

Enewsletter
February 2025

Numbers

All Around

Nebraska
Growing Readers

Nebraska
Growing
Readers



Growth through Books

Early childhood professionals and families are the foundations of literacy and crucial to developing reading skills. While many of you are working with children too young to read, by reading to them, you are not only fostering an interest in the lifelong reading skills that will stand them well later in life, but you are also building the early literacy skills that will help them as they do read on their own.

Just a few of the skills that children learn from being read to and later reading themselves are:

- Increased creativity and imagination;
- A developed sense of empathy;
- Improved social and emotional development;
- Stronger focus and concentration;
- Greater vocabulary and stronger language skills;
- A wider understanding of the world.

Nebraska Growing Readers promotes such growth through books and wants to share with you texts and ideas that will help you foster such skills in your children.



Growth through Health

Health isn't about just physical growth. Good health promotes good sleep, proper brain function, and our body's ability to engage in day-to-day activities that help us learn. *How Do You Stay Healthy* is an introduction to all the things that help us stay healthy and begin the day ready for all it holds.

[Read *How Do You Stay Healthy*](#)

Well Wishes and Continued Excellence



Since October of 2023, Nebraska Growing Readers (NGR) has made a significant impact on the literacy landscape of the state. Wendy Keele has worked with a team to engage 1,117 providers to receive free books for the families they serve, register 3,218 incoming kindergarteners to receive free books in the mail, and provide over 900,000 books to children and families across Nebraska. In addition, Wendy has been a part of creating the first community book gardens in the state, in implementing writers workshops where 37 local authors have created books, and promoting translations of texts into numerous languages.

Wendy will be moving on in March, and we want to thank her for the dedication, passion, and leadership she has brought to NGR. Her contributions have been invaluable, from helping shape resources supporting families in fostering early literacy to forging strong connections across programs and communities. Her commitment has left a lasting imprint. We will miss her and wish her well in all that lies ahead.

We are confident that Wendy leaves NGR in good hands as Greta Carlson will continue to carry the NGR mission forward through Sixpence. She will continue to help programs deepen their understanding of shared reading, embed literacy into everyday routines, and support local content creation. Additionally, there will be continued efforts to collaborate with districts, ESUs, and other partners to expand the reach and impact of NGR's work.

Thank you to Wendy for the work she has done and to Greta for continuing the future efforts of NGR. We look forward to seeing how this important work continues to grow and evolve! Stay tuned for more to come.

NGR News

A Little Something Something



Yanki Smith with her daughters, My'Kiyah and Ya'Miyah

In an effort to use books to help children understand the complex emotions involved in a big move to a new home, Barb Stratman and Yanki Smith collaborated to write *Moving Day Made Fun*, a book about ways to ease the transition from one home to the next. Read about the impact the book had on the children, the authors, and the Southside Terrace neighborhood.

[Read the Article](#)

[Read the Book](#)



Growth Through Creativity

Ava Paints introduces children to the world of creativity and can be a fun way to spend time making things. You can use the book to introduce an art project and to talk about all the different ways people make things

[Read *Ava Paints*](#)

Nebraska Book Spotlight

That Growing Feeling

Learning to understand and name the feelings they're having is an important element of social emotional growth for children. *Show Me How You Feel* is a fun way to get children talking about the different feelings they have and how they express those feelings.

The book is also a great way to help children who are struggling with their feelings show you what they are experiencing in the moment. It can also help them to understand that they are not alone in the big feelings they might have. You can have this book available in a "calming corner" for children to look at while they are working through emotions and they're sure to recognize some of the "feeling faces" they see in the book.

[Read *Show Me How You Feel*](#)



-Help your child learn names for their feelings.
-Ask your child to make a face and guess what they are feeling.

Doing Something New

Even adults know that doing something new comes with a mix of emotions, from excitement to fear. But for children those feelings can be overwhelming. *We're Going on a Trip* introduces children to the experience of flying and gives them the knowledge to help ease any fears they may have.

But the book is also a great way to talk about all the different ways of going on a trip, to discuss why people go on trips, and to share stories of favorite trips. Use the book to introduce a travel activity. You can take a trip to your backyard or go on a local field trip.

[Read *We're Going on a Trip*](#)



-Talk about any trips you might take this year.
-What are some things your family does when you have to wait?



Growth through Thinking

You Have Just One is, is both a way of thinking about simple math concepts and of thinking about bodies. What do we have just one of? Use the book not only to talk about those things we have just one of, but also to discuss what different body parts do.

[Read *You Have Just One*](#)

**Did you enjoy reading these books?
Want to read other books available
in the NGR library?**

[Visit the NGR Library](#)

Join Our Facebook Group

Nebraska Growing Readers has a Facebook Group where you can get up-to-date information about the program; engage with this program and the other NGR provider sites; and share ideas, resources, and tips for getting kids excited about reading.

Follow Us on Facebook

This private group, will require you to answer a question to get in. There are no wrong answers. We just want to assure a safe space specifically for providers.

Learn More about Nebraska

See Nebraska-Related Books

Nebraska Growing Readers continues to build the library of content written by Nebraskans and about the various cultural experiences you can find in the state. Want to know more about Nebraska books? Visit our Spotlight on Books page to see what's happening in your state.

Nebraska Growing Readers is a collaboration between Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, the Nebraska Department of Education, the Statewide Family Engagement Center, and Unite for Literacy.

If you have questions or comments concerning the program, please contact [Greta Carlson](mailto:gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org) (gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org).



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