



Raising A Reader: A Take-Home Book Bag & Parent Involvement Program

- Program:** Raising A Reader (www.raisingareader.org)
- Description:** Our primary mission is to build read-aloud routines in the homes of low-income families with children in the 0-5 age range, thereby fostering early brain development, parent-child bonding, early literacy skills, and improved kindergarten readiness. Our evaluations have shown that if RAR's five-part theory of change is in place, Raising A Reader programs will change parent read-aloud behavior, library usage, and kindergarten readiness. Our train-the-trainer model empowers early childhood professionals to effectively connect and communicate with parents while facilitating an easy-to-implement home book bag rotation.
- Who uses RAR:** Affiliate partners in over half of California's counties. Serving over 200,000 children and families since 2000 in over 140 communities and 30 states through a variety of organizations. (Some of our partners: 20 First 5 funded programs across the state of California, public school districts, child care action councils, Head Start, United Way, home visiting programs, home-based childcare, and adult education programs).
- Target:** Low-income families with children between ages 0 & 5
- Cost:** Kits cost between \$1,215 to \$2,300. A typical Raising A Reader kit includes:
- A diverse set of age-appropriate books available in English or in Spanish (including rhythm and rhyme books, wordless books, alphabet and numeracy books, concept books, story books, myths and fables, and books reflecting diverse culture)
 - Red Book Bags and Blue Library Bags for each child
 - A parent engagement video or DVD for each family dubbed in 11 languages
 - A "Teacher Attaché" with the program video and the four components of the curriculum for early childhood professionals: Early Brain Development, new ideas and best practices from our affiliates, how to train parents in interactive reading, and the basic RAR implementation program book.
 - Materials are designed to last for approximately 5 years, and average cost-per-child over five-year period is \$30.
- Research & Evaluation:** A dozen independent evaluations have shown the success of Raising A Reader. RAR continuously evaluates its programs, both for evidence of impact and for decisional data that informs program design. We provide our affiliates with tools to conduct parent and site evaluations and have separately commissioned several more in-depth evaluations of kindergarten readiness, language acquisition, and parent-child bonding. Link to our evaluations: <http://www.raisingareader.org/research.html>
- Recent Highlights:**
- A 2006 brief by Harvard Family Research Project that was presented on Capitol Hill during the National PTA Conference—"Family Involvement Makes a Difference in Student Success" highlighted RAR as a model program. <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/content/projects/fine/resources/research/earlychildhood.pdf>
 - RAR is highlighted in distinguished national education writer Gene Maeroff's book on high-quality parent involvement early childhood programs, *Building Blocks: Making Children Successful in the Early Years*.
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- Website:** www.raisingareader.org



Frequently Asked Questions:

Does Raising A Reader have materials in Spanish?

Raising A Reader was developed in the San Francisco Bay Area, home to a large Spanish-speaking population. Most of our training materials are available in both Spanish and English. Our award-winning parent DVD has been dubbed in Spanish (as well as 10 other languages) and features Latino parents. We have bilingual Spanish-English book sets and a Spanish parent curriculum, “Leamos Juntos.”

Is Raising A Reader research-based?

Raising A Reader is based on abundant research in early literacy, language acquisition, early brain development, family bonding, and adult learning styles. We know that there are statistically significant positive correlations between regular family read-aloud routines and early brain development, parent-child attachment, IQ, and future school success. We have developed our curriculum based on child and adult behavior motivation research.

How is Raising A Reader evaluated?

Raising A Reader has been extensively evaluated. We provide all programs with site rubrics and parent pre- and post- surveys to measure read-aloud and library routines. We have also conducted kindergarten readiness studies at Head Start programs around the country. Head Start children using Raising A Reader for 8 months scored twice as high as the national norms for Head Start children in book knowledge, story comprehension, and print concepts. For more information on our evaluation results, please visit <http://raisingareader.org/research.html>.

How much does Raising A Reader cost?

Raising A Reader is one of the most cost-effective programs, averaging less than \$35/child served over the five-year life of the materials. On average, the start-up cost for Raising A Reader is approximately \$100/child.

Are there other programs in my area doing Raising A Reader?

Raising A Reader has a strong presence in California! We have 54 Affiliates in over half of California’s counties, and approximately 20 of those counties receive funds from First 5 to support the program. Raising A Reader is also operating programs in 30 other states. Please contact us for more information about programs in your area, or visit our website, www.raisingareader.org.

How can I get started with Raising A Reader?

If you’re interested in starting a Raising A Reader program in your area, please contact the Raising A Reader Outreach & Development Assistant Manager, Janet Lee Kwon, at 650.854.5566, x203 or email her at jkwon@cvp.pcf.org