



# 30 Things About The Children's Reading Foundation



30 years  
of literacy  
& learning

## 1. Started with a bold community goal

The Children's Reading Foundation was founded in 1996 in Kennewick, Washington, when five citizen leaders and eight local school districts came together around one big idea: the whole community shares responsibility for helping children read well.

## 2. The vision is simple

The Children's Reading Foundation's vision is that every child learns to read at grade level by the end of third grade, so they can reach their full potential in school and life.

## 3. The mission spans families, schools, and communities

The Children's Reading Foundation aims to: educate and support families/caregivers; support schools in achieving reading proficiency; and facilitate community involvement in raising readers.

## 4. "90% reading by third grade" is the North Star

At launch, founders set a measurable goal: 90% of students reading proficiently by the end of third grade within six years—a target that still shapes the foundation's work today.

## 5. Parents are a child's "first and most influential teacher"

From day one, The Children's Reading Foundation has focused on equipping parents and caregivers, not replacing them. Its resources and programs are built around helping adults prepare children for school success starting at birth.

## 6. The message is simple: Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day

If you remember only one thing, remember this:

"Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day."

The Children's Reading Foundation has championed this daily habit for decades through pledges, campaigns, and resources.

## 7. Reading with your child 20 minutes a day can change their trajectory

Decades of research back up that message: reading aloud daily nurtures language, strengthens bonds, and lays the groundwork for school readiness and long-term achievement. The Children's Reading Foundation curates and shares this research through its "Studies, Research & Results" resources.

## 8. A FREE Resource Hub for parents, caregivers & teachers

Discover fun and exciting activities, printables, booklists, and games to help develop your child's love of Reading Together and Playing With a Purpose.



## **9. READY! for Kindergarten is one of the signature programs**

Launched in 2002, READY! for Kindergarten is the research-based school readiness flagship program from The Children's Reading Foundation that helps parents and caregivers build key skills from birth to age five.

## **10. READY! focuses on Targets, Training & Tools**

The Children's Reading Foundation's flagship program, READY! for Kindergarten gives caregivers:

- Targets: Age-appropriate learning goals
- Training: Workshops on how children learn
- Tools: Games, materials, and simple activities

These are designed to fit into everyday routines at home.

## **11. READY! offers workshops, too, even before school starts**

The READY! for Kindergarten program engages parents and caregivers from birth to age five, equipping them with tools, training, and activities aimed at preparing children for kindergarten success.

## **12. READY! is more than a class; it's a lifestyle**

READY! for Kindergarten encourages families to adopt a simple daily rhythm: Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day and Play With a Purpose for 10 Minutes using READY! Activities.

## **13. Programs reach beyond reading, providing early math & social-emotional development, too**

Through its READY! for Kindergarten program, The Children's Reading Foundation supports not only literacy but also early math and social-emotional skills, recognizing that readiness for school is comprehensive.

## **14. Team Read supports struggling readers in the early grades**

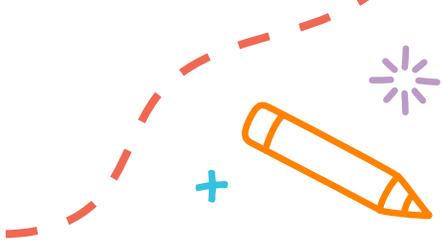
Developed in 2000, Team Read trains community volunteers to tutor students in grades 1–3 who need extra help with reading, providing supplemental sessions so kids don't fall further behind.

## **15. Team Read is one-on-one & relationship-based**

Volunteers typically work one-on-one with the same child twice a week during the school day, becoming a consistent, positive reading coach over the school year.

## **16. READ UP tackles "Summer Slide"**

The READ Up: Stop the Summer Slide program helps children keep reading during the summer months so they don't lose ground when school is out. It encourages daily read-aloud routines and provides access to books.



## 17. READ UP events are free & family-focused

Through READ UP summer events, the foundation and its partners host free gatherings for caregivers and children from birth to age 8. Families hear stories, learn about the power of reading aloud, and receive free books to keep.

## 18. Local chapters adapt programs to community needs

The Children's Reading Foundation of the Mid-Columbia, South Sound Reading Foundation, and other foundation chapters tailor programs like READY!, Team Read, and READ UP to meet local needs through workshops, summer reading activities, and family literacy events.

## 19. Continuous support of both families & schools

Nationally, The Children's Reading Foundation positions itself as a partner to:

- Parents and caregivers, offering guidance and tools to prepare children for school
- Schools and communities, delivering proven school readiness and reading programs

## 20. The work is grounded in large-scale research

In 2019, using data from around 380,000 students, a national school readiness study sponsored by The Children's Reading Foundation showed that kindergarten entry scores are the single strongest predictor of academic achievement through at least fifth grade.

## 21. Amplifying research on why third grade matters

The Children's Reading Foundation's research highlights work showing that reading proficiently by the end of third grade is tightly linked to later achievement, graduation rates, and life outcomes. This evidence informs its focus on early preventive work.

## 22. Providing practical tools like booklists & printables

Families don't just get advice, they get tools: curated booklists, downloadable reading tracker bookmarks, printables, games, and other practical resources to help make daily reading a real, manageable habit.

## 23. The "Reading Pledge" turns intention into action

The Children's Reading Foundation's Reading Pledge invites families and caregivers to commit to reading with a child 20 minutes every day.

## 24. Collaborate with the community to reach more children

The Children's Reading Foundation regularly partners with school districts, nonprofits, early learning centers, and community organizations that host READY! workshops, Team Read tutoring, and READ Up events—greatly expanding their reach beyond one central office.



## 25. Chapters are still growing

Recent reports from local partners show how READY! and Team Read serve hundreds of students in districts such as Kennewick, Washington, each year, demonstrating ongoing relevance and demand nearly three decades after the foundation began.

## 26. Reaching families beyond workshops

The Children's Reading Foundation maintains an active presence on social media, newsletters, and resource hubs to share free printables, book giveaways, and literacy tips with families everywhere.

## 27. Local chapters lean into creative campaigns

Campaigns like "Resolution Read" invite families to make reading their New Year's resolution, turning the 20-minutes-a-day message into a community-wide challenge and celebration.

## 28. Volunteers are at the heart of the mission

Programs like Team Read depend on community volunteers who commit to regular one-on-one reading time with a child. Training and support help volunteers feel confident, even if they don't see themselves as reading experts.

## 29. The Children's Reading Foundation's influence extends into national conversations

The Children's Reading Foundation's research, statistics, and messaging are frequently cited by other literacy organizations, media outlets, and education partners, helping shape the broader conversation about early literacy and school readiness in the United States.

## 30. Thirty years later, the core belief hasn't changed

From 1996 to 2026, one idea has guided The Children's Reading Foundation: when families, schools, and communities work together, and when adults commit to reading with children every day, kids have a far better chance to thrive in school and in life.

