

Reading Kits

What is a Reading Kit?

Reading kits offer families with young children the tools and information to help inspire a passion for reading in their homes. The most important thing to include in the kit are at least one or two books and informational materials about the importance of reading together for the child's caregiver. Kits can have various themes and be assembled and distributed in a number of ways.

How Do Reading Kits Support Literacy?

Reading kits support literacy because they help establish a literacy-friendly home environment by providing books, information for parents about the importance of reading and activities for developing early literacy skills. The number of books in a child's home, the frequency of how often they are read to and how engaged parents and caregivers are in conversations and reading with their young children are all factors that impact a child's future reading ability.



Steps to Create Reading Kits

1. Determine your target age group and how many children/families you want to reach.
2. Select your distribution site – for example, a farmer's market, health clinic, etc. Build a partnership with the distribution site and plan together!
3. Decide on the theme and contents of the kit.
4. Establish a budget, determine funding and identify other resources needed.
5. Procure, purchase, and/or print materials.
6. Assemble reading kits – recruit volunteers and local groups to help!
7. Distribute to families

Tips for Assembly & Distribution

Reading kits should be assembled thoughtfully based on target age, theme and distribution site. It is important to establish a partnership with your chosen distribution site, as they play an instrumental role in getting kits into the hands of children and families. Here are some helpful tips for you to consider:

- Choose a distribution site/partner based on where you can reach the largest number of families who are most in need.
- Purchase reusable tote bags or drawstring bags – encourage families to continue to use the bags when they go to the local library!
- Host a kitting party to efficiently assemble the reading kits and engage local community members to help.
- Engage local businesses – they may want to sponsor an item in your kit, or even the entire reading kit in exchange for including a flyer among the materials.
- Be sure to share key messages about the importance of reading and **Together, We Read** when you distribute the kits to families. Have talking points prepared. If a third party is distributing the kits on your behalf, provide the group with talking points.

Kit Ideas & Themes

While educational websites and sites like Pinterest have a wealth of reading kit ideas, here are a few thought starters for the types of kits you can assemble:

New Baby Reading Kits

Books and early literacy materials can be given to families in hospitals when their baby is born. Give the gift of books and other literacy materials to parents at the hospital prior to leaving.

Child Age: Newborn

Distribution Site: Local hospitals, health clinics, etc.

What Goes Inside? 1 to 2 books for babies, one-page awareness document about the importance of reading to babies, bookmark or magnet with information about reading to babies, other newborn items such as a blanket, onesie, or baby wash.

*Bedtime Reading Kit – Bedtime In A Box*

This bedtime in a box reading kit encourages parents to establish a bedtime routine that includes reading every night.

Child Age: 3 months to 3 years old

Distribution Site: Day care centers, preschools, food banks, children's resale stores, homeless shelters, etc.

What Goes Inside? 1 to 2 books for toddlers; one-page awareness document about the importance of reading to toddlers and building reading into the bedtime routine; bedtime nursery rhymes and songs; bookmark or magnet with information about reading to toddlers; other bedtime items such as child toothpaste, toothbrush, blanket, or a stuffed animal.

Library Kits

Visiting the library is an important way to promote children's language and literacy development. Library kits provide families with everything they need to know about the local library to encourage families to visit frequently. They also reinforce the importance of reading to children. You'll want to partner with your local library on this kit!

Child Age: birth through age 5

Distribution Site: Schools, libraries, community events, shopping centers, grocery stores

What Goes Inside? Information about the local library and how to get a library card, book lists, information about the importance of reading and how to stimulate a child's language and literacy development through games, songs and other activities.