

Books from Brek

Newsletter:
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Visit our website at <http://booksfrombrek.org>

Mission: Books from Brek collects, processes, and distributes quality new and gently used children's books *to significantly increase book ownership among at-risk infants, toddlers and school-age children* throughout the Champaign/Urbana area.

Vision: Increasing book ownership among at-risk infants, toddlers and school-age children will:

- Improve the reading achievement of children by increasing their access to print
- Recognize having books in the home is twice as important as the father's education level
- Close the gap in the ratio of books per child among middle- and low- income families.
- Increase the knowledge of families in the relationship between reading success in school and being read to prior to school among all children.
- Change the fact that millions of children show up to the first day of kindergarten never having seen a book before in their lives.



Books from Brek Foundation

The "Books from Brek" Nonprofit was established in March 2016 to celebrate the life of Brek Thomas Neiswender.

Brek loved turning the pages of his books and having someone read to him. We hope that this foundation can further the love of reading in many young children. Brek's family manage the funding, selecting, and distributing of all books. Our family members take responsibility to order, level, bag, and distribute books.

His life lives on through the smiles and joy of others.

Our Impact

We have distributed approximately **31,500 books** from 2016 to 2022. We have distributed **3,000 books** so far in 2022 and hope to distribute **3,000 more** to reach our goal of **34,500 by December 31.**



Thanks to Our Supporters

We are grateful to you — our donors, supporters, family, and friends— who continue to stand with us in protecting children, supporting families, and strengthening communities as we achieve our mission and vision. This year was filled with successes and challenges that would not have been possible to achieve and navigate without your support.



Neiswender Family and Illini Football Team mulched Brek Park

Brek Park recently experienced an exciting upgrade with new mulch provided by the University of Illinois football team and the Neiswender Family. The team players who did the work were amazing. How wonderful the university takes such interest in Champaign-Urbana community.





Values We Promote

Equity . . . Self-Concept . . . Support . . .
Literacy . . . Success

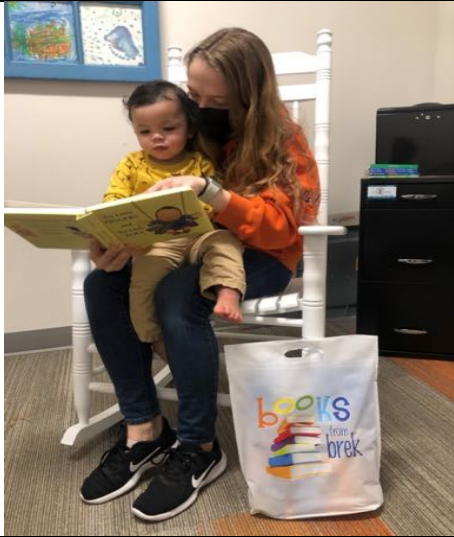


The benefits of reading aloud to children birth to kindergarten

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Whether you're reading a classic novel or fairy tales before bed, reading aloud to children can significantly benefit your child's life. Some benefits reading to children include:

- **Supported cognitive development:** Cognitive development is the emergence of the ability to think and understand. When you read aloud, it essentially provides them with background knowledge, which helps them make sense of what they see, hear, and read.
- **Improved language skills:** Reading daily starting in infancy, can help with language acquisition, communication skills, social skills, and literacy skills.
- **Preparation for academic success:** Reading aloud helps children grow their vocabulary skills with exposure to new words and listening skills they develop. Both contribute to school readiness and academic success.
- **Developing a special bond with your child:** Reading to your child provides a great opportunity to set up a regular, shared event where you can look forward to spending time together. It gives children a sense of intimacy and well-being.
- **Increased concentration and discipline:** When you introduce regular reading to a child, you observe a change in behavior. Attention span and memory attention improves.
- **Improved imagination and creativity:** Reading aloud helps them use their imagination to explore people, places, times, and events beyond their own experiences. By widening a child's imagination, the child dreams bigger and acts creatively.
- **Cultivating lifelong love of reading:** Reading is the key for lifelong learning. Reading presents books as sources of pleasant, valuable, and exciting experiences. Children who value books are motivated to read on their own and will likely continue to practice independent reading throughout the rest of their lives.



Crisis Nursery Center Impact

"If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."
 -African Proverb

This quote encapsulates our history and the work we dedicate ourselves to at the Nursery. We pride ourselves not only on keeping children safe, but also how many families we are able to come alongside and support throughout the most influential developmental period of their child. Through our home-visiting program, parents receive extra support on things such as walking, talking, tummy time, and much more to make sure that their child reaches their developmental milestones. A family favorite, and staff favorite, is being able to hand out Books from Brek to children. The children enjoy the books, and parents greatly appreciate access to the resource!



Rachael Graham

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Testimonials

How we support families mirrors how our generous supporters helped us during our "developmental" period. Without the help of many golden-hearted people, we would not be the organization that we are today. We started as a room in the hospital, and now we are so much more because of the help of many people who also believe in the work we do. When two sides come alongside each other, it helps expand the vision beyond what was ever expected. It helps to open doors that were not apparent before. It serves as a stepping stool instead of making one rely on their personal reservoir of strength. As our slogan states, asking for help is a sign of strength because it provides an opportunity for someone not to only help you reach your goals, but to help you surpass everything you ever imagined."

-- Crisis Nursery Family Specialist

The Thrill of Finding Out What Is Inside



Champaign Public Library Mother Goose Program Impact



We are grateful to the Champaign Library for providing us space to

We contribute many books distributed through the Mother Goose program. What's so great about Mother Goose on the Loose?

- **A love of learning** through nursery rhyme activities and music that will ensure their success throughout their school experiences
- **Social and emotional skills** such as taking turns, following directions, showing appreciation to others, developing confidence in themselves, and playing with other children
- **Fine and gross motor skills** through fingerplays, dances, and physical exercise
- **Literacy-based measurements** including holding a book correctly, turning pages appropriately, and understanding text flows from left to right

receive, organize, bag and ready our bookbags for children

- **Language skills** by learning new words, singing songs, hearing sound patterns in words and understanding concepts such as “high” and “low” and phoneme awareness
- **General knowledge about the world** by identifying shapes, colors, and animals, etc.

What are some things I can do to prepare my child for kindergarten?

- Read daily with your child and discuss what you read. Connect it to her daily experience. If reading a book about animals, relate it to your last visit to the zoo.
- Have an active social life. Give your child lots of opportunities to play with others and practice sharing and social skills.
- Encourage your child’s independence by giving them chores around the house; have her select her clothes, dress herself, help her make her own snack.
- Help your child ‘write’ letters to friends and family members. You can begin by tracing letters on paper or in the sand box. Graduate to pencil and paper writing and have it available to work with.
- Play sound games including rhyming words, making up silly songs, repeating tongue twisters.
- Talk to your child about kindergarten and what her day will be like, visit the school if possible and try to set up a play date with future classmates. Encourage your child to talk to you about kindergarten as well.



Less than one-third of Illinois kindergartners begin school “ready”...

Many families lack access to high-quality early childhood opportunities, particularly those from low-income communities, families of color, and those in childcare deserts, which can limit their ability to fully benefit from the positive early learning experiences that help children enter school ready to succeed. Ensuring students are academically and developmentally on track, closing opportunity gaps that begin well before kindergarten, and guaranteeing families have safe environments to place their children are key components to high-quality ECEC.

We believe every child deserves access to equitable opportunities in life, beginning with experiences in the early years. To make that a reality, we need a strong ECEC system from the state to local level, combined with adequate and equitable funding.

Check the data in your community for Kindergarten Readiness. It will be surprising to you!

Thanks to the Illinois Legislature for in 2022 providing additional fundings for early children education. More dollars are available for preschool programs.

Gov. Pritzker And Illinois State Board Of Education Announce \$54 Million Increase In Early Childhood Education Funding

Supporting children from pregnancy to toddlerhood to preschool is one of my administration’s top priorities,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “And in Illinois, every child deserves an equal opportunity to learn and succeed, regardless of their family’s socio-economic status. We are investing millions to strengthen our early childhood education system—empowering families, teachers, and childcare workers to build the foundation for the next generation of young Illinoisans. Here’s to making Illinois the best state in the nation to raise a family.”



Children who participate in high-quality programs are:

- More likely to be kindergarten ready
- Less likely to participate in special education or remedial coursework
- More likely to graduate high school and go on to college
- More likely to be employed and have higher earnings

Happy 7th Birthday, Brek - September 12

Brek's 7th birthday will be celebrated on September 12.

Once again family and friends celebrate Brek by recalling and sharing incredible memories. Our birthday photo this year reminds us of his contagious smile and the happiness and joy he brought to us all.

