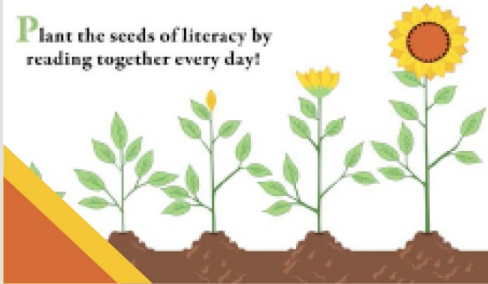


Plant the seeds of literacy by reading together every day!



Book Activities

Too often we think of literacy as the actual ability to read, but a child's earliest literacy moments are really all the things they learn about reading and writing before they learn to do either. When we read to young children, we are offering them these earliest experiences with literacy: We model how to hold books, how to turn pages, how to read from left to right (at least in most western languages); they see that the strange marks on the page are words that make specific sounds; they see that images connect to those words.

These early literacy moments are crucial for a number of reasons. According to The Center for Literacy and Learning, some of the most important impacts of reading to young children include: stimulating optimal patterns for brain development; encouraging children to mimic the sounds we make when reading thus introducing them to word making and vocal patterns; creating visual connections between words and images; developing nurturing bonds through moments of shared reading; and developing a lifelong interest in reading that will enhance later learning.

As early childhood professionals and families, you can promote literacy as an enjoyable experience and, by doing so, lay the foundations for those impacts. Creating book activities that not only include reading books aloud, but also making meaningful and enjoyable connections to the world is a great way to reinforce a love of reading and to build the foundations of literacy.

In this month's newsletter, we offer information on establishing reading rituals and on finding book activities that promote literacy as an enjoyable experience.

Reading Tip that Could Pay Off for You! Part 2



Last month, we provided a book activity from Renae Norenberg and asked you to submit your own activity for a chance to win a \$20 Amazon gift card. We apologize for the inconvenience, but due to a computer problem, those submissions did not go through. We encourage you to resubmit now that the problem has been fixed. We also offer a new activity for you to try.

Scavenger Hunt: Read the book *Farm Sounds* aloud to your children, point out and name each animal, and repeat the sound the animal makes.

- Place stuffed versions or pictures of the animal around your play area.
- Ask children to find animals that were in the book and bring them back to the reading circle.
- When they return with an animal, point to it and name it.
- Bonus: Ask them to make the sound that animal makes.

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

September Webinar Opportunities

In September, Nebraska Growing Readers will offer 3 opportunities to attend the webinar "Reading Math Books Counts Twice." You need only attend one of the sessions to receive an in-service hour.

1. September 16 at 1 pm Central Time
Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/9557688445?omn=81995730784>
2. September 19 at 6 pm Central Time
Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85792834917>
3. September 22 at 2 pm Central Time



Zoom Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81675600414>

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

You can also contact **Greta Carlson** (gcarlson@nebraskachildren.org) with any questions.

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



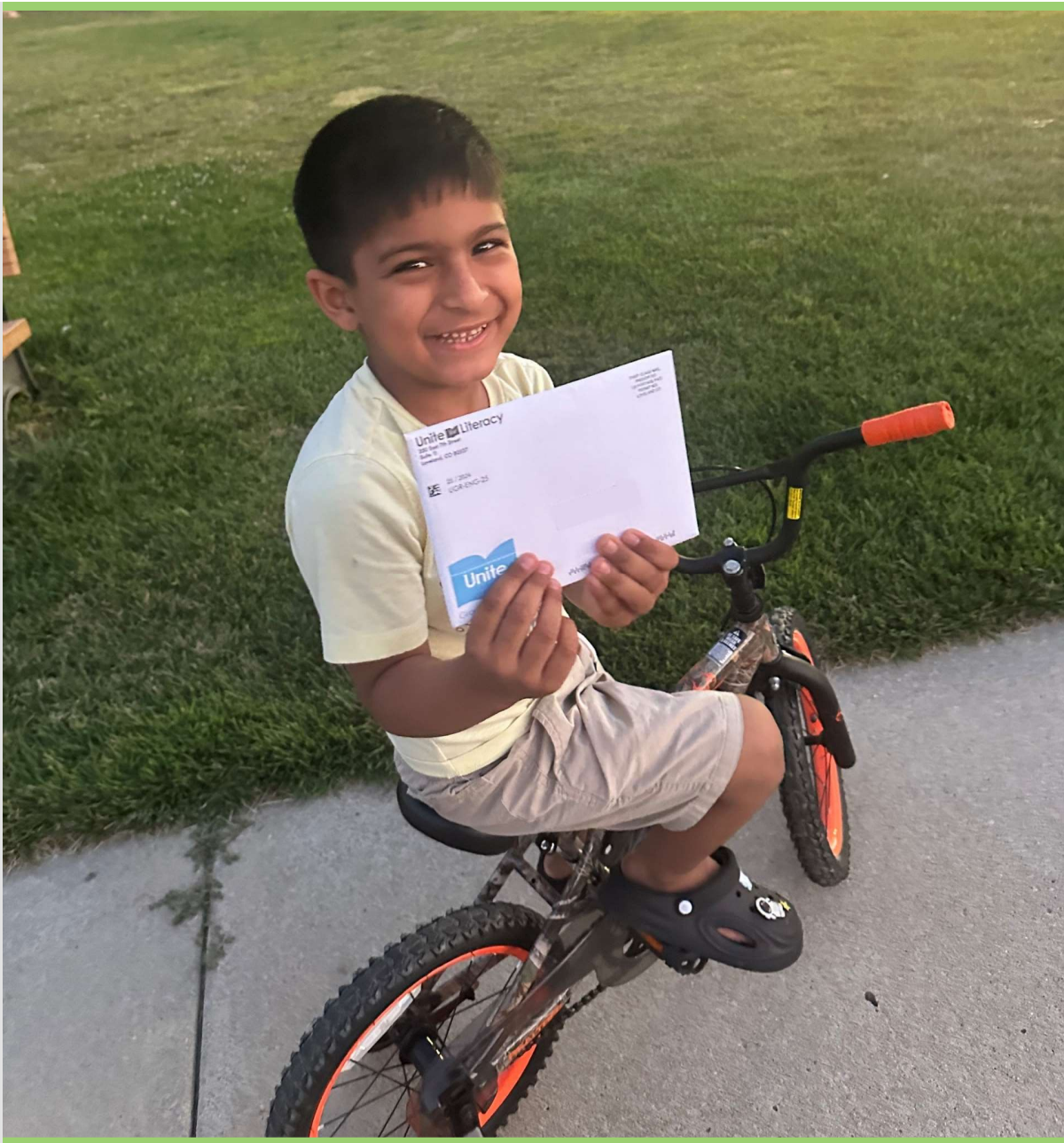
Book Activity

Sand Play provides the opportunity to introduce all kinds of sandbox games and fun, but even on a cold or rainy day you can use the book with this activity.

Salt Tray Art: Tape 4 to 5 rectangles of different color construction paper to a tray so that the bottom is completely covered. Pour regular table salt on the tray so as to cover most of the tray with a thin layer. Let children draw multi-colored pictures in the salt with a paint brush. Gently shake the tray back and forth at the end to "erase" the picture.



NGR News



Building Book Excitement through Nebraska Growing Reader's Incoming Kindergarten Free Book Program

Literacy is a ritual in the Mohmand household. Fariha Mohmand is an Afghan refugee who was an instructor for company management instruction and a university professor. She moved here to live with her “American Family,” a university professor named David Wilson, who has always given her children books. She says, “literacy is the door to teaching my kids the importance of education.” That’s why when she saw Nebraska Growing Readers offer to send her son Yousof free books as he prepared to enter kindergarten in the fall, she jumped at the opportunity.

Nebraska Growing Readers, an initiative of Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, began in October of 2023 and, within six months, had already signed up 1,000 early childhood educators to receive free books to be distributed for free to their families. The program is a partnership between Nebraska Children, Unite for Literacy, Nebraska Department of Education, and the Statewide Family Engagement Center of Nebraska, and is based on data that shows children who have over 100 books in their home show significantly higher reading scores (National Assessment of Educational Progress). The idea then is to help families build home libraries for their children and to promote shared book reading.

The initial success of the initiative led to the Incoming Kindergarten program where families whose children are entering kindergarten in the fall of 2024 could receive free weekly mailings of 4 books for up to 25 weeks. The program, which began in mid-May, was an immediate success, reaching its goal of 3,000 registrations within the first 6 weeks. It currently stands at 3,072 registrations and has a waiting list.

[Read the full story.](#)

Book Activity

It's Fall is a great book for getting children to think about the seasons and what is different about each one. Here is an activity to try:

Little Pumpkins Game: Make a certain number of pumpkins from stuffed paper lunch bags. Place them on a table, fence, or other space where they can be knocked off. Sing a version of Monkeys in the Bed-- something like "There were four little pumpkins sitting on a wall. One fell off and the other ones called." Let the children throw bean bags or any soft ball to knock the bags off as they sing and count how many are left.



NGR Website

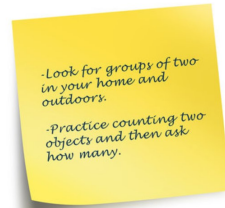
Nebraska Growing Readers continues to build the resources available for early childhood professionals and families. We invite you to explore the NGR site.

[Visit Our Website](#)

Nebraska Book Spotlight



I See Two introduces simple numbers and asks children to think about the things that come in pairs. You can use the book for a body game (two eyes, two ears, two arms, etc.), to introduce simple counting, or to find things that come in pairs.



Read *I See Two*



It's always fun to connect food to the books you read. With *Apples*, you can have kids try different types of apples, different colors of apples, or even different products made from apples (apple sauce, juice, pie, etc.). The book is a great way to think about how things grow, what they look like, and what they make.



Read *Apples*

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

Visit the NGR Library

Book Activity

Round Is explores all things round and can be used to introduce the world of shapes. Here is a good round game to play after reading the book.

A round of beach ball: Using markers, write the names of or draw round items on a beach ball. Have the children sit in a circle and roll the ball to each other. When a child gets the ball, have them point to one of the items. You then say the word and have them repeat it. As an added bonus, if you have the items in your play area, you can get them to find the actual item of the word they just picked.



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



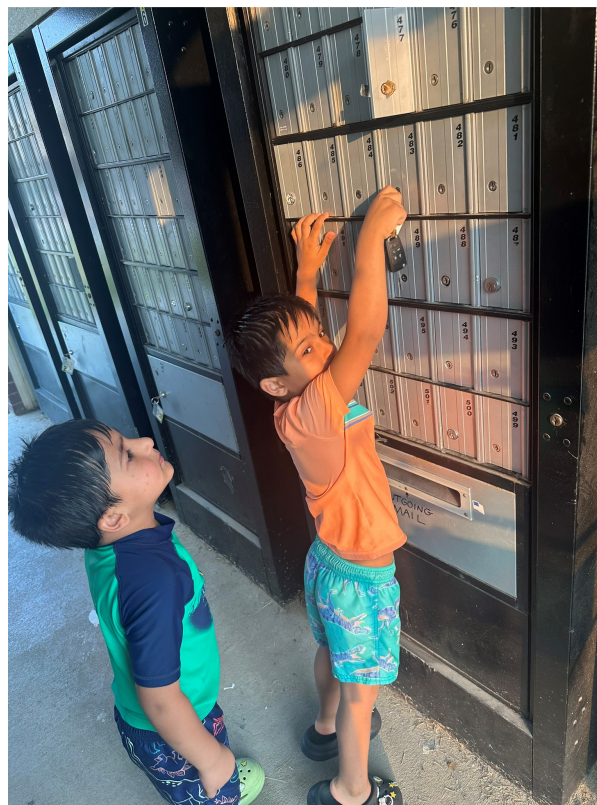
NGR Resources Help You Connect with Families

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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