

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL® STORY SAMPLER

Considering Character



FOR CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 3





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What Is a Story Sampler?

A Story Sampler makes books come alive for children. It is a book-based, thematic approach to reading designed to engage children in the book experience. Each Story Sampler includes hands-on, cross-curricular literacy activities.

Why Use a Story Sampler?

You should use a Story Sampler if you are looking for:

- Suggestions to enhance children’s reading experiences.
- A quick and easy resource filled with activities to integrate into your program’s reading time.
- New ways to expand books children are reading to include parents and the community.

Each Story Sampler offers ways to extend book experiences for the children you work with. Motivational activities are an important part of every Reading Is Fundamental program because they help children associate books and reading with positive experiences and fun! Use a Story Sampler to delve deeper into a book’s message, to demonstrate that books are extensions of real life, and to provide tie-ins that connect families to literacy activities.

Scores of studies show that students learn more and do better in school when their parents are involved in their education. Story Samplers offer ideas to help forge relationships and shared experiences within the family and the community.

Story Samplers provide a variety of hands-on activities to enable all children to learn in different ways. They also provide suggested questions to ask before, during, and after reading together. These prompts and discussion topics can help children develop high-order thinking skills.

What’s Inside a Story Sampler?

Each Story Sampler addresses a theme that unifies a collection of children’s books. A featured book is introduced at the beginning of each section, followed by activities and a list of additional titles to extend the lesson. The types of activities found within each section include:

- Questions that promote interaction with the text.
- Activities that extend learning within the book.
- Ideas to involve families in activities related to the book.
- Ways to connect the community with themes presented in the stories.

Who Should Use a Story Sampler and Where?

Story Samplers cover a variety of topics and age groups. They are designed for caregivers seeking to cultivate a literacy-rich environment, busy teachers looking for new ideas to expand their lessons, parents hoping to increase their children’s contact with books and associated activities, and adults wishing to integrate children’s books into thematic lessons.

When and How Should I Use a Story Sampler?

A Story Sampler can be used in its entirety or in sections that apply to the learning objectives you hope to achieve. Use the activities to enhance the work you are already doing, to supplement a curriculum, or to encourage reading at home.

Family members can encourage children to become lifelong readers by reading aloud with them every day. Reading aloud to children is one of the most effective ways to support language and literacy development. The featured titles are intended to be read aloud to promote interaction with the book.

Books can explain and reinforce concepts, allow children to build positive self-images, stimulate discussions and thinking, and expand children's imaginations. Use Story Samplers when the books and the activities help you to achieve one of these goals. Only you and your program can determine the best way to use Story Samplers. Have fun and enjoy!

Tips for Reading Aloud

Before You Read a Story...

- Make sure everyone is comfortable.
- Show the cover, and read the title and author of the book.
- Ask the children about the cover.
- Suggest things the children can look or listen for during the story.
- Provide background information that may help children understand the story better.

During a Story...

- Change your voice to fit the mood or action.
- Point to the words as you read them.
- Show the pictures and talk about the book as you read.
- Adapt the text to fit the comprehension level of your audience.
- Ask children to make predictions about the plot, the characters, and the setting.
- Follow the cues of the children.

After You Read a Story...

- Ask about what happened in the story.
- Encourage the group to relate the story to their own experiences.
- Ask the children how they might feel or act if they were one of the characters.
- Invite children to share their thoughts about the story and pictures.
- Extend the story with an activity or another book.

Considering Character

A STORY SAMPLER FOR CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 3

HONESTY

Ling Cho and His Three Friends

by **V.J. Pacilio**, illustrated by Scott Cook. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2000

RESPECT

Chicken Sunday

by **Patricia Polacco**. Philomel Books, 1992

SHARING

Tops and Bottoms

by **Janet Stevens**. Harcourt Children's Books, 1995

COURAGE

Erandi's Braids

by **Antonio Hernández Madrigal**, illustrated by Tomie dePaola. Putnam Publishing Group, 1999

RESPONSIBILITY

Uncle Jed's Barber Shop

by **Margaree King Mitchell**, illustrated by James Ransome. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1993

Ling Cho and His Three Friends

by V.J. Pacilio, illustrated by Scott Cook
Farrar Straus Giroux, 2000

Ling Cho decides to help his poor, but proud, friends by asking them to sell his crops for half of their profits. When his friends return empty-handed, they each have a story to share about what happened to Ling Cho's half of the money.

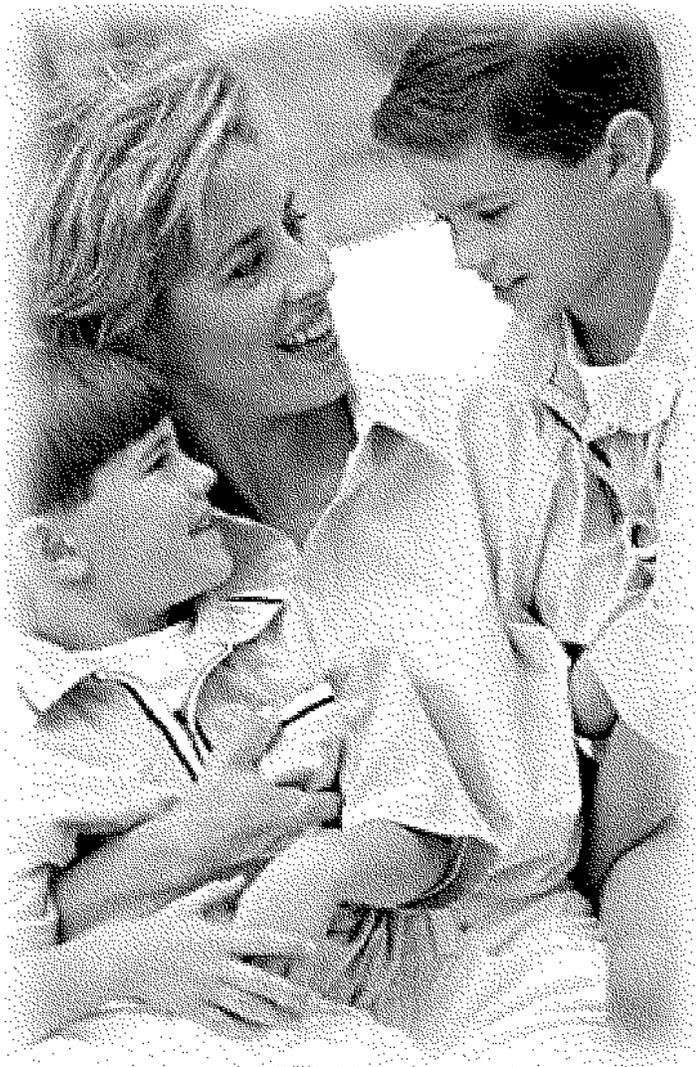
What to Do Before Reading the Story

- Tell the children you are going to read a story about honesty. Ask them to talk about honesty and what it means.
- Read the title and show the cover illustration. What can they share about the cover that might help them determine where the story takes place?
- Give each child an index card. Color one side green and write *truth* on it. Color the other side red and write *lie* on it. Tell children that they will be asked during the story to say whether they believe Ling Cho's friends are telling the truth or a lie.

Things to Talk about During the Story

- Scott Cook's illustrations capture the mood of the story. Take a moment to discuss the scenes depicted on the pages.
- Before showing the illustration, have children draw a sketch of the outrageous-looking beast Ben Lo describes.
- Ask children to use their cards to vote when each character tells his story of what happened to the money. Tally the votes.





What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Which of Ling Cho's friends did the right thing? Why did it make a difference to Ling Cho? Have the children share their opinions. Talk about how if each of the friends had been honest in the first place, they all would have been able to work with Ling Cho.
- Provide examples of when someone must decide between honesty and dishonesty. Have the children discuss the best options the person should take. For example, when a girl finds a stuffed animal in the park, she doesn't see the owner and wants to keep it. What should she do?
- The story is told in rhyming couplets. Have the children practice rhyming. Start with words from the book such as *need*, *sell*, or *plan*. Then help them to make couplet rhymes about the story.

Family Involvement

- Encourage families to discuss why it is important to tell one another the truth. Talk about the impact of lies within the family.
- Ask each family member to come up with a lie. As a group, pick one and create a story that shows how that lie went terribly wrong. Have each family member contribute to the story.
- Is lying ever okay? Have families talk about situations that may warrant a "softening" of the truth.

Community Connection

- Honesty is something we should expect from everyone. Ask children to make up skits demonstrating the difference between honesty and dishonesty. Children can perform their skits in front of peers or members of the community.
- We often trust that businesses and advertisements are telling us the truth; however, there are times when they exaggerate the truth in order to persuade people to buy their product. Have children look at ads in newspapers and magazines to identify examples of dishonesty.

Additional Titles

A Day's Work by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himler
When Francisco accepts a job for his grandfather that he knows he cannot do, he learns that small lies can cause more harm than good.

Jamaica's Find by Juanita Havill, illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien

Jamaica finds a lot of things left behind at the park; she returns everything except for a little stuffed dog. When her family pushes her to turn in the dog to the lost and found, she learns that her find makes another little girl very happy.

Too Many Tamales by Gary Soto, illustrated by Ed Martinez
Maria tries on her mother's ring as they are kneading masa dough for the tamales. It is when they are ready to eat that she discovers the ring missing and then coaxes her cousins into helping her find the ring.

The Honest-to-Goodness Truth by Patricia McKissack, illustrated by Giselle Potter

When Libby is caught in a lie, she vows to always tell the truth—to the chagrin of everyone around her.

Chicken Sunday

by **Patricia Polacco**
Philomel Books, 1992

When three friends are mistakenly accused of breaking Mr. Kodinski's window, they understand that they have to work hard to prove their innocence and earn Mr. Kodinski's respect.

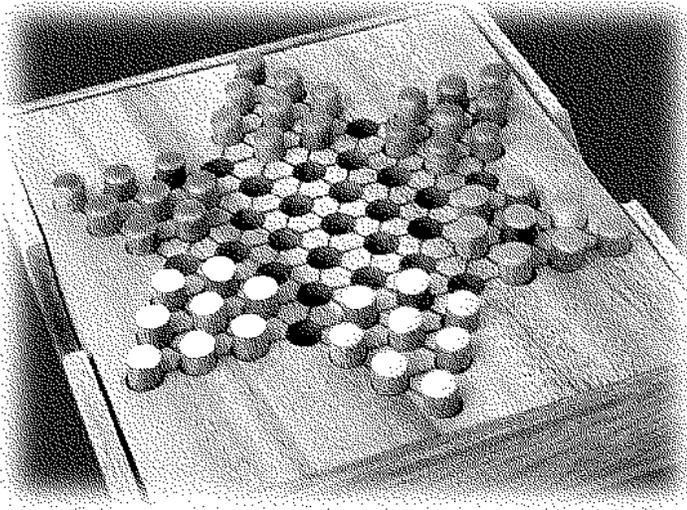
What to Do Before Reading the Story

- Show the cover illustration and ask the children to describe what they see. Tell them to describe the people in the picture.
- Read the title aloud, and ask the children to explain what they think the story will be about.
- This story shares a memory from the author's childhood. Talk about a personal memory of a tradition from your childhood. Ask children to share things they do regularly.

Things to Talk about During the Story

- Miss Eula secretly wishes for a hat. Ask the children if there is something they have ever secretly wished for.
- Have the children share why they think Mr. Kodinski thought the three main characters had thrown eggs at his door. Was it fair? How should the children prove their innocence?
- Have the children raise their hands if they have colored eggs before. Explain that people around the world color eggs. Some dye the outsides of hard-boiled eggs and crack them to get to egg inside. Others make a tiny hole, blow the egg out before it is cooked, and then dye or paint the shells. These are much more fragile and are not meant to be cracked or eaten.





What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- The children knew that they would not prove their innocence or earn Mr. Kodinski's respect by arguing. They decide to offer him a token of their hard work and creativity. What are some ways children can show respect to their elders?
- Have the children dye eggs like the Ukrainians. Or if children are too young to handle the delicate shells, they can draw designs with wax crayon on hard-boiled eggs before they dip the eggs in dye. Another option is to have the children color Ukrainian egg designs. Coloring pages are available at www.learnpysanky.com.
- Respect can mean a lot of things, depending on how one uses the word. Ask the children to provide examples from the story that illustrate how characters respect one another.
- Create a list of words or phrases that are disrespectful (i.e. *Hey you!*, *Give me!*, *I want!*, *Move!*) and write them on cards. Pick a card and read it aloud. Ask children to share a more respectful way of communicating the request.

Family Involvement

- What are the rules of respect? Ask families to sit down and talk about ways they show respect to one another in their household. For instance, if one person is watching TV and another wants to watch a different show, how does the second person respectfully ask to change the channel?
- Draw a respect web. Ask families to write the word *respect* in the middle of the page. Then have each person add other words that make him or her think of respect.
- Have families play a game. After they finish their game, encourage them to talk about the rules of the game and how following the rules shows respect for one another.

- Host a family storytelling night to promote respect and understanding of the cultures, traditions, and beliefs that exist in your community. Ask each family to bring an artifact (a personal treasured object) from home. Encourage them to share with a partner the story of that object in under five minutes. Stop the process and then ask families to write a simple note about the story they shared. Encourage them to write or record the entire story so their children may have it to treasure in the future.

Community Connection

- One way to pass along respect is to define respectful behavior. Have the children describe respectful behavior others should show in their school or community. Have them make signs that show respectful behavior. Post the signs around the community to illustrate that respect is a behavior that is valued.
- One way to show respect to your neighbors is to get to know them. Encourage the community to host a block party, apartment resident gathering, or a community center event. Invite groups to attend and share what is special about their family.

Additional Titles

The Little Red Ant and the Great Big Crumb: A Mexican Fable by Shirley Climo, illustrated by Francisco X. Mora

The little red ant needs help carrying the crumb until he discovers that all creatures have their strengths and weaknesses.

Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse by Kevin Henkes

Lilly loves her first grade teacher, until he punishes her for acting up. In her anger, she draws a hurtful picture of him and ends up feeling sorry about her actions.

The Recess Queen by Alexis O'Neill, illustrated by Laura Huliska-Beith

The tough new girl at school doesn't want to be a bully, but all the children are afraid to befriend her—that is until one girl does.

Smoky Night by Eve Bunting, illustrated by David Diaz

When riots jeopardize the safety of a segregated community, neighbors reach out to one another to overcome misunderstandings.

Miss Hunnicutt's Hat by Jeff Brumbeau, illustrated by Gail de Marcken

Despite protests from people in her town, Miss Hunnicutt refuses to change her ridiculous hat for the queen's arrival. As it turns out, the queen has a surprising hat of her own.

Tops and Bottoms

by Janet Stevens
Philomel Books, 1992

Hare and his family are very poor, but Bear is lazy and has more than he can use. They strike a deal to share the crops if Hare harvests them. Bear finds that clever Hare may be getting more than his share.

What to Do Before Reading the Story

- Point out the Caldecott medal displayed on the cover. Explain that the Caldecott medal is awarded to the illustrator. In this case the illustrator and author are the same person, Janet Stevens. Ask the children to pay close attention to the drawings in the book as you read.
- Take a moment to show the book cover illustration. Ask the children to describe what they see in the picture.
- This book is formatted to read from top to bottom. Have fun with this format. Open the book in a traditional way, and have the children tell you which way to hold this special book.

Things to Talk about During the Story

- The author uses the word *hare* instead of *rabbit*. Check for understanding when you first encounter the word.
- Ask children to describe the arrangement that Hare and Bear make. How is Bear sharing? How is Hare sharing?
- Ask children to make predictions about what Bear will choose (*tops* or *bottoms*) after he is outsmarted by Hare.



What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Bear and Hare decide to share Bear's crops: Bear provides the land and the food that grows on it and Hare provides the work. Is this a fair solution? Ask children if they can think of a better solution to this problem.
- Are hares and rabbits the same? Ask children to work in small groups to find out the similarities and differences between these two animals.
- What do you have to share? Have children draw a picture of what they like to share with others.

Family Involvement

- Encourage children to talk to their families about sharing, especially with siblings. What are ways that everyone can have their own share of something without arguing?
- Have families talk about how good it feels to share, such as when one shares a gift for a birthday. Have families make a list of other ways they can share.



- Ask families to make a sharing collage together. Children can practice sharing magazines, scissors, and glue, as they search for pictures that demonstrate sharing.

Community Connection

- Take a trip to your local grocer or vegetable stand (or invite a farmer to bring produce). Have children examine each item and classify it as a “top” (that grows above the ground), or a “bottom” (that grows beneath the ground).
- Many families, such as the Hares, face financial hardships but do not have farms where they can work and share the crops. Have children make a list of ways communities can work together to share resources with those who need them. What are ways the children can take part in these initiatives?
- Plant a community garden. Have the children research what vegetables will grow in your region and how to take care of them. At the end of harvest season, children can taste the fruits of their labor and share ideas of how they might incorporate each food item into a recipe.

Additional Titles

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

All of Peter's things are being painted pink for his new baby sister. Peter has a hard time dealing with this until he decides that it is all right to share his things.

The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog! by Mo Willems

Pigeon wants to enjoy his hot dog in peace. But Duckling's persistent questioning leads Pigeon to the only possible solution, to share the hot dog.

The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and The Big Hungry Bear by Don and Audrey Wood, illustrated by Don Wood

The little mouse fears that the big, hungry bear will steal his strawberry, until he discovers that he can share it.

Sheila Rae's Peppermint Stick by Kevin Henkes

Sheila Rae has a peppermint stick of her very own that she does not want to share with her little sister. She teases her sister until the stick breaks in two, and they can both enjoy the peppermint stick.

Yoko by Rosemary Wells

Yoko's lunch is very different from her classmates', but she shows that differences can be delicious when she shares with them.

Erandi's Braids

by Antonio Hernández Madrigal, illustrated by Tomie dePaola

Putnam Publishing Group, 1999

Erandi's mother must come up with the money to fix their fishing net. She decides to sell her braids, but they are too short. It is up to Erandi to make the sacrifice to help her family.

What to Do Before Reading the Story

- Show the cover illustration and ask children if they think the story takes place in New York, Mexico, or France. What are some clues from the illustration that help them to know?
- Tell the children you are going to read a story about courage. Ask them to describe a time they were courageous. What could *Erandi's Braids* have to do with being courageous?
- There is a glossary of Spanish vocabulary in the beginning of the book. Write the words on the board and practice saying them with the children.

Things to Talk about During the Story

- Ask the children what they would like for their birthdays.
- Ask the children if they think Erandi made the right decision to sell her braids. Why do they think she did or did not make the right decision? What might others think of her decision?
- Why does Erandi's mother seem upset after Erandi cuts her hair?



What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- How did Erandi show courage by cutting her braids? What are other examples of children being brave?
- Erandi was afraid of what others might think of her short hair. Someone else might be afraid to speak in front of groups. Another might be afraid to ride a bike. Have children identify what they are afraid of. Have them write down their greatest fear and think of ways they can overcome that fear.
- There are many synonyms for the word *courage*. *Bravery*, *guts*, *nerve*, *daring*, *confidence*, and *audacity* are just a few. Have children play with vocabulary by choosing a word and drawing a picture that illustrates it.

Family Involvement

- Erandi cuts her hair so she can help her family. Ask children how they help out at home.
- Have children think of ways their family members have been brave or courageous. Has their mother given a speech in public? Did their father drive the family safely home through a blizzard? Has a sibling stood up to a bully? Have children identify acts of courage in their own family and make a certificate to commemorate them.

Community Connection

- What have others done to demonstrate courage? Create a wall of courage by highlighting famous people who have been courageous such as Joan of Arc, Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Lincoln, and Gandhi. Feature their pictures and descriptions of why they were courageous.
- Organize a hair drive. Hair donations were at one time used only for the wealthy, but thanks to some enterprising, generous individuals, hair donations are now used for children who are unable to grow their own hair. Organizations such as Locks of Love (www.locksoflove.org) accept hair donations of 10 inches or more to make wigs for children with diseases that make them lose their hair.
- Have the children create a list of professions that require people to display courage every day (i.e. firefighters, police officers, window washers). Invite one of them in to describe how courage helps him or her to perform his or her job well.



Additional Titles

New York's Bravest Mary Pope Osborne, illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher

Mose Humphreys is a firefighter who is committed to saving lives—even when it endangers his own.

The Paper Dragon by Marguerite W. Davol illustrated by Robert Sabuda

Mi Fei is the only person in the village wise enough and brave enough to face the dragon who dooms his village.

Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story by Ken Mochizuki, illustrated by Dom Lee

Hiroki's father has the power to save the lives of thousands of Jewish refugees, but he must betray orders from Japan to do it.

First Day in Grapes by L. King Pérez, illustrated by Robert Casilla
Chico must face another first day of school as his migrant family moves to harvest the next crop. Despite the challenges he faces, he shares his strengths with his teacher and classmates and has a successful first day.

Uncle Jed's Barber Shop

by **Margaree King Mitchell**, illustrated by **James Ransome**

Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1993

Uncle Jed has been saving his money to open a barbershop. But when Sarah Jean gets ill and needs an expensive operation, he understands that his responsibilities to the family are more important than his dream.

What to Do Before Reading the Story

- Ask children who cuts their hair. Do they go to a barbershop or a beauty salon, or does a family member cut it for them?
- Ask the children to look at the cover illustration. The title is *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*. Are the two people in a barbershop?
- Note that this book has won a Coretta Scott King Award, which honors books that celebrate peace, social change, and brotherhood.
- Gather items that might help tell the story before you start reading, including scissors, a thermometer, a pillow, and money. Pull each item out of a bag one at a time. Have the children reflect on what the object might mean to the story.

Things to Talk about During the Story

- Uncle Jed shares his dream of owning a barbershop. Have the children share some of their dreams.
- Uncle Jed understands that he can help save his niece with the money he has saved, and he accepts responsibility for her health. Ask the children if he has made the right decision.
- Uncle Jed keeps saving his money and then losing it for one reason or another. Ask the children if they think Uncle Jed should give up on his dream. Or should he keep pursuing it despite how difficult it may be?



What You Can Do When You Finish Reading the Story

- Uncle Jed's character is true as he prioritizes his family before his dream. Have the children share what they think *responsibility* means.
- Each person has a responsibility to friends, family, and the earth. Have the children draw a picture of how they are responsible to each.



- In Gloria Rambow Singh's classroom, she helps illustrate responsibility by sending each child home with a stuffed bear named *Responsible Ralph*. The bear is supposed to see what responsibilities the children have at home. Introduce your own "Accountability Ambassador" to send home with children. Then ask children to share what work the ambassador has seen them do at home.

Family Involvement

- How does a family show responsibility to one another? Encourage families to consider how they take care of one another in good times and bad.
- What responsibilities does each child have at home? Have families create a chart of responsibilities. How does the family ensure that each person has a role?

Community Connection

- We are all responsible for the care and upkeep of our community. Ask children to think of ways they can help take care of their surroundings (i.e. asking people not to litter, sharing the health dangers of smoking). Then create a plan to spread the word.
- Host a community essay-writing contest. Invite children to write what responsibility means to them.
- The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts of America teach children responsibility. Have a local troop come in a share why they think responsibility is important.

Additional Titles

Elizabeti's Doll by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen, illustrated by Christy Hale

When Elizabeti's brother arrives, she decides that she too wants someone to take care of. She takes on the care of a rock and soon proves that caring for an object is no laughing matter.

It Takes a Village by Jane Cowen-Fletcher

When Yemi is entrusted with the care of her little brother, Kokou, she realizes that everyone in the village takes responsibility for the care and safety of the children.

Bertie Was a Watchdog by Rick Walton, illustrated by Arthur Robins

Bertie may be small, but he takes his job as a watchdog seriously.

Fanny's Dream by Caralyn Buehner, illustrated by Mark Buehner

Fanny dreams of having prince charming sweep her off into a fairy tale life. But first, she needs to take care of her family.

RIF'S MISSION IS TO:

- Ensure that every child believes in the value of books and the importance of reading.
- Assist children and their families with the fundamental resources children need to become motivated to read.
- Lead in the creation and development of national, regional and local collaborations building strong community-based children's and family literacy programs.

RIF's programs focus highest priority on the neediest children from birth through age 11. RIF utilizes a national volunteer corps of parents, teachers, librarians, and other community members to provide effective literacy programs to children and their families in every U.S. state and territory.

ABOUT RIF

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF), founded in 1966, works to build a literate nation by helping young people discover the joy of reading. RIF's highest priority is to serve the nation's underserved children and families through the development and delivery of literacy programs and campaigns that motivate youth to read regularly. Through a national, grassroots network of 450,000 community volunteers at 25,000 RIF program sites, 5.1 million children are provided with 16.5 million new, free books and other essential literacy resources each year. For more information and to access reading resources, visit RIF's website at www.rif.org.

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