

**CHANGE  
WON'T  
HAPPEN  
WITHOUT  
YOU**  
PLEDGE TO BECOME  
A VOLUNTEER  
READER



## HOW CAN VOLUNTEER READERS HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED?

Poor academic skills are often rooted in family environments in which adults don't talk a lot with children, or surround them with books and other reading materials. As a child grows, reading becomes increasingly important for understanding the world, achieving academic success and succeeding in the workforce. The foundation for reading reaches a critical juncture between kindergarten and third grade. That's when children begin to acquire the skills that enable them to find meaning in written text. One of United Way's education focus areas prioritizes the development of strong reading skills by the end of third grade—a phase when parents, formal/informal caregivers and volunteer readers can make a real difference.

Reading and helping children to engage in storytelling is a fun and easy way for a volunteer to support literacy development. Here are a few tips for reading with children:

### 1. HAVE FUN

- Practice ABC songs and poems together.
- Be expressive. Add Sounds. Make the snake hiss and the do
- Sing, rap or chant the words and invite your reading buddy to join in.

### 2. ENGAGE THE CHILD

- Ask “what do you think happens next?” and “why did they do that?”
- Let the child follow along with finger and turn the pages.

### 3. BE A CHEERLEADER

- Offer specific praise, such as “good job sounding that word out!”
- Give kids time to figure out word and encourage them along the way.