



Hello, and thank you for your interest in Growing Readers Together!

In Colorado, a significant number of children aged 5 or younger (between 40% – 60%) are cared for by family members, friends, or neighbors (FFN) while their parents are at work. Yet, due to the personal nature of these arrangements, few FFN are included in the state's efforts to increase the quality of childcare. To address this situation, in 2016 the Colorado State Library (CSL) established Growing Readers Together (GRT) both to increase librarians' awareness of these caregivers (who already may be library patrons) and to provide FFN with additional support.

In 2021, Growing Readers Together (GRT) is offering a variety of ways that any public library in Colorado can become part of GRT. Libraries can express interest in any or all of these options based on their own interests, passions, community needs, and capacity.

We look forward to Growing Readers Together with you!

### **Growing Readers Together 2021: Menu Selections**

- 1.) **2021 Buell Foundation Grant Program** - This year, GRT is offering grants of up to \$7500 to approximately 15 Colorado libraries to grow their programming, outreach, and services to informal family, friend, and neighbor caregivers in their communities. Grantees will be required to distribute early literacy and learning materials to FFN caregivers and to conduct at least one early learning program specifically for the FFN community. Additional possibilities beyond these requirements include collection development for FFN caregivers, improvements to early literacy and learning play spaces, and more. An application for these funds will be required and can be completed by any interested library system, regardless of previous GRT involvement. Creativity and innovation in how you approach fulfilling the parameters of this grant in your community is encouraged.

**Application Deadline:** The initial deadline to apply for a grant will be February 17, 2021. Applications received by that date will receive top priority. Applications will continue to be accepted until March 5, 2021 or until all available funds have been distributed, whichever comes first. Libraries interested in applying for a grant are strongly encouraged to submit their application materials by February 17th.

**Supplemental Application Materials:** please download the application and budget form available at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/grtlibrarytoolkit> under "Planning Tools"

Once completed, the application and budget should be combined into a single .pdf file and uploaded to the GRT 2021 Interest Form.

- 2.) **Play, Learn, & Grow Program** - Play, Learn & Grow is a program model specifically developed for use with FFN providers in public libraries. In the past, Play, Learn & Grow was offered as a two-part, in-person workshop series. We have expanded that model and libraries interested in bringing the Play, Learn, & Grow program to their library now have several options for doing so. The Play, Learn & Grow series has been recreated as a 21-minute video that libraries can host on their own websites, promote through their social media, and/or host watch parties for caregivers. Play, Learn, & Grow Take & Make kits have also been created and are available on a limited basis for libraries to distribute in their communities. The video has also been copied onto a limited number of DVDs for distribution to FFN providers and/or library circulation. **Once safety conditions allow**, the GRT Early Literacy Librarians can again facilitate the two-part, in-person Play, Learn, & Grow workshop at libraries in their region. This option also includes materials for distribution to FFN attending the workshop.

- 3.) **Staff Professional Development Opportunities** - The GRT Early Literacy Librarians are available for additional professional development opportunities tailored to the specific early literacy and learning needs of your library. They can provide staff development using the **GRT Outreach Success Cycle** to improve outreach and engagement with informal FFN caregivers. They can also provide facilitated opportunities for your staff to explore how to weave the **Colorado Public Libraries Early Literacy Framework** into your library's work. We are also able to offer **Play, Learn, and Grow Staff Training** to increase your staff's early learning knowledge, or help your staff facilitate the Play, Learn, and Grow video workshops.

We are also thrilled to offer a special professional development opportunity, **Reimagining School Readiness Staff Training**. Colorado is joining this IMLS project out of the Pacific Library Partnership, the Bay Area Discovery Museum and the California State Library to provide Reimagining School Readiness training to library staff across our state. Librarians participating in this training will learn the research behind the practices in the Reimagining School Readiness toolkit and how to use the toolkit when offering early learning experiences in their library. Library staff attending this training are agreeing to experiment with the toolkit practices and participate in research (interviews, family surveys) on its effectiveness.

- 4.) **Early Literacy & Learning Consulting for Individual Libraries** - The GRT Early Literacy Librarians are available to all Colorado library staff interested in exploring how to continue developing their early literacy and learning programs and services, especially those targeting informal FFN caregivers. Consultation can also cover outreach, advancing the goals of the CO Public Libraries Early Literacy Framework, coordinating early learning community engagement events, and designing early literacy and learning kits for circulation or distribution in your community. Consults can take place over email, phone, or video chat.
- 5.) **Early Literacy & Learning Outreach Materials** - Libraries who would like materials to distribute as part of their outreach to informal FFN caregivers, parents, and professional childcare facilities can make a request for materials to GRT. Potential materials include, the Colorado Day-by-Day early literacy calendars, Vroom early learning caregiver tip cards, Getting Ready to Read brochures and the forthcoming PLAYbook from the Office of Early Childhood.

If you are only interested in requesting calendars, you can do so here:

<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3934748/colorado-day-by-day-family-calendar-request-form>

If you're only interested in requesting Getting Ready to Read brochures, you can do so here:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/Brochures/index.htm>

If you're only interested in requesting Vroom early learning tip cards or the PLAYbook, please contact Joyce Johnson, Growing Readers Together Coordinator at [johnson\\_joyce@cde.state.co.us](mailto:johnson_joyce@cde.state.co.us)

### Ready to Make a Selection?

Complete the 2021 GRT Interest Form here:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfv6tDYczeShkMp\\_WBNFDRpW3ck4bmcHii8wzO6Incv6cYCYQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfv6tDYczeShkMp_WBNFDRpW3ck4bmcHii8wzO6Incv6cYCYQ/viewform)

**Need more information?** Here are some helpful contacts:

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