



Did you know that only 60% of Orange County students met or exceeded standards for literacy and English language arts during the 2018-2019 school year?

While that number is higher than the state average, it indicates there is still work to be done to improve literacy outcomes for children in Orange County.

The Raise Foundation, with a continued focus on prevention, asks for your help in promoting early and lifelong literacy in the children we serve by supporting the inaugural **Blue Ribbon Book Drive and Book Club Program**. Early childhood literacy includes reading, writing, listening and speaking with children as early and often as possible. Looking at pictures in a book and listening to words exposes children to vocabulary, word use and picture identification – all of which encourage language development.

About the Program

The Blue Ribbon Book Drive and Book Club program seeks to provide community access and equity to books, support and promote quality bonding time between parents and children through storytelling/recitation and work to improve short-term and long-term literacy outcomes for children in Orange County. Children and their families will be able to participate in this new program together, and will receive brand new books to read and keep.

In addition to addressing early childhood literacy, this program also seeks to connect with middle school and high school aged students by providing titles regularly needed for schools within Orange County and also popular titles amongst their age demographics that will continue to encourage the joy of reading.

These goals can be accomplished with your support, and we encourage you to share this email with friends, family, colleagues, and anyone else who might like to participate in this exciting new project!

Why is Early Childhood Literacy Important?

Research has shown that early literacy sets a strong foundation for a child's lifelong learning process, and additional research shows that reading to young children (ages 6 months to 5 years) not only provides healthy together time for parents, families and children, it also offers many lifelong benefits:

- Increased vocabulary, curiosity, and memory
- Positive associations with books and reading
- Opportunities to build listening skills and a foundation for scholastic success

Additional benefits of continued reading include improved comprehension, development of cognitive skills and reduction of stress and reported levels of depression. Having access to books greatly improves the likelihood that a child will read and increase the amount of reading they do.

The Raise Foundation also recognizes that having access to required school reading titles can alleviate academic related costs associated with school that some families may struggle with.



- **Books in Spanish**
- **Early Reader Books**
 - Level Up! Readers, DK Readers, I Can Read, Leveled Readers, etc.
- **Picture Books**
- **Chapter Books**
- **Required School Reading Titles**
 - The Great Gatsby, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Outsiders, Where the Red Fern Grows, Of Mice and Men, 1984, etc.
- **Teen/Young Adult Books**
- **Popular Series and Box Sets**
 - Harry Potter, Magic Tree House, Dog Man, Percy Jackson, Hunger Games, Babysitter's Club, etc.

How You Can Help

To meet these needs and make this project possible, we are asking for donations of **brand-new** books for children and teens. We encourage you to have fun choosing books you love, books that you enjoyed reading as a child, with your own children or other children you know, or books that are considered required school reading titles for Orange County based schools.

If you'd like some ideas, our wish list and additional title suggestions can be found on our website.

Donated books will be distributed as part of The Raise Foundation's Child Abuse Prevention and Blue Ribbon Month campaign in April and beyond. This distribution will take place in conjunction with participating Family Resource Centers.

Books can be purchased from any bookstore or website of your choice, and all books should be shipped by **March 15th** to:

The Raise Foundation
2900 Bristol Street, Suite J-201
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at katarina@theraisefoundation.org.

Thank you for your consideration and support!

Sincerely,

Katarina Scalise