



## CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

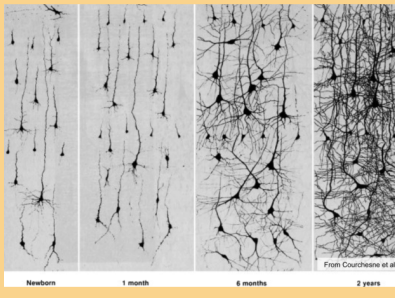
Today's children are our future workforce, parents, and citizens. Children who read well and avoid traumatic stress are more likely to have success in school, work, and life.

Children not reading at grade level by the end of third grade are **four times** as likely to drop out of high school. *Double Jeopardy*

Dropouts cost more than **\$312 billion** in lost wages, taxes and productivity over their lifetimes. *United Way Worldwide*

### When do children start to fall behind?

#### Brains grow fast from 0-2.



#### The early years are critical learning years.

By **age 3** a child's brain has grown to **80%** of its adult size and has built most of the wiring for his or her lifelong emotional, social, and intellectual make-up.

#### Children living in poverty often start and stay behind.

In 2017 **20%** of Iowa 4th graders eligible for free or reduced-price lunch scored proficient on NAEP reading assessments compared to **48%** of all Iowa 4th graders.

Every baby has a unique genetic makeup which then is influenced by their early experiences.

The first five years are critical for physical, mental, social and emotional development.

Poor reading has been linked to lower graduation rates and higher crime and unemployment.

### Why don't some young children reach their potentials?

#### Children's interactions with caring adults may be limited.

Parents and caregivers are young children's **first teachers**. Adults living in or near poverty may work long hours and have stresses that impact children.

Today people of all ages are often distracted by phones and screens. This leads to missed opportunities to communicate, read, and interact together.

#### Many adults don't know how to nurture young children's development.

Often adults don't know the importance of the early years and how to provide everyday experiences that will **build brains and habits for life**.

Families benefit from support, information, stimulating experiences, reinforcements, and good children's books.

#### Adults with unmet needs struggle to meet kids' needs.

Family risk factors include poverty, single parents, not high school graduates, English language learners, live in poor neighborhoods, depression or substance abuse, minorities, and isolation. Connect them with **community resources**.

### 2018-19 District 6000 Literacy Promotion and Child Abuse Prevention Team

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## ROTARY TO THE RESCUE!

**Increasing early literacy can decrease childhood trauma.** When caring adults regularly talk, read, sing, interact and share books with young children, they build children's brains, nurture language and literacy, and form lasting positive relationships. On the other hand, when children experience neglect or chronic stress, their brain growth can be disrupted and their ability to pay attention and to learn is reduced.

**Rotarians can take action!** Learn about promoting literacy and preventing child abuse in the early years and early grades. Adopt a project. Check out the [amesamrotary.org](http://amesamrotary.org) website for a free downloadable **Community Literacy Toolkit** and these **six Program Guides**.

### Reach Out and Read with Doctors



### Public Reading Corners



### Gift Books for Disadvantaged Families



### Little Free Libraries



### Step into Storybooks Event for Families



### Book Drives



A traditional greeting of the Masai Africa tribes is "How are the children?" Rotarians can lead community activities in order to reply "All the children are well."