



## Unique Benefits of Louisville Growing Readers

### A Ready for K Alliance initiative incorporating the Unite for Literacy library

#### 1. Books are strategically created for emergent readers

- Books in the Unite for Literacy library are different from those found in many local libraries. Rather than incorporating a high volume of text, they are instead overly reliant on sight words—a critical emergent reader skill—and most deliberately include illustrations that support the text to support readers more effectively at the foundational level. These qualities make books distributed through the Louisville Growing Readers (LGR) program unique and highly effective learning instruments for children ages 3 to 7.
- Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), a partner in LGR, is training teachers to lead guided reading groups which utilize emergent reader texts, so the books children receive through LGR are similar to what they will read as part of their classroom curriculum.
- Supplemental tools for families are also available. Through the LGR program, families will receive a reading tip card in each book mailing and can also opt-in to email or text messages to receive tips on how to develop a daily habit of reading.

#### 2. Book equity is a program cornerstone

- While participating families will be mailed 4 books per week for 25 weeks, these books are also accessible online **for free** to anyone in the community. This provides an opportunity for everyone to get involved and build their daily habit of reading. Louisville's free online library can be accessed at <https://www.uniteforliteracy.com/louisville/growing-readers>
- A large emphasis is also placed on representation in the LGR library. The books feature diverse characters—different ethnicities, races, and genders occupy the pages. Multi-generational families are also depicted, an important divergence from the “traditional” family structure visible in many children’s books. Language is yet another crucial element. While the books are printed in English, many are narrated online in a variety of home languages including Spanish, Arabic, and even American Sign Language. The narrators are actual people reading in their home language.



- These books are deliberately small—they measure 4.75 in. x 4.75 in., and a group of 10 can fit inside a purse. Kid-sized and portable, they are more practical for busy families including highly transient families.

### **3. Subject matter is nonfiction**

- Many of the books in the LGR library are non-fiction texts which is a key distinction between the LGR program and other book distribution programs. This is important because we read fiction and nonfiction differently and exposing children to nonfiction early prepares them for this type of reading and builds children’s background knowledge about the world around them.
- Concepts beyond reading are also taught through the books. For example, skills, such as sorting and counting are incorporated into LGR books, supporting math and other academic areas beyond literacy.
- The teaching of everyday skills does not stop at the last page; there are two activities to continue the learning at the end of each book (such as cooking or exercising), providing expansion beyond the cover-to-cover experience.

### **4. Research backs long-term effects of 100-book home libraries**

- A 2010 study analyzing over 70,000 cases across 27 countries found a nearly 50% increase in the likelihood that a child would complete the 12<sup>th</sup> grade if she or he grew up in a household with 100 books, when compared to a household without any books ([Evans, 2010](#)).