



Contact: Steve Honig
The Honig Company, LLC
818-986-4300
press@honigllc.com

**RAISING A READER PROGRAM DRAMATICALLY INCREASES
INSTANCES OF READING AMONG NEWARK CHILDREN
ACCORDING TO JUST RELEASED STUDY**

**Literacy program being implemented locally by United Way of Essex
and West Hudson reaching children throughout metropolitan Newark**

NEWARK, NJ, Oct. X, 2015 – Raising A Reader, a national nonprofit organization that provides resources and programs to help families develop, practice and maintain literacy habits critical for a child’s success, released the results of a study done to evaluate the effectiveness of its program in Newark. The national program is being implemented locally in Newark by the United Way of Essex and West Hudson using funding provided by the Foundation for Newark’s Future.

Among the results of the study, the number of times a child asked their parent to read a book increased 24 percent, and the number of instances a child actually read a book with their parent (either by asking or prompting from the parent) increased 47 percent.

“Our goal at FNF is to improve educational outcomes for children across Newark, and we know that our kids will have a much better chance in school and in life if they learn to read at an early age,” said Kimberly McLain, president & CEO of the Foundation for Newark’s Future. “We are so proud of this effort and will continue to invest in promoting a culture of literacy throughout Newark.”

Other results from the study:

- The number of parents who let their child choose what to read increased from 85 percent to 100 percent.
- The number of children who started turning the pages of the book themselves as being read by their parents increased from 73 percent to 95 percent.
- The number of children who asked their parents questions about the book afterward increased from 48 percent to 62 percent.

- The number of children who were too young to read but who attempted to read the book or tell stories about the pictures to their parent increased from 48 percent to 85 percent.
- The number of children who asked their parent to read a book to them again after finishing the book increased from 58 percent to 92 percent.
- The number of instances the parent and child discussed words from a book and their meaning increased from 33 percent to 43 percent.

“If a child is not reading at grade level by third grade, there is a significantly lower chance of that child ever catching up; a child’s literacy abilities are formed at an early age and family engagement plays a major role in that process,” said Gabrielle Miller, Ed.D., president and CEO of Raising A Reader. “These study results from Newark show the meaningful impact that family engagement has on a child’s reading proficiency.

Children who participate in the program are given a Raising A Reader book bag with several age-appropriate books to take home and read with their parents. Every week the bags are rotated into children’s homes, with approximately 100 books being brought into the child’s home every year. The program also provides support and guidance to help families develop, practice and maintain home-based literacy habits. More than 23 independent evaluations demonstrate Raising A Reader’s impact on essential home literacy skills.

"United Way of Essex and West Hudson is thrilled to report these initial results to the community," said Catherine P. Wilson, MSW, senior director of community impact and strategy for United Way of Essex and West Hudson. "The program's effectiveness is a testament to its simplicity. By engaging parents and their children with regular, sustained book rotations we have seen a dramatic increase in the exposure of our young children to books, reading and their local library. We are very excited about the continuing implementation and partnership with Raising a Reader. "

Raising A Reader is a 501c3 charitable organization dedicated to helping families develop, practice and maintain literacy habits for children ages 0-8 that are critical for a child’s success in school and in life. The program is evidence-based, with more than 23 independent evaluations showing that Raising A Reader significantly improves language and literacy skills, cognitive development, communication and comprehension skills, school readiness and social competence. Raising A Reader is implemented through a network of community partners that comprise more than 2,500 locations across the country including public school systems, libraries, afterschool programs, community agencies and other organizations both public and private. Headquartered in Redwood City, California, Raising A Reader was founded in 1999 and has served more than 1.25 million families nationwide. More information is available at RaisingAReader.org, @RARnational (Twitter) and RaisingAReaderNational (Facebook).

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