

## **Instructions for Grade Level Reading Loss Exercise** **(Draft December 4, 2012)**

**Time:** 5-8 minutes

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to illustrate how the achievement gap grows as children have or do not have: 1) access to high quality preschool programs, 2) regular school attendance and 3) summer learning opportunities.

### **Instructions:**

- 1) Ask for two volunteers from the audience
- 2) Instruct both to stand next to each other. Then ask Volunteer A to take 8 steps back. Announce Volunteer A represents the child who starts school a year behind because of an incoming gap school readiness. Share that Volunteer A could be a year behind because they didn't have a chance to participate in a high quality preschool experience or because their parents did not have the knowledge or the resources at home to offer rich early literacy experience.
- 3) Ask both volunteers to walk forward 8 steps to represent a year of learning in Kindergarten. After both finish taking the steps, ask Volunteer A to walk back 2 steps because they were chronically absent for the year. (Each step represents approximately a month of lost learning. Explain that the 2 steps reflect both the amount of time the student actually missed – and an additional month because of the disruption that caused in their learning. Then, ask Volunteer A to take another 2 steps back because they didn't have any supports to support literacy over the summer so they are experiencing a summer reading loss of 2 months.)
- 4) Ask both volunteers to walk forward another 8 steps to represent what they would have learned in 1st grade. Again, Volunteer A is asked to walk back 2 steps for chronic absence and then 2 steps for summer reading loss.

By this time, the picture of the widening gap is quite clear and it already makes clear why the child who is behind doesn't get to reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade.