



ReadingPals Statewide Q&A



ReadingPals offers volunteers an opportunity to build meaningful relationships with young children in Florida, while helping them improve their social-emotional development and early literacy skills. ReadingPals is managed by The Children's Movement of Florida and administered through 17 United Ways -- with the help of numerous community partners across the state.

What Is ReadingPals?

ReadingPals is a statewide early literacy initiative that provides volunteer mentors for students from Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) to 3rd grade who may need extra help, utilizing one-on-one or small group settings.

Why Is ReadingPals Important?

45% of children in Florida are not ready for Kindergarten¹ and 43% of Florida students cannot read at a minimally proficient level by the end of third grade.² Additionally, studies show that children with mentors are more confident and have fewer behavioral problems.³ Early intervention and individualized attention gives students the best likelihood of success.

What Do We Hope To Achieve?

1. **MENTORING:** To build genuine, impactful relationships between students and our volunteer mentors.
2. **EARLY LITERACY:** To improve students' understanding of the fundamental building blocks of early literacy.
3. **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** To help students build a strong social-emotional foundation through self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

Sources:

1. Florida Office of Early Learning (2018)
2. Florida Department of Education (2018)
3. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (2013)



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Where Is ReadingPals Available?

We offer programs in 26 counties via 17 local United Ways and other community partners, with opportunities in more than 200 schools and childcare centers around the state. We provide over 3,000 students every year with a mentor. This is all made possible thanks to Publix Charities and the Barnett family's passion for promoting literacy and early childhood development in Florida.



What Is The Commitment?

ReadingPals volunteers are asked to commit an hour per week with their student(s) for 25+ weeks during the school year (some programs may offer a 30-minute per week or half-year option). Each school year, more than 2,300 volunteers statewide make this commitment, and at least 40% return for another year!

How Can I Get Started?

Once signed up through the United Way or The Children's Movement of Florida, volunteers are connected with a regional coordinator at United Way (or other partner agency) who will provide details about participating schools in your area, volunteer time-slots, background screening, training and curriculum.

What Else Can I Do?

ReadingPals volunteers see the importance of early education first-hand, and gain exposure to the challenges many teachers and students face in the classroom. We hope the ReadingPals experience will inspire our volunteers to become advocates alongside The Children's Movement, promoting greater investment in Florida's youngest children. Learn more at www.childrensmovementflorida.org