

Just Read, Florida!

Parents • Communities • Educators • Businesses

Learning to read is a lot like learning to ride a bike. Children start early, then build confidence as they grow by practicing and through instruction from adults. Over time, a bike rider can go from riding slowly for a few minutes on a level sidewalk to riding with confidence all afternoon over much more difficult terrain. And once they learn, they never forget. It's a skill that lasts a lifetime.

It's the same way with reading. We start with the basics, gradually build their skills and confidence, and eventually give them the tools to explore their whole world.

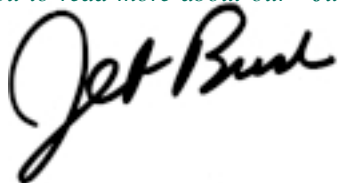
Our "Just Read, Florida!" initiative is designed to help every child in our state get moving. A child begins learning immediately and one component of our plan gives parents of newborns the tips and tools they need to begin reading to their children the day they are brought home from the hospital.

"Just Read, Florida!" assures our pre-K and public school teachers get the research-based professional development they need to teach reading most effectively. It mobilizes our volunteer and business communities so that every Floridian is a stakeholder in creating a state full of readers.

The success of these efforts is critical because an inability to read is much more devastating than an inability to ride a bike. Those children who cannot read, or who are not developing the skills that will make them ready to read, are stuck in a much narrower world.

It must be our task to give our children the skills to make their world as broad and as open as possible. We must renew our commitment to leave no child behind.

I invite you to read more about our "Just Read, Florida!" initiative.



Vision and Research

The Governor's unequivocal goal is for all students in Florida to be able to read on grade level or higher by 2012.

On September 7, 2001, Governor Bush signed an Executive Order, directing the Florida Department of Education to work with local school districts, educators, parents and community members to review current reading programs, reading standards, effective teaching strategies and reading course requirements.

Scientifically-based reading research provides the foundation for both Governor Bush's **Just Read, Florida!** initiative and for the federal *Reading First* program. **Just Read, Florida!** incorporates methods that emphasize the five key components of reading effective instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary.

Phonemic awareness: knowing that words are made up of sounds.

Phonics: the link between sounds and letters.

Vocabulary: what words mean and how to say them.

Fluency: the ability to read words accurately and quickly.

Comprehension: the ability to understand what you read.

Just Read, Florida! involves:

Educators

Parents and Families

Communities and Businesses

The Early Childhood Community

These components include tools, resources, materials and programs to equip teachers, parents and families, and the early childhood community with the necessary knowledge base to create successful, independent readers. They also guide communities and businesses in their involvement with state literacy efforts.

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Educators

Empowering teachers to teach reading better.

Florida's goal is to have the best-trained reading teachers in the nation, by equipping teachers and principals with the necessary knowledge and tools to provide effective instruction, diagnose reading difficulties, and fix the problems so that no child is left behind. The **Just Read Florida!** initiative will train teachers through the following programs:

Florida Center for Reading Research:

The nation's preeminent reading research center will be based at Florida State University (FSU) and be led by Dr. Joseph Torgesen, the nationally recognized Robert M. Gagne Professor of Psychology. The Reading Research Center will partner with the FLARE Center at the University of Central Florida (UCF) to offer professional development based on this new research. The Center will be funded with \$2.5 million in existing federal dollars and **Reading First** federal funds.

Reading First Academies

These academies will train all K-3 teachers by 2005, to ensure that they have the instructional strategies in the latest research-based methods; their new skills will be transferable to any district statewide. The academies will be funded up to \$6 million, through **Reading First** federal funding.

Reading Endorsement Certification

Available by the fall of 2002, this new endorsement will empower every teacher with the necessary skills to teach reading effectively to their students. Endorsements indicate a teacher's special level of expertise and are currently offered in gifted, middle grades and English for Speakers of Other Languages.

Just Read, Florida! Leadership Conference

This summer institute will train principals how to implement a school-wide research based system of instruction. The summer institute is for principals of schools showing the most need. Scheduled for July 9-11, 2002, it is funded with existing federal IDEA and REA funds.

Online Reading Classroom for Teachers

This program provides K-12 educators with opportunities to enhance their knowledge of research-based reading instruction, while working toward recertification as their time schedule permits. The interactive system will include immediate feedback



through email, instant messaging, telephone follow-up, and a chat room, and is scheduled to be online by Summer 2002. This project, awarded to UCF, will accommodate up to one-third of all certified teachers in Florida was funded with \$2 million in existing federal funds.

Summer Reading Professional Development Program

This program provides reading courses for public school teachers and administrators of grades 6-12 and is offered by FSU statewide. This program will enhance the ability to teach reading, and provide stipends to educators who participate.

Publisher-Provided Professional Development

The Governor announced an unprecedented agreement with five major instructional materials publishers to provide up to 100 hours of free training on the building blocks of reading to each Florida teacher in the districts that purchase their instructional materials.

Parents and Families

Reading begins at home.

The parent component of the **Just Read, Florida!** initiative calls for strong parental involvement by putting effective strategies and activities in the hands of parents so that they can create a positive reading environment at home:





"I'm A Reader" kit

This kit, available September 2002, will be provided to the parents of every newborn Floridian. The "I'm a Reader" kit will include a copy of the *Sunrise Skill Builders*, an application for a library card, a Scholastic book, a *Put Reading First* brochure, and a congratulations card from the Governor and First Lady encouraging literacy development among all families. Funding for the kits is provided through private sources and existing state and federal dollars.

School-Home Reading kit

An online resource available in English and Spanish, this kit is for every K-3 teacher and parent and is aligned with the Sunshine State Standards. The reading kits are a collection of research-based activities designed to help families reinforce the reading and language arts skills that their children are learning at school. Hard-copy kits will be provided to each of Florida's 1,700 elementary schools. The cost for printing the kits is being provided by Verizon.

Summer Reading Activity Kit

Full of information and activities parents can use to engage their children in reading over the summer, this kit is provided through a partnership with Florida PTA, the Florida Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and Washington Mutual. It includes nine weeks of reading activities, travel reading ideas, and a magnet to post each week's activities on the refrigerator. Initial funding will be provided through the partnership. The kit will be offered online in May 2002 and distributed to parents by local PTA's.



Community and Business Involvement

Mobilizing the state to create a literate Florida.

This component of the **Just Read, Florida!** initiative calls for a strong commitment from volunteer groups and the business community to help nurture readers in every community:

Mentoring

A series of new mentoring initiatives will expand the number of volunteers in Florida who will focus on reading skills.

Teen Trendsetters™

This new program will partner with the Governor's Mentoring Initiative, Florida Trend's NEXT, Universal Orlando™ and the Florida Department of Education to train teens as lead reading mentors. These high school students will then help establish reading tutor programs for local elementary students by training them in effective mentoring skills based on the newest research in reading. Students can apply online at www.floridanext.com or on the www.myflorida.com **Just Read, Florida!** link.

AmeriCorps

Currently, there are 631 AmeriCorps members in Florida who are mentoring more than 6,000 elementary students at 203 schools. The Florida Commission on Community Service will make **Just Read, Florida!** their first priority and have a goal of signing up 500 additional AmeriCorps members who would be devoted specifically to this initiative, impacting an estimated 3,000 students.



A Challenge to Florida's Business Community

Florida's business community is stepping up to promote all our reading efforts in the state with various activities including **Just Read, Florida!** information shopping bags, trayliners, billboards, and TV commercials sponsored by Winn-Dixie, McDonalds, Outdoor advertisers, and Comcast Cable.

The "Business Challenge"

Issued by Governor Bush, this call to action encourages businesses to get involved in supporting reading in Florida's schools. To promote this Business Challenge, a ten-point guide is being issued to offer simple ideas on how a business can help local students. World Class Schools and the National Federation of Businesses will assist with the dissemination of the Business Challenge guide, now available online at www.flmentoring.org.

Community Involvement

Governor Bush is also encouraging Florida communities to make reading a fun and enjoyable experience. On the state level he will participate in a reading program with other well-known "readers" and urges similar programs be set up on the local level.

Phone Line Story Time

Children can call a toll-free number to hear a story read aloud by Governor Bush, Lt. Governor Frank Brogan, former First Lady Barbara Bush, Ronald McDonald, Universal Orlando™ characters and Zach Thomas and Jason Taylor of the Miami Dolphins. Each month a celebrity will read an elementary level book such as *Clifford, the Big Red Dog*. Phone Line Story Time will be accessible via a toll-free number beginning this summer.

Ready to Read

Ready to read means ready to learn.

The Ready to Read component of Just Read, Florida! focuses on the importance of including early reading as a critical component of education reform efforts. Ready to Read includes:

- Training for local school readiness coalitions that focuses on early literacy development and research-based reading readiness instruction.
- The distribution of 400,000 copies of a revised edition of the *Sunrise Skill Builders*, a booklet that provides information about the intellectual, physical, and social development stages of children from infancy through early childhood.
- Governor Bush has also asked the Florida Network of School Readiness Hubs to serve as a "Ready to Read Response team" to work with local school readiness coalitions across the state as they prepare to respond to the federal *Early Reading First* grants program. The Ready to Read Response Team will help local

coalitions access the most current research, information and expertise they need to develop competitive grant applications. The team will develop a template grant application that will be distributed to interested programs. This grant template will help ensure that Florida early childhood providers have the absolute best information on reading readiness at their fingertips.

- *Heads Up! Reading* is an innovative 44-hour course which will be provided to teachers via satellite television to deliver the highest quality professional development to early childhood educators and childcare providers who teach and care for children birth through age five. Currently, just 150 teachers have received this training. Governor Bush announced a goal of training 1,000 teachers by 2004 - a goal estimated to impact 20,000 preschool students.

Reading First in Florida

Reading First is the largest – and yet most focused – federal reading initiative this country has ever undertaken. *Reading First* focuses on what works, and funding will support scientifically-based methods of reading instruction in grades K-3. Florida can potentially receive \$45.6 million a year over the next six years. Subgrants to eligible districts will be used to improve reading programs, select and administer assessments, and professional development.

Governor's Educators' Leadership Summit

Governor Bush convened the 2nd Annual Educators' Leadership Summit in Tampa, May 6-7, 2002. This event brings together an elite group of educators recognized for their outstanding contributions to Florida's students, schools and communities. The two-day event features sessions conducted by nationally recognized reading experts, forums in which Florida educators share best practices, opportunities for feedback, and time to work with colleagues. Lieutenant Governor Frank Brogan, Commissioner Charlie Crist, and Secretary Jim Horne joined Governor Bush for this year's Summit, which focused on reading.

Just Read, Florida! is in partnership with:

- *Governor's Mentoring Initiative.* This initiative, founded by Governor Bush in 1999, is designed to help students excel in school by recruiting Floridians to become mentors. The Governor's Mentoring Initiative promotes collaboration among state agencies, businesses and nonprofit organizations. As of April 2002, over 115,578 Floridians have joined Governor Bush in mentoring a child.
- *Governor's Family Literacy Initiative.* Governor Bush is committed to creating a statewide understanding of how the average Floridian can assist in the family literacy movement. With the assistance of private supporters, including the South Florida Annenberg Foundation and the Barbara Bush Foundation, the Governor's Family Literacy Initiative provides financial support to programs that promote literacy as a life-long learning opportunity. As of April 2002, over \$3.25 million has been given to family literacy programs in Florida.