partner educators believe that consistent one-on-one support will not only help students academically, but will also fulfill a need for social interaction.

HOW WITS MEETS THE NEED

- Reading aloud evokes the powers of imagination while also making visual associations that help children to transition more quickly to independent reading.
- WITSK students build book and print awareness including reading left to right and distinguishing between letters and words.
- Research shows that reading aloud and talking about what you have read encourages social-emotional learning, empathy, and conversation skills.

THE WITS MISSION

WITS believes that literacy is the foundation on which all other learning develops. Our mission is to empower Chicago elementary students to discover themselves through reading while developing foundational literacy skills. We do this by creating community through literacy-based mentorship, enabling teachers to build diverse classroom libraries, and promoting book ownership at home.

For more information email WITS Program Director, Ellen Werner, ellen@witschicago.org.