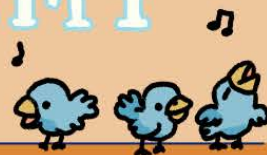




FAST START ACADEMY

SUMMER PROGRAM 2024



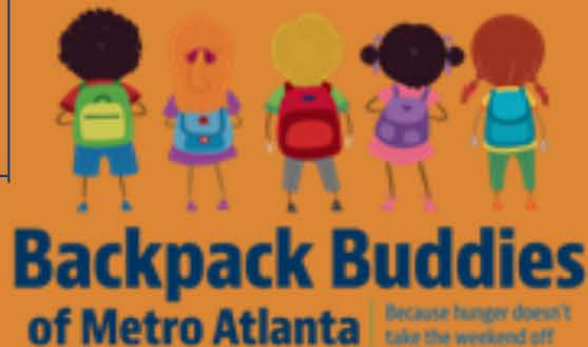
I love coming to this summer camp. I learned to read more and enjoy stories... I feel at home and I wish this was my real school the whole year!

100% of the students participating maintained their reading level and 75% increased their reading level.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF SUPERVISORS	NUMBER OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS	SOR INSTRUCTION HOURS	NUMBER OF MEALS SERVED
100	6	35	140	4000
NUMBER OF WEEKEND MEALS (BACKPACK BUDDIES)	NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS			
700	12			

New Partners for 2024:

- Backpack Buddies of Metro Atlanta
- High school students from Marietta City Schools working as classroom assistants



Because hunger doesn't take the weekend off

"Children must be ready to learn when they come to school (cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically). They need to have high quality learning opportunities . . . in school and during out of school time, including summers, in order to sustain learning gains and not lose ground" (Annie E. Casey, 2010).



FAST START ACADEMY



Responding to our continuous improvement approach, we listened to feedback from our partnering school district and the parents of 2023 participating students. **One major barrier they identified was that the program was only available to 1st and 2nd graders, leaving older siblings at home without access to other camps due to financial and transportation limitations.** To address this need, we introduced a 4th-grade class for the first time, specifically inviting upper elementary siblings to participate. This addition proved to be one of the most impactful changes to the program, yielding some of the strongest results. **Over 90% of these students spoke little to no English and were struggling in school, feeling isolated, unsupported, and unmotivated.** With the guidance of our empathetic preservice teachers, they not only **improved their literacy skills but also gained confidence in other academic and social areas, helping them feel more prepared for the upcoming school year.**

Thanks to the funding we received, this was the first year we were able to hire such a large group of preservice teachers, creating a profound impact on multiple levels.

Many of our teacher candidates have faced economic and sociocultural barriers themselves, making the opportunity to earn an income while gaining hands-on experience in their chosen profession truly life-changing. The unique nature of Fast Start, where they serve students in whom they can "recognize themselves," proved both inspiring and cathartic. At the same time, for the elementary students, seeing teachers who looked like them helped foster a sense of safety, understanding, and motivation. Many even expressed a newfound desire to become teachers themselves. As one teacher candidate shared, **"Going through school has always been a struggle for me, making me question every step of the way, but these students changed my life and validated why becoming a teacher is not only a dream but an honor I can't wait to fulfill!"**

