

Overview Training Handout

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What is America Reads?

The America Reads Challenge is an effort to mobilize parents, teachers, community groups, college students, and business leaders to insure that all children are reading independently by the end of the 3rd grade. Colleges and universities play a major part in America Reads. The original initiative challenged all colleges and universities to join The Honor Roll, the collection of educational organizations participating in America Reads, by pledging up to 50 percent of their FWS increase for tutoring preschool through elementary school children in reading. In exchange, the government will waive the requirement for these colleges to match the percentage of the funds for FWS students who serve as reading tutors, a savings passed on to the schools and community agencies who had previously covered some part of the salaries. In essence, under America Reads participating schools and community agencies will not have to pay for tutors. The goal is to enlist at least 100,000 college students to help improve reading skills.

The Tutor's Relationship to the School or Community Agency

Your College/University is paying your salary through the America Reads government grants, though your immediate focus is on your work site; it is they who hired you and who will train you to meet the needs of their classrooms or programs. Your time-sheets are the connection between your two employers, as the sheets need to be signed off by your work site and returned to your Financial Aid/Student Employment office. This process may work a little differently for each tutor depending on which College/University you attend.

It's not teaching reading, but BUILDING READERS

Someone said you can't teach anyone anything, only get them excited to learn it for themselves. Your creativity, imagination and experience are the most effective tools you have to communicate the joy and wonder reading can bring to our lives. Reading is much more than an acquired skill, but a gateway to learning about oneself and the world that surrounds us. As the saying goes: give someone a fish, feed him for a day; teach someone to fish, feed him for life. Good Readers are able to relate books and stories to their own lives, they read fluently and make associations within the text and to the people and objects around them, moving beyond simply sounding out the letters and words. The goal of the tutor is to build good readers, by example, by instruction, by correction.

Blue Prints for the Tutor

Professionalism

Be on time. Notify your employer in advance if you cannot keep your scheduled hours (the teacher as well as the child depends on you). Be aware of your appearance; use common sense. You are entering a professional arena; take it seriously, the teachers and administration do. Be aware of your language: kids tend to parrot what they hear, and inappropriate speech reflects badly on you personally, and as a representative of your college or university.

The Language of the Classroom

More than likely it has been some time since you were in an elementary classroom. Allow yourself time to observe and learn, watching the teacher's interaction with the students, and the students' interactions among themselves, the tone of the teacher's voice and the manner in which he/she presents information to the students. Your role as a tutor is to guide, coach and encourage. LISTENING is a fundamental tool for successful tutoring and communication, and is essential to your goal of building better readers.

Communicating Effectively

Both you and the children you tutor should enjoy the cooperative reading experience. Let your responses to the child and the tone of your voice be positive and genuine as well as constructive. You are there to help them improve, and correction is a necessary part of the process. Your comments should lead readers first to self-correction. When students learn

