



The
Children's
Reading
Foundation

Chapter Formation

HANDBOOK

**How to Start a Chapter of
The Children's Reading Foundation**



Vision

To ensure every child learns to read early and well, thereby reaching his or her full potential in school and in life.

Mission

Encourage and educate families about their important role in raising a reader and preparing their child for kindergarten.

Support schools in ensuring students read on grade level by the end of third grade.

Facilitate community involvement in helping young readers be successful.



The Children's Reading Foundation

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A letter from our CEO

"Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day"™

Reading — the foundation for learning. Reaching families and children with this message is at the heart of forming a Chapter of The Children's Reading Foundation.

We are a national nonprofit with a network of community-based chapters. We are dedicated to the vision of ensuring that every child learns to read early and well, thereby reaching his or her full potential in school and in life.

In essence you will be starting a new nonprofit organization in your community.

Our Chapters share our three-fold mission to families, schools and communities:

- Champion the importance of reading aloud daily with children, starting at birth
- Provide our proven programs that focus on childhood literacy and early learning from birth through third grade
- Facilitate community involvement in helping young readers be successful.

The national office is here to help new Chapters have the strongest start possible. Our **proven programs**, library of resources, and knowledge and experience in helping form Chapters will help you be successful in starting this work in your community. We welcome your feedback and questions.

Please visit our website www.ReadingFoundation.org for our history, current news, and our annual report.

Together we can give countless children a brighter future. **Kids who read succeed.**

Kristin Norell, CEO

Read Together **20 Minutes** Every Day™

www.ReadingFoundation.org



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GETTING STARTED

*The simple act of **reading together 20 minutes every day** has a lasting, positive effect on a child's life. Get this message out to your community by creating a Chapter of The Children's Reading Foundation.*

*Your Chapter will empower parents, schools, caregivers and community leaders to greatly improve the future for all local children. Our programs, tools and training have been successfully **strengthening young readers** since 1996.*

*Getting started requires a small group of champions. Through simple steps these champions mobilize entire communities to ensure **every child receives the lifelong advantages of literacy.***

Get Inspired

You are well on your way to making a lasting impact in your community if you are reading this sentence! Commitment to the vision and mission of The Children's Reading Foundation is the key to success.

Find Like-Minded People

Starting and operating a Chapter of The Children's Reading Foundation cannot be done alone. In order to be successful, gather a group of three-to-six people who share your passion and vision for children's literacy.

Define Your Service Area

Decide the geographical region your Chapter will serve. This is usually determined by organizational resources, population, media market and school, city, or county boundaries. Your service area is a distinguishing part of your Chapter's name. It also determines other partners you will likely want to reach out to in the start-up process.



1,000,000
people nationwide
have heard our message:
Read Together
20 Minutes Every Day™

■ Prepare Legal Documents

For a one-time fee of \$200, we will add your local Chapter to our 501(c)(3) list of subordinates, provide templates for essential legal documents and offer guidance through your organizing journey. This assistance will save countless hours, thousands of dollars, and reduce startup time by at least 10 months. Submit your *Notice of Intent to Affiliate* to the national office for signature and approval. State legalities and applying for a federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) are the responsibility of each Chapter.



■ Organize a Board of Directors

Invite between five and 20 individuals to be your charter board members. Tap leaders who represent the strengths and diversity of your region. Ask those who are activists for children and education, and those who have expertise in business, fundraising and finance. Include a respected superintendent and school board member.

■ Hold the First Board Meeting

The big day has arrived! At the first meeting, board members elect officers and then vote to approve the *Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws and Affiliation Agreement*. Once these actions are recorded in official minutes, your new Chapter will be added as a subordinate under our nonprofit status and you will receive our IRS Group Number. Other board business may include passing a resolution to open a bank account and creating a budget and strategic plan.

■ Hire or Appoint an Executive Director

The Executive Director will run the day-to-day operations of your Chapter. Ideally, this person has valuable expertise in media and marketing, outstanding communication and people skills, excels in building community partnerships, and is qualified to run a small nonprofit business. Energetic, motivated, dependable and ethical are hallmarks of a great director.

Create Community Awareness

Which community stakeholders should be involved? What roles will they fulfill? Host a few informational meetings to facilitate input and support. School districts are typically eager advocates for local Chapters, as are libraries, child care agencies and local media.

Involve Local School Districts

Ask the superintendent and/or school board member from your board if you can give a presentation about the new Chapter of The Children's Reading Foundation.



A Key to your Success – Chapters of The Children's Reading Foundation are designed to form public-private partnerships with local school districts. They typically have open memberships for all public school districts within their footprint, as well as privately operated schools. School dues* can provide a key funding source. Ideally, a school board member and the superintendent or director serve on the Chapter's board and assist in establishing these partnerships.

**See Affiliation Agreement for details.*

Set Your Budget and Begin Fundraising

With your nonprofit status, you'll be ready to accept tax-deductible charitable donations. Chapters are typically public-private partnerships funded by grants, dues and contributions from local service groups, businesses, individuals, etc. Host fundraising events as determined by the board.

Hold On to Your Hats!

Once organized, your Chapter will gain momentum! You will be astonished at the number of people and organizations who are eager to get involved. The Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day™ message can be incorporated into nearly every activity in town. Countless children and families will benefit, thanks to your efforts and commitment!

AFFILIATION BENEFITS

The benefits of affiliating with The Children's Reading Foundation include the following:

■ **Formation Assistance**

The national office of The Children's Reading Foundation provides guidance and materials to help initially create and later operate a Chapter in your community. We provide samples of all necessary legal and business documents for starting a Chapter, including templates for bylaws, articles of incorporation, and guidance in creating your strategic plan. We offer suggestions for board member recruitment including guidance on skills and expertise needed on a board to make the greatest impact.

■ **501(c)(3) Nonprofit Status**

Affiliation provides instant nonprofit 501(c)(3) status under The Children's Reading Foundation national office. Specific state and local registrations will be the responsibility of each Chapter.

■ **Training and Resources**

Monthly webinars from our national office provide ongoing training and encourage local executive directors and their boards to share best practices and ideas. A wealth of resources for promoting your Chapter's mission, vision and message are created and maintained by the national office and accessible online. We host an annual conference for executive directors to receive in-depth training, and to provide networking and collaboration opportunities with other Chapters from around the country. This conference is held in conjunction with a *READY! for Kindergarten*[®] program annual training in Washington state. (More about *READY! for Kindergarten* and our *READ Up: Stop the Summer Slide*SM programs on page 7.)

■ **Unified Mission, Vision and Branding**

Affiliation protects and strengthens all Chapters by assuring that each Chapter represents the same mission, vision and values.

■ **Copyright Permission**

Chapters in good standing have permission to use the copyrighted name of The Children's Reading Foundation, symbol and logo, as well as procedures, concepts, and materials generated by the national office in alignment with our brand messaging and visual standards.

Website

Our website communicates our mission, vision and programs. We encourage chapters to maintain a social media presence, but not an individual website. We will list your preferred social channels and local contact information. This eliminates work on your part as we keep the most up-to-date information on our website that you can easily point to from your social channels.

Outreach Materials

Chapters receive an outreach 'startup kit' that will equip them to hold effective meetings and presentations in their communities. Materials including brochures, bookmarks and more in both English and Spanish are included. Additionally, other promotional and outreach materials are available to reference and download from a Log In area of our website.

Social

The national office maintains social media presence on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Pinterest. We also provide Chapters with a sample social media plan including predesigned posts and images.

Minimal Dues

Chapters pay a one-time affiliation fee of \$200 to cover the legal expenses of incorporation and application for nonprofit status. Following initial affiliation, yearly dues range from \$200 - \$1,500 depending on the number of students served*.

**See Affiliation Agreement for details.*

Successful Programs

Our *READY! for Kindergarten*[®] and *READ Up – Stop the Summer Slide*SM programs help fulfill our mission and are part of a successful Chapter's efforts in their community.



***READY! for Kindergarten*[®]**

The *READY! for Kindergarten*[®] program engages parents and caregivers in their child's learning from birth to age 5. *READY!* builds strong parent involvement and teaches families new skills and helpful tips to nurture a child's development in ways that foster essential early literacy, math and social-emotional skills.



READY! parent workshops, learning targets, and take-home activities and tools, equip parents and caregivers to help babies and young children develop strong brain connections for success in school.

The program is designed to be adapted for local needs and opportunities including Head Start, preschools, home visitor and other community models. Lessons are available in English and Spanish, and can be adapted for other non-English speaking populations.

***READ Up: Stop the Summer Slide*SM**



The *READ Up* literacy program promotes reading as part of daily summer routines, so children don't miss out on critical brain development during the summer break. The summer slide begins the first week students are out of school. School-age children can lose three months of reading skills in just one summer.



READ Up events are for children from birth to age 8 and their parents or caregivers. At every event, adults leave with new skills and motivation to encourage daily reading and children leave with a new book and fun take-home materials. Materials are available in English and Spanish.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We've collected the answers to some of the most frequently asked questions.

What is The Children's Reading Foundation local Chapter model?

At its core, a local Chapter of The Children's Reading Foundation is a grassroots nonprofit that works to fulfill a three-fold mission:

1. Encourage and educate families about their important role in raising a reader and preparing their child for kindergarten.
2. Support schools in assuring that students read on grade level by the end of third grade.
3. Facilitate community involvement in helping young readers be successful.

This work is accomplished by communicating clearly, involving broadly and staying focused on our target of birth through third grade literacy and learning improvement. Chapters maintain a messaging campaign around our slogan, "Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day™" or one of our approved slogan variations.

Do studies show the benefit of The Children's Reading Foundation?

The first Chapter of The Children's Reading Foundation was formed in Benton and Franklin Counties in Washington State in 1996. It produced sound evidence that a local Chapter is a dynamic, effective and admired addition to a community.

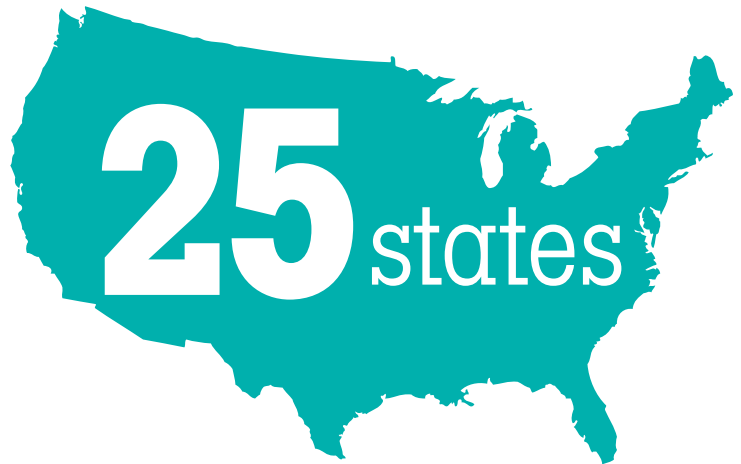
Here is impressive data from the Mid-Columbia Chapter in Washington state:

- Thirty months after the Chapter started, a community survey indicated 98% of parents had heard and agreed with the importance of our message: Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day™.
- Two years later in 2001, a follow-up survey showed 99% message recognition. In 2003, it was 99.2%.
- The school district served by the Chapter achieved it's goal of 90% of all students reading on grade level by the end of third grade in 2006.
- Within 10 years, the Chapter distributed more than 200,000 books to children and families.

■ Why is establishing a Chapter important to the children in my community?

A Chapter of The Children's Reading Foundation, with its focus on parents and caregivers of children from birth through third grade, addresses the critical role that families play by spending time with their children in early literacy and learning activities. This provides a solid early reading foundation and ultimately supports schools by sending children to school eager and ready to continue learning. Schools and teachers welcome community and parent/caregiver engagement. Many schools try to engage parents, but it's not their primary mission. Plus, schools will invariably opt to spend scarce dollars on classroom activities and operating expenses rather than outreach to parents who don't yet have children in school.

The Children's Reading Foundation Network



And Growing!

Children are in the home/caregiver environment more than they are in school. The goal of a Chapter of The Children's Reading Foundation is to help all who have a stake in the success of the next generation to understand how essential they are to a child's future in school and in life.

Chapters can create and help maintain the political will necessary to sustain community and school board efforts toward reform focused on ensuring all children read on grade level by the end of third grade. These efforts rarely last past an election cycle without consistent and continued voter support.

Experience tells us that communities with local Chapters of The Children's Reading Foundation are better able to sustain reform efforts over the many years necessary to see improvements. Chapters accomplish this through the activities aligned with our collective mission and message.

What will it cost to run a Chapter?

Each Chapter is responsible for paying annual dues to The Children's Reading Foundation national office. Dues, which depend on the size of school districts served, range from \$200 to \$1,500*. Paying dues grants each Chapter the use of The Children's Reading Foundation name, logo, symbol, organizational and operational concepts and materials generated by the national office in alignment with our brand messaging and visual standards.

Your operating budget will be set by your board of directors. Some Chapters choose to run as all volunteer organizations with no paid executive director or staff. Others operate programming either on their own or in partnerships that require more time than a volunteer run Chapter could support. Please contact the national office for specific examples.

**See Affiliation Agreement for details.*



Do you develop school curriculum?

No. All programs supplement the school district reading curriculum by engaging parents and caregivers and the community in making reading with a child 20 minutes every day a community expectation and imperative.

How do we measure the success of a Chapter?

Chapters are successful when they have the following attributes:

- Executive Committee/Executive Director who are passionate about the mission and vision.
- Engaged board of directors who freely share their knowledge and contacts to strengthen the mission and vision.
- Open working relationship with the school districts and school boards in their footprint.
- Local funding for outreach, program, and messaging efforts.



Successful Chapters promote the message, "Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day™."

During the startup year, you may wish to measure the percentage of people who have heard the message, Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day™. A community survey in the first month can be done to create baseline data for your area. A follow-up survey after two years of outreach can be conducted to compare the percentage of households reporting they have heard the message.

In your surveys, also consider including a question asking how many households with children from birth to age 8 read with their children every day. This will also provide baseline data for future surveys.

Improvement in school reading scores and entering kindergarten readiness scores may also be used as inferential data. Community support for the local Chapter of The Children's Reading Foundation can also be a measure of effectiveness.

Offering any of our programs within your Chapter's footprint will also bring success in fulfilling your mission. We offer support, planning and budgeting assistance, and professional marketing materials to aid you in reaching families and children.

How will the Chapter be funded?

We work with you to determine the best way to fund your Chapter. Ultimately your Chapter makes that decision. Most start out with small budgets and large amounts of volunteer and in-kind hours. In-kind donations are valuable to reduce operating expenses and provide necessary partnership and visibility opportunities for members of the community.

One method that has proven effective is partnering with local school districts to promote the, “Read Together 20 Minutes Every Day” message and to keep it visible throughout the community.

Additionally, each school district in the Chapter’s footprint may become a “member” of the Chapter by paying membership dues each year based on student population. (See affiliation agreement for details.) While this funding will not be enough to sustain Chapter operations on its own, this clear school district support for the mission and message gives your Chapter credibility as you seek other donations from the community.

Business and corporate donations, along with grants from individuals, private foundations and state and/or federal sources can also be sought with your nonprofit status. Examples include locally owned and corporate businesses, charities, service organizations, faith based organizations, educational service districts, local philanthropic groups and individuals. These organizations and community members all have a stake in children being successful and can benefit from partnering with your Chapter.



PARTNERSHIPS



DONATIONS



VOLUNTEERS



GRANTS



MEMBERSHIP DUES

What is the first step in forming a Chapter?

See the Getting Started section, beginning on page 1 of this document, then contact the national office to discuss your interest and next steps. We look forward to hearing from you!



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