

JOURNEY TO LITERACY

Did you know the majority of children in Georgia are not at their proper reading level? One of the crucial milestones on the path to success is learning to read at an early age. Children who read proficiently by the end of third grade are more likely to graduate from high school and to be economically successful in adulthood.* In 2009, a study by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina reported that 80% of the preschool classrooms were rated as having less than basic practices supporting children's language and literacy skills. And according to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data*, 80 percent of low-income fourth graders and 66 percent of all fourth graders are not proficient in reading. But, through our Journey to Literacy events, we are sharing with parents, educators, and members of the community the importance of reading with children and giving them the resources to do so. Join us as we make strides to turn these statistics around!

**Source: U.S. Department of Education, NAEP, 2013 Reading Assessment*



The Journey to Literacy events are often held at local libraries and within our community placement sites. You can join in the fun by reading to children and assisting them with fun crafts and activities that are related to the books. You can engage children simply in a conversation. Encourage them to use language and to find their voice. Take the time and share the importance of language and literacy with the children and parents around you. Whether you are a member, sustainer, or an involved member of the community, you can make a difference in the life of a child.

RESOURCES FOR READING TO CHILDREN

What's the best way to prepare a child for school? Language proficiency (size of vocabulary, recognition letters and understanding the letter/sound relationship) is central to school readiness. Readiness involves a curiosity about learning, emotional development, use of language, understanding and knowledge. Reading is one of the best ways for a child to learn these skills.

Parents and caregivers are the key to getting children ready to learn! They are their first teachers.

Children who see their parents read are more likely to pick up a book on their own. More importantly, the children who hear their parents read are more likely to stick with reading into adulthood. That's why we recommend "The Read-Aloud Handbook" by Jim Trelease.

In the first chapter, Trelease tells us that, when it comes to reading, “We have 100 percent interest in kindergarten but lose 75 percent of our potential lifetime readers by senior year.” He explains that children learn to be “school time readers,” who know how to get by in class, but no more, and finally, he shows us by citing numerous empirical and case studies that the most influential factor in determining future success, across all subjects, is reading aloud to children.

Here are a few recommendations, organized not by age, but by comprehension readiness.

Pre-verbal & Early Talkers

Ask Mr. Bear by Marjorie Flack
This is the Bread I Baked for Ned by Crescent Dragonwagon
Owl Babies by Martin Waddell

For those with greater attention spans

Frindle by Andrew Clements
Call it Courage by Armstrong Sperry

Pre-readers and Early Readers

Granddaddy’s Place by Helen Griffith
Froggy Gets Dressed by Jonathan London
The Whingdingilly by Bill Peet
The Wretched Stone by Chris van Allsburg

For older children capable of more difficult subject matter

Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli
North to Freedom by Anne Holm
Slake’s Limbo by Felice Holman

HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY READ

Beyond reading the words in a book, explain the story, ask a child questions about the text, and encourage them to talk about the story. All of this helps to develop a deeper understanding of the world and promote social skills. The way a book is read to a child has as much impact as the frequency of reading. Try connecting the books to the child’s own life experience, to other literature they have read or even to universal concepts. Look for books with rich language, meaningful plots, compelling characters, and engaging illustrations.

Each summer, the Junior League of Atlanta takes part in the Mayor’s Summer Reading Program, where children are encouraged to continue reading even when they’re not in school. [Here](#) are some tips and videos illustrating how to read to your children with the most impact.



The options for books and the activities you can incorporate with them are endless. The library is an excellent resource! Keep the time fun and exciting for a child and it will help develop a love of learning. Carve time from your day to read to a child. It is time that they will treasure forever!