

Free Florida Reading Program Launches Regional Partners Program to Reach More VPK – 5th Grade Families in Need of Literacy Support

The New Worlds Reading Initiative is partnering with organizations across the state of Florida to support families and communities through literacy workshops and events!

Florida, December 12, 2023 – In an effort to boost literacy rates across Florida, the UF Lastinger Center for Learning’s New Worlds Reading Initiative has launched its Regional Partners Program. Over the next five years, New Worlds Reading will partner with trusted community organizations to host parent and family literacy workshops, community literacy events, and teacher professional learning opportunities.

As a first-of-its-kind state literacy program, [New Worlds Reading](#) delivers free books and reading activities directly to the doorsteps of eligible VPK through 5th grade students who are not yet meeting grade level expectations in reading. There are estimated to be more than 910,000 students eligible to receive 9 free books and resources each school year through fifth grade.

“Since enrolling last year, New Worlds Reading has helped my nine-year-old son, Caleb, gain confidence in reading. He gets excited every time a new book gets delivered to our door and the program has helped foster new opportunities for family bonding in our home,” said New Worlds Reading parent Zohara Campos. “We recently attended a Book Bash event in Miami and had a blast. We had the opportunity to participate in fun reading activities with other families and even got to take some new books home with us.”

Books and reading activities are available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and braille, and provide students the opportunity to choose books tailored to their interests. Currently, the most popular books are in the adventure, humor and nature categories.

Regional Partners will be able to help families of eligible students apply at community events and caregiver workshops. These will include strategies for reading support as the organization’s work to connect caregivers and students with additional book and literacy resources to help build their home libraries.

New Worlds Reading is designed to foster ongoing, positive connections among families, schools, and communities around a shared mission of ensuring all children learn to read. The Regional Partner Program will extend the initiative’s reach deep into local communities and regional networks to ensure more families have access to the free books and literacy resources provided by New Worlds Reading. In doing so, it will create more opportunities for local communities to come together and celebrate reading.

“We want to ensure that every eligible family gets to experience New Worlds Reading firsthand,” said Michelle McGriff, Regional Partners Manager, New Worlds Reading. “Our Regional Partners will help us expand our reach, increasing the capacity of the amazing work that we’re already doing with New Worlds Reading. With help from our partners, we’ll be able to meet eligible Florida families where they are with assistance from trusted community organizations they already know and love.”

The 12 current organizations that are part of New Worlds Reading Regional Partners Program include:

- [Children's Home Society of Florida](#) (Orlando, FL)
 - At CHS, everything is designed to empower children, families and individuals to find - and pursue - opportunities for success and happiness.
- [Children's Literacy Initiative](#) (Broward County, FL)
 - CLI helps educators serving high-need student populations learn high-impact instructional strategies and nurture dynamic professional learning communities.
- [Consortium of Florida Education Foundations](#) (Gainesville, FL)
 - The Consortium's mission is to connect individuals, organizations, and financial resources to build the capacity and impact of member local education foundations.
- [Florida State Alliance of YMCAs](#) (St. Petersburg, FL)
 - The Y is a leading charity committed to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility that creates opportunities for people of all ages to learn, strengthen their bodies and build community.
- [Hands Together for Haitians, Inc](#) (Lake Worth, FL)
 - Hands Together for Haitians's goal is to assist the Haitian immigrant population with transition from living in their native country to living in the United States through education, health care, language, social resources, counseling, and guidance.
- [Heartland Education Consortium](#) (Lake Placid, FL)
 - HEC provides educational services to six small and rural school districts in central Florida to achieve excellence with the appropriate support and resources.
- [Panhandle Area Educational Consortium](#) (Chipley, FL)
 - PAEC is Florida's first legislatively created Educational Consortium created to support small districts with limited resources to better serve children, teachers, and administrators.
- [Phyllis Wheatley Rise to Read Campaign, Inc](#) (St. Petersburg, FL)
 - PWRTRC's mission is to ensure that African children from birth to 18 years old can read on and above grade level in this generation and on, through designing literacy activities and providing support to parents so they are able to support their children's literacy.
- [Principle Life Family Resource Center, Inc](#) (Lauderhill, FL)
 - Principle Life Youth Development teaches and motivates teens to make better choices when it comes to their education and relationships through training materials aimed at students, educators, and parents.
- [The Lucy Project](#) (Miami, FL)
 - The Lucy Project advocates for children who struggle to read and provides full and fair access to evidence-based literacy intervention.
- [United Way Suncoast](#) (Tampa, FL)
 - United Way Suncoast's mission is to provide leadership that improves lives and creates lasting community change by mobilizing the caring people of our communities to give, advocate, and volunteer.
- [Uplift Literacy](#) (Miami, FL)
 - Uplift Literacy is a nonprofit organization that works to maximize lifelong success for underserved children by improving their reading proficiency – at school, at home and in their communities.

About The New Worlds Reading: New Worlds Reading is Florida's free at-home literacy program to help eligible VPK through 5th grade students in Florida bolster literacy skills, build reading confidence, and foster a lifelong love of reading. Each month during the school year, eligible kids receive a free book tailored to their interests with resources and activities for caregivers and children to use together. New

Worlds Reading is administered by the UF Lastinger Center for Learning. Book titles are selected in partnership with the Florida Department of Education and Scholastic. Books and materials are available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and braille. Learn more at newworldsreading.com.

Article Image



Caption: Students participate in literary activities at the New Worlds Reading Initiative