

### Mission

Raising A Reader's mission is to engage parents in a routine of daily "book cuddling" with their children from birth to age five to foster healthy brain development, parent-child bonding, and early literacy skills critical for school success.



*"Raising A Reader is based on the best research on early reading. The program reaches into the home to help parents create the literacy-rich environment that has been shown in research to foster high levels of literacy skills."*

Dr. Deborah Stipek,  
Dean,  
Stanford University  
School of Education

### Program Overview

Raising A Reader is a national nonprofit organization offering local agencies an evidence-based early literacy and parent engagement program that has demonstrated it can improve the reading readiness skills of children birth to age five. With nearly half of all U.S. children entering kindergarten lacking the early reading skills needed for success in school, Raising A Reader has set a long-term goal of reaching one million children and families. **Raising A Reader currently serves 111,000 children through its nearly 2,500 affiliate sites across the country.**







Raising A Reader rotates bright red bags filled with award-winning books into children's homes on a weekly basis. In the average program a child is exposed to approximately 100 books per year. Local implementers are trained in interactive "read-aloud" techniques that stimulate early brain development and language acquisition. They in turn, train parents and caregivers. The training helps parents and caregivers, even those with limited English proficiency or low literacy skills, learn how to engage their child by sharing a book. Through the program, families are also connected to their local public library. At the culmination of the program, children receive a blue library bag to keep and continue the practice of borrowing books and "book cuddling."

Since it was founded in 1999, **Raising A Reader has reached more than 811,000 children** through its affiliations with local organizations such as United Way, Head Start, public libraries, home visiting programs and early learning programs in school districts.

### Theory of Change Model

Raising A Reader's unique Theory of Change is based on peer-reviewed educational, behavioral and systems change research. It is the framework used to insure the program's standards of excellence.

#### Raising A Reader's Theory of Change:

-  If...children drive the process with the Raising A Reader red book bags and books becoming a favorite toy;
-  Program professionals learn how to train parents in interactive read-aloud strategies and early brain development;
-  Parents learn and engage in read-aloud strategies and develop a regular routine of book cuddling;
-  The weekly book bag delivery system is turnkey—a simple, sustainable routine that is easily managed in a number of diverse settings; and
-  Families start to use their local library for an additional source of high-quality reading materials...
-  **Then...**children will enter kindergarten with a love of books and ready to learn to read.

**Raising A Reader National Office | [www.raisingareader.org](http://www.raisingareader.org)**

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## A Smart Investment

In a 2006 report sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trust and PNC Financial Group, it was estimated that the return on investment for programs supporting young children at risk can be as high as 15-17 percent, making support of high quality programs for young children an extremely good investment.

Raising A Reader offers a demonstrated, scalable, and cost-effective early literacy and parent engagement program for communities that want to invest in the educational success of their youngest children.

Raising A Reader is cost-effective because the books and materials are used year after year. The program can be started for approximately \$100 per child per year, with an annual average cost per child served over a five-year period of just \$35.

## Proven Results and Recognition

More than a dozen independent evaluations have shown the success of Raising A Reader. Evaluations have demonstrated:

- 75 percent increase in the number of parents who shared books with children five or more times per week. (Norfolk, Va., 2004)
- Raising A Reader five-year-olds in Head Start scored 69 percent higher in pre-reading and 59 percent higher in book knowledge than other Head Start five-year-old or older children. (San Francisco, Calif., 2003)
- The number of Spanish-speaking parents taking their preschool children to the library at least once per month increased from 6 percent to 27 percent. (Santa Clara County, Calif., 2001)

Raising A Reader's success and effectiveness has garnered the following national recognition:

- Three-time recipient of Fast Company magazine's "Social Capitalist Award."
- Highlighted as a "model early childhood family engagement program" during Congressional testimony by Harvard Family Research Project Executive Director, Dr. Heather Weiss.
- Featured in distinguished national education writer Gene Maeroff's book on high-quality parent involvement early childhood programs, *Building Blocks: Making Children Successful in the Early Years*.



## Impact

*"The trend we are seeing is that the kids who participate in Raising A Reader are more ready to learn how to read and write when they enter kindergarten. That early exposure to books and reading is so incredibly important, and we're seeing that it is a powerful tool to close achievement gaps, even by age five."*

**Julie Knowles,  
Director of Assessment  
and Special Programs,  
Garfield County School  
District Re-2, Rifle, Colo.**

*"No other library service has the outcome-based evaluation results that Raising A Reader has. Our evaluations consistently show substantial gains in changing parent and caregiver behaviors around books and reading."*

**Nell Colburn,  
Raising A Reader  
Coordinator,  
Multnomah County  
Library, Portland, Ore.**



**To learn more, please contact the Raising A Reader National Office:**

650.450.5566 | [rarinquiry@raisingareader.org](mailto:rarinquiry@raisingareader.org) | [www.raisingareader.org](http://www.raisingareader.org)

**Imagine...all children entering kindergarten in love with the printed page and ready to learn to read.**

Imagine...

Raising A Reader® 