

# Colorado READ Act

## Information for Parents



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

### EARLY LITERACY IS A COLORADO PRIORITY

Every child should read by the third grade. This is an elemental building block to receiving a quality education. It is so important that the state legislature put it into Colorado law and the Colorado Department of Education made it one of the department's four guiding goals.

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (Colorado READ Act) was passed by the Colorado Legislature in 2012, giving the state the guiding philosophy, structure and resources to get children reading at grade level by the time they enter the fourth grade.

### LEARNING TO READ, READING TO LEARN

Research shows students must make the transition from *learning to read* to *reading to learn* by the end of the third grade to be successful in later grades. Each year, as grade-level demands increase, students who struggle to read can fall further behind.

The Colorado READ Act works to ensure the mastery of reading for third-grade students before they advance to fourth grade. The initiative focuses on early literacy programs, resources for both teachers and students, early screening, individualized reading plans for at school and at home. As a last resort, the law allows retention to ensure that all students entering fourth grade are able to read to learn.

### KEY FACTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY LITERACY

- Graduation, college and career preparedness are more likely for students who master reading skills by fourth grade, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- A student who misses the opportunity to learn to read proficiently before fourth grade almost never catches up, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- Reading to learn enables a student to comprehend facts in social studies and science, understand word problems in math and interpret increasingly complex concepts in language arts.
- Students who cannot read by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school, and high school drop outs make up 75 percent of citizens receiving food stamps and 90 percent of the Americans on welfare, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

### How to support reading at home

- **TALK OFTEN:** The more words children hear, the better they will be at reading. Narrate your day. Talk about everything you and your child do throughout the day. Converse with your child over meal times and other times you are together. Introduce new and interesting words.
- **READ TOGETHER:** Read books together, spend time talking about the stories, pictures and words.
- **BE AN ADVOCATE:** Keep informed about your child's progress in reading. Ask the teacher about ways to help.
- **BE AN EXAMPLE:** Children learn from the habits of those around them. Read, write and show your child the benefits of both.
- **VISIT THE LIBRARY:** Story times, special events, books, magazines, computer access, homework help and other exciting opportunities and activities await the entire family at your local library.



## **TALKING TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER ABOUT READING PROGRESS**

- **AT LEVEL/ON TARGET:** Your child is on track for meeting reading targets. You will want to ask your child's teacher about daily reading instruction. What does classroom instruction look like? What skills are they working on? What home activities can support instruction?
- **AT SOME RISK:** Your child has acquired some reading skills but not all of them. Supplemental supports are needed in addition to grade-level instruction to help get your child back on track. You will want to ask your child's teacher about the kinds of supports that are available. Questions to ask: What does classroom instruction look like? What skills are the students working on? What kind of support does my child need? What skills is he or she lacking? What types of home activities can support instruction?
- **AT HIGH RISK:** Your child has limited or no reading skills. Intensive intervention is needed in addition to grade-level instruction to support your child to get on track. You will want to ask your child's teacher about the READ Act plan for your child and intervention services that can be provided. What does classroom instruction look like? What kind of support does my child need? What types of intervention services are being provided and how frequently? What types of home activities can support instruction?

### **Where can I learn more?**

- Parent Tips, <http://bit.ly/2rnwDd1>
- Helping Struggling Readers, [www.readingrockets.org/helping](http://www.readingrockets.org/helping)
- More on the Colorado READ Act, [www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy](http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy)