



Raising Readers

in Story County

Community LITERACY TOOLKIT

Effective Strategies for Communities Who Partner with Families and Schools to Increase the Language and Literacy Development of Children from Birth to Age Eight



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Rotary Club of Ames
Morning



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Sharing What Works

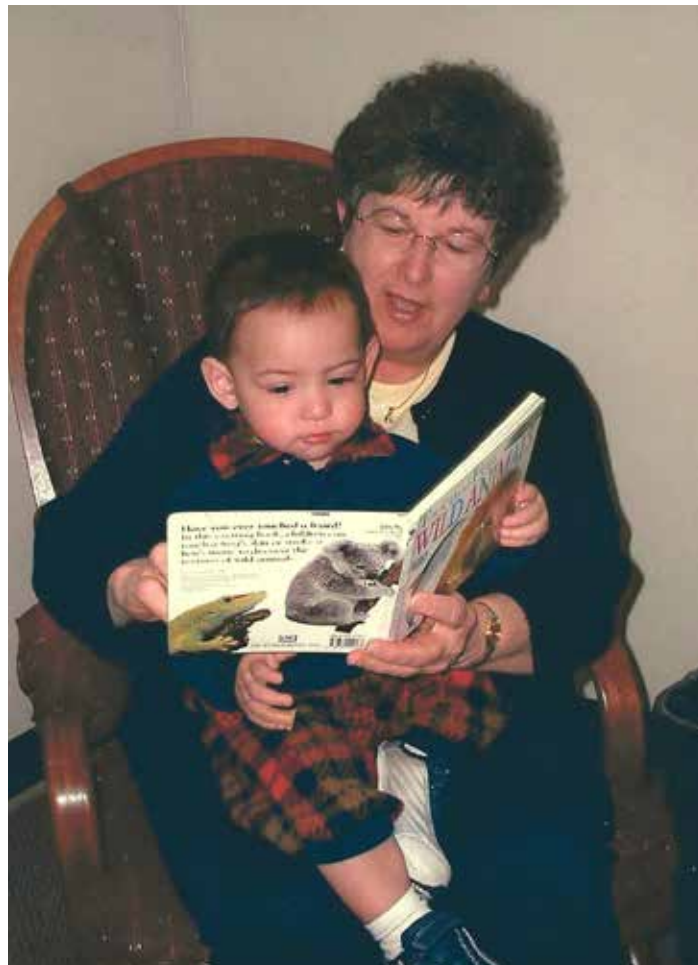
In 2000, community members in Ames, Iowa, began exploring ways to help impact early language and literacy development. This toolkit shares how we organized ourselves and what strategies have worked for us. We offer it as a guide for other communities as they identify their own early literacy needs and marshal their unique resources to address these needs.

Some of the tools, programs, ideas, strategies and techniques in this toolkit are research-based. Some are evidence-based. Some are innovative programs we developed in an effort to reach desired outcomes.

The level of difficulty ranges from programs that are easily adopted and likely to get quick results to other programs that require more extensive training, supervision and funding to achieve significant long-term changes.

Our local network of family, school and community partners has been essential to our successes. Now we invite other communities to join us in exploring various strategies and sharing what works.

The toolkit's digital format allows for future updating and for the materials to be accessed online or downloaded at no cost when you register. We aim to build a network of people interested in developing community-based solutions to promote early literacy. We welcome your feedback and look forward to ongoing communication among communities with similar goals.



In 2004 Ames Rotarians started donating books for a new Reach Out and Read program. In 2009 Dr. Paschen (pictured below) gave the 10,000th book funded by Ames Rotary Clubs to a child at her well child checkup. Rotary club presidents Jane Acker and Jeff Gibbons looked on as Dr. Paschen encouraged the family to read together daily at home.

Photos in this toolkit illustrate RRSC programs and are the property of RRSC.



This toolkit was created by Raising Readers in Story County (RRSC), the Rotary Club of Ames Morning, and Iowa State University (ISU) School of Education and Extension and Outreach. RRSC is a community-based organization that has demonstrated early successes in promoting children's language and literacy development and healthy parent-child relationships. Rotary is an international organization dedicated to service above self. ISU has the expertise and network to plan, implement, and scale up effective programs.



Section 1 Meeting the Challenge

Children are our future. They will be our workforce, parents of our next generation, and citizens in our communities. Children who learn to read well are more likely to experience success in school, work, and life. Educating children is a key way to address root causes of poverty. Low literacy is both a worldwide and a national problem.



International Case for Change

- UNESCO Institute for Statistics reports 123 million youth worldwide are considered illiterate.¹
- Rotary International and the International Reading Association agree literacy is an essential ingredient for reducing poverty, improving health, increasing community and economic development, and promoting peace. The publication "Basic Education and Literacy Project Strategies" describes literacy, assessing community needs, and Rotary resources.²



United States Case for Change

Even in the United States low literacy is a problem. Too many youth are not prepared to succeed in the 21st century workforce or to be contributing citizens.

- Every year, more than 80 percent of children in U.S. families with low-incomes, about 6 million children in 1st through 3rd grades, are unlikely to read proficiently by 4th grade.³
- “Children who aren’t reading at grade level by the end of third grade are four times as likely to drop out of high school,” according to the Double Jeopardy report.⁴
- “Education is the cornerstone of individual and community success. But with more than 1.2 million children dropping out each year, America faces an education crisis. The cost? More than \$312 billion in lost wages, taxes and productivity over their lifetimes” according to United Way Worldwide.⁵
- The gap between children from families with low incomes and their more advantaged peers is both economic and social. “As income inequality expands, kids from more privileged backgrounds start and probably finish further and further ahead of their less privileged peers.”⁶
- There are 1.7 million more children living in low-income working families today than in the midst of the great recession. The 2015 KIDS COUNT Data Book is a source of national and state data about the well-being of children in the areas of Education, Economics, Health, and Family and Community.⁷

Iowa Case for Change

Iowa has reasons to be concerned about our children’s reading abilities. A 2015 Grade 4 State Reading Snapshot by the National Center for Education Statistics⁸ using National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed these results:

- The average score (210) of Iowa fourth-graders eligible for Free/Reduced-price Lunch was 24 points lower than the average score (234) of students who were not eligible.
- The average score (195) of Iowa Black students was 33 points lower than the average score (228) of White students.
- Iowa’s growth in reading has been stagnant compared to other states. The average score (224) of Iowa fourth-graders in 2015 was not significantly different from the average score (220) of Iowa fourth-graders in 1998.
- The NAEP scores of students in 31 states improved more than Iowa students’ scores in those years. In 2015 the average score (224) of Iowa fourth-graders was not significantly different from the average score (221) of fourth-graders in the nation. Iowa is no longer a leader in reading.

Children’s vocabulary skills are linked to their economic backgrounds. By 3 years of age, a 30 million word gap between children from the wealthiest and poorest families has been documented. “Simply in words heard, the average child on welfare was having half as much experience per hour (616 words per hour) as the average working-class child (1,251 words per hour) and less than one-third that of the average child in a professional family (2,153 words per hour).”⁹ Hart & Risley 2003

In 2015, Zero to Three Iowa State Baby Facts reported 40% of Iowa infants and toddlers live in low-income families, leaving them particularly vulnerable.¹⁰

In 2012 the Child & Family Policy Center report Iowa Early childhood Needs Assessment¹¹ identified several groups whose children were likely at risk of becoming struggling students, including:

- 38% of children lived in families with income below 200% of the federal poverty level and 16% fell below 100%.
- Of the over 38,000 total births in Iowa in 2010, 8 percent were to adolescent mothers—almost all of whom were unmarried and with a high school diploma or less. Another 22 percent were to older mothers with a high school diploma or less who were not married.

Helping all children fulfill their potentials

Educating children is a shared responsibility among families, schools, and the community. Schools can't do it alone. Families and caregivers build children's brains by talking and reading, starting at birth.

Communities help lay the foundation for early language and literacy development by empowering and educating caring adults and by providing enriching activities for children.

"For infants and toddlers, learning unfolds in many settings, including the home, child care centers, Early Head Start, family child care homes, and family, friend, and neighbor care."¹²

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

"The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading¹³ is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. Engaged communities that mobilize to remove barriers, expand opportunities, and assist parents in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities to serve as full partners in the success of their children are needed to assure student success."

In 2012 Ames Reads joined the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading because our missions and goals are aligned. Reading well by the end of third grade is an important milestone toward academic success and is the best predictor of high school graduation and career success.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading identified critical areas for communities to address to improve early literacy, including Readiness for school, Summer learning, Attendance, Parent engagement, and Health. The campaign provides a framework and technical assistance for participants.

Readiness for school

A child's first 2000 days are critical. Even before birth, babies' experiences set the stage for the rest of their lives. A baby is born with about 80 billion brain cells (neurons), but there are relatively few connections (synapses) between the cells. In the first three years about 700 neural connections are made each second. By age three, a child's brain has grown to 80 percent of its adult size and develops most of the "wiring" that determines the individual's emotional, social and intellectual make-up.

The Harvard Center on the Developing Child Resource Library¹⁴ has many user-friendly resources showing essential components of early language development. Three core concepts are illustrated in 2 minute videos: (1) Experiences Build Brain Architecture; (2) Serve and Return Interaction Shapes Brain Circuitry; and (3) Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development.

These two videos are also reminders that "brains are not born, they are built." The Science of Early Childhood Development¹⁵ is a 3:58 minute video by the Harvard Center. How Brains are Built: the Core Story¹⁶ is a 4 minute video by Alberta Family Wellness.

Children in families with low incomes often fall behind their more advantaged peers.¹⁷

- By 18 months, children in families with low incomes begin to fall behind in vocabulary development and other skills critical for school success.
- By age 3, a child's vocabulary can predict third grade reading achievement.
- By age 5, a typical child from a middle-class family recognizes 22 letters of the alphabet, compared to 9 for a child from a family with low-income.



A Small Talk Story County facilitator celebrates with a graduating family.

“The brain continues to build new neural connections throughout life, but at a much slower pace. Brain plasticity, or capacity for change, is greatest during the early years, which is what makes infancy and early childhood a period of such great opportunity—and vulnerability. Like a house, it’s easier and less costly to build a strong foundation than to identify a problem and have to retrofit later, according to Raising of America Early Childhood.”¹⁸

Parents are their children’s first teachers. “The incredible power that helps nurture the brain into optimum intelligence and stability is parent talk.”¹⁹ Parent-baby conversations are the most crucial element for building early brain connections. Communities can help empower and support parents in these essential roles.

Summer learning

Summer learning is critical for all children.²⁰ It is unacceptable that students from families with low incomes lose an average of more than two months in reading achievement each summer and by 5th grade fall 2.5 to 3 years behind their middle class peers.

The Statisticks Lottery video illustrates the readiness gap separating disadvantaged children from their more affluent peers.²¹

Attendance

Children who are enrolled in school but are chronically absent fall behind in learning. Chronic absence is defined as missing 10% or more of school days.²² Even in preschool, early absences can rob students of the time they need to develop literacy skills and become a habit. Poor school attendance can also be an early warning sign of challenging social, economic, and health conditions.



Summer is a great time for children to enjoy books.



A mom talks with her baby about the RRSC poster.

Parent Engagement

Parents who talk, read, sing and play with their children can make a huge difference in the development of their children’s vocabulary, comprehension and critical thinking skills. The Grade-level Reading Campaign has developed a framework of nine essential competencies that communities can help Successful Parents strengthen in order to support their children’s school readiness, school attendance and summer learning.²³

Warm, responsive care from adults helps a child handle his emotions and adapt to stress, not just short term, but into the future. Improving the home language environment accelerates early brain growth and closes cognitive, emotional, and social gaps.

Babies become distressed when adults don’t interact responsively, as the Still Face experiment by Dr. Edward Tronick illustrated.²⁴

Health

The American Academy of Pediatrics Literacy Promotion Policy recommends that pediatricians promote early literacy for children beginning in infancy and continuing at least until the age of kindergarten entry.²⁵

Children from families with low incomes have more frequent challenges that affect their health and wellbeing than more affluent children. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is promoting Healthy Readers with a Starter Kit to help communities identify priority issues affecting children's health and Growing Healthy Resources Guides with suggested strategies.²⁶

The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University created a multimedia resource describing Early Childhood Mental Health.²⁷

According to the Starting Early Matters Fact Sheet, there is growing evidence that preventive and developmental health services that start in the health practitioner's office contribute to addressing some of the major concerns affecting children's growth and development, including: learning, education and closing the achievement gap; social and emotional development and adjustment; obesity, diabetes and chronic health conditions.²⁸



Story County received a 100% participation award from Reach Out and Read.

MISSION

The mission of RRSC is to improve language and literacy development in children from birth to age eight and nurture healthy parent-child relationships.

RRSC is addressing two urgent needs:

1. Not all children enter kindergarten ready to learn.
2. Not all children read and comprehend at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

Section 2 RRSC COMMUNITY LITERACY MODEL

WE BELIEVE

- All children can learn.
- The first five years are critical for physical, mental, social and emotional development.
- Babies' experiences prenatally and in the months after birth shape their brain development.
- Parents and other caring adults are children's first and most important teachers.
- Educating children is a shared responsibility between families, schools and communities.



Vision

Raising Readers in Story County is committed to a future in which generations of young children get a solid foundation in reading, communicating, and learning. This will help prepare them to become successful students, citizens, and workers.

1. Children starting at birth will have experiences that help them thrive, come to school ready to read and learn, and read at or above grade level by the end of third grade.
2. Families will provide caring and stimulating environments that nurture the language, literacy, and emotional development of their young children.
3. Communities will help by providing effective early care and education, good books for children, reliable literacy information, and support for families.

RRSC created a logic model that illustrates the theory of change underlying the RRSC model. It is based on local literacy needs and assumptions, and it outlines our desired long-term impact, inputs, activities, and outcomes.

“All Story County children reading to succeed” is our desired result.

- One mid-term milestone of our progress is the percent of children entering kindergarten demonstrating a proficient level of early literacy skills by 2020 as measured by school districts on valid and reliable assessments.
- A longer-term indicator is the percent of children who read and comprehend at or above grade level by the end of third grade by 2020 as measured by school districts on valid and reliable assessments.

RRSC is fortunate to have a network of local individuals and groups also contributing to a collective impact on early literacy. In 2012 RRSC helped launch Ames Reads, a coalition led by United Way of Story County, which is now expanding to Story County Reads. As a member of the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, we benefit from state and national connections and technical support.

RRSC History

Raising Readers in Story County can trace its roots to the year 2000.

Ames participated in the Iowa Stories 2000 project sponsored by then First Lady Christie Vilsack. Leaders from school, public, and university libraries facilitated a series of community focus groups and public forums. They reviewed existing literacy programs and looked for segments of the community that were under-served.

Early literacy emerged as the area of greatest need. Young children and their parents, especially families with low incomes, became the target group for the Ames project.

At the same time, Ames Morning Rotary Club decided to contribute to the Ames Community School District goal of all children reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade. Ames Morning Rotary received a \$20,000 Children's Opportunity Grant which they used to fund an intervention pilot project to help developmentally delayed four-year-olds get ready for kindergarten, a public awareness campaign to promote early literacy, and other local early literacy initiatives.

Soon citizens concerned about early literacy formed a grassroots coalition. Representatives of the library, service groups, healthcare, human services, parents, educators, and early childhood providers began meeting monthly at Mary Greeley Medical Center. They adopted the motto “Read to Succeed” and wrote a one-page document outlining ways to connect Ames readers with young children.

The coalition learned about babyTALK, a nonprofit organization in Decatur, Illinois, that was reporting positive results working with families.²⁹ In 2001 Ames Morning Rotary provided funds for Executive Director Claudia Quigg to do a two-day training in Ames. Participants from many local groups learned about the babyTALK model and considered how we might adopt similar initiatives.

Coalition leaders also discovered the national Reach Out and Read program, an evidence-based model in which doctors used well-child checkups to encourage parents to help their children love books, learn, and eventually succeed in school.³⁰

The Rotary Club of Ames Morning helped launch a local Reach Out and Read program by creating a public reading corner in the McFarland Clinic pediatric waiting room with a comfortable chair and a bookcase displaying a collection of high quality children's books. They also donated 500 Baby Faces board books, which several pediatricians began giving to children at six-month checkups. This modest start blossomed into a countywide program in just a few years.

By 2004 the fledgling coalition felt a need to formalize their structure. They developed Articles and By Laws and obtained an Iowa Certificate of Incorporation. In 2005 the organization received federal income tax exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

RRSC board members involved community members in developing a mission, vision, goals and strategic planning. Job descriptions were written for the volunteer board members who were responsible for both governing and implementing programs. The board began hosting annual meetings to publicly report their progress.

In 2007 RRSC received a state Empowerment grant to hire a part-time Executive Director.

The Empowerment funding was cut in half in 2008, so the board changed from an Executive Director position to a part-time Parent Educator who developed a program to teach parents effective ways to enjoy books with their young children. A family educator position has been maintained with a combination of donated funds and grants.



Board members developed procedures for managing thousands of books.



In 2005 the board celebrated gaining 501c3 status.



Mona Berkey led parent education groups in 2008.



In 2007 the Executive Director and Board President promoted RRSC.

By 2014 RRSC had enough sustainable funding to hire a part time Executive Director. Then in 2015 the board used multiple funding sources to make the position full time in order to support our growing programs and expansion countywide.

Dedicated volunteers remain essential to the success of RRSC. In 2015, 7,500 volunteer hours were recorded for an in-kind value of \$150,000 at \$20/hour.

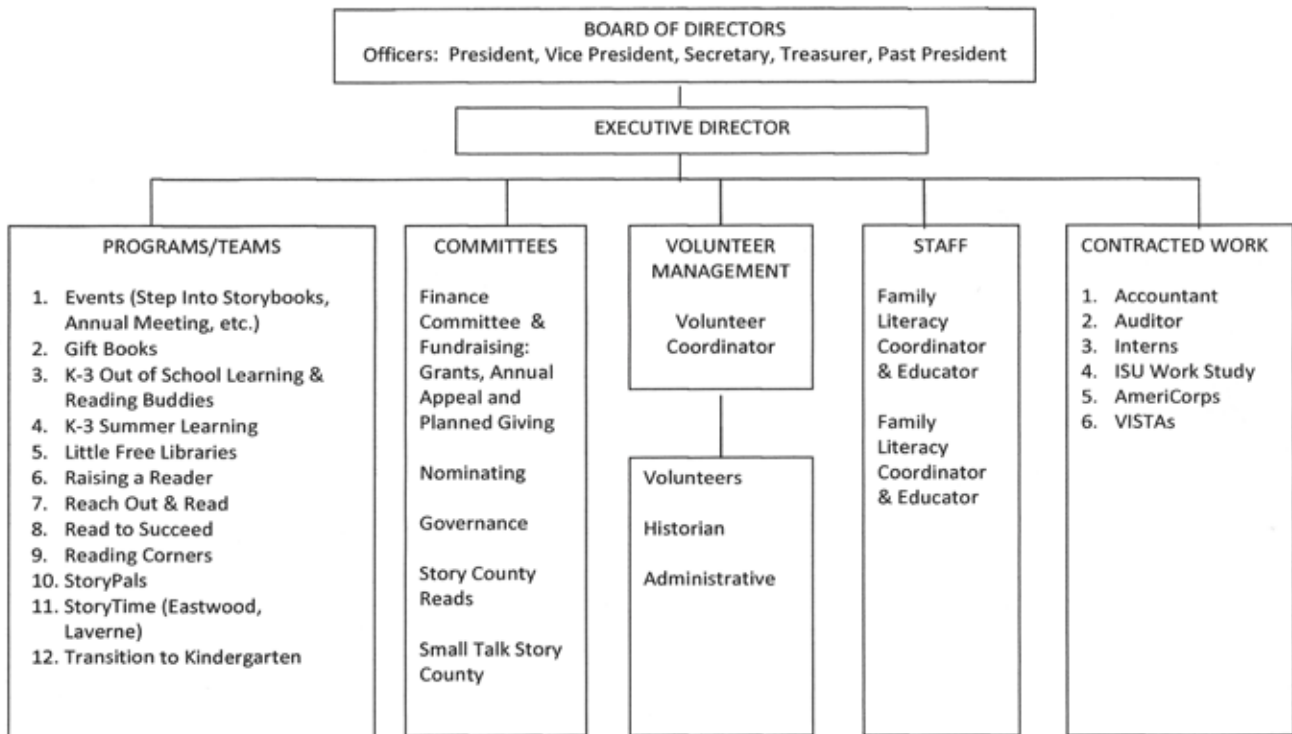


Executive Director Kim Hanna got a fine start reading to a boy at a summer event.

The 2016-17 organization chart below illustrates the roles of staff and volunteers.



2016-17 ORGANIZATION CHART



In terms of financial stewardship, RRSC has two separate funds. The Annual Operating Fund supports the projected budget and meets the most urgent needs each fiscal year. The Endowment Fund is invested with Story County Community Foundation, and the board can use up to 5% annually. This Endowment fund helps sustain programs and allows donors to create legacies that make a positive difference for future generations.

Funding sources have included a) individual donors, b) United Way of Story County, c) Story County Community Foundation, d) service groups, e) city and county, f) businesses and corporations, g) grants, and h) in-kind contributions. An annual appeal letter is mailed each November inviting donations to both the Annual Operating Fund and the Endowment Fund.

RRSC developed a communications plan in order to increase public understanding of the importance of early literacy and build rapport with various target audiences. Internal audiences include the board, staff, teams, volunteers, and advisors. Immediate external audiences in Ames and Story County include families with young children, educators and caregivers, community partners, funders, local leaders, and media. Beyond Story County, we connect with state and national organizations and those who access RRSC's website and social media.



ACPC offered this space to RRSC in 2013.



The Raising Readers Room became our home base in 2014.

RRSC programs and materials are branded with our logo and website address. A RRSC brochure highlights our mission and programs. We illustrate our progress with pictures and stories as well as with data.

Technology, including the website and social media, offers a cost-effective way for RRSC to connect and interact countywide, statewide and beyond. The RRSC website³¹ has been pivotal in branding and providing access to key messages, information about the organization and programs, and family support. The website is responsive to various mobile devices.

RRSC volunteers worked out of their homes and public spaces for 14 years. In 2013 Ames Community Preschool Center offered space in their newly renovated facility. Generous community groups provided funding and hands-on labor to transform the empty classroom into a literacy-rich environment. The Raising Readers Room is now used for hosting center-based activities such as family literacy classes and sharing books and activities with emerging readers.

RRSC holds meetings and programs in various community sites. RRSC makes a special effort to offer services in locations convenient to families at risk, such as low-income neighborhoods, food pantries, and health and human service agencies.

Communities, schools and families share the responsibility for educating children. RRSC continues to develop mutually beneficial relationships with a growing network of partners to work toward collective impact.

Initial Ames partners included Rotary, the public library, and healthcare providers. RRSC's network has grown to include Story County libraries, human service providers, food pantries, service clubs, nonprofit organizations, school districts, preschools, higher education, philanthropy groups, faith groups, elected leaders, and businesses. Many of these partners now help RRSC reach families living with low incomes and other risk factors.

Rotary Club of Ames Morning is an example of a small community service club that has made a significant difference as a Champion for Early Literacy since 2000.³² To inspire others, the club prepared one-page handouts about five literacy programs they support: Reach Out and Read, Reading Corners, Step into Storybooks event, Little Free Libraries, and the Raising Readers Room.

Ames Morning Rotarians donates time by hosting the annual Step into Storybooks event and by constructing the Raising Readers Room and Little Free Libraries. They share their talents as RRSC leaders and grant writers. The club is the ongoing Lead Sponsor for 6-month Reach Out and Read books and it provides matching funds for Rotary grants. The Rotary Club of Ames has also been a faithful supporter of early literacy activities.

“If an educational strategy is evidence-based, data-based, or research-based, educators compile, analyze, and use objective evidence to inform the design of an academic program or guide the modification of instructional techniques.”

—The Glossary of Education Reform³³
<http://edglossary.org/evidence-based/>

Section 3

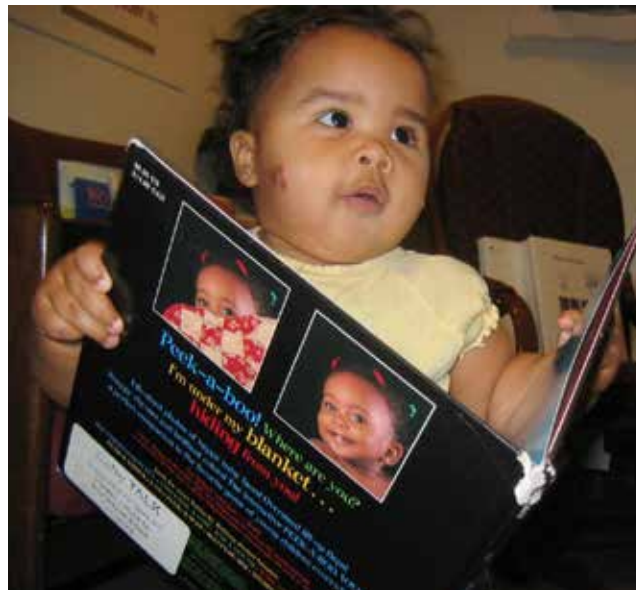
RRSC PROGRAMS

RRSC maintains and continually improves community-based early literacy programs to address local literacy needs.

RRSC has created unique programs tailored to local populations, such as StoryTime in low-income neighborhoods.

RRSC adopts some programs that have proven effective and are likely to get desired results, such as Reach Out and Read.

RRSC is partnering with Iowa State University and Ames Public Library to study the cost-effectiveness of community-based parent education programs, such as Raising a Reader and Small Talk Story County.



Program Overview

RRSC programs provide multiple points of contact with children and their families along a learning continuum from the prenatal time to age eight. We are nurturing early brain development, preparing children for school, and promoting attendance and reading at grade level in order to help prepare future generations for success and to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

These are indicators of progress in Readiness for School in Ames.

- From 2008 to 2013, Ames Community School District (ACSD) used the Phonological Awareness Test (PAT) to assess the basic literacy skills of incoming kindergartners. During those years, the percent of children demonstrating basic literacy skills increased from 65% to 80%.
- In 2014 the ACSD began using the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) screening. The new baseline in 2014 was 65.10% of all children entering Ames kindergarten met the FAST benchmark. In 2016, 77.54% of all Ames kindergartners met the FAST benchmark, resulting in a 19.1% improvement for this total population.
- In 2014, a new baseline was also established for the subgroup of Ames children entering kindergartners who qualified for Free and Reduced-price Lunch (FRL), and 52.85% met the FAST benchmark. In 2016, 62.93% met the benchmark for a 19.07% improvement in the FRL subgroup.

The time to start developing a child's potential is prenatally and in the early months after birth when babies' brains are developing incredibly fast. RRSC is increasing our efforts in babies' first 1,000 days.

In the five years before kindergarten, RRSC supports families and nurtures children's physical, mental, social and emotional development. For school-age children, RRSC offers Reading Buddies, a community-based intervention program, and Ames Reads provides enrichment and food programs in the summer and Iowa Reading Corps tutoring in schools during the school year.

2016-17 RRSC Programs, Services and Events: Learning Continuum

RRSC Programs, Services & Events	Prenatal	0 -12 months	Toddler 1-3 yrs	Preschool 3-5 yrs	K-3; 5-8 yrs
1. Reach Out and Read		X	X	X	
2. Reading Corners	X	X	X	X	X
3. Gift Books		X	X	X	X
4. Small Talk Story County		X	X		
5. Raising a Reader		X	X	X	
6. StoryPals				X	
7. Preschool Reading Buddies				X	
8. K-3 Reading Buddies					X
9. Transition to Kindergarten				X	
10. StoryTime in Neighborhoods				X	X
11. Little Free Libraries		X	X	X	X
12. Read to Succeed					X
13. Step into Storybooks		X	X	X	
14. Read Across Story County				X	X

RRSC programs can also be sorted by whether they raise awareness of the importance of early literacy-rich experiences, change behaviors of adults and children in order to nurture early literacy, and provide access to good quality children's books.

Image #40

2016-17 Anticipated Impact on Early Literacy of RRSC Programs

RRSC Programs (ages served)	Raise Awareness	Change Behavior	Provide Books
1. Reach Out and Read (2 mo – 5 yrs)	X	X	X
2. Reading Corners (Prenatal – 5 yrs)	X		X
3. Gift Books (0 – 8 yrs)	X		X
4. Small Talk Story County (0 – 30 mo)	X	X	X
5. Raising a Reader (0 – 5 yrs)	X	X	X
6. StoryPals (3 – 4 yrs)	X	X	X
7. Preschool Reading Buddies (4 -5 yrs)	X	X	X
8. K-3 Reading Buddies (5 – 8 yrs)	X	X	X
9. Transition to kindergarten: Super K (5 yrs)	X	X	X
10. StoryTime in low-income neighborhoods (5 – 12 yrs)	X	X	X
11. Little Free Libraries (3 – 8 yrs)	X		X
12. Read to Succeed (5 – 8 yrs)	X	X	X
13. Step into Storybooks (0 – 5 yrs)	X		X
14. Read Across Story County (3 – 8 yrs)	X		

Guides to RRSC Programs and Services

If the brief description of a RRSC program below interests you, please click on the link or access our website for more information.

Reach Out and Read

This evidence-based national model makes early literacy an integral part of pediatric primary care. RRSC sponsors a unique countywide program that serves all families who bring their children to well-child checkups from 2 months to 5 years. RRSC provides nearly 10,000 books each year with funding from local sponsors. Doctors at participating clinics give a book to each child and encourage families to talk and read aloud with their children daily in order to nurture their early language and literacy development.

“It is powerful to see every child leaving their checkups with a book in their hands (or mouth!). We are sending a strong, wonderful message to families that WILL make a difference in the lives of children.”

Jill Alexander MD, McFarland Clinic Pediatrician and Medical Director, Reach Out and Read Story County



Dr. Jill shares a poster with a 2-month-old baby.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC Reach Out and Read Guide.³⁴

Reading Corners

This unique RRSC program provides literacy-rich areas in public reception rooms to encourage families with young children to enjoy books together while they wait. In 2008 RRSC created a Reading Corners Toolkit for quality and consistency. RRSC currently maintains 23 Reading Corners in the county, including one at each Reach Out and Read clinic site. Public Reading Corners are intended to increase both the time children and families spend reading and their exposure to good quality books.

“We at Primary Health Care so enjoy watching families read the books from Raising Readers in our Reading Corner. It inspired us to turn our waiting room into an educational center. Now we don’t have one dusty copy of an outdated Good Housekeeping magazine anywhere!”

Linda Hanson, Clinic Director-Story County



RRSC helped create this Reading Corner at the Ames Primary Health Care clinic.

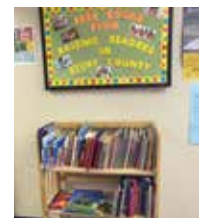
Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC Reading Corners Toolkit.³⁵

Gift Books

RRSC created the innovative Gift Books program to distribute new and gently used books to children who have few books at home. RRSC collaborates with partner agencies in order to reach families with low incomes and other risk factors. These partners include Women Infants and Children (WIC) Clinics, food pantries, Early Head Start and Head Start, Good Neighbor, and Salvation Army. Books are also distributed through Little Free Libraries and activities in low-income neighborhoods. This popular program encourages children to read more by offering selections of free books to match their interests and reading levels.

“We are thrilled to have Raising Readers Gift Books in English and Spanish to give to children. Kids who come with parents, and there are lots in the summer, enjoy picking out their own books. Parents also appreciate the opportunity to take a book for each of their children at home.”

Cari McPartland, Director, The Salvation Army Service Center - Ames



RRSC supplies books for Salvation Army to give to families.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC Gift Books Guide.³⁶

Small Talk Story County (STSC)

Iowa State University, Ames Public Library (APL), and Raising Readers in Story County (RRSC) are partners in this innovative program. A newborn's brain depends on early experiences for intellectual and social growth. Parents have the power to jumpstart the development of their babies and toddlers. Small Talk Story County (STSC) teaches families and caregivers to improve the quantity and quality of a child's language environment. Adults who participate in this series of small group classes learn and practice effective ways of talking, reading, and singing with their children every day.

"Preparing your child for school starts at birth, with reading, talking and interacting with your baby. Communities can give parents the tools and support they need to ensure all children can be successful. We teach parents effective strategies so that all that small talk adds up to a big future."

Constance Beecher, Assistant Professor, ISU School of Education and Extension and Outreach



Diverse families participate in STSC classes.

The STSC pilot project will serve 150 families over three years, and 55 families participated by the end of 2016. We actively recruit families living with low incomes, since their children typically hear fewer words than their middle class peers.

The facilitator follows a curriculum designed by LENA. It is "high touch" because of the supportive small group design. It is "high tech" because it uses the LENA "language pedometer," a small device worn by the baby that records the number of adult words spoken and number of back and forth conversation turns between adult and baby during a day. At each class, parents receive a report that compares their recent week's results to previous weeks. At the end of each class, families choose a new board book to take home. Between classes, text messages remind parents what they can do at home to nurture early language and literacy. RRSC and APL also offer a continuum of other community-based programs in order to build on STSC and to keep families engaged and supported as their children grow.

Here is a link to a free downloadable Small Talk Story County Guide.³⁷

Raising a Reader

RRSC developed this innovative series of classes that supports parents and provides reliable information about children's early development and school expectations. Small groups of families or caregivers meet in comfortable settings with an RRSC facilitator. Adults learn about everyday literacy activities to do at home. Families choose a child's book to take home after each session.

"I learned fun ways to go beyond just reading a book by using dialogic reading. We're also reading during the day now, not just at bedtime."

A parent who participated in the classes



Parents learn from each other in Raising a Reader classes.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC Raising a Reader Guide.³⁸

StoryPals

RRSC created this program to provide additional reading experiences to children ages 3-5, especially those who have limited access to books and reading at home. RRSC recruits and trains volunteers to use the shared reading technique called dialogic reading. RRSC creates StoryPals kits containing books, prompts, and instructions. Typically, preschool teachers identify children to participate. Each volunteer is matched with a child or a small group of children. They meet once or twice a week during the school day. The goal is to provide personalized experiences with good books in order to increase children's basic literacy skills and readiness for kindergarten. Although this program was designed for volunteers working in preschools, the training would also benefit caregivers and families.



Nevada StoryPals volunteer shares a recipe for success.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC StoryPals Guide.³⁹

Preschool Reading Buddies

RRSC trains volunteers to work with preschoolers at the Ames Community Preschool Center (ACPC) in order to encourage language and literacy development and help the transition to kindergarten. The adults and children meet twice a week in the Raising Readers Room. They use a combination of dialogic reading and early literacy programming.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC Preschool Reading Buddies Guide⁴⁰

K-3 Reading Buddies

Raising Readers in Story County offers this free intervention program for students finishing kindergarten through those finishing 3rd grade. School districts and families help identify children who are reading below grade level or at risk of falling behind in the summer. In the summer, it is a 6-week program that aims to help students maintain or improve their literacy skills. Every child signed up is paired with a trained Reading Buddy. They meet twice a week at convenient, supervised community sites for personalized 45 minute reading sessions. ISU faculty initially helped with training supervisors, coaches and volunteers and with program evaluation. We aim for families to be engaged and supportive.

Reading Buddies is also offered during the school year outside the school day during “early out” Wednesday afternoons. It is named Harrison Barnes Reading Academy, after the Ames High grad and current Dallas Mavericks forward. Volunteers meet students at Ames Public Library and supplement students’ in-school reading activities.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC K-3 Reading Buddies Guide.⁴¹

Transition to Kindergarten: Super K

Although any child entering kindergarten in the fall is eligible, Super K was designed by RRSC especially for children feeling some anxiety about starting school and who need a little more help with transition to kindergarten. It is particularly beneficial for children who have not gone to preschool. Super K is provided at no cost to families. The program meets for eight three-hour sessions and exposes children to many of the routines, activities, materials, and skills important in kindergarten. Participants become super friends, super listeners, super organizers, and super problem solvers as they become familiar with the backpack routine, lunch tray procedures, opening milk cartons, and saying “goodbye” to families at the door. There is an emphasis on social readiness. Each student receives a free backpack, school supplies, daily snacks, and a book. Each class has a maximum of 12 students and several adults, including a lead teacher, to offer guidance and support.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC Super K Guide.⁴²

“Our 4- and 5-year-olds have had a blast working with the kind and fun volunteers! That personal time is so important. I am happy to see such growth in their reading development this year.”

ACPC Preschool Teacher



Dialogic reading encourages children to be actively involved in telling stories.

“Fantastic program! We were so grateful to find out about this free, exceptional program to help out our beginning reader keep up with skills over the summer.”

Parent of a child participating



A RRSC Family Literacy Coordinator is a Reading Buddy.

“Our daughter had lots of fun and enjoyed her teachers and new friends. Loves reading even more now. This is a very beneficial program for kids going into Kindergarten.”

Parent of 2016 Super K participant



Ames Super Kindergartners show off their super capes.

StoryTime in low-income neighborhoods

A retired kindergarten teacher with a big heart created this program for children living in a low-income neighborhood. Children ages 4-10 gather twice a month after school in their community room to enjoy stories, poems, songs, crafts, movement activities and snacks. RRSC has lesson plans and tips to share with others who want to serve disadvantaged children in this way. As RRSC connects with children through StoryTimes, we continually work to build better understanding and relationships with their families.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC StoryTime Guide.⁴³

Little Free Libraries

RRSC supports over 23 Little Free Libraries in Story County. We arrange for construction of child-height structures, recruit stewards, provide an initial collection of books, and offer more books as needed. Most of these free-standing libraries are in neighborhoods where children have few books at home and little access to a public library.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC Little Free Libraries Guide.⁴⁴

Read to Succeed

United Way of Story County supports the Backpack ProgramTM of the Food Bank of Iowa. It provides backpacks of food to feed disadvantaged elementary-age children over the weekend and during school breaks. RRSC contributes to this program by giving personally selected gift books to tuck in students' backpacks, typically before holidays and spring and summer breaks. In the 2015-16 school year we served 195 students in 5 school districts. In 2016-17, we are serving 7 school districts.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC Read to Succeed Guide⁴⁵

“I can’t believe this program is free. My son is much more excited about reading and wants to go to the library to check out books that were read at Storytime.”

A StoryTime parent



Community volunteers and ISU students help with StoryTime.

“Many times children select books from the Little Free Library and sit on the nearby bench taking turns reading to each other, pretending they are the teachers. Then they take the books home.”

Office manager at a subsidized housing complex



Girl Scouts are mapping locations of Little Free Libraries.

“By providing books for students in low income families, RRSC is making strides to ensure all kids have an equal opportunity to succeed, while establishing their organization as a true leader, advocate, and partner in education for our community.”

Jean Kresse, President and CEO, United Way of Story County



This boy has a backpack with food and a book to keep.

Step into Storybooks

Parents are children’s first teachers. This annual event provides fun literacy-rich experiences to inspire families to enjoy reading and related activities at home with their babies, toddlers and preschoolers and some older siblings. Possible sites are libraries, schools and preschools. This event supports early relationships and experiences that influence children’s brain development. Children who do not grow up in nurturing, literacy-rich environments fall short of their potentials, enter school behind their peers, and are likely to fall further behind in successive years. Ames’ Step Into Storybooks is held at the Ames Public Library and Eastern Story County’s Step Into Storybooks is held at Central Elementary School in the town of Nevada.

Here is a link to a free downloadable Step into Storybooks Guide. ⁴⁶

Read Across Story County

This annual event is provided as an option each September during the United Way Day of Caring. RRSC hosts community volunteers, many wearing UWSC campaign shirts, who visit participating schools, preschools, and libraries. The adults read books with groups of children and share why reading is important to them. This event supports the UWSC focus area of Education and raises awareness of the need to start early to develop literate citizens for our society.

Here is a link to a free downloadable RRSC Read Across Story County Guide. ⁴⁷

“Families from every walks of life participated. After volunteering at this event, I’ve never been more proud to be a Rotarian.”

Joel Rogers, Past President, Ames Morning Rotary



Children discover books coming to life at Step into Storybooks.

“It’s hard to tell who has more fun on the day of Read Across Story County, the community volunteers or the students.”

Carolyn Jons, RRSC board member

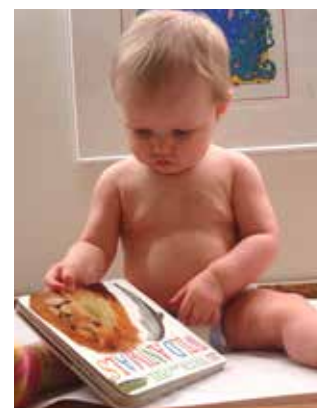


The Dean of the ISU College of Business reads with students.

RRSC answers some questions frequently asked by other communities who want to address their own early literacy needs.

Section 4 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How does RRSC provide good quality children's books?
2. How does RRSC select programs?
3. Where does RRSC deliver programs?
4. How does RRSC engage families?
5. How does RRSC assess results?
6. How does RRSC get funding?
7. How does RRSC use technology in this digital age?
8. How does RRSC benefit from volunteers?
9. What other community groups support early literacy?



How does RRSC provide so many good children’s books?

First, we are fussy about choosing high quality, developmentally appropriate books that capture children’s interest. Librarians are an excellent source of children’s books recommendations. Retired youth librarian Carol Elbert has been a RRSC leader in selecting new books and sorting gently used books. The RRSC Reading Corner Toolkit Guide⁴⁸ describes a start-up collection of 40 books. It also has lists of read aloud favorites and recommended children’s books according to children’s developmental ages, interests, and topics.

The Reach Out and Read program distributes about 1,000 books a year. A team annually selects one or more titles for each of the eight well-child checkup levels and buys in bulk, typically from vendors like Scholastic and All About Books. RRSC receives discounted prices, free shipping, and bonus books as a Scholastic Literacy Partner.⁴⁹

Our parent education programs give new books to participating families. Children in StoryPals, Super K, Reading Buddies, StoryTime, and Step into Storybooks also get new books to keep. Reading Corners, Little Free Libraries, Read to Succeed, food pantries, and human service agencies get both new and gently used books.

There is a line item in the RRSC budget for purchasing new books. Community Lead Sponsors fund all the books for specific Reach Out and Read checkup levels. Ames Morning Rotary funds books for Step into Storybook. RRSC grant applications often include books.

RRSC recycles gently used books in the Gift Books program. Community groups have conducted many successful book drives. RRSC has a downloadable Book Drive Tips online.⁵⁰ Volunteers sort and clean the books before recycling them.

One way RRSC reaches families with low-incomes is by providing Gift Books to the trusted organizations that serve them, such as healthcare providers, preschools, human service agencies, and home visitors. RRSC also delivers books to neighborhoods where disadvantaged families live. Little Free Libraries are often located in these areas to give 24/7 access to books that children may borrow or keep. Each library has a steward to maintain an appropriate selection of books.

It is the practice of RRSC to add value whenever giving out books. For example, RRSC staff and volunteers regularly talk with adults about how books stimulate children’s development, demonstrate good reading techniques, and provide written tips for literacy activities related to the books.

How does RRSC select programs?

7 Criteria for Selecting Programs were adopted by RRSC in 2008

1. Mission – a good fit that addresses real needs
2. Proven – research-based, evidence-based, best practice, likely to get results
3. Measurable – can analyze our results
4. Funding – have sustainable long-term prospects
5. Person-power – volunteer or paid
6. Doable – “low hanging fruit,” relatively easy to do, likely to get quick results
7. Required – by our Bylaws, Iowa laws, etc.

RRSC adopts programs that provide multiple points of contact with children and their families along a learning continuum from birth to age 8.



A child in the Small Talk Story County program enjoys a book with Executive Director Kim Hanna.

RRSC also seeks programs that have proven effective in raising broad awareness, changing behaviors, and providing access to good children’s books. The national Grade-Level Reading Campaign website is a reliable resource for reviewing effective literacy programs.⁵¹

5 Steps to Adopt a Community Literacy Program

1. Identify local literacy needs
2. Review effective programs and plan strategies
3. Implement a proven program or an innovative RRSC program
4. Evaluate
5. Make revisions to get desired results

An example of identifying local needs is that dental problems and asthma are key causes of poor school attendance nationally. However, in Story County, mental health has been identified as a more pervasive concern affecting all aspects of children’s learning from birth to high school graduation and beyond. RRSC is working with the Story County Reads collaboration to establish a benchmark and milestones for early mental health development.

ISU Extension and Outreach agents in communities throughout Iowa can facilitate local early literacy planning.⁵²

“Community Assessment Tools” is a Rotary International resource with guidelines for assessing a community’s strengths, weaknesses, needs, and assets.⁵³

Where does RRSC deliver programs?

The Raising Readers Room and office is available year-round for staff and programming. It hosts center-based community activities, such as preschool reading buddies, transition to kindergarten, and family literacy classes.

Beyond this home base, RRSC takes programs out to various community sites that are convenient to families at risk, such as low-income neighborhoods, food pantries, health clinics, human service agencies, faith communities, libraries, schools, and family homes.

How does RRSC engage families?

RRSC respects and empowers parents and caregivers who are the first teachers of babies, toddlers and preschoolers and who continue to be influential in their children’s development during school years. Families, schools and communities share the responsibility for nurturing and educating children. RRSC sees parent engagement as a collaborative partnership.

RRSC has a two-generation Family Literacy approach which (1) empowers families to nurture their children’s development, (2) provides literacy-rich experiences directly to children, and (3) connects adults to resources to meet their own basic needs. For instance, the Raising a Reader and Small Talk Story County programs increase adults’ awareness of the importance of nurturing early literacy, teach them how to create a literacy-rich home environment, and guide their practice of activities that stimulate children’s development. Families who participate in these classes have the option to use a LENA recording device to set goals and get feedback on the number of words spoken to the child and the number of conversational turns.

RRSC also includes a parent engagement component in other programs. Summer Reading Buddies is an example. A Lending Library was added to encourage reading at home. RRSC provides cinch bags so children can borrow books, and a reading log is included



Books line the entrance to the Raising Readers Room.

so families can record the number of minutes read. Children return the log and receive small incentives at various milestones. Reading Buddies supervisors or volunteers use verbal reports, written notes, and texts to tell parents what children are doing during sessions so families can do similar activities at home. Families come to celebration parties at the end of the Small Talk and Reading Buddies programs.

The RRSC website (presented at right) offers a variety of resources for families.

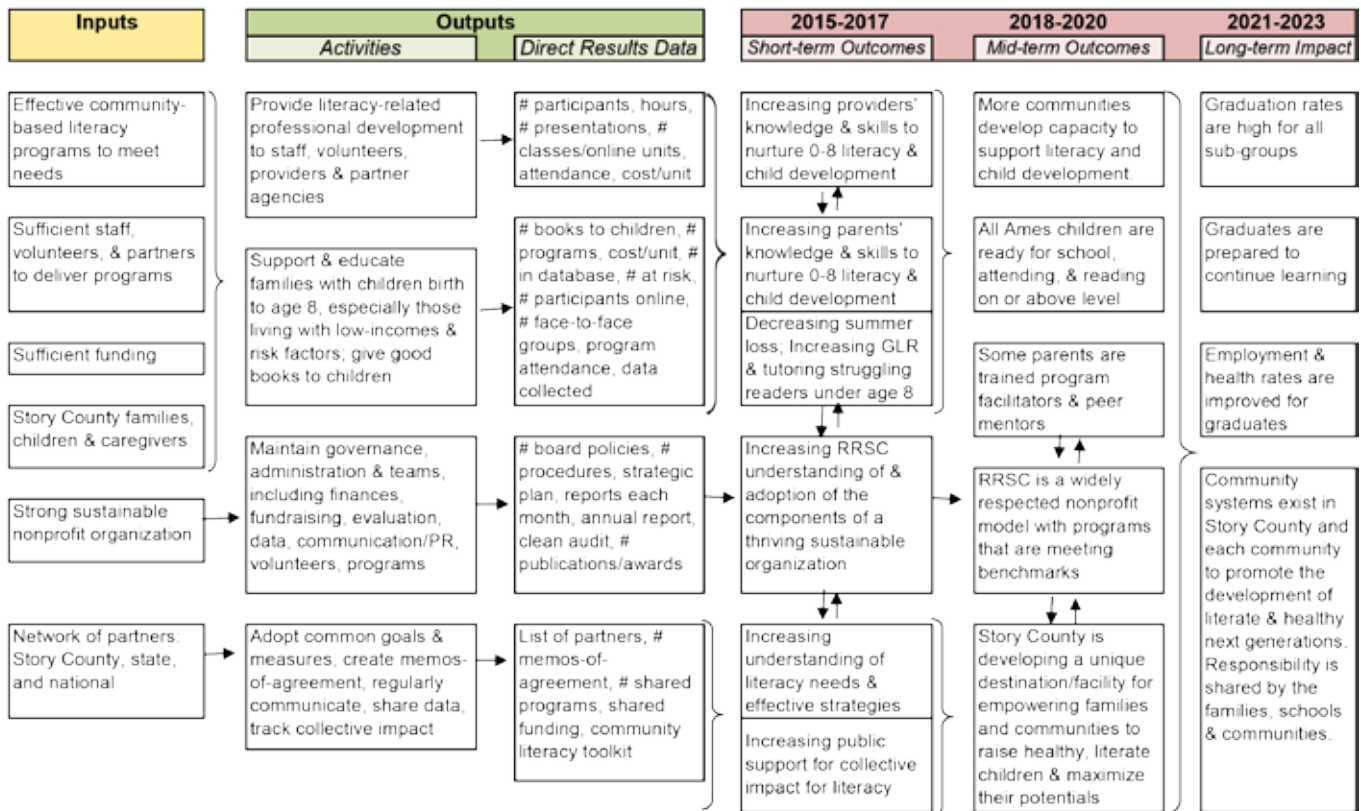


How does RRSC assess results?

The RRSC board created a one-page Logic Model that identifies our desired outcomes (short-term and long-term results). It includes our mission and basic assumptions. It shows what resources (Inputs) we need, what activities we can conduct, and what measures (Outputs) we can collect.

Program: Raising Readers in Story County

Problem: Not all children (1) enter kindergarten ready to learn or (2) read and comprehend at or above proficiency by the end of third grade



Program Assumptions: (1) All children can learn. (2) The first five years are critical for physical, mental, social & emotional development. (3) Parents want the best for their children. (4) Early prevention is more cost-effective than remediation. (5) Volunteers and financial support are essential for sustainable programs. (6) Educating children is a shared responsibility among families, schools and communities. (7) Data and research will support accountability and continual improvement.

External Factors: (1) Some parents need to learn they can be their children's first teachers. (2) The number of families with low incomes and elementary students eligible for free & reduced lunch has increased. (3) Most out-of-school and summer activities are fee-based and lack a literacy component. (4) Lack of transportation and childcare often prevents families from utilizing available resources. (5) Sometimes families from different cultural backgrounds don't feel welcome in our communities.

RRSC is working with other partners toward a desired result of all Story County children reading to succeed.

- One mid-term milestone indicator of our progress is the number and percent of children who enter kindergarten demonstrating a proficient level of early literacy skills by 2020 as measured by school districts on valid and reliable assessments.
- A longer term Indicator is the number and percent of children who read and comprehend at or above grade level by the end of third grade by 2020 as measured by school districts on valid and reliable assessments.

So far, RRSC has Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with three of the seven public school districts. The MOUs plan for sharing population level student achievement data by whole groups and disaggregated by subgroups, such as low income, English Language Learners, and race. Contact RRSC Executive Director Kim Hanna at director@raising-readers.org for a copy of the MOU between RRSC, UWSC, and Ames Community School District.

RRSC also does Individual Level Assessments by measuring the impact of specific programs that directly serve children and families in the Target Populations. For instance, in the Raising a Reader and Small Talk Story County programs, the LENA feedback charts provide data to parents about how much they improve in talking with their infants and toddlers.

The RRSC board and staff are pursuing high quality in these areas in order to sustain our work and become ever better.

<p>High Quality Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance Administration and management Staff expertise Funding and accountability Communication: internal/external Team leaders: roles and procedures Volunteers and training Assessments Continuous improvement Appreciation and recognition 	<p>High Quality Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet existing needs Effective leadership Engage stakeholders Evidence-based programs Innovative programs Faithful implementation Goals and assessments Demonstrated outcomes Stories and testimonials Appreciation and recognition Continuous improvement
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Some of the measures tracked annually and over time are number and percent of 0-5 children in Story County reached, number of programs delivered in each community, program outcomes, program cost-effectiveness, number of volunteer hours, sufficient and sustainable funding, board member engagement, staff evaluations, and Memoranda of Understanding with partners. RRSC now uses an independent accountant and has an annual audit.

RRSC has recently received a number of awards from external entities, including: Iowa Literacy Award sponsored by the Library of Congress and State Library of Iowa; United Way of Story County Spirit Award; Ames Branch/NAACP Presidential Award; and National Grade-Level Reading Pacesetter Awards in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Ames Public Library received first place in the 2017 Library Awards for Innovation sponsored by Penguin Random House for the Small Talk Story County program, its potential for real impact, and the local collaboration.

In 2016 United Way of Story County nominated RRSC board member Carolyn Jons as a local hero promoting early language and literacy development in children and nurturing healthy parent-child relationships. She was selected for a Hero Effect award⁵⁴ as one of ten ordinary individuals in the country who are making extraordinary differences in their communities. United Way Worldwide and Dolphin Entertainment filmed an episode on location in Ames that will be aired on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) on March 11 and April 8, 2017, from 9 am-10am CST.

How is RRSC funded?

In the beginning, RRSC relied on a Rotary grant and in-kind community contributions. As the organization grew, we added more balanced funding sources, such as individuals, corporations, and philanthropic groups. RRSC also now receives annual funding from ASSET (Analysis of Social Services Evaluation Team), which is a collaborative effort to support Story County nonprofit programs meeting local needs.

The board develops financial policies and receives a financial report each month. The staff created procedures for responsible financial stewardship and arranges for an annual audit.

RRSC maintains an Operating Fund for immediate needs and an Endowment Fund for long-term sustainability. We use QuickBooks for accounting and the DonorPerfect system for donor management.

RRSC mails one annual appeal in November after the United Way campaign ends. Board members add personal notes to the letters. The Executive Director makes deposits and writes thank you letters. For several years, philanthropists have offered to match a donor's gifts that are made to both the Annual and Endowment Funds.

Grants now represent a smaller percent of RRSC's income than when we began. Our requests have been fairly successful over the years, so RRSC shared some tips in a paper RRSC Grant Writing: 6 Steps.⁵⁵

How does RRSC use technology in this digital age?

RRSC believes all young children need access to high quality print books and materials. This is especially critical in the early years when brain connections are forming and learning patterns are established.

RRSC also recognizes that various types of media contribute to literacy learning. The book "TAP, CLICK, READ: Growing Readers in a World of Screens" promotes a balanced approach to literacy learning.⁵⁶ Authors Lisa Guernsey and Michael Levine use the term "readia" to describe "media in service of reading and reading that includes media." They mention six categories of media, and RRSC uses many of these technologies.

1. Physical Media: printed books and signs

RRSC annually provides over 16,000 books, with our labels affixed, to children and their families. We have RRSC signs at the Raising Readers Room, on Reading Corner bookcases, on Little Free Libraries, and at events. RRSC photos and articles appear in local newspapers and magazines.

2. Electronic Media: video, audio, e-books

RRSC leaders learn from webinars. We use video clips in communicating with and teaching families and stakeholders. United Way of Story County has featured RRSC programs in the annual UWSC campaign video.

3. Mass Media: TV, movies, radio

RRSC occasionally participates in local TV and radio programs. "The Hero Effect," a docu-series produced by United Way Worldwide and Dolphin Entertainment, will feature Ames as one of 10 communities in the country in which ordinary individuals are making extraordinary differences. The episodes will air on the Oprah Network on the second Saturday of every month at 10 a.m. EST. Raising Readers in Story County will be featured March 11 and April 8, 2017.

4. Digital Media

RRSC is beginning to use a 0-5 "client management" database to provide reliable information to parents about their children's development, to record family participation in RRSC programs, and to evaluate our impact.

5. Interactive Media “tap, click, swipe”

The RRSC website⁵⁷ offers families (1) a calendar of local literacy-related classes, playgroups and events; (2) information about early brain and literacy development; (3) activities to do at home; (4) good book ideas; and (5) kindergarten expectations. It also features RRSC Programs, Volunteers, Donations, and About Us information.

6. Social Media: texts, Facebook, Instagram

RRSC uses various social media options in communicating with families, volunteers, and supporters. Texting has been an effective way to remind parents of activities they planned to do with their children and to alert them to upcoming programs. The number of people we reach through social media continues to grow.

How does RRSC benefit from volunteers?

Prospective volunteers can sign up on the website or contact the Volunteer Coordinator who will match their interests and availability with current options. Possibilities range from one-time help with an event or with book labeling to an ongoing commitment as a Reading Buddy or to year-round service on the board.

RRSC volunteers receive training, support, and supervision appropriate to their activities. Although most say contributing to the mission and supporting children and families are sufficient reward, volunteers are appreciated by RRSC annually. Often volunteers are spotlighted on the website or Facebook.

What other community groups support early literacy?

RRSC program guides credit collaborating partners. The following are some specific examples of how Story County partners are contributing to help “All Children Read to Succeed.”

Rotary Clubs in Ames

- Initiated Reach Out and Read and continues as a Lead Sponsor
- Founded Step into Storybooks and continues as a co-sponsor
- Fund RRSC programs, including this Community Literacy Toolkit
- Serve on the RRSC board and as program volunteers
- Construct Little Free Libraries
- Promote early literacy activities in Rotary District 6000

Ames Community Preschool Center (ACPC)

- Donates space for a RRSC office and the Raising Readers Room for programs
- Integrates RRSC literacy programs in summer and school year curriculum

United Way of Story County (UWSC)

- Continues as a Lead Sponsor for Reach Out and Read
- Serves as the convener for Ames Reads and Story County Reads
- Sponsors the summer enrichment and feeding programs
- Sponsors the school year Iowa Reading Corps and BackPack™ Food programs and attendance campaigns
- Provides early literacy funding through ASSET and grants
- Promotes Education, Income and Health initiatives county-wide
- Provides financial literacy for parents



Reading Buddies volunteers and preschoolers look forward to their special time together.

“Our organization relied exclusively on volunteers for many years. Although we now have staff, RRSC still benefits from over 7,000 volunteer hours a year, which is valued at over \$140,000.”

Sue Seaton, RRSC Past President and Volunteer Coordinator

Ames Public Library (APL)

- Sponsors Small Talk Story County with ISU and RRSC
- Sponsors Step into Storybooks with Ames Morning Rotary and RRSC
- Provides year-round books and programs for children and families
- Hosts summer learning and feeding program
- Provides space for community meetings and literacy programs

Healthcare Providers

- Serve as trusted providers for Reach Out and Read
- Have access to all families with young children and have repeated contacts at checkups
- Support RRSC Reading Corners in reception areas
- Promote RRSC and library programs

Iowa State University (ISU)

- Co-sponsors Small Talk Story County and supports the primary investigator
- Researches ways communities can improve early literacy through the ISU School of Education
- Disseminates early literacy strategies and the RRSC toolkit through ISU Extension and Outreach
- Arranges with the community for practical experiences for ISU students in internships, work study and volunteer options

Human Service Providers

- Have access to families living with low incomes and other challenges
- Give RRSC books to children and promote family reading and RRSC programs
- Provide multi-generational support by helping adults meet their basic needs (housing, education, jobs, health)
- Help address special needs of children

Story County School Districts

- Provide data on student achievement according to MOU's
- Promote RRSC programs to families with children who could benefit
- Help plan and facilitate programs

Story County City and County Governments

- Provide funding, public awareness, and in-kind support
- Provide ASSET funding for nonprofit organizations
- Provide demographic data

Philanthropists

- Story County Community Foundation offers annual grants to nonprofits
- Service groups offer financial and in-kind support
- Individual philanthropists make donations

Faith Communities

- Provide facilities space for RRSC programs, trainings and meetings
- Rent a space for receiving and recycling children's books
- Have access to families living with low incomes at food pantries and clothing rooms
- Give RRSC books to families at food pantries and holiday gift events

A helpful guide to developing mutually beneficial relationships is United Way's "Education Strategies Improving Success for Children and Youth."⁵⁸

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14. The Science of Early Childhood Development, video 3:57 minutes, Harvard Center on the Developing Child, <https://youtu.be/tLiP4b-TPCA>
15. How Brains are Built, video 4 minutes, Alberta Family Wellness, <http://youtu.be/LmVW0e1ky8s>
16. Early Learning, National Grade-Level Reading Campaign, <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-work/school-readiness>
17. Raising of America Early Childhood, <http://raisingofamerica.org/snap-snap-synapse>

18. Thirty Million Words: Building a Child's Brain, Dana Suskind, MD., video 3:40 minutes, <https://youtu.be/7BrrPOiPISw>
19. Summer Learning paper, National Grade-Level Reading Campaign, <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-work/summer-learning-loss>
20. Statisticks Lottery, video 5 minutes, National Grade-Level Reading Campaign <http://gradelevelreading.net/video-the-statisticks-lottery>
21. Chronic Absence paper, National Grade-Level Reading Campaign, <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-work/chronic-absence>
22. Successful Parents, National Grade-Level Reading Campaign, <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-work/successful-parents-3>
23. Still Face, video 2:49 minutes, Dr. Edward Tronick, <https://Reading.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0>
24. Literacy Promotion: an Essential Component of Primary Care Pediatric Practice, American Academy of Pediatrics Policy, <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2014/06/19/peds.2014-1384>
25. Healthy Readers web site, National Grade-Level Reading Campaign, <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-work/healthyreaders>
26. Early childhood Mental Health, Harvard Center on the Developing Child, <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-early-childhood-mental-health-video/>
27. Starting Early Matters Fact Sheet, Child and Family Policy Center of Iowa, http://www.cfpciowa.org/documents/filelibrary/issues/school_readiness/8_things_docs/8_Things_3_EF739FC84E2B8.pdf

Section 2: RRSC COMMUNITY LITERACY MODEL

28. BabyTALK <http://Reading.babytalk.org>
29. Reach Out and Read <http://Reading.reachoutandread.org/>
30. Website, Raising Readers in Story County, Reading.raising-readers.org
31. Champion for Literacy since 2000, Rotary Club of Ames Morning, <http://portal.clubrunner.ca/1618/SitePage/literacy-projects>

Section 3: RRSC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

31. The Glossary of Educational Reform, <http://edglossary.org/evidence-based>
32. Reach Out and Read Guide, Link to download

33. Reading Corners Toolkit Guide, Link to download
34. Gift Books Guide, Link to download
35. Small Talk in Story County Guide, Link to download
36. Raising a Reader Guide, Link to download
37. StoryPals Guide, Link to download
38. Preschool Reading Buddies Guide, Link to download
39. K-3 Reading Buddies Guide, Link to download
40. Transition to Kindergarten: Super K Guide, Link to download
41. StoryTime in Low-income Neighborhoods Guide, Link to download
42. Little Free Libraries Guide, Link to download
43. Read to Succeed Guide, Link to download
44. Step into Storybooks Guide, Link to download
45. Read Across Story County Guide, Link to download

Section 4: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

46. Reading Corners Toolkit Guide, Link to download (same link as # 39 on RRSB website? On Dropbox? On ISU Extension store?)
47. Literacy Partner, Scholastic, <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/literacypartnerships/about.asp>
48. Book Drive Tips, Raising Readers in Story County, http://Reading.raising-readers.org/media/cms/Book_Drive_Tool_Kit_2015_8F2F2709E14BD.pdf
49. Grade-Level Reading Campaign <http://gradelevelreading.net/>
50. Iowa State Extension, <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/content/county-offices>
51. [Community Assessment Tools, Rotary International, https://Reading.rotary.org/myrotary/en/document/community-assessment-toolsCommunity](https://Reading.rotary.org/myrotary/en/document/community-assessment-toolsCommunity)
52. The Hero Effect, <http://www.unitedway.org/the-latest/press/new-docu-series-the-hero-effect-to-premiere-on-oprah-winfrey-network>

53. Grant Writing: 6 Steps, Raising Readers in Story County, <http://www.raising-readers.org/xxxxx>
54. TAP, CLICK, READ: Growing Readers in a World of Screens, Lisa Guernsey and Michael Levine, Reading.tapclickread.org/
55. Raising Readers in Story County home page, Reading.raising-readers.org
56. Education Strategies Improving Success for Children and Youth, United Way, http://Reading.uwewh.org/PDFs/education/EducationStrategies_March2010.pdf