

Reading Corners

A reading corner is an inviting literacy-rich book collection area established within public reception or waiting rooms that inspire families with young children to enjoy books together while they wait. Public reading corners are intended to support the goal of helping families with young children spend time together reading aloud at least 20 minutes a day and increase their exposure to high-quality, age-appropriate books.



How Do Reading Corners Support Literacy?

Sixty percent of low-income families have no children's books in their homes. Children growing up without books are on average, 18-months behind children who do have books at home when it comes to literacy and language development skills. Reading corners increase children's access to books and create an encouraging and inviting atmosphere for families to have even more opportunities to read together during their daily routines.

When adults read aloud to their young children and talk about the books they've read, they build literacy skills that lead to later success in school and in life. Reading together strengthens family relationships and fosters a love of reading.

Steps To Establish Your Club's Reading Corner(s)

1. Establish a budget.
2. Select your location(s).
3. Decide on the design of your reading corner and determine the materials needed. Be sure to make it colorful, fun and inviting.
4. Curate high-quality books for your reading corner. You'll need about 40 in total.
5. Build, install and decorate your reading corner. Recruit community members to help!
6. Place a **Together, We Read** bookplate in each book in your reading corner.
7. Develop a plan for ongoing stewardship and maintenance of your reading corner.
8. Include signage or resources that offer tips on easy ways families can incorporate literacy and reading activities in day-to-day and at-home activities.

Budget Items & Costs To Consider

- Materials and labor costs.
- Decorations including bookshelves or crates, signage that promotes reading, a colorful rug, comfortable seating, lamps and greenery, etc.
- Books – to both fully stock your reading corner for the grand opening and to restock it over time.
- Printing of **Together, We Read** awareness materials for parents to take home. For example, you can include bookmarks and reading tip sheets with a sign encouraging individuals take one!

Selecting A Location

Collaborate with other community groups to determine the best place to build your reading corner(s). Try to locate reading corners in places frequented by low-income families and by children who aren't likely to have many books at home. Possible sites include public health clinics, human service agencies, community rooms in affordable housing complexes, food pantries, faith-based organizations and laundromats.

Tips and Best Practices

- Choose an assortment of high-quality children's books that appeal to various ages, interests and cultures. A typical collection includes 10 board books, 10 multi-cultural books, 10-15 picture books and 5-10 nonfiction books.
- Work with the staff at each reading corner site to develop a customized plan that reflects the existing space and the languages, cultures and interests of the families they serve.
- Solicit help to build your reading corner from local artists, woodworkers, high school woodshop students, carpenters, Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, or do-it-yourself creative individuals. Find inspiration on Pinterest or simple Google searches.
- Schedule experienced volunteers to read with children when the waiting room is likely to be busy. They can model effective reading techniques and inspire families to use the reading corner. Make it fun by dressing up or using puppets.

Ongoing Maintenance & Stewardship

Maintenance is the most crucial element to ensuring the success of your reading corner:

- Develop a plan to monitor your library and keep it stocked with excellent books.
- Create a schedule to clean, paint and repair your library as needed.
- Remember to take photos and record your progress and creative ideas to share and inspire other Rotary clubs participating in **Together, We Read**.

