Readathon Toolkit

Reach Out and Read Illinois



**Table of Contents**

Letter to Our Friends 2

Reach Out and Read Illinois Readathon: Frequently Asked Questions 3

Readathon Planning Tool 6

Suggested Materials for A Successful Readathon

Letter To Readers And Parents 7

Readathon Rules For Readers 8

Readathon Reading Chart 9

Request For Pledges 10

Readathon Sponsor Pledge Form 11

Thank You Note To Readathon Sponsors 12

Press Release 13

**Letter To Our Friends**

Dear Friend of Literacy,

Please help us bring a Reach Out and Read Illinois Readathon to your community. Introduce us to a school so that students there can help bring books and literacy to families living in poverty by reading!

**Why?**

Children who live in print-rich environments and who are read to in the first years of life are more likely to develop stronger reading abilities and enter school prepared to succeed. Parents of children living in poverty may not have easy access to children’s books or may not themselves been read to as a child. Parents visit the doctor regularly for shots and checkups during their children’s early years, making the doctor’s office a great place to promote reading.

**Who?**

Reach Out and Read Illinois distributes books to children in need aged 6 months to 5 years through doctors’ offices during pediatric checkups. Reach Out and Read doctors in 126 sites in Illinois encourage parents to read to their children and show them how. In 14 studies, Reach Out and Read has been shown to increase family reading time and children’s language development.

**Looking for Participants**

Reach Out and Read Illinois is looking for schools and other community partners to participate in Readathons in 2013-2014. Children will take pledges for the number of minutes they plan to read in a two week Read Illinois Readathon. Proceeds will be evenly split between the school’s needs and local Reach Out and Read Illinois sites that will purchase books.

**Readathons Rock!**

* Students read more, learning to enjoy it more
* Students take pride in helping families who didn’t have access to books get them
* Parents living in poverty have more books and skills to use in reading them aloud to their children
* Young underprivileged children build their vocabularies and reading skills
* Schools earn extra funds in a healthy and educationally connected way

To learn more about Reach Out and Read Illinois and all the forms the school will need to run a book drive, visit [Reach Out and Read Illinois](http://illinoisaap.org/reachoutandreadillinois/about-us/) and [follow the prompts to the Readathon Kit](http://illinoisaap.org/reachoutandreadillinois/get-involved/reach-out-and-read-illinois-readathon-toolkit/).

Reach Out and Read Illinois

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**Reach Out and Read Readathon:**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. What is Reach Out and Read Illinois?

[Reach Out and Read Illinois](http://www.reachoutandreadillinois.org) is a program that distributes books to children living in poverty aged 6 months to 5 years through Illinois doctors’ offices during pediatric check-ups. Reach Out and Read doctors encourage parents to read to their children and show them how. In studies, Reach Out and Read has been shown to increase family reading time and children’s language development. Reach Out and Read Illinois is a project of the [Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics](http://www.illinoisaap.com), which is the state membership organization for pediatricians.

1. What are the goals of the Readathon?

Goal #1: To motivate children to read for fun, enjoy reading more, overcome reading obstacles, and find more time to read.

Goal #2: To encourage children to help other children, and to empower them to feel that there is something they can do to help children living in poverty.

Goal #3: To encourage parents to read to their children and to encourage children to read to each other.

1. Who can run a Readathon?

Librarians, teachers, principals or parent volunteers can run school-wide Readathons. Upper-grade students in service clubs can also run Readathons.

1. How does a Readathon work?

The Readathon is held over a specified period of time. We suggest two weeks. During that time, the participating children try to read as much as they can and keep track of what and how long they read. They can read anything they want. The children find one or more sponsors who will agree to donate five or ten cents per minute (or any other amount) for every minute they read, or a certain amount such as $10 when the children finish.

It may be easier for children in kindergarten and first grade to count the number of books read rather than minutes read. Second graders may be given the choice to read by minutes or by books. The Readathon can be flexible—do what works for your kids.

1. What about prizes?

A PTA or PTO and/or associated businesses may support a Readathon by providing money for prizes. The classes or students who read the most minutes or raise the most money may earn special school supplies, extra recess, coupons from local businesses, or healthy food rewards. Of course, the underlying prizes may be the best: the great stories they’ll read, the better reading skills they’ll gain, the pride they will feel in helping others less fortunate, and the smiles on the faces of the people they’ll help.

1. How do you find a sponsor?

Parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, older brothers and sisters, and neighbors are good choices to ask to be sponsors. Many kids sponsor themselves by donating their own money.

1. What are some special events you can do to make the Readathon even more exciting?

Some schools have a “Dress Up As Your Favorite Book Character Day,” with prizes for the best costumes. Some classes have an all day read-in when they can bring their pillows and blankets and snuggle in for a full day of reading in class. Some libraries have a “Sleepover,” when kids come in their pajamas to hear bedtime stories. Some schools and libraries have a Family Reading Night, when whole families come to hear guest readers read and tell stories.

1. Who wins?

Everybody wins! The school has a reading success story, the students become better readers, and parents are proud of their children’s reading gains and charitable efforts. The young children in poverty get books and parents reading to them, making them better readers, too.

1. Where does the money go?

Half the money comes back to the school for reading materials or other needs in the school library. The other half goes to Reach Out and Read Illinois to buy books for young children at Reach Out and Read clinics. Those funds help doctors have new, developmentally appropriate books to give to needy families.

1. How do you begin?

Begin by following the enclosed Readathon Planning Tool. It begins:

Create a committee to plan and implement the Readathon, which could include school staff and/or volunteers. Hold a planning meeting to consider the following and delegate responsibilities.

* A date for the Readathon. We suggest choosing a two week period, but the school can decide.
* Decide whether the students will count only reading hours outside of school or in school as well.
* Decide who will collect pledge sheets and funds and the time of when they will be collected.
* Decide if you will provide incentives for students to collect pledges and read, such as small prizes and/or class parties for the classes who read the most.

**Readathon Planning Tool**

Create a committee to plan and implement the Readathon, which could include school staff and/or volunteers.

Hold a planning meeting to consider the following, and delegate responsibilities:

A date for the Readathon. We suggest choosing a two week period, but the school can decide.

From: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ To:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Decide whether the students will count only reading hours outside of school or in school as well.

Hours: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Decide who will collect pledge sheets and funds and the time of when they will be collected.

Who: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Decide if you will provide incentives for students to collect pledges and read, such as small prizes and/or class parties for the classes who read the most.

Incentives?

Yes

No

Type(s) of Incentive(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Congratulations! You’re ready to start your very own Readathon!

Every minute you read helps you and an Illinois family living in poverty

Dear Readers and Parents,

We are holding a Readathon to make reading even more fun and exciting.

We will be raising money with our reading to buy books for our own school library and for **Reach Out and Read Illinois**, an evidence-based, non-profit organization that promotes early literacy and school readiness in pediatric exam rooms statewide by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud. Nationwide, the program serves more than one-third of all children living in poverty, and continues to grow each year with the vision that one day Reach Out and Read will serve all at-risk children. Doctors and nurses send families home from checkups with free books and a very important prescription—“Read aloud to your children.”

It’s really easy. During the two week Readathon, every time you read or listen to someone read, you record the number of minutes on your Readathon Log.

Parents can help students find sponsors who will agree to donate for every minute you read. If a student reads, as an example, for six hours and receives a pledge of five cents per minute, they will raise $18.00. Sponsors can be your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, friends—just about anyone. You can have as many sponsors as you want. You can even sponsor yourself!

When you find a sponsor, just fill out the Sponsor Pledge Sheet. Then when you finish the Readathon, contact your sponsors, tell them how much you read, and ask for their donations. Donations will be split evenly. Half will go to buy reading materials for our school library, and the other half will go to purchase books for Read Out and Read Sites to help families in poverty.

The Readathon will begin: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

and end: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Regards,

**Readathon Rules for Readers**

The Readathon begins \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date & Time

You may use the pledge form to keep track of your sponsors and how much they will donate. Use your Reading Chart to keep track of how many minutes you read.

1. Reading from before the official beginning of the Readathon does not count.
2. You can only read a book once for the contest. When you finish that book, read another! Other people reading aloud to you also counts.
3. Reading aloud to other people counts. If you read to your friend or your brother or sister, it counts for both of you!
4. Reading aloud to the dog, the cat, and the goldfish counts.
5. Reading in a tree, on the bus, in the car, on an airplane, in a hotel, and under the bed covers with a flashlight counts.
6. Reading instead of doing your homework does not count.
7. Reading instead of watching TV does count.
8. No guessing or rounding off minutes. Please look at the clock or use a timer or stopwatch.
9. Please be honest so that it will be fair and fun for everyone! Your parents or teacher need to initial your form each day.
10. The last day to read for the school Readathon is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
11. Make sure you bring your reading chart to school by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
12. No minutes will be counted after \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Readathon Reading Chart**

**Student \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Minutes Read** | **Rolling Total Minutes Read** | **Adult’s Initials (Parent, Grandparent, Teacher)** |
| Sunday |  |  |  |
| Monday |  |  |  |
| Tuesday |  |  |  |
| Wednesday |  |  |  |
| Thursday |  |  |  |
| Friday |  |  |  |
| Saturday |  |  |  |
| Sunday |  |  |  |
| Monday |  |  |  |
| Tuesday |  |  |  |
| Wednesday |  |  |  |
| Thursday |  |  |  |
| Friday |  |  |  |
| Saturday |  |  |  |
|  | **Grand Total Minutes Read** |  |  |

**Readathon Request for Pledges**

Dear friends,

We’re so proud of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school is doing a Readathon as a fundraiser. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is going to read books for two weeks to help support the school library and giving books to needy families through Reach Out and Read Illinois.

The Readathon starts \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and ends \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ told his/her teacher the number of minutes he/she hopes to read over the whole duration and is reaching out to family and friends to pledge a certain amount per minute. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hopes to read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minutes throughout the Readathon.

At six hours, or 360 minutes, a $0.05 pledge would be a donation of $18 to the Readathon, and a $0.10 pledge would be a $36 donation, etc. You can pledge $0.03, $0.08, $0.25, or any other amount you want. The Readathon ends \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Half of the donations will go to our school library to buy reading materials, and the other half will go to [Reach Out and Read Illinois](file:///C:\Users\ljusten\Downloads\reachoutandreadillinois.org). Reach Out and Read Illinois is a program that distributes books to children living in poverty aged 6 months to 5 years through doctors’ offices during pediatric checkups. The doctors and nurses encourage parents to read aloud to their kids. It is proven to increase language scores and help children be ready for school.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is ready to read!

I pledge \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cents for every minute \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ reads!

Thank you so much for your pledge. After the Readathon, we will contact you to let you know how many minutes were read.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name Date

**Readathon Sponsor Pledge Form**

Student \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Grade-Classroom \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total number of minutes read \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sponsor’s Name** | **Phone/Email** | **Donation/Minute** | **Total Due** |
| e.g. John Smith | 312-555-5555 or [johnsmith@yahoo.com](mailto:johnsmith@yahoo.com) | (suggested $0.05 - $0.10 per minute) | Per minute donation x total of all minutes read by deadline |
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**Thank you to Readathon Sponsors**

Dear\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for participating in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school Readathon!

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_read for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minutes over the two week Readathon period.

You pledged $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per minutes read, bringing the donation total to $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Half of the donation will come back to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school for reading materials in our school library.

The other half will go to Reach Out and Read Illinois to buy books to give to families in poverty during pediatric checkups at Reach Out and Read Illinois doctors’ offices. ROR doctors give books to their patients age 6 months to 5 years old and encourage their parents to read aloud to their children for prescribed amounts of time, laying a foundation for future school success.

Your donation helped to motivate many school children to read for fun, enjoy reading, and make time to read. Your donation also encouraged children to have a direct role in helping others. And, your donation will give books to needy families and encourage parents in poverty to read to their children!

Please make your check out to:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!



Students at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school to hold a Readathon

*Funds raised will purchase books for children in need*

*and for their own school library*

Starting on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, students at the ­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school will participate in a two-week Readathon. The Readathon is a partnership between the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school and Reach Out and Read Illinois. Students will collect sponsorship dollars from family, friends, neighbors, and local businesses by reading as many minutes and hours as they can during a two week period.

Proceeds from the Readathon will be split evenly. Half will be used to purchase books for Reach Out and Read families in poverty. The other half will be kept at the school to purchase reading materials for the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school library.

Reach Out and Read Illinois is an organization that has long been passionate about improving literacy in Illinois. We are excited to work with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school to help support their own library, and to show children the importance of reading and helping other children who lack resources like books.

Reach Out and Read Illinois, a program of the Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP), trains doctors and nurses to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and to give books and advice to children and families at checkups from 6 months to 5 years of age, with a special focus on children living in poverty. Reach Out and Read is a national, evidence-based model founded in 1989 at Boston City Hospital. Reach Out and Read Illinois serves more than 124,000 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers each year at over 100 clinics.

Dr. Judy Neafsey, chair of Reach Out and Read Illinois said, “We are thrilled to be entering into a partnership with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school. Together, and with the enthusiasm and support of teachers, we can help children discover and develop a love of reading. We are so grateful to our student readers. With this new initiative, our sites can give more books to more families who need them—everyone benefits!”

The partnership is a win-win-win proposition encouraging local children to read while simultaneously instilling charitable values and raising money for books for families in poverty.

For more information about Reach Out and Read Illinois, please contact the Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics at 312/733-1026 ext 202 or 204 or [RORILinfo@illinoisaap.com](mailto:RORILinfo@illinoisaap.com).