



The Colorado READ Act

Information for Parents

EARLY LITERACY IS A COLORADO PRIORITY

Reading is an elemental building block to receiving a quality education, and every student should attain strong foundational reading skills by the end of third grade. 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 five key initiatives.

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 ensure students are reading at grade level by the time they enter the fourth grade. In 2019, the legislature strengthened the READ Act, adding new emphasis on the importance of instruction that is scientifically proven to be effective in teaching students to read and requiring training for teachers in scientifically and evidence-based reading instruction.

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 that students are able to master foundational reading skills before they advance to fourth grade. The initiative focuses on screening for reading risk, scientifically based and evidence-based instructional programs, resources for both teachers and students, and individualized reading plans for at school and at home. As a last resort, the law allows consideration of 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 preparation are more likely possibilities for students who master basic reading skills by fourth grade. A student who misses the opportunity to learn to read proficiently before fourth grade almost never catches up. 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.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school, and research shows that individuals without a high school diploma are overrepresented among those who rely on public assistance programs, highlighting the long-term importance of early literacy support.

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD’S TEACHER ABOUT READING PROGRESS

The READ Act requires that ALL students in grades K-3 be assessed for reading competency using a state board-approved interim reading assessment throughout the school year. Understanding your child’s reading scores and communicating with your child’s teacher are an important part of supporting your child with reading.

- **AT LEVEL/ON TARGET:** If your child’s assessment says, “At Level/On Target,” your child is on track to meet reading targets. Your child is likely to benefit from the universal core instruction and supplemental resources provided in the regular classroom.
- **AT SOME RISK:** If your child’s assessment says, “At Some Risk,” your child has developed some reading skills but has not yet mastered the skills to reach grade-level reading competency. Targeted intervention may be needed in addition to grade-level instruction to help get your child on track.
- **AT HIGH RISK:** If your child’s assessment says, “High Risk,” this means he or she has limited reading skills that are significantly impacting their progress toward reading competency. Intensive intervention is needed in addition to grade-level instruction to support your child to get on track. In this case, you and your child’s teacher will meet to create a plan of intervention, called a READ plan, to support your student. This plan will outline your child’s specific skill deficits, goals and objectives, intervention services the child will receive, and support you can offer at home.

Some questions that you may want to ask about your child’s reading progress include:

- What does regular classroom instruction look like?
- What skills does my child need support with?
- What type of intervention services are being provided, and with what frequency?
- How often should I expect to receive progress updates?
- What types of activities can I support my child with at home?

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

- Get more tips for parents at [Read.Learn.Lead](#)
- [READ Act Parent Resources](#) page
- More on the [Colorado READ Act](#)

SUPPORTING READING AT HOME

TALK OFTEN

Oral language skills can have a significant impact on learning to read.

- Narrate your day.
- Talk about everything you and your child do throughout the day.
- Converse with your child during mealtimes and other times you are together.
- Point out new objects and practice connecting objects and words during car rides.
- Introduce new and interesting words.

READ TOGETHER

Read books together, and spend time talking about 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.

MAKE READING FUN

Make nap time even better with at least 15 minutes of story time together. Let your child be your helper in charge of turning the page.

