



Raising a Reader Overview

Who We Are

Raising a Reader is a national nonprofit dedicated to strengthening family bonds and advancing early literacy. Since 1999, we've served nearly 2 million children and families through a network of nearly 300 affiliate organizations across the U.S.

What We Do

We deliver two award-winning program models for children from birth through grade 2:

- Red Classic Book Bag Program
- Home Library Programs
 - Family Shared Reading Program
 - Super Summer Learning Adventures

Our programs help families build consistent shared reading routines using multicultural, multilingual books and simple, research-based tools. We partner with schools, libraries, early childhood centers, and community organizations to provide training, support, and resources that meet the diverse needs of families.

Why It Matters

Children who start school with strong reading habits and supportive family relationships are more likely to succeed academically and emotionally. Shared reading builds not just literacy but empathy, critical thinking, and social emotional skills. It reduces parental stress and strengthens bonds. Our approach promotes equity by reaching children and families—especially in under-resourced communities—with the tools they need to thrive.

Vision

Every child has the family support and reading skills they need to thrive.

Mission

Raising a Reader supports families and inspires the development of literacy skills and a lifelong love for reading to help children attain brighter futures in which they can thrive and contribute in school, the workforce and society.



Need 5 Quick Things to Say About Raising a Reader?

When Someone Asks About Raising a Reader, Say This...

1. We help families fall in love with reading—together.

Raising a Reader supports families to build lifelong reading routines that strengthen bonds and boost early learning and academic success.

2. Our programs reach nearly 200,000 children and families every year.

We have a national footprint—and a local impact—through our network of nearly 300 community partners.

3. Reading with a child changes everything.

Shared reading builds critical early literacy skills and improves school readiness.

4. Books are just the beginning.

Our carefully curated collections feature engaging, developmentally appropriate books that reflect the everyday experiences of families and communities—building brains, language skills and connections between children and their caregivers.

5. Our model works—and the research proves it.

Thirty-nine independent evaluations confirm our programs boost reading behavior, build family connection, and improve kindergarten readiness.



Boilerplate Messages

All materials include this short boiler plate:

Raising a Reader is a national nonprofit that partners with parents and educators to create brighter futures for children by strengthening family bonds through our two award-winning early literacy and family engagement models.

About Raising a Reader—Expanded Boilerplate (249 words)

Raising a Reader is a national nonprofit that partners with families and local agencies to create brighter futures for children. By building consistent shared-reading routines and increasing access to books in the home, Raising a Reader helps increase family engagement, strengthen families, and build more positive family relationships and communication.

Thirty-nine independent evaluations have found that our programs create a positive, measurable impact, significantly improving family reading behavior, parent-child bonding, and kindergarten readiness.

Raising a Reader's evidence-based, award-winning programs for children ages birth through grade 2, help caring adults set their children up for success by providing families with training in research-based practices to develop the habit of sharing books with their children. Through easy-to-use, multilingual materials and diverse stories, we meet families where they are and make shared reading more engaging and accessible for all children. Our child- and family-focused programs also build the capacity of local agencies to provide family-engagement programming directly to families.

The research is clear: strong, engaged families make a major difference to children's educational and life outcomes. When families read together, they share more than stories. Reading together strengthens bonds between children and the caring adults in their lives. It becomes a consistent, shared positive experience that improves communication and creates stronger attachment. Shared reading benefits adults as well. Studies have found that those who read with their children experience reduced parental stress and more positive parenting behavior.

Since 1999, we have helped approximately 2 million children and families in communities across the United States. Through our network of almost 300 affiliate organizations, we serve nearly 200,000 children and families every year.



Boilerplate Messages

Abbreviated About RAR Message (156 words)

Raising a Reader partners with families and local agencies to create brighter futures for children by strengthening family bonds. By building consistent shared-reading routines and increasing access to books in the home, Raising a Reader helps increase family engagement, strengthen families, and build more positive family relationships and communication.

Our two award-winning early literacy and family engagement models for children ages birth through grade 2, are focused on strengthening families and developing literacy skills through shared reading. Our child- and family-focused programs also build the capacity of local agencies to provide family-engagement programming directly to families.

Thirty-nine independent evaluations have found that our programs create a positive, measurable impact, significantly improving family reading behavior, parent-child bonding, and kindergarten readiness.

Since 1999, we have helped almost 2 million children and families in communities across the United States. Through our network of nearly 300 affiliate organizations, we serve approximately 200,000 children and families every year.



Want to Create Your Own Elevator Pitch?

THE HOOK

Who are you?

What do you do?

How does RAR make an impact?

THE BODY

Describe the specific social impact RAR brings to the communities we serve. Please include the following message points:

1. Raising a Reader is a national nonprofit that partners with parents and organizations to create brighter futures for children by strengthening family bonds.
2. We have 2 programs that help build home libraries and one that rotates book in and out of the home.

As an exercise to prepare the body template of your pitch, ask and answer questions like:

- What differentiates RAR from others in the same space?
- How effective are our current programs?
- Do you have a compelling story?
- How can a prospective donor get involved right now?
- What do you plan to accomplish in the near and distant future?

Want to Create Your Own Elevator Pitch?

THE WRAP-UP

When it's time to rehearse your elevator pitch, start by printing it out and reading it aloud to yourself.

Pay attention to things like:

- Sentences you stumble over
- Fluffy, long-winded language
- Wording that lacks clarity
- Lines that you can condense
- Words you hate saying

NOTES:

TIP: Remember that if you can say something in five words, you should say it in five words. Short and simple often trumps long and complex.