

Plant the seeds of literacy by reading together every day!



Cultivating a Culture of Reading

Think about your favorite stories as a child, maybe a folk tale, a cartoon, a beloved story read to you again and again. Was it just a text to you? I don't know about you, but my favorite stories sometimes appeared on television, showed up in songs we sang, in games we played. I sometimes dressed as favorite characters and even made up new versions of stories in my head.

If that's the case, then what is a culture of reading? It seems more than just having books available or regularly reading to children. A culture of reading creates a sense of the importance of words, of sounds; a culture of reading goes beyond the pages. After all, think about how many simple ways each day reading becomes a factor in your life--whether its a text on your phone, a road sign, a label on a can, a banner across the bottom of a television screen.

To cultivate a culture of reading, we have to make words fun and important to children; we have to let them start on the page, but echo beyond it; we have to bring those words into the other activities that children are a part of each day. As early childhood educators, you are a trusted source of information on literacy, so it is important for you to share your thoughts on developing a culture of reading and to support families in finding resources and activities that promote reading. In this month's enewsletter we want to offer ways to expand your culture of reading.

Culture of Reading Tip

Attend book-related events or create your own. Making books an important part of your curriculum activities is a great way to demonstrate to children that reading is important, and connecting books with activities extends literacy from the page to the lives of everyone involved.

Activity

Invite someone local to speak to your children who can speak to a book you're reading. Let them read the book and talk about what they do.



NGR News

How Does Your Garden Grow



Schuyler Launches an NGR Community Book Garden

In this case with clean, white washing machines all in a row. The laundromat is initially quiet, and while we wait for all the dignitaries to arrive, a thin young teenager picks up a book from the stand and begins to read aloud in Spanish. Soon the Sheriff arrives, as do the Mayor, the Director of Schuyler Public Libraries, and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce.

The setting at first seems strange for an auspicious occasion, but as the event progresses it feels appropriate. Schuyler is a small Nebraska community sustained largely by manufacturing and health care. It has an Hispanic population of nearly 74%, according to 2023 data. And the people are proud of their community. Like the Corrals family who owns the Soak 3 Times Laundromat, which is a community bookstand where Nebraska Growing Readers (NGR) is launching its Community Book Garden program.

NGR, an initiative of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, has partnered with Schuyler and other communities like it to provide books in areas where they are harder to find or to populations who benefit from access to free books. The ribbon cutting at Soak 3 Times launched the five community bookstands in Schuyler that, according to Greta Carlson, Program Manager of NGR, is the first Community Book Garden in Nebraska.

[Read the full article.](#)

Schuyler Book Garden



CHI Health University Clinic Book Garden



One World WIC Clinic-- South Omaha Book Garden



A Culture of Reading-- Library Trip

While NGR books are a great way to help families create home libraries, it is also important to show children and families other ways to find books. Your local library is a great resource for books, audio, films, activities, presentations, and more. Set up a field trip to your local library and be sure to show families how to register for their own cards.



NGR Website

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

Visit Our Website

December Webinar Opportunities

There are no professional development webinars in December, but please check back with us in January when we hope to have more available to you.

Happy holidays!

To learn more about this Professional Development Training through NECPRS please click here: <https://necprs.ne.gov/training-public>;



You can also contact [Wendy Keele](mailto:wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) (wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) with any questions.

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



Nebraska Book Spotlight



Let's Meet Deputy Brown Bear is a local Nebraska book written in Schuyler that introduces children to the world of police and can be a great way to talk about what to do in uncomfortable situations. You can pair the book with a visit from your local police or other service organizations.

-What adventure would you like to go on with Deputy Brown Bear?
-What is Deputy Brown Bear's favorite thing to do?

[Read *Let's Meet Deputy Brown Bear*](#)



Moving Day Made Fun was written by an Omaha author. It is full of longer sentences for older children and allows them to explore the experiences and emotions of a move to a new place. You can use the book to stage your own move using toys and books. Make a move from one room to another and ask children what might change in the move?

-Start talking early to your children about the move and answering any questions they may have.
-Explore the new neighborhood and community with your child.

[Read *Moving Day Made Fun*](#)

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

[Visit the NGR Library](#)

A Culture of Reading-- Reading Spaces

Creating a dedicated space for reading says to children that reading is an integral part of our daily lives. Start with display cases for books and maybe bean bags or other comfy seats and allow time for children to sit with the books and read or look at pictures. Dedicated



space and time emphasizes the importance of literacy.

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.



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 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 have questions or comments concerning the program, please contact [Wendy Keele](#) (wkeele@nebraskachildren.org) or [Greta Carlson](#) (gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org).



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