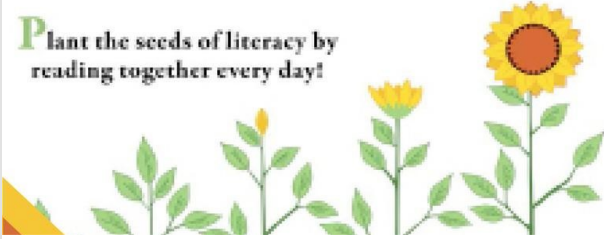




Nebraska

Growing Readers
Enewsletter
August 2024

Plant the seeds of literacy by reading together every day!



A Community of Literacy

We know that the stronger the bond between children's providers and their families, the better the outcome for children. Our own University of Nebraska-Nebraska Extension shows that early childhood professionals who work to create strong bonds with their families promote significant benefits for the children they work with, including: improved social skills and adaptive behaviors; increased language, literacy, and math skills; and reduced challenging behaviors.

The impact of strong family-provider bonds also holds benefits for a child's literacy outcomes. An Ohio State University study claims, "research demonstrates that family support for language and literacy activities at home is positively related to children's outcomes, including reading acquisition, language, vocabulary learning, conceptual development, and literacy achievement." It is, therefore, important for providers to connect with families about books, literacy, and reading activities. NGR books are a great way to start this process.

In this month's newsletter, we will explore ways you can encourage families to take home books, share games that encourage reading, establish effective reading habits, and unite as a reading community.

Reading Tip that Could Pay Off for You!



In this month's NGR news story (see below), early childhood educator Renae Norenberg of Nae's Home Away from Home shares the activity she used NGR books for on National Eat Your Vegetables Day. She read her children books like like *Count Your Veggies* and *The Fruit Market* and had them sort plastic vegetables and fruit, count them, and separate into groups of the same color. Not only did she make a literacy moment a fun activity, she encouraged her kids to:

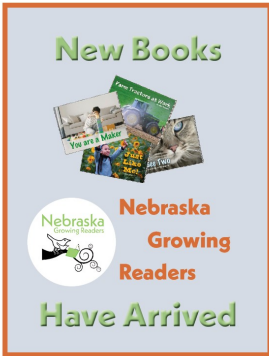
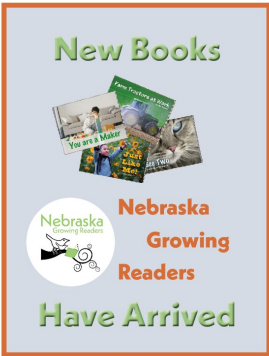
- Count items;
- Recognize the different fruits and vegetables;
- Name and recognize colors;
- Think about ways to sort items;

We know that you have lots of wonderful ideas for reading activities that you could share with others. If you click on the link below and submit your best reading activity that you use NGR books for, you will become eligible for a drawing in which we choose 3 early childhood professionals to receive a \$20 Amazon gift card.

[Submit Your Activity for a Chance to Win](#)

New Books Arrival Signs

We know that children and families are excited to know when new books have arrived, so we are offering these signs you can post at your childcare when NGR shipments come in. You can download PDF versions to use wherever you display your



books or use a PNG version to send out notification via text or email.

You can also find these and other resources on our [website](#). If there resources you need but can't find, please let us know and we'll do our best to provide you with them.

PNG Version



PNG Version

PDF Version



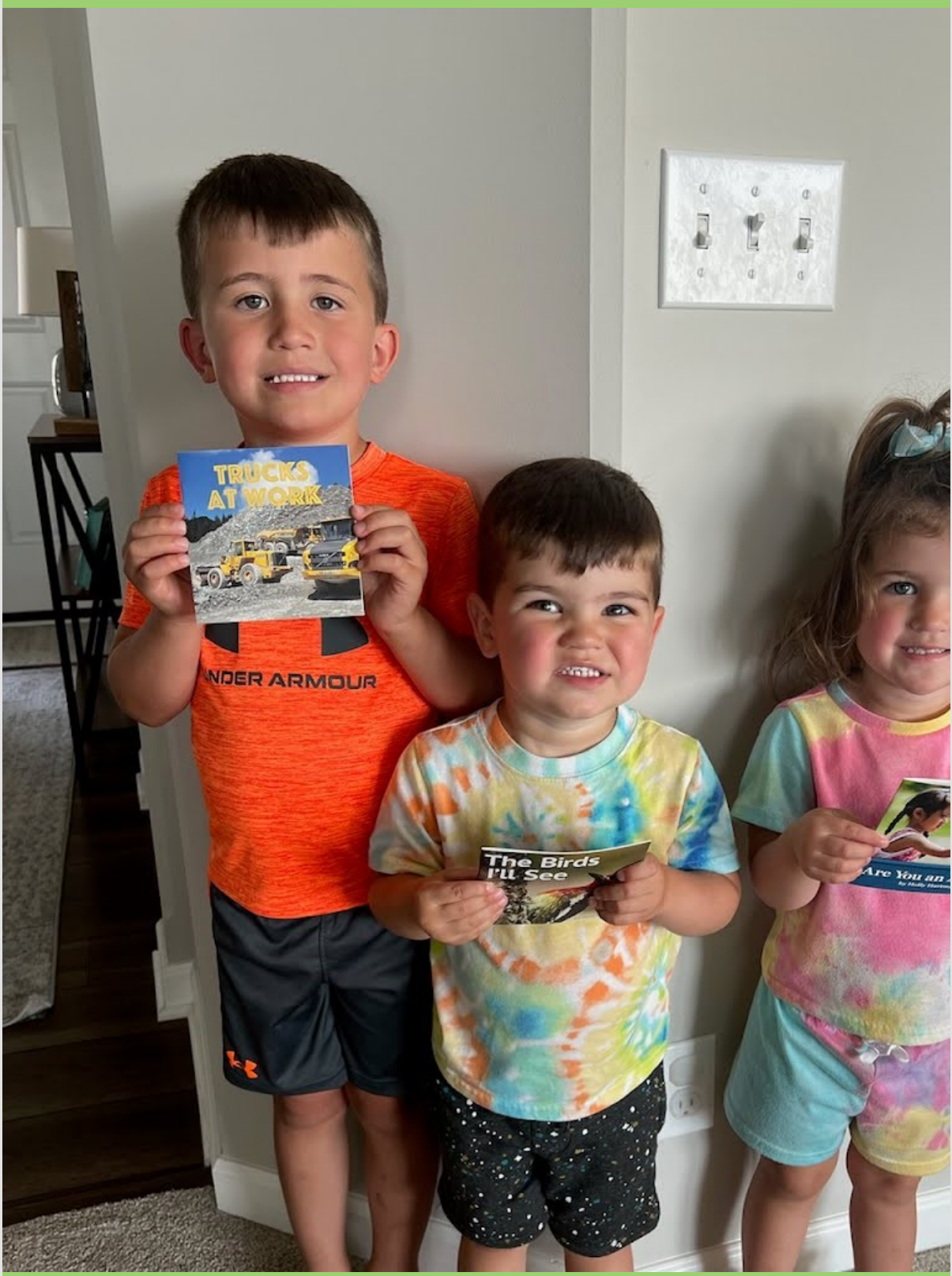
PDF Version

Reading Tip

Build bridges between the literacy work you do as a provider and the things families are doing at home. One way you can share is by printing a favorite activity you do in the care setting and placing it inside copies of NGR books that go home. You can also share these activities in a digital setting via email or by using a website if you have one.



NGR News



You've Got Mail

Okay, it may be hard to imagine now that most of our communication comes via email or messaging, but real mail can be exciting. In an age where mostly what we see in our actual

postbox are bills, ads, or political flyers, Nebraska Growing Readers (NGR) is creating excitement about mail . . . and it's for our youngest residents!

Renae Norenberg, who has owned and operated Nae's Home Away from Home childcare in Fremont since 1990, says, "my kids just get ecstatic. They watch for the mail. It's like they know when those books are going to be coming. They want to open the door to see if they have a little box on the porch. We can't open them fast enough." Norenberg is talking about the free boxes of NGR books that are sent to early childhood educators who are registered with the program.

Each month, she receives copies of 10 different titles that she can put on display for families to take home so they can build their own libraries. Norenberg takes one copy of each book to keep on hand because, as she says, "I'm huge on reading to kids and how important it is." The rest are taken home by her families.

At Nae's Home Away from Home, her children love to make the NGR books part of their daily play. Norenberg describes the library game they play where she must be the librarian who scans their books when they bring them to her. She also likes to make the books part of the activities she includes in her daily schedule. "Every day there's a national something day," she says. Recently, it was Eat Your Vegetables Day, and Norenberg read the children NGR books like *Count Your Veggies* and *The Fruit Market*. To enhance the reading, she gathered the plastic fruits and vegetables she had in her play kitchen and had the children identify which were fruits and which were vegetables. She then had them sort by color and count the number of each color they had.

[Read the full story.](#)

Reading Tip

Make families and children the stars. Invite family members to read a book to your kids and share the way they relate to the book. Perhaps they find a cultural connection, maybe there's a work connection, or it could be that it's just the child's favorite book. Whatever the case, you are creating those important links between educator, family, and literacy.



NGR Website

Visit Our Website

Nebraska Growing Readers continues to build the resources available for early childhood professionals and families. We invite you to explore the NGR site.

Nebraska Book Spotlight



Are You Ready for School is a great book for preparing children for what happens at school. You can share the fun activities that are done at school and also use the book as way to think about what other routines are like and what they involve.

-make time to read every day
-talk about what you read

Read *Are You Ready for School*



Kids love to make things, and *You Are a Maker* allows them to explore the different ways of making. From making things that are functional to things that are beautiful, this book encourages turning imagination into action.

-Compare your child's creations to the pictures in this book. What is the same? What is different?
-Encourage your child to tell a story about something they made.

Read *You Are a Maker*

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

Visit the NGR Library

Reading Tip

Support multicultural experiences. Offering Spanish versions of texts to your bilingual families or directing other non-English speakers to digital versions of texts in their native tongue tells them their experiences and culture are important. Using these books in your curriculum not only creates important bonds with bilingual families, but also exposes native English speakers to a broad range of cultural experiences.



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 through NGR Webinars

There are no webinars available in August, but NGR will be back in September with more offerings. Check the September newsletter or our Facebook group for information on upcoming webinars for the fall.

You can also contact [Greta Carlson](mailto:gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org) (gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org) with any questions.

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](mailto:Ivan.Young@nebraskachildren.org) 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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