

# Unlocking Literacy: Implementing the Science of Reading Into Summer Programs

*Best Practices for Libraries*

This Best Practices one-pager is meant to accompany ULC's July 11, 2024, webinar, "**Unlocking Literacy: Five Action Steps for Implementing the Science of Reading into Summer Programs at Your Library.**" View the recording of that webinar [here](#).

## WHAT IS THE SCIENCE OF READING?

In recent years, educators have seen a paradigm shift toward **evidence-based approaches to teaching reading**. The "science of reading" encompasses a comprehensive body of research that spans **cognitive psychology, linguistics, neuroscience, and education**, providing a well-rounded understanding of how children learn to read.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS



- **33%** of 4th graders read at grade level or above, according to the 2023 NAEP test.
- This is a **2 percentage point decrease** since the 2019 NAEP assessment, administered before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Factors that inform reading proficiency outcomes include: socioeconomic levels, race, urban/rural spaces, pandemic impact, funding cuts, and generational trauma.



### 5 Ways to Include Elements of Structured Literacy into Summer Programming:

1. Support caregivers by providing them books that promote letter-sound recognition, programs and resources.
2. Offer programs that include phoneme-grapheme awareness.
3. Enrich the library's collections with phonics-based games.
4. Create a Reading Buddies program and get teens involved to assist.
5. Curate a collection of culturally diverse books that offers context, vocabulary and background knowledge.

The Urban Libraries Council's Science of Reading work is generously supported by Baker & Taylor.

## MEMBER PRACTICES

### Engaging Parents & Caregivers in Reading Readiness: Best Practices from Toledo Lucas County Public Library



Toledo Lucas County Public Library's best practices have successfully engaged parents and caregivers in fostering reading readiness among young children. These practices are designed to create a supportive and enriching environment for early literacy development. **Here are some key strategies:**



#### Staff Buy In

- Have all staff listen to *Sold a Story* podcast that covers the idea that education isn't based in cognitive science, and it's impacting kids' abilities to read.
- Talk to executive leadership team, library board, managers, supervisors, and librarians because everyone has a role in helping children learn to read.



#### Staff Development

- Focus on developing the staff's Science of Reading staff knowledge. Share the *Right to Read* film, *Sold a Story* podcast, and asynchronous trainings.



#### Collection Changes

- Build a decodable collection full of books that were written to help with learning phonics sequences.
- Speak to public schools in your area and find out which curriculums they use.
- Build your collection and include trusted series like Scholastic Teachables which gives kids books they can read with their parents and alone.



#### Programs and Services

- Programming should be curated based on age group and what works for you as a programmer. Read the room to see what works for the group you're with.
- Effective program options include: story times, Scrabble Slam, Spinner Wheel activities, rhyming games, silly sentence cards, and Feed the Animals.

## RESOURCES SHARED IN WEBINAR:

- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [Science of Reading Work Groups: Incorporating Phonics and Vocabulary](#) (Toledo Lucas County)
- ULC Article: ["Boost Summer Learning with Science of Reading Elements"](#)
- ["Right to Read"](#) Documentary
- ["Sold a Story"](#) Podcast
- [Decodable Text Sources](#) (The Reading League)
- [List of Games and Board Games to Promote Phonics Learning](#)

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