

Our Mission

We all have a huge stake in the healthy development and effective education of young children. We do not have a child to spare.

-Janet Porter, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Dana Farber Cancer Institute

35% of children enter kindergarten unprepared to learn, according to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This gap persists into third grade, where statewide standardized test data tells us that 39% of Massachusetts third graders do not meet proficiency standards for reading. **This figure jumps to 60% for low income children.** Why does this matter? A longitudinal study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2011) showed that **children who are not reading proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma.**

Raising A Reader seeks to close this achievement gap by helping families of young children (newborn to age 5) develop, practice, and maintain habits of reading together at home. Our work, which both increases access to books and gives families tools for strengthening the culture of reading at home, is driven by more than 25 years of research that correlates high rates of family book sharing with kindergarten readiness.



Young children whose families read with them at home are more likely to be prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

Our Model

It is really exciting having the books at home. They just get read over and over. I love seeing the kids opening the books and getting so excited. They can't wait for the next week to come because they are going to get more books.

-Wendy Guerrero, Parent

Raising A Reader MA is closing the achievement gap in strategically selected, high need communities by delivering the following services to children and families:

1. Our signature red bag book rotation program, which makes dozens of high quality, culturally appropriate books accessible to children and families every year.
2. Multilingual DVDs, workshops and peer and professional support services that train parents in Interactive Reading strategies and their impact on pre-literacy development (like vocabulary, letter awareness, phonics and oral expression).
3. Training and support for early education providers in strategies for reinforcing the family's role in children's literacy development through storytelling, book sharing and other activities.

We offer our services year-round through partnerships with centers of early education and care and other community-based organizations where families regularly go (e.g. Head Start, churches, preschools and/or playgroups).

Raising A Reader MA currently has more than 38,000 books being circulated through the homes of nearly 8,500 children and families across the Commonwealth. Our multilingual staff works in communities like Dorchester, East Boston, Chelsea, Brockton, Lawrence, Lowell, and Springfield.



Raising A Reader MA reinforces the message of early literacy for lifelong achievement through active participation in community-activities like Chelsea Reads and Summer Story Times in the Park.

Our Impact

...before coming to the Raising A Reader workshops, I used to focus...on reading the words on the page, which was boring for my children and made me uncomfortable, because whenever I found a phrase or a word I did not understand in English, I would stop. Now that Raising A Reader MA has taught me the techniques to focus on the pictures of the book and to ask questions, my children are much more engaged and we have a lot of fun together.

-Parent, Brockton, MA

Raising A Reader MA works. Annual program evaluation data shows that **families' rate of home book sharing increases by as many as 20 percentage points over the course of a year, up to 75% reporting reading together at home three or more times a week.**

Baseline data collected at the start of the program shows that before the program, as few as 45% of families may report reading together at home regularly.

Raising A Reader MA's annual program evaluation data is backed up by academic research. In 2010, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the University of Texas Health Sciences Center completed a four-year, randomly controlled evaluation of the effectiveness of the program model used by Raising A Reader MA. **Results showed statistically significant effects on five key drivers of student lifetime achievement: vocabulary, grammar, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and memory for language skills of pre-kindergartners.**

This research reinforces more than 20 independently conducted program evaluations and/or standardized educational assessments that show:

- Parents engaged in Raising A Reader experienced an 82% increase in knowledge about the importance of building literacy skills from birth (Organizational Research Services, 2008)
- Raising A Reader participation was associated with an increase in the proportion of English Learner parents who read to their children most or all days (25.4% to 62.9%) (Harder & Company Community Research, 2007)
- The number of children who met or exceeded a standardized Pre-K assessment for Letter Sounds and Beginning Sound Awareness rose by 322% and 112% respectively after Raising A Reader (PALS Pre-K—Head Start, 2005)
- Raising A Reader English and Spanish speaking participants performed significantly higher in Book Knowledge, Comprehension and Print Knowledge on a standardized assessment as compared to national norms and local Head Starts not participating in Raising A Reader (Pacific Consulting Group, 2001).

The success of Raising A Reader MA's work lies in our ability to ensure our community-based partners are implementing the program with fidelity. We measure this with a web-based software tool that has been specifically designed to allow our staff to collect and analyze data including participant demographics, training comprehension, program implementation by site, and constituent satisfaction. This data is complemented by parent pre and post-surveys to ascertain literacy behavior in the home before and after families experience Raising A Reader MA.

Because of our outcomes driven approach, **Raising A Reader was named one of the top 45 social entrepreneurs changing the world (Fast Company, 2007), and a top non-profit (Philanthropedia, 2010).**



I picked my four-year old son up from school and he asked me, "Can we go to the (school) library before going home?" He's never asked me this before. This is the type of impact Raising A Reader MA is having on our family.

-Carlos V., Parent

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Raising A Reader MA is a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization. All donations are tax deductible. Our EIN number is 80-0297898.

