

What We Know

Students who don't read well struggle to graduate from high school. They face an ongoing struggle to learn and even diminished success over their lifetime.

In 2012, one in five South Carolina students in 3rd grade was not reading on grade level. By 8th grade, one in three students is not reading on grade level.

Have you heard that children *learn to read* before 3rd grade and after that, they *read to learn*? After third grade, the academic demands put upon students become greater. They are expected to know how to decode words and use basic skills to comprehend more complex texts.



The first three years of a child's life are critically important in shaping language development. Children from low-income families hear approximately 3 million words annually, 8 million fewer words than children from professional families.

Research shows that the more time students spend reading in and outside of school, the better readers they become.

The stakes for children who do not read over the summer are high. Research on summer reading loss shows it's usually the students who can least afford to lose ground as readers who are most likely to suffer from summer reading loss and fall far behind their peers. Some students lose as much as **two months of achievement** in one summer! Reading just five books over the summer can prevent learning loss.

Reading is essential for success in school and young people learn best when nurturing, caring adults provide motivation and support as they learn.

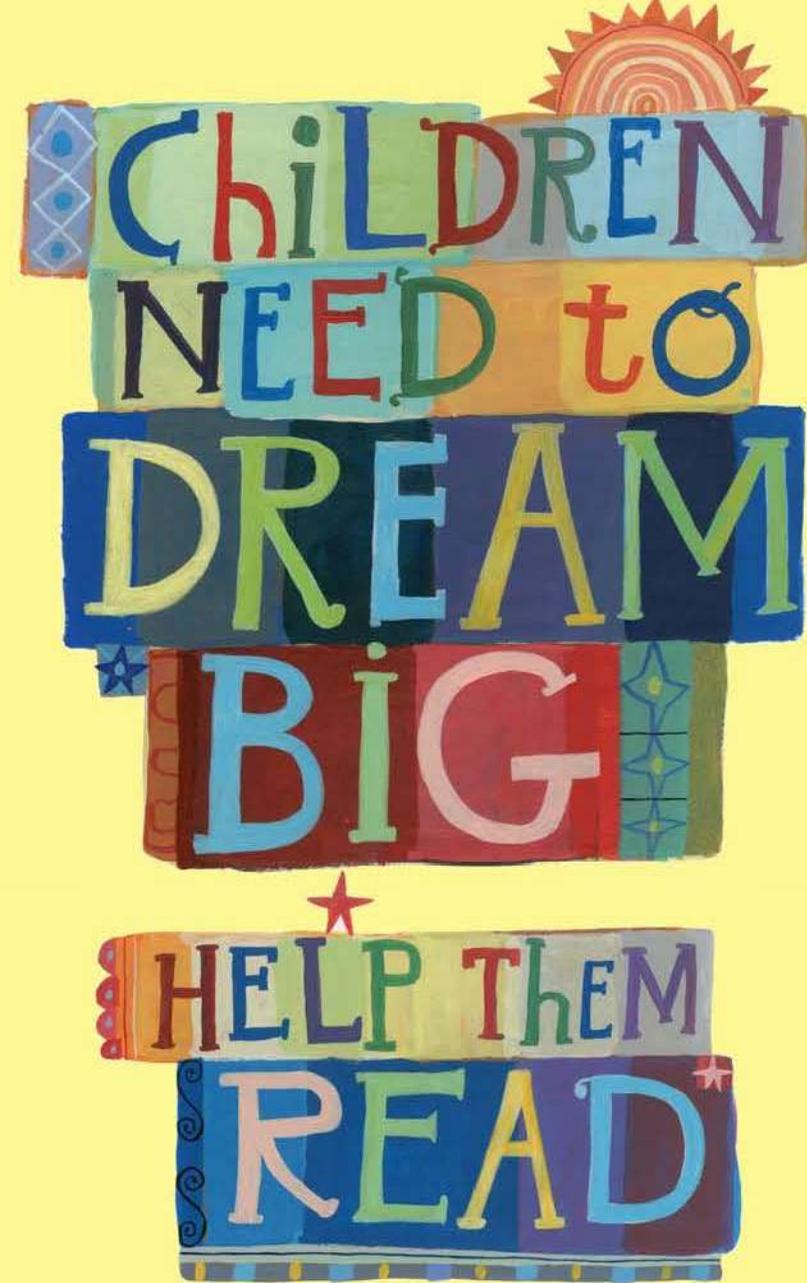


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Involvement from the community and caring individuals are essential in creating real and lasting improvements in reading achievement among young people. Here are some ways community members, members of faith groups, and others can help:

Read to children - BIG and small! There is no better way to help a child than to read to them or with them. Empower children by allowing them to choose the books they want to read.

Encourage the children in your life to ask "Why?" and then find the answer through reading.

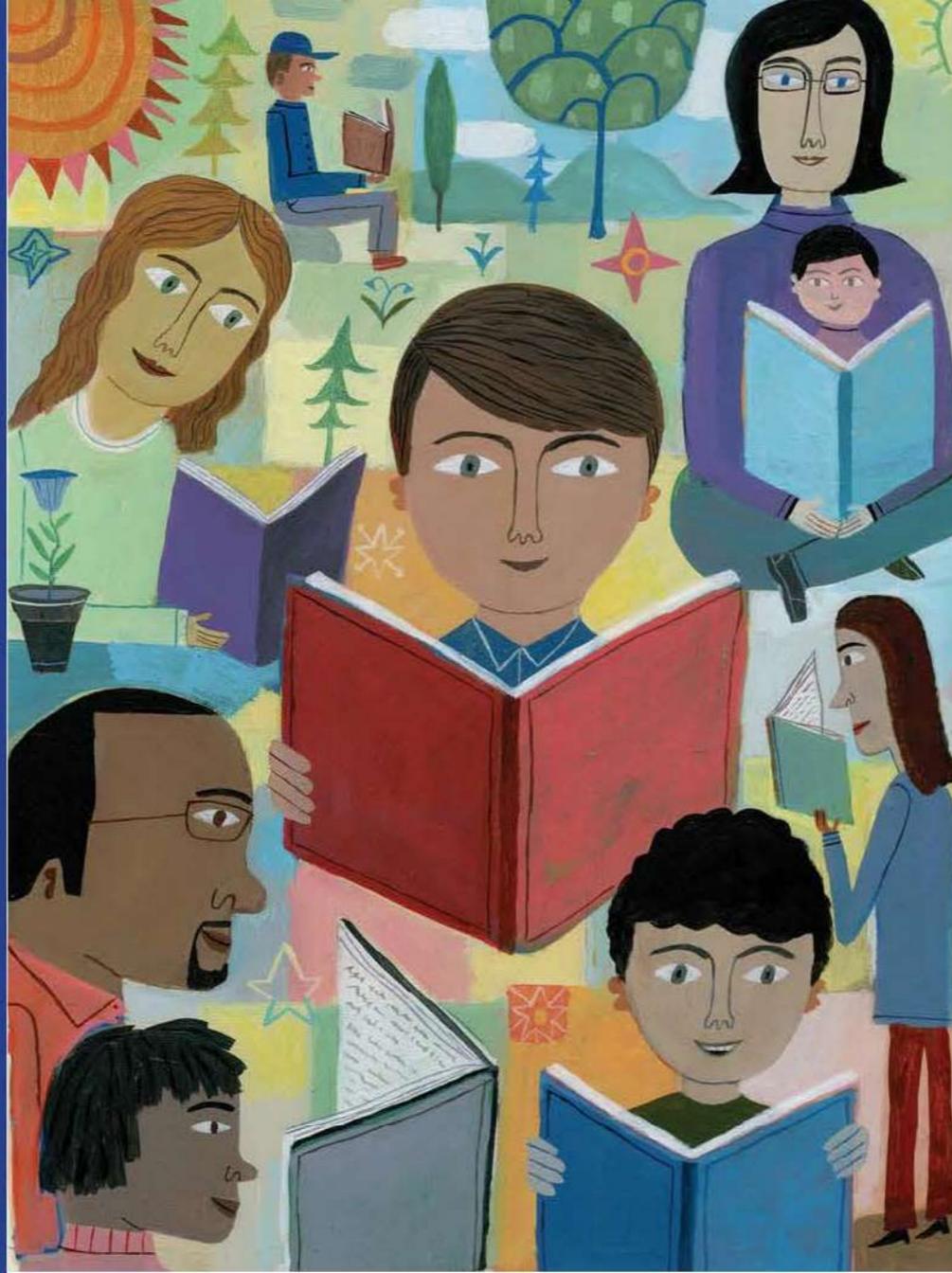
Volunteer to be a reading tutor for students who are not reading on grade level.

Contact the public library in your community to see if there is a homework help program you can be a part of.

Sponsor a teacher at a Boys & Girls Club, United Way, or afterschool program to give students the extra help they need.

Donate books to text-free or text-poor zones. Just 5 books can help a child prevent summer learning loss!

Donate or loan out transportation for summer and out-of-school-time reading programs.



Provide scholarships for students to attend preschool or consider donating to programs, like Reach Out and Read, that connect young children with books.

Model good behavior and get caught reading! Show children you value reading.

Think of innovative ways to promote reading in your community or your workplace – company billboards can be a great space to spread the word. Ask your community newspaper if you can write an article about the importance of reading.

Congratulate students personally and publicly for academic achievement – every chance you get. Expect them to do their best in and out of school.

Participate as a lunch buddy or reading buddy to students at local schools.

Take extra children's books to your local schools or daycare centers. Let the children pick out what **THEY** want to read.

Talk to the children in your life! Give them positive reinforcement and make certain they know that you are there for them.

