



Ready to Read

Stories about Ready to Read books and the Children who Receive Them

8/21/08 - received via e-mail from a Children's Service Society home visitor

Here goes -----

I arrived for the first Parent Aide visit at the home of a single Mom with a 3 and a 1 ½ year old. I was prepared to engage the children with *Wheels on the Bus* and the *Colors* books. The response was unbelievable! Mom and I both read each book twice and when I returned the following week both children were toting around their books. After observing that no other books were present in the home I decided to bring one more for each child the third week. When I was leaving the 3 year old said, "Come back, we need books!"

A family I have served since the birth of their 2 ½ year old started without any books in the home. After receiving several Ready to Read books over the years I arrived recently to find that Mom had gone to two rummage sales to seek out books. She was so excited with her finds!

I recently served a blended family that included Mom and her 9 year old, Dad, and a 6 month old they had together. Big brother Jason (not real name) was excited to receive the *How Kids Grow* book. Over the summer we have made time each visit to discuss a section of the book. It has been a bonding experience for the whole family as we also go through the 'Growing Great Kids' Start Right curriculum.

7/3/06 – via letter of thanks from a Public Health Nurse

"I am a public health nurse working in rural western communities, visiting women who are pregnant or have recently given birth. Maria had delivered her fifth child; the others were 5, 7, 9 and 11. Early on in the visit, I took out two books to give the family from the Ready to Read program and asked the children, "Who likes to read?" They all smiled happily and said that they read a lot of library books. That led to further conversation about language, and that being able to speak two languages is a very good thing. I explained that the books I brought had both English and Spanish because both are beautiful to speak. The face of little Marianna, 5 brightened and she said, "Thank you."

Later, Maria talked through the interpreter about being able to speak only Spanish and her concerns about losing communication with her children. The older children told me they speak just a little Spanish. We talked about the English classes available to her in the community, and the section in the public library devoted to Spanish materials. I really felt bringing the books to this family opened up a very important topic and helped bring home the message about reading, using and valuing both languages, and the library as a welcoming place."

Quotations from returned parent surveys from the Public Health Nurse Visits illustrating program effectiveness include;

"Didn't know that you had to start so early to read to children." Rural farm family has only the book the Public Health Nurse gave her. It lead to a discussion of perhaps using the local library. One family (Spanish) finally has a book in Spanish. 6 of 13 survey respondents indicated that they had 0-5 books in their homes up to the Public Health Nurse visit.



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Volunteers have shared with us the excitement of both children and parents in being able to take home a book.

St. Peters school staff person reports, "It's exciting to watch the faces when they find out that the book is theirs to keep."

8/24/07- received via e-mail Children's Service Society

"The Family Resource Center gave Jessica, age 2 ½ the book Clifford's Animal Sounds at Drop-In Playtime. She and her Mom attended quite regularly and Mom commented on how often they were reading the book together. Several weeks later Mom called and asked if there was any way we could provide another copy of the book as Jessica had literally worn hers out. At the time we didn't have one in stock but United Way was able to order more. Jessica came in with her Mom to pick up the replacement when we called to say it was in. The delight on her face as she got her new "red dog" book was a joy to see!"

Lincoln Elementary - received via fax 8/21/07 "Here is the request form from Lincoln Elementary. We are thrilled to get the books!"

08/27/07 – via e-mail from a Marathon County Public Health Nurse

"One morning I went to see an Amish family which I have seen after each child's birth so had visited numerous times--they have 9 children! I had brought a book for each child in the family aged 5 and under, so had four brand new books. They quietly stood around the table as I read one of the books to them--it was, "Time for Bed". Then I gave that book to a child, and also "Growing Vegetable Soup", "Colors", and "Bingo". I adding a few used books I carry in a box in my trunk for these situations so that every child got something. About ½ hr later, I had completed my visit with the mother and was driving down their long driveway when I glanced over at the front yard and saw a very touching site--all 8 children were sitting in a circle in the grass, one was playing teacher and her pretend students each had an open book on his or her lap!"



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Selection of responses from teachers & principals to the Fall 2007, 4 and 5 year old kindergarten distribution.

1. We participate in this program because we are a high-need school. Having books to put into children's hands is a wonderful thing. For some kids, this is their very first book they can call their own. It's a great way to promote literacy, and it parallel's our school goals.
2. I participate – it is a great way to get books into the hands of children and encourage parents to read, read, read!
3. Literacy is one of one of our primary school goals. Parental involvement in the life of the school is also very important to us. Being able to give students books to read at home with their parents helps us to achieve both goals. Without the help of this United Way program, we would not be able to afford to offer our families this opportunity.
4. Our K-2 students at St. Mary's school need personal libraries of their own. New books catch young readers reading new words learned through classroom instruction and they enjoy studying the beautiful, colorful illustrations. The distribution of books to our students by the Ready to Read program is looked forward to by the parents, also. Thank you for increasing literacy among the newest readers in our school.
5. The more resources for parents, the better...especially at no cost to our limited budget.
6. We like getting books into the hands of our students.
7. What a wonderful gift for our youngsters? Books are such a special part of our lives...any time we can provide such a generous offering, we will do so!
8. Anytime we can get books into the hands of children it is a positive.
9. We participated because we felt it was a great way to get books into our student's homes.
10. 1.) By providing books to all students to take home we hope to help build a literacy connection between students and their parents. 2.) Help develop an awareness for pre-literacy skills looking at pictures to make predictions, (front vs. back cover, etc.) and to enjoy and value books.
11. We are a low income district (over 50%) so any time we can provide learning materials to distribute to parents, we will do so.
12. We have a high population of low income families in our district, so we greatly appreciate any free educational materials we can provide them with.
13. You offered great literature to children at no cost; an opportunity for some children to own their first book and to share it with family members.
14. Offer of free literature to children provides a wonderful opportunity for families to read together and share their ideas.
15. We have many children who have few or no books at home. Anything we can do to get more reading materials in the homes of our youngest learners is great!
16. I think it not only encourages reading, but helps children know that more than just teachers think it is important.
17. This is a program which is exciting for our students and our teachers. We find it very helpful in promoting literacy among our early childhood learners.
18. Students have their hands on the book and clutch it as if it was a birthday present. It's theirs to keep and read over and over again!



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19. The children are always so delighted to receive the books. It has been great to be able to give a book to each student at our kindergarten night.
20. Any additional tools are helpful.
21. It's one more opportunity for students to receive free books. We usually give away books during our FACT Nights (Families and Children Together), but not all families attend.
22. (Very helpful)-The kids really enjoyed the books. Many kids don't have a lot of books at home, so getting one to keep at school is really special for them.
23. Very helpful as I find that all students are excited about getting a free book and some do not have much access to books at home.
24. Many of our students do not have books in their homes. It's a great way to expose kids to print.
25. Many of our students come from low-income families where books are a luxury to have at home, and many can't afford to buy books for students that students have listened to in class, to keep and cherish. Thank you!
26. It's hard to tell how much these books get used at home, or what effect they have, however I would assume they are helping to promote literacy skills.
27. This was an excellent way to set an example and stress to each family the importance of literacy by promoting read at home, not just at school.
28. It's another avenue to impress upon children the significance and enjoyment of reading. Indeed there are students who have never stepped into a library much less own a book of their very own.
29. This program provides another way to show families how important reading is. There are many children who do not have many opportunities to explore quality literature.
30. ...if you had books in Spanish, that would be great for our Hispanic population
31. Insert into each book: 1. Process for securing a library card from Marathon County Public Library. 2. and a page of parent suggestions for use of the book.4
32. One of our school goals is to immerse students in literature. We try to have many opportunities for students to have access to books, and this program helps us. It's also special that the kids get to keep their own book!
33. We tied the literacy program into our Red Ribbon Week Program as a positive choice for students. One teacher used the books as a welcome back to school gift. Several of the teachers incorporated them into their weekly themes.
34. Books were read by the teacher and students listened, making frog sounds. They were highly engaged. Apple books' illustrations were compared to the pictures of their recent field trip to the apple orchard in Merrill. Books were read in pairs by themselves. They were taken home and enjoyed.
35. At our Preschool and Kindergarten informational meetings we were able to give each visitor a book. It made the children feel important and anticipating beginning to read.
36. Students will be given the book after their annual trip to the apple orchard.
37. I know you have already heard this, but the principal read the book with two of the classes before telling them that it was a gift from the United Way for them to keep! What a priceless moment? One teacher even scheduled a berry taste-test for her students to go along with the book!



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38. The children were able to choose a book when he/she was our "Star of the Day." The children all really looked forward to their turn to pick a book.
39. Books were used as a reward for working hard with the teacher on a literacy activity. All students received a book for "reading" a story with the teacher.
40. The books will be put in folders and distributed at an informational meeting regarding math and literacy. We'll have the opportunity to stress the importance of reading to the children.
41. Books are given to parents during parent-teacher conferences to help emphasize the importance of reading to their child at home.
42. We handed the books out to parents at our parent/teacher conferences.
43. They were distributed to every student in Kindergarten as a gift from the United Way. There were lots of smiles and thank you's.
44. The books will be distributed prior to the winter break to assure that each child will have some reading material over break.
45. I plan to distribute the books before winter break to ensure some reading material is available at home. Doing so at that time will also provide time for the children to become more familiar with reading behaviors.
46. Here is the request form from Lincoln Elementary. We are thrilled to get the books!
Thank you!
47. –Both the children and their teachers were delighted to receive the books from the United Way Project. Isn't it wonderful that children's eyes still light up at the sight of a book?
Thank you for making so many eyes light up.
48. Thank you so much for the books donated to our 4K-5K students. I read the book to two of the classes while they followed along. Afterwards, we discussed the story and our own love of berries. I wish you could have seen the wide smiles and bright eyes when I told them the copy in their hands was theirs to keep. We very much appreciate your thoughtfulness!
49. *** We received the books yesterday ... Thank you very much. The Kindergarten teachers were very excited. They are going to pass them out to the families on October 10 during our parent/teacher conferences. *** (from the teachers) we would like to thank you and the United Way of Marathon County for the generous donations of books for our kindergarten students. The students were very excited to get new books to take home and keep. What a great way to emphasize the importance of reading at home, not just at school! Thank you so much.