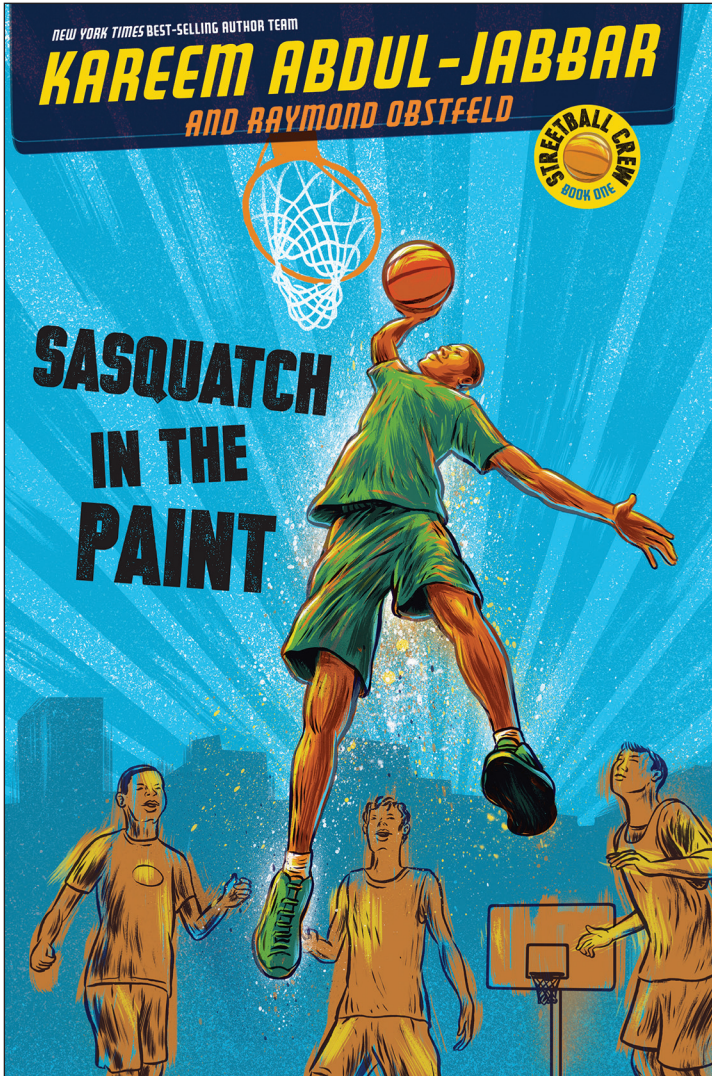


NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR TEAM

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR
AND RAYMOND OBSTFELD

STREETBALL CREW
BOOK ONE

**SASQUATCH
IN THE
PAINT**



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION BOOKS

ABOUT THE BOOK

Everyone at school is noticing Theo since he grew six inches taller during summer vacation. Theo is struggling to deal with all of the attention and to feel comfortable in eighth grade. His new height earns him a place on the basketball team, but his novice playing skills are making him reconsider his decision to join. Things continue to get worse when Theo begins to spend all of his free time playing basketball. His “Brain Train” teammates notice that his science skills are fading due to lack of practice. If Theo continues to spend all of his time on the basketball court his academic drill team could lose their big competition. Theo is disappointed to find himself in danger of being kicked off of *both* teams if he doesn’t start improving. Theo’s journey—navigating the challenges, solving problems, and meeting unique friends along the way—makes the story a slam dunk.

COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT

This guide is aligned with the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (CCR) for Reading Standards for Literature, Writing, and Language. The broad CCR standards are the foundation for the grade level–specific Common Core State Standards. Each question and activity in this guide includes a reference for the CCR strand, domain, and standard that is addressed. To support instruction, also reference the grade-level specific Common Core State Standards to scaffold the questions for your students.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTERS 1–5

- 1** Theo is receiving a lot of attention at school because of his height. Do you think the additional attention will increase his confidence? How could more confidence help Theo on the basketball court? Based on information from the story, what things do you believe Theo is very confident about? Why is confidence important when you are completing an assignment, competing in a game, or trying something new? *(Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.6)*
- 2** Why does Theo seem most bothered by being told he looks like a character from *Avatar*? What cultural and school-based experiences make this name very difficult to deal with? What occurs after this? Provide examples from the story. *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*
- 3** After losing the game everyone has a different perspective or view of Theo. What is the team’s perspective of Theo’s basketball potential? What is the coach’s perspective of Theo’s basketball potential? How do the perspectives of the coach and team differ? How does Theo view himself after the game? How do these different points of view make the plot more interesting or dramatic? *(Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.6)*
- 4** The author says that the coach “rubbed his hands enthusiastically like he was a criminal mastermind hatching a brilliant scheme” (p. 10). Why would the author compare the coach to a criminal? What are the coach’s character traits? Use evidence from the story to support your answer. *(Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4)*
- 5** Is the coach’s decision to build the offense around Theo a good idea? Why or why not? Support your answer with details from the text. If the team is going to be successful, what type of skills will they need to build together? Provide examples. *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*

- 6** Why is Brian able to understand how Theo feels about being called names? How is Brian different from many of the other students in the school? What do Brian and Theo have in common? Use details from the text to support your answer. *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*
- 7** When Theo confronts the girl about the “hurtful” name calling, what does the subsequent conversation reveal about her character? How does she respond to his complaint? Do you believe that the girl will remain Theo’s nemesis? Why or why not? How might they help each other as the story continues? *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.3)*
- 8** Make a prediction using details from the story: Who is the man on motorcycle? How might he be connected to the girl? Why wouldn’t the boys or other people on the basketball court help the girl after she was slapped by the man on the motorcycle? Have you ever experienced a situation when you wanted to help someone, but couldn’t? Describe the situation and what prevented you from helping. *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*
- 9** What game rules does Theo overlook or misunderstand during the outdoor basketball court game? Did Theo play well or poorly during the game with the other boys? Provide details from the story. *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*
- 10** Theo encounters several difficulties on the court with the “Asian kid” during the outdoor game. What events during the game led to the dispute they have at its end? *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.3)*

CHAPTER 6–10

- 1** What does it mean to “do the right thing instead of the easy thing”? What are examples of Theo and his father doing “the right thing”? Provide examples from the story. Describe a time that you chose to do the right thing instead of the easy thing. (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4*)
- 2** Based on the interactions between Theo and his father, what type of relationship do they have? Support your response with details from the story. If you believe Theo and his father have a good relationship, why doesn’t Theo want his father to know that he got into a fight? Do you think Theo should hide the fight from his dad? Why or why not? Share a time that you decided not to share something with someone close to you. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 3** What is a BIB jar? Why does Theo’s father tell him to put a dollar in the BIB jar? Do you think that it was fair for Theo to have to put money in the jar? Why or why not? What does the creation of the BIB jar tell us about Theo’s mother? Make an inference about the types of values was she trying to instill in him. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 4** As Theo thinks about playing basketball he reveals that it is “the most exciting thing he’d ever done in his life” (p. 50). Why is this thought so scary to him? Can you think of a time that you very felt excited and scared about something? (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 5** The author writes, “For almost six months after his mom’s death, Theo and his dad had let everything in the house deteriorate” (p. 54). What does it mean to let something deteriorate? Why might that occur in a home after losing a loved one? Why does Theo think that it was “great” when the house was deteriorating? (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4*)

- 6 Based on what we know about Theo’s father, how do you think he would respond to Theo’s snooping? What is Theo’s response to his computer discovery? Provide evidence from the story. What potential changes does his discovery indicate for his family? (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.3*)
- 7 Theo references his “secret identity” several times in the story. How is his “secret identity” different from his everyday life? Do you think that Theo and his dad will eventually share their “secret identities” with one another? Why or why not? Use evidence from the text. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 8 Compare the outdoor basketball games that Theo plays at Palisades Park and at his grandmother’s home. What do both games reveal about Theo? Do you think Theo shows any improvement in the game at his grandmother’s home? Why or why not? Provide examples from the story. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.3*)
- 9 Gavin tells Theo that there are three types of basketball players (p. 68). Do you agree with his opinion? Is Theo the second type of player that Gavin describes? Use evidence from the story to support your answer. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 10 The text states, “Since they’d arrived back at Grandma Esther’s house, everything Theo had said to Gavin was snide” (p. 70). How might it sound if someone is saying or responding to something in a *snide* manner? What examples of *snide* comments are there in the chapter? (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4*)
- 11 What events occurred to cause Theo to feel upset when he returns to the house with Gavin? Use examples to support your answer. Were you surprised that Gavin responded to Theo’s comments by rebooting his computer instead of fighting him? Why or why not? Use evidence from the story to support your answer. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.3*)

CHAPTER 11–15

- 1 Why does Theo believe that there is “more to his cousin than bragging and showing off” (p. 78)? What evidence supports that Gavin is very superficial or, not superficial? What evidence shows that Gavin cares about other people and real issues? Why does Gavin’s music make Theo feel jealous of him? Include examples from the story in your answer. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 2 At first Theo decides that he won’t tell anyone about the fight. Then, when he returns to school he “volunteers” the story about his fight on the basketball court to members of the Brain Train team. Why do you believe he changed his mind and shared the story with everyone? How does the story influence or alter people’s perspectives of him? (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.3*)
- 3 Who are the members of the Brain Train team? What does each member contribute to the team? How is the Brain Train team similar to and different from a basketball team? What do you think Theo enjoys about being on each team? (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 4 Mr. J quotes Shakespeare’s *Henry V* by saying:

*“In peace there’s nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility;
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger:
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood.”*

What does the quote mean? Why does Mr. J decide to recite it to the team? Use examples from the story to support your answer. How does the team respond to the quote? (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4*)

- 5** Why does Brian believe that Theo should quit the basketball team? How would that impact Brian and Theo’s relationship? Based on what we know about Theo, why do you think he decided to be part of the basketball team? Do you think Theo joined because of all or any of the four reasons Brian shares? Why or why not? *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*
- 6** Do you agree with Rain when she states that Theo and Brian live in “Walla-Walla Land”? What does it mean for someone to live in “Walla-Walla Land”? What evidence from the story suggests that they each live in “Walla-Walla Land”? What evidence suggests that they don’t? *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*
- 7** Theo is upset when Brooke mentions kicking him off the team. How does Brooke’s opinion differ from those of other people on the team? Do you think that Theo can be a member of both teams and perform well? Why or why not? Support your answer with examples from the story. *(Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.6)*

CHAPTER 16–20

- 1** How does the coach’s new game strategy involve Theo? What types of “foul” mistakes does Theo make at practice? What solution does Chris offer? Do you believe the new strategy will be effective? Provide examples from the text to support your answer. *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*
- 2** Why do Brian and Theo believe being thirteen “sucks”? Based on Theo’s opinion about being thirteen, what additional expectations and/or changes might make him feel upset? *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*
- 3** How might the experiences and views of R.J. in the high school be similar to those of Theo in middle school? How do other kids view R.J.? Provide examples from the text. *(Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.6)*
- 4** Motorpsycho threatens Theo in the park. Should Theo take his threats seriously? What actions suggest that Motorpsycho is dangerous? Examine his actions in the story and list his character traits. *(Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1)*

- 5 Theo decides to keep the threats from Motorpsycho secret, but says that if his life was a movie the moral of the story would be “Tell your parents everything.” Can you think of a movie or book that incorporates the moral “Tell your parents everything”? What similarities do the main character and the situation have to Theo in this story? (*Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: R.CCR.9*)
- 6 Theo’s dad seems to be keeping secrets as well. What secret do you believe Theo’s father is withholding? How might Theo react to hearing the secret? Provide evidence from the text. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)

CHAPTER 21–25

- 1 The theme of bullying is discussed and shown several times in the story. Theo’s school also gives an assembly about bullying. What are examples of bullying from the story? Describe the encounter and how it impacted the character. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.2*)
- 2 How are Theo’s social interactions with other students in the school and with Brian changing now that he is on the basketball team? Provide examples of the changes from the story. Do you believe that the changes are positive or negative? (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 3 Brooke and Rain have an intense moment during practice over the phrase “*Sic semper tyrannis. . . thus ever to tyrants*” (p. 155). What does this phrase actually mean? Use the clues and context from the book to figure it out. (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4*)
- 4 When Brooke calls Mr. J a hippie, he points out that she may only feel that way because of his hair. Are there any examples of characters in the book being judged because of their looks? Which characters and why? Provide examples from the story to support your answer. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)

- 5 When Theo skips class with Weston, he feels that it is “exciting to leave his nerdy self behind for a change.” How do his actions differ from his “nerdy self” that day? Use examples to support your response. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 6 Theo and the coach have a moment after practice to discuss basketball. How are the experiences of the coach and Theo similar? What worries the coach about Theo? How does Theo respond to those concerns? (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.6*)
- 7 Theo compares his Friday “Diary of Doom” list to the story *The Three Musketeers*. Can you think of another story in which the main character has to face several challenges in one day? (*Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: R.CCR.9*)



CHAPTER 26–30

- 1 Gavin is really upset that his song is stolen. What investigative steps should Gavin and Theo take to solve this mystery? Explain why each step will result in figuring out the crime. Based on the events that have already occurred in the story, who do you believe is responsible for the theft? Provide evidence from the text. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 2 Having Gavin at his school makes Theo, “think of what would happen if you tossed a wild boar into a room six inches deep in farm-fresh eggs. *Squash! Crunch! Splat!*” What does this quote suggest? What does Theo believe will happen with Gavin in his school? (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4*)
- 3 Theo continues to say that Gavin is not the same guy that he was in the past. What examples have we seen of Gavin being a “nice guy” instead of a “bully” or “show-off?” Examine Gavin’s interactions with the Brain Train team and the basketball team to identify examples. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 4 Gavin tells Theo that he plays as if he is ashamed of his height. Is there evidence throughout the story that this statement is true? Provide specific details. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)

CHAPTER 31–36

- 1 Describe what Theo discovers when he arrives at Rain’s home. What surprises him about the environment and her family? Was Rain in danger throughout the story? Why or why not? Use examples from the text. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)
- 2 Rain speaks about many of the misconceptions that people have about Muslims. Where do many of those misconceptions stem from? What are some Islamic beliefs that people may be unaware of? How did those misconceptions affect Rain at her last school? Provide examples from the story to support your answer. (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.1*)



- 3** There are many examples of parents supporting their children throughout the book. What actions and relationships highlight the theme of “parental support” throughout the story? (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.2*)

- 4** When Theo makes his decision about the Brain Train team, Mr. J says “No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be” (p. 251). What does this quote mean? How does it relate to Theo’s decision? (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4*)

- 5** In the game against Orangetree, the fans start yelling “Sasquatch.” How does the meaning of Sasquatch change from the beginning to end of the book? What does this indicate about Theo’s character? (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4*)

- 6** What types of verbs and phrases does the author use to describe Theo’s feelings and actions during the final basketball game? Based on the descriptions, what do you believe Theo enjoys about basketball? How has his playing changed from the first to the last chapter of the story? (*Reading: Craft and Structure: R.CCR.4*)

- 7** One theme of the story is “transformation” since many characters experience changes throughout the book. What events lead to the transformation of characters such as Theo, Mr. J, Brian, Gavin, Marcus, etc. . . . ? (*Reading: Key Ideas and Details: R.CCR.2*)

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: RESEARCH AND WRITING

WRITING

Research the life and career of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar using sources such as the Internet and books. Write a report about his life and career using the information that you gather. Be sure to discuss how parts of his life are similar to and different from the character Theo from *Sasquatch in the Paint*. Be sure to reference your sources and include a bibliography. (*Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: W.CCR.8*)

SOCIAL STUDIES

In chapter 25, Theo says that his Tuesday is worse than the stock market crash of 1929. Use the Internet to research what happened during the stock market crash of 1929. Create a three-page summary of your findings that includes a clear introduction, sequence of events, and conclusion. (*Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: W.CCR.6*)

In the story, the lawyer (Ms. Moonsilver) explains to Rain, Theo, and Gavin that the purchase of Gavin's song was legal. What is the process to copyright and sell a song? Research the process and develop a brochure that highlights the steps. (*Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: W.CCR.1*)

MUSIC

Music is a topic that comes up several times in the story. During one Brain Train team debate the students share facts about the symphonies Mozart composed as a child. Create a group of three and assign each person one of Mozart's first symphonies. Each participant should research his or her assigned symphony, describe the important facts of that musical selection, and list reasons why it is the best symphony. Once every group member has completed the research assignment, students should engage in a debate about why his or her selection is the best. (*Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.CCR.1*)

SCIENCE

Throughout the book, Theo shares several interesting facts on the Brain Train team. Research one of the following areas (see A–F below) and create an informative essay that develops the topic by including related facts, details, and examples.

(Writing: Text Types and Purposes: W.CCR.2)

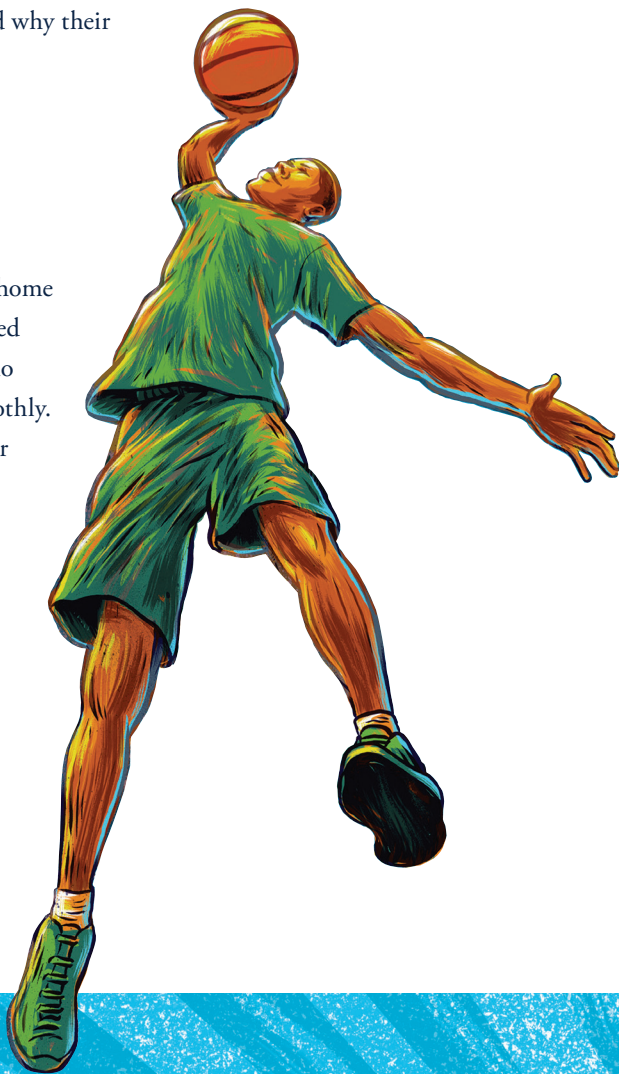
- a. The dangers of cigarettes
- b. The use of maggots in modern-day medical treatment
- c. The relationship between sugar and hyperactivity in children
- d. The digestive system of birds and why their “poop” comes out white
- e. Californium
- f. Scarabaeoidea

HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTION

When Theo begins doing chores at home he realizes how hard his mom worked every day. Think about someone who helps things in your home run smoothly.

Create a PowerPoint presentation for that individual that includes the things he or she does, why you appreciate the help, and how their actions are related to your success.

(Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: SL.CCR.5)



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR played basketball for the Milwaukee Bucks (1969–1975) and for the Los Angeles Lakers (1975–1989), helping his teams win six NBA Championships. He is the NBA’s all-time leading scorer, with 38,387 points. He also holds the records for the most field goals (15,837) and the most minutes played (57,446). Abdul-Jabbar gave the game the skyhook, considered basketball’s most classic, and lethal, offensive move. He was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1995.



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Since retiring, Abdul-Jabbar has been an actor, basketball coach, and an author, focusing on history. His previous titles include *Giant Steps*, *Kareem*, *Black Profiles in Courage*, *A Season on the Reservation*, *Brothers in Arms*, and *On the Shoulders of Giants: My Journey Through the Harlem Renaissance*. His children’s nonfiction book about inventors, *What Color Is My World?*, won the NAACP award for Best Children’s Book. In 2012 he was selected as a U.S. Cultural Ambassador.

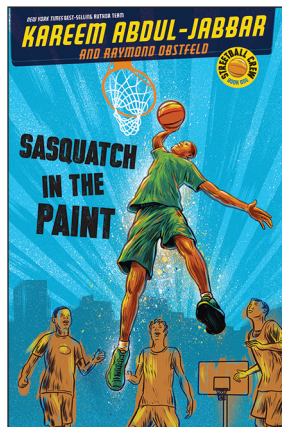
RAYMOND OBSTFELD is a novelist, screenwriter, and nonfiction writer. His second novel, *Dead Heat*, was nominated for an Edgar Award; he also wrote an award-winning YA novel entitled *The Joker and the Thief*. Obstfeld has previously collaborated with Abdul-Jabbar on the sports memoir *On the Shoulders of Giants: My Journey Through the Harlem Renaissance*, and the nonfiction picture book *What Color Is My World?* Obstfeld currently teaches creative writing at Orange Coast College as an associate professor.



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This guide was created by Dawn Jacobs, who has a doctorate in Special Education: Learning Disabilities, and works to improve academic outcomes for all students through teacher development, instructional design, and research in the areas of response to intervention, social support, and parent involvement.

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