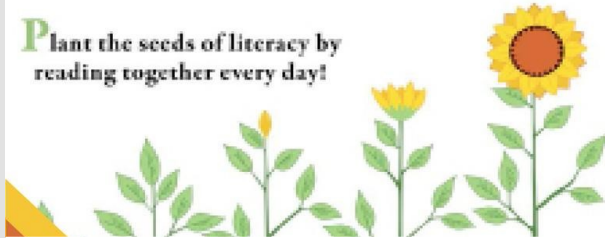




Nebraska Growing Readers

Newsletter
June 2024

Plant the seeds of literacy by
reading together every day!



Increasing Access to Books

A 2019 Ohio State University study showed that children who have 5 books read to them from birth to age 5 will be exposed to 1.4 million more words than children who are not read to. That's why Nebraska Growing Readers wants to make books available to all the state's children and to help them build home libraries where they can develop the literacy skills that will set them up for future success.

NGR has already reached a goal of providing books for 1,000 early childhood professionals that can be distributed to the families they serve; is now registering kindergartners to receive 4 books at home per week for up to 25 weeks; and will soon be working to establish book gardens in areas of the state identified as book deserts (areas lacking in book resources). This month's newsletter will look at ways to increase access to books across Nebraska.



Drawing Winners

Congratulations to Jill Jones and Tiffany Luna. They each won a \$20 Amazon gift card in a random drawing of home and center-based child care providers who had all their families complete the Family Survey for Nebraska Growing Readers. Thank you to everyone for your support and help in making families aware of Nebraska Growing Readers.

Nebraska Growing Readers Incoming Kindergarten Enrollment



Nebraska Growing Readers
Incoming kindergarteners in Nebraska can sign up to receive free picture books mailed to their home! When you register, every week you will get four easy-to-read picture books, plus a family information card mailed to your postal address for up to six months. This program is free for you and your family.

Nebraska Growing Readers
¡Niños-as próximos a ingresar a kínder en Nebraska, pueden inscribirse para recibir libros ilustrados gratuitos enviados a sus hogares! Cuando te registras, cada semana recibirás 4 libros ilustrados fáciles de leer, más una tarjeta de consejos para la familia enviados a tu dirección postal por hasta 6 meses. Este programa es gratuito para ti y tu familia.

Scan the QR Code or follow the link to sign up and complete a short survey.
Escanea el código QR o sigue el link para registrarte y completar una breve encuesta.
https://www.uniteforliteracy.com/register/ne_childcare

Books for Incoming Kindergartners

Registration is open NOW for most incoming kindergarteners in Nebraska! For research purposes, Schuyler and Hastings will open in August.

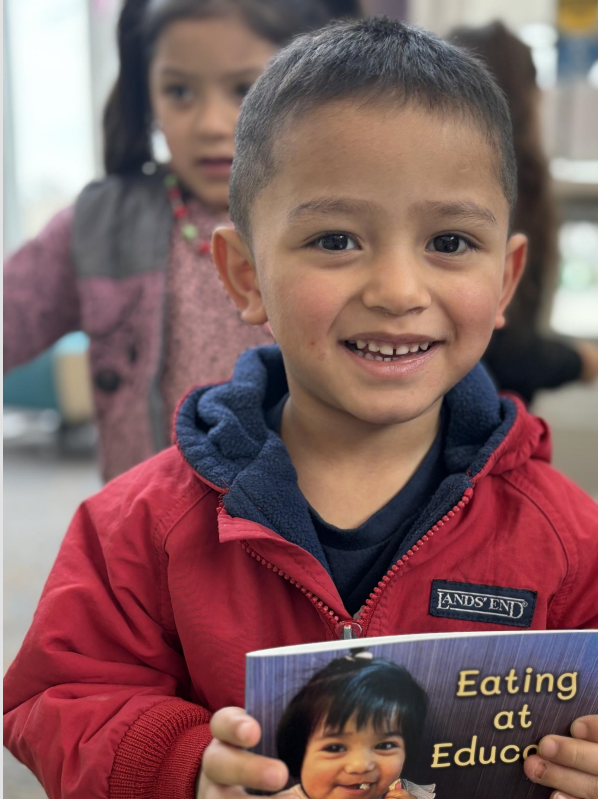
Incoming kindergarteners can receive up to 100 free books mailed to their home by registering at no cost to their family. Every week the child will receive a packet with four new books. Depending on when the child is registered, they could receive up to 25 weeks of mailings. Please share the flyer with your families that have kids starting kindergarten in the fall.

Find flyers for Omaha, Lincoln, and statewide areas by clicking on the buttons below.

Omaha

Lincoln

Statewide



783 Kindergarteners Registered!

We have just begun to register incoming kindergartners. Our goal is to have 4,000 registered by end of year. Don't miss out on an opportunity to receive free books for your child.

NGR News



Books in Little Hands

Both Kim Chase and Amy Standley agree on a very specific detail about Nebraska Growing Readers (NGR) books: they fit well in small hands. While this may seem minor, it means that the children these early childhood professionals work with are holding the books, looking at the colorful pictures, identifying what they see; such moments are the early literacy moments NGR strives for.

But the small size of the books has an even more special meaning to Standley, who works for Educare Lincoln. She is able to fit several easily into her bag, which she takes home where her son eagerly looks to see if the books are there. Standley's youngest son is non-verbal, and she says of the books, "my son is the same age as the kids I teach and he responds so well to them." She describes how he holds them in his little hands and how she feels there is no pressure for him to speak because the pictures tell their own story.

Standley describes the bonding moments of shared reading with her son: "Even though I don't know exactly what his mind is thinking, I like to assume I can when we look at books together." She adds that he carries the books all over the house, especially his favorite *Are We There Yet*, which includes pictures of cars and trucks. She says, "he'll get his little trucks and he'll get his book and he'll hold them up together." The connection he's made between the object and the image is an important early moment of literacy.

NGR, which is a collaborative effort between Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Nebraska Department of Education, the Statewide Family Engagement Center, and Unite for Literacy, promotes such shared-reading moments not only for their impact on literacy, but also for the connections they build.

[Read the full story.](#)

Reading Tips

Access to Books

Availability of books to young children has a number of significant and lasting impacts on their development. Just a few of the beneficial effects of being read to from an early age include: exposure to more vocabulary, increased listening skills, stronger bonds with loved ones, improved ability to recognize sounds and letters, and a stronger ability to improve on knowledge and reading skills. In fact, simply having access to more books in the home at a young age has been correlated with better reading scores on later achievement tests.

Nebraska Growing Readers wants to create access to books for all the state's children and you can help. Some things you can do to create access are:

- Keeps books in a familiar place where children can reach them. Low shelves and special containers help children find their favorites quickly;
- Keep NGR books in a prominent place with a sign clearly marking that "free books" are available;
- Provide books in Spanish for bilingual children. They will appreciate it and their families will love it;
- Check the Unite for Literacy digital catalog for books in other languages. You'll make a child happy if you can provide a book in their native language;
- Make time to read books aloud or to use the NGR read-aloud function for digital books so that reading is accessible for children with visual impairments;
- Hold special events that highlight books. This makes reading important to children and families and reminds



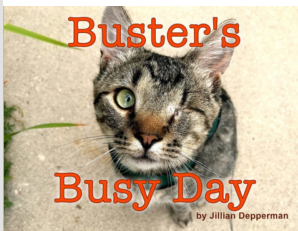
them that books are available to take home.

New Website

Nebraska Growing Readers is excited to announce that we have a new website full of resources for you to explore! We invite you to visit the new site.

Visit Our New Website

Nebraska Book Spotlight



Buster's Busy Day is a delightful exploration of a day in the life of Buster the cat. Because Buster only has one eye, the book is a great way to talk about people and creatures with different abilities. It can also introduce the habits of animals and encourage children to explore what they know about other animals.

-Draw a picture of an animal you know.
-Talk about the things you do every day.

Read *Buster's Busy Day*



My Mom is a Chef explores Salvadorian culture and some of the foods that shape it. The book provides opportunities for talking about the variety of cultures that exist and foods people eat, to think about daily routines, or as an introduction to a food making activity.

-Look up a recipe and cook with your child.
-Learn about a different culture and try a new food.

Read *My Mom is a Chef*

Did you enjoy *Buster's Busy Day* and *My Mom is a Chef*? 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.

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.

Follow Us on Facebook

Learn More through NGR Webinars

Join us for a Deep Dive into the NGR digital library and the versatility of features and languages it offers your child care and families. Find out more about:

- Nebraska-related books;
- Texts in multiple languages;
- Narrated texts;
- Categories and searches.

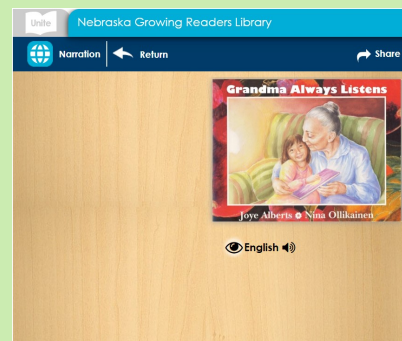
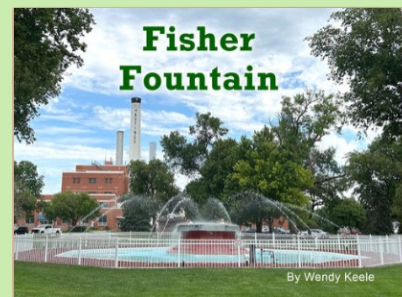
The same presentation will be available at 3 different times:

1. Tuesday, June 18 at 6pm Central
2. Thursday, June 20 at 1pm Central
3. Sunday, June 23 at 2pm Central

To join any of the presentations, please use this Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89572612441>

See our [Facebook Group](#) to learn more!



NGR Resources Help You Connect with Families

We have resources available on the NGR website so that you can better connect with families about shared reading habits and available materials. You can, for example, **click on the image to download a "Free Books" sign that has an enlarged QR code that links to the NGR library.**

[View More Resources.](#)

Send us your family pictures!

We'd love to see pictures of your family reading Nebraska Growing Readers books and include them in our newsletter. Please send your photos to [Ivan Young](#) and feel free to include comments on what your children enjoy about reading and the books you read to them.



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 need to change the quantity of books you are receiving or would like to be receiving some books in Spanish, please contact [Wendy Keele](mailto:wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) (wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) or [Greta Carlson](mailto:gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org) (gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org) to get that changed for your next shipment.



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