



KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY
BAGWELL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

FAST START LITERACY ACADEMY 2025



A Introduction to Our Summer Program

Program Directors: Drs. Megan Adams,
Virginie Jackson, & Sanjuana Rodriguez



ABOUT OUR PROGRAM



At Fast Start, we run a four-week summer program to support students who are reading below grade level and qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. We provide daily literacy instruction and immerse students in college life through museum visits, music, and meals for students. We also mentor college students, mostly education and social work majors, who serve as teachers and gain valuable hands-on experience. Through Fast Start, we build literacy, foster confidence, and help students and future educators grow together.



Thank you to our
2025 Sponsor!



CAMP ROUTINES



At Fast Start, consistent **daily routines** help our students feel safe, confident, and ready to learn .

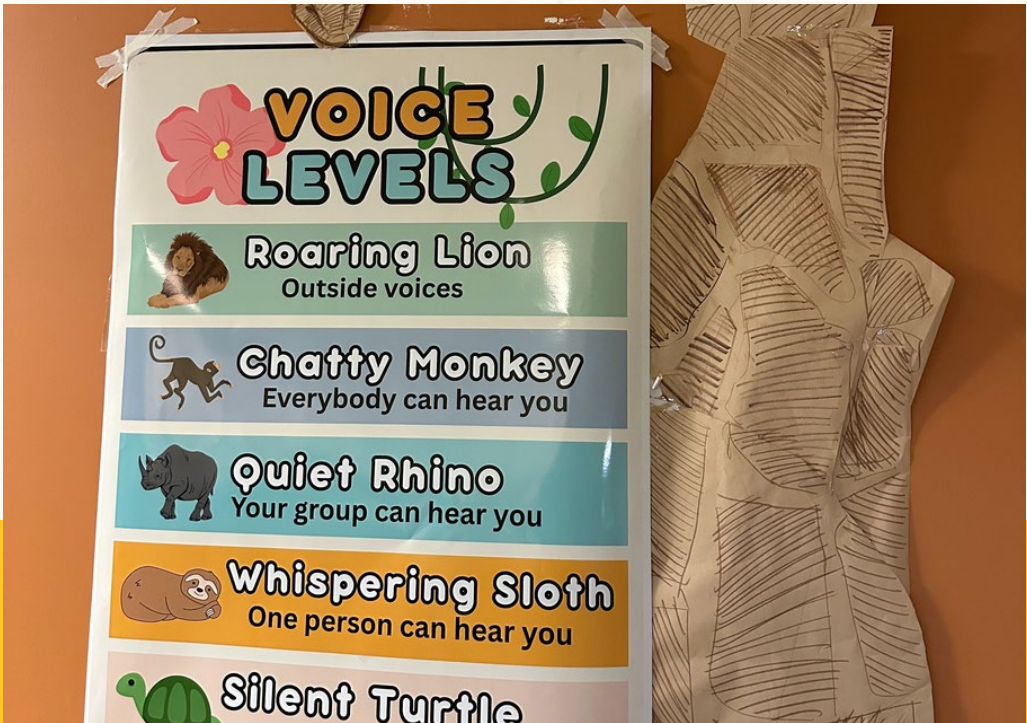
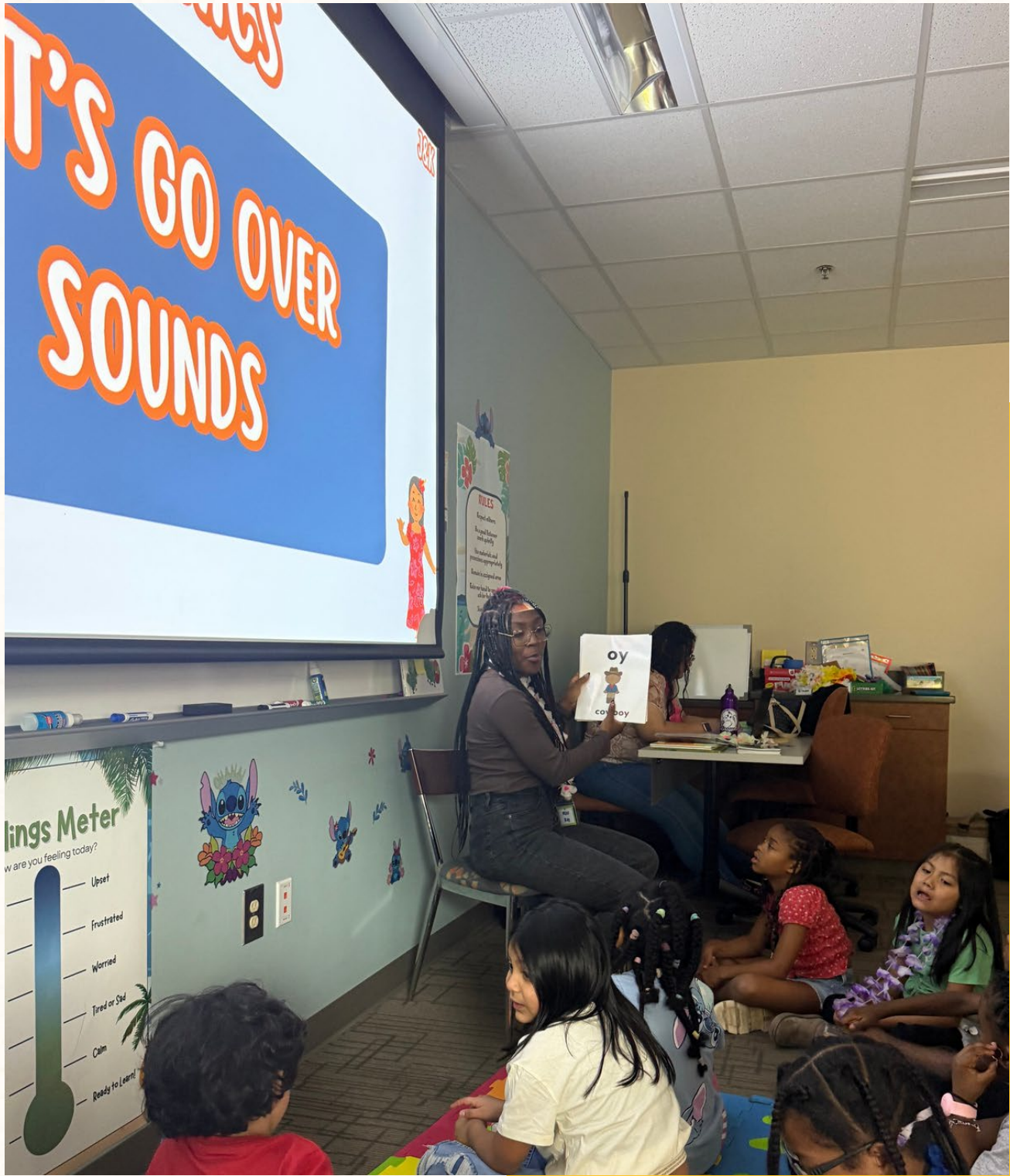
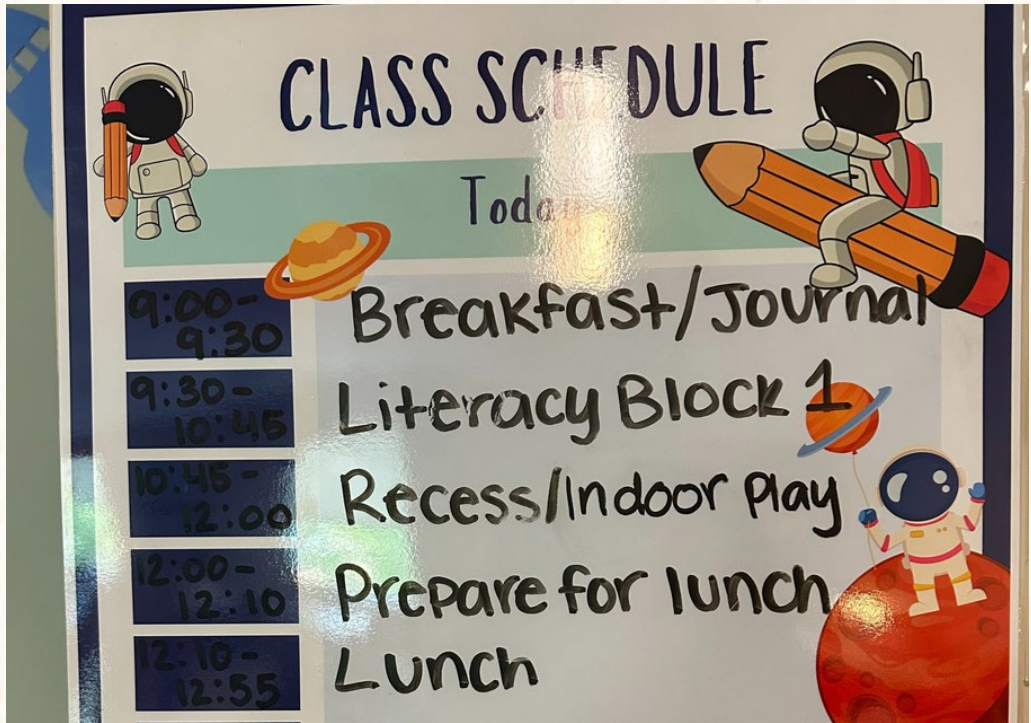


Each day begins with structured literacy blocks, followed by interactive read -alouds, writing activities, and hands -on learning experiences. These predictable routines create a strong foundation for academic success.

To meet the unique needs of every learner, **each classroom is supported by 4 –5 teachers** . This allows us to provide targeted small group instruction throughout the day.



CAMP ROUTINES



CAMP ROUTINES



We create an experience that feels like a real school day and prioritize **social -emotional learning** to help students build confidence, relationships, and a love for learning.





BY THE NUMBERS

106
Elementary Students

35
Pre-Service Teachers

140
Literacy Instructional
Hours

4800
Meals Served

500
Weekend Meals
(Backpack Buddies)

12
High School Students
(Apprentices)

MEET OUR TEACHERS



Pre-service teachers and other majors, such as social work and art.



Dear Fast Start Camp,

I want to thank you for this one month teaching Opportunity to work with young minds that needed extra help. This opportunity has been a very rewarding experience. This program helps kids that struggle giving them an extra hand to succeed in their next school year. I hope this will be offered to all school systems that have kids who need extra help that Fast Start offers. When I went into this program, I took it as a chance to get experience in teaching a class of students and find out if the path of becoming a teacher is right for me as a lasting career. I can truly say after completing Fast Start I am definitely in the right career path. Making a difference in the class of 4th graders was a privilege. Getting to know each student and seeing their excitement of learning the lessons and coming each day has touched me. Over the last four weeks has been both rewarding and fulfilling. It has truly changed me as a person and as a future teacher. We were given many tools and lots of support before, during, and afterwards each day of the Fast Start week. The program directors, support staff, volunteers, other teachers, Marietta School system who supplied the students, breakfast, lunch, and to transporting them to and from the KSU campus, and to the KSU Bagwell of Education staff who worked hard to support the program, teachers, and students. As one of the teachers, who taught a class of 4th graders made a profound impact on me. I will push through my own struggles and I will become a teacher to help more kids like them. In these four weeks of Fast Start camp, I hope that I too have made a difference and a lasting impression on everyone involved in this wonderful program. Especially the young minds that have made a difference and a lasting impression on me. I will carry this experience with me for a lifetime.

Sincerely,
Crystal Schaefer

To those supporting our children,

Thank you for making the Fast Start program a reality. Without your support, a formative experience for student teachers would be missing. Even more so, the young lives touched by this program would lack a valuable impact on their future. This month passed by far too quickly. What began as nervousness and anxious anticipation ended in bittersweet parting.

My identity as a teacher has transformed. Before beginning this program, I was certain that the qualifications of an impactful teacher required a commitment to lifelong learning. This program tested that belief for my benefit. Every day presented a new challenge, whether developing learning goals, collaborating with other student teachers, or identifying the diverse needs of young people. Without a commitment to learning first as the teacher, I'm convinced that we cannot understand the needs of our students. Fast Start allows future teachers to learn from both their mistakes and victories in a safe and nurturing environment. The uniqueness of this program is the opportunity to collaborate with other lifelong learners. Identifying each learner's needs is rarely clear-cut. Yet, we have assessments and content knowledge to guide us, but the needs of our students go unnoticed without one paramount piece: relationship. At Fast Start, we begin with rapport. Through social-emotional learning, we gain a better understanding of the intricacies each learner brings into the classroom. It is by knowing and playing with our students that we create the biggest impact, and our instruction becomes salient.

While I wish I could write pages on each of my exceptional students, I will at least say this: we cannot do this without them. Even with my caring professors and enriching curriculum, hands-on experience cannot be substituted. Granting pre-service teachers the responsibilities of running a classroom in a protected environment is an irreplaceable learning experience. The Fast Start program is an essential part of the Bagwell College of Education, and I am thankful for this opportunity.

With gratitude and joy,

Hannah Lindley, Kennesaw State University

TEACHER LETTERS



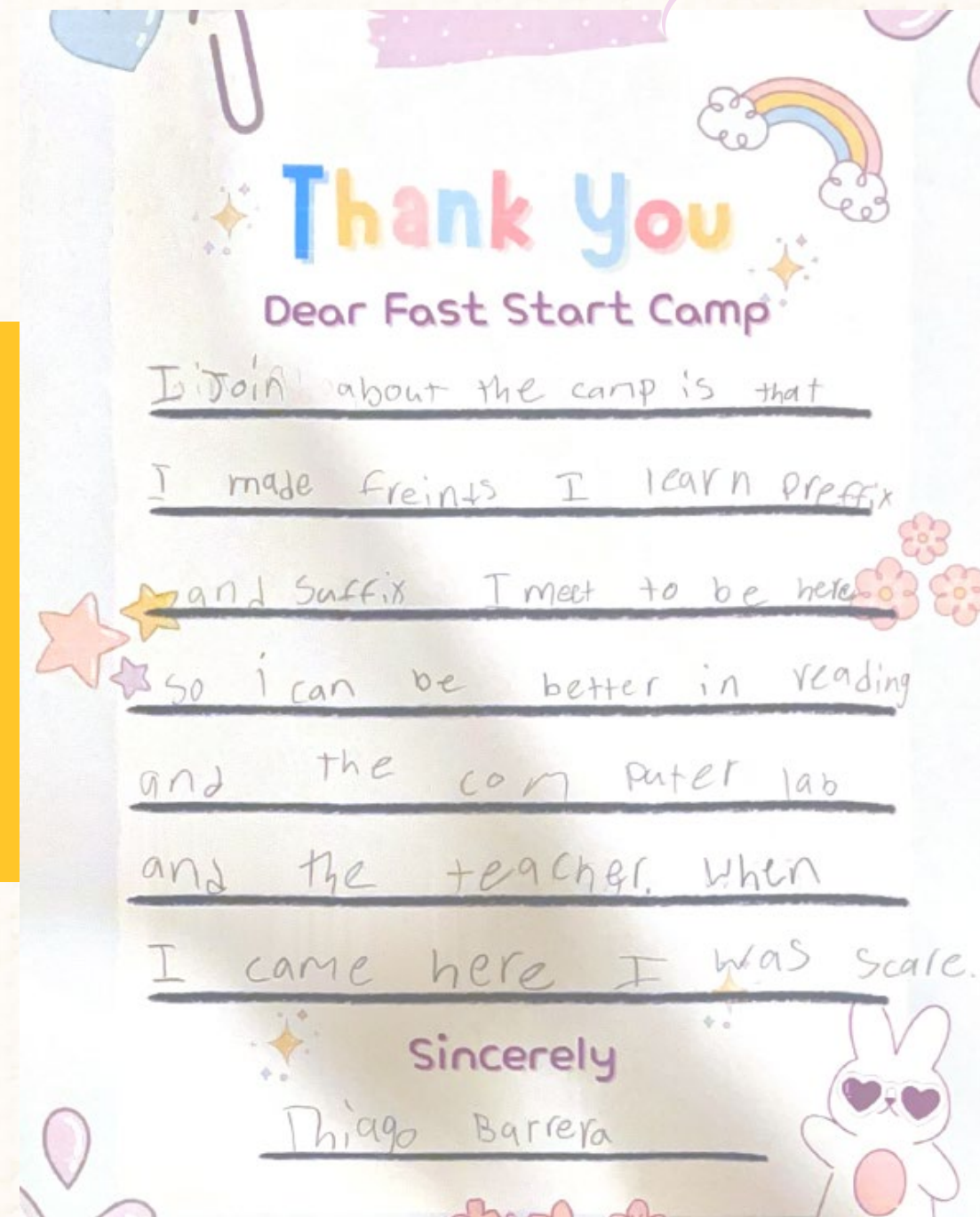
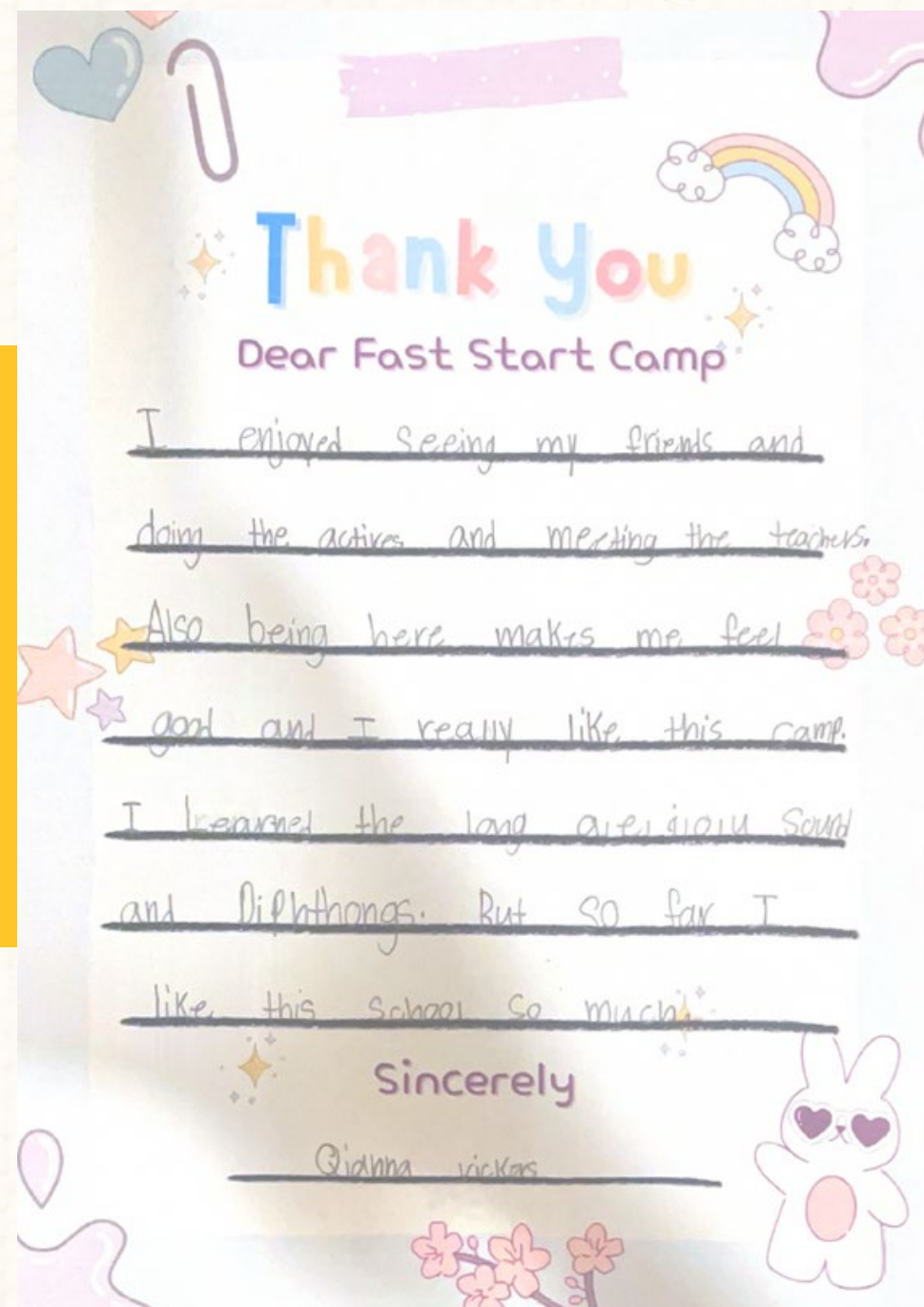
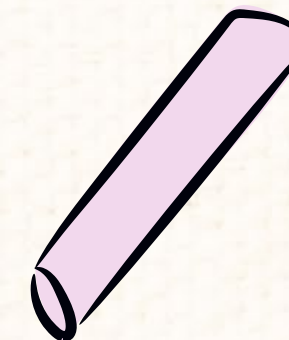
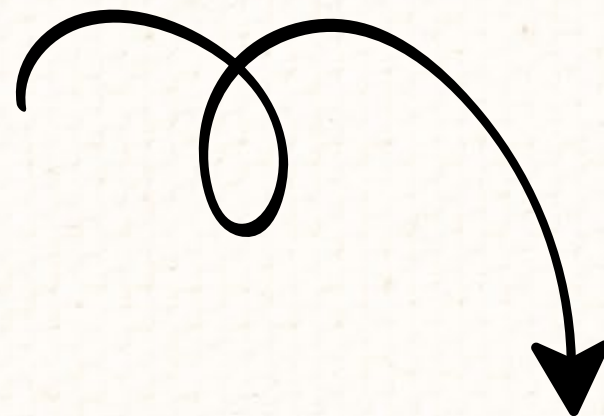
Teachers wrote of their experiences with our camp.

Here are a few!

"I can truly say after completing Fast Start, I am definitely on the right career path. It has truly changed me as a person and as a future teacher"
(Crystal Schaefer, Elementary Education Service Teacher)

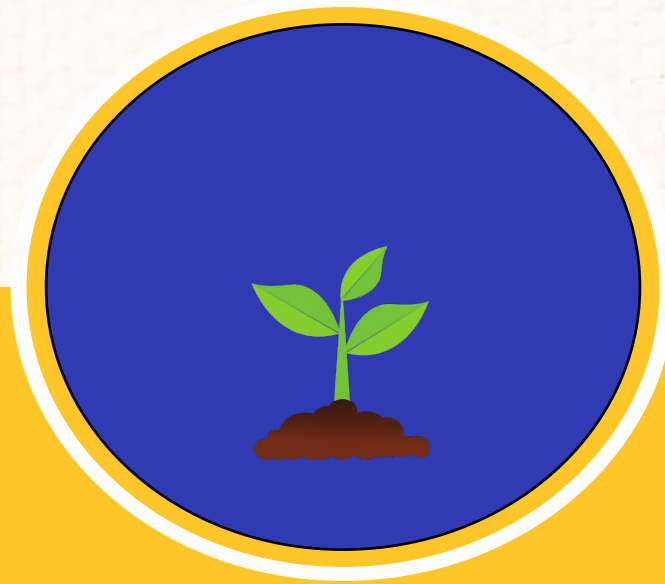
"My identity as a teacher has transformed" (Hannah Lindley, Elementary Education Service Pre Teacher)

STUDENT LETTERS



STUDENT LITERACY PROGRESS

- Students demonstrated measurable growth in nearly **all** phonological and phonemic awareness skills. All skill areas showed positive movement, reflecting program-wide instructional impact.



Smaller Gains

- Segmenting Words into Phonemes: +0.07
- Final Consonants and Long Vowel Spellings: +0.05 and +0.02



Moderate Growth Areas

- Blending and Isolating Sounds: +0.26
- • Deleting Initial Phonemes: +0.32
- • Substituting Initial Phonemes: +0.16



Notable Gains

- Rhyming: +0.87 (5.63 → 6.49)
- Consonant blends with short vowels: +0.95 (15.02 → 15.97)
- Multisyllabic Words: +1.53 (10.02 → 11.56)
- r- and l-controlled vowels: +0.57 (6.53 → 7.10)
- Short vowels, digraphs, and -tch trigraphs: +0.40 (8.4 → 8.80)

COMMUNITY DRIVEN AND STUDENT IMPACT



Partnered with Backpack Buddies for the second year in a row to ensure students have access to nutritious food over the weekend.

This initiative was inspired by a student named Prince, whose struggle with hunger reminded us of the importance of care beyond the classroom. We now dedicate this program in honor of Prince, and it reflects our camp's deep commitment to supporting the whole child.

The program is made possible through community donations, volunteers, and continued partnership with Backpack Buddies.

This year, we were able to send over 500 bags to our students' homes!



Backpack Buddies
of Metro Atlanta
Because hunger doesn't take the weekend off



Alliance Theatre



Building Experiences

The Alliance Theatre visits Fast Start to lead students in an engaging artistic activity focused on body movement and self-expression. Through creative movement, students explore emotions, build confidence, and express themselves in fun, meaningful ways.



ZUCKERMAN MUSEUM



Each year, the Zuckerman Museum partners with Fast Start to lead art activities inspired by their current exhibits.

This year, students learned about origami and folded their own paper creations to make KSU's mascot—the Owl!



***FAST START CONTINUES TO THRIVE THANKS TO OUR
2025 SPONSOR!***



COBB COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

**Marietta
city schools**
A Georgia Charter System



**Backpack Buddies
of Metro Atlanta**
Because hunger doesn't take the weekend off

Alliance
Theatre at the Woodruff



Zuckerman Museum