

PARTNERS POST

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Celebrate National Literacy Month

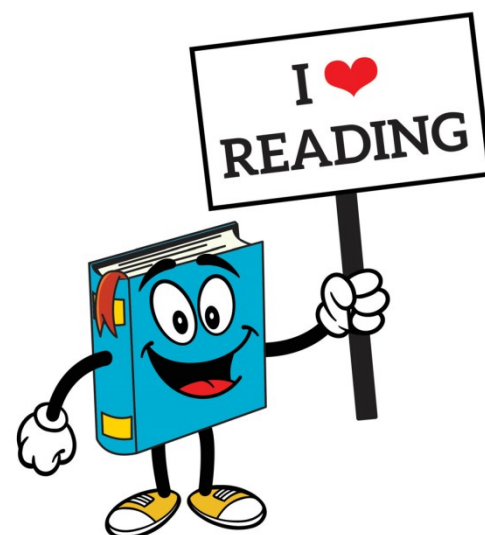
One of the best ways to prepare young children for school and to nurture a lifelong love of reading is to make sure they have access to quality books before they even enter a classroom.

That's why the American Academy of Pediatrics encourages pediatricians to promote early literacy development during primary care visits. A new AAP policy encourages pediatricians to "advise parents of young children that reading aloud and talking about pictures and words in age-appropriate books can strengthen language skills, literacy development, and parent-child relationships," according to the AAP News.

Reading proficiency by third grade, after all, is one of the most important predictors of whether a student will graduate high school and succeed in a career, the AAP notes.

September is National Literacy Month, a time to encourage the young people in your life to go to the library, pick up a good book, and explore new worlds. For younger students, it's a great time to sit down together and read a book out loud.

Every day, teachers and parents partner to instill a love of reading and writing in Pennsylvania students and to make good reading practices a part of daily life. Parents can help by encouraging reading at all ages, talking to their children about their favorite books and authors, and even telling family stories.



Participate in a book drive and give a child a bedtime story



Who doesn't love a bedtime story?

Unfortunately, for children from lower-income families, a bedtime story may be hard to come by because there may be no books at home to read.

Researchers have found a wide disparity between the literacy skills of children from low-income homes and those from wealthier families in large part because too many poorer families have no books. One study found that in middle-income neighborhoods there are 13 books per child, while in low-income neighborhoods, there is one book for every 300 children. By age 3, children from wealthier families have typically heard 30 million more words than children from low-income families, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

You can help change this by donating books to community book drives. When low-income parents read to their children from an early age, have books in the home, and visit the library, their children have higher literacy skills, researchers with the Economic Policy Institute have found.

Help close the reading gap between the wealthiest and poorest children. And give a child somewhere the gift of a great bedtime story.

Educators make a difference one book at a time

Every baby born at UPMC Altoona Regional Hospital or Nason Hospital in Roaring Spring goes home with a brand new book. It's part of an effort known as "Books for Babies" spearheaded by educators and support professionals in Blair County.

Now in its second year, the project has collected and donated 2,000 books to newborns, and is aiming to do the same over the next year. All books include a sticker with the slogan, "Literacy Begins with Your First Book."

The message is simple, said Todd Russell, a science teacher at the Hollidaysburg Junior High School: "Just go home, read to your kids, get them interested in the stories, and when they get to school, we'll take it from there."

It is just one example of how educators and support professionals in school districts across Pennsylvania are volunteering their time after school to promote literacy among students.

In Western Pennsylvania, educators and support professionals from the Hermitage, Sharon, Lakeview, and Greenville school districts are collecting books to be distributed at events planned for November 2015. Last year, they distributed 3,000 books and Partners for Public Education bookmarks to pre-kindergarten students.

On the other side of the state, employees in the Penn Delco School District are sorting through 20 boxes of donated books to give away to children at a series of three community events in September and October 2015.

Danielle Clark, a second grade teacher and president of the Penn Delco Education Association, said that many school teachers and staffers purchase additional books throughout the school year to donate to the book drive, along with gift cards and other prizes.

"As an association, we feel it's important to not only strive to show our commitment to our students in the classrooms, but also to show that we care about the preservation of our community, we care about our students' well-being, we care about them beyond the walls of our classrooms," Clark said.



Partner Spotlight

Reading receives an active boost in Armstrong School District



For students at West Hills Primary School in the Armstrong School District, reading and exercise go hand in hand.

Students at the Western Pennsylvania school can enjoy a book while participating in physical activity, thanks to the StoryWalk Fitness Trail.

The trail consists of 10 posts spaced apart to create a pathway in a vast grassy area in the front of the school. Each post is made of a Plexiglas-covered sign, with a page of a book on one side and an exercise on the other. Students can read the book page, complete the exercise on the sign, and then walk, jog, or skip to the next post.

Read the full story online at

www.partnersforpubliced.org/PartnersForPE.aspx?id=12850

Partner Benefits Spotlight: Tune up the car and save

Winter is around the corner, so what better time to get your car a tune-up and a wash. Whether you need new tires, a paint job, detailing, service, or repair, Partners has you covered. Visit the **Partner Benefits** page and sign in to Access to get started.



Partners for Public Education is working to provide you with resources about public education in Pennsylvania because we are committed to the success of every child. It is brought to you by the **Pennsylvania State Education Association**, an organization made up of the dedicated employees in your Pennsylvania public schools.

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