

READERS MAKE LEADERS

How to Organize a Readers Make Leaders Event Online

Reading is critical to children being successful in school and life. But too many children, particularly those living in poverty, come to school with limited experience with books and reading. Investing in high-quality early childhood education programs help children arrive to kindergarten with the knowledge they need to be strong readers.

To celebrate the importance of reading and encourage candidates to prioritize investments in early learning programs like child care, Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) is hosting Readers Make Leaders events online via Zoom. These family-centered online events will feature readings of two books that focus on children as leaders. The virtual events will also engage parents in the vital work of expanding affordable, high-quality early learning opportunities for all kids by urging them to sign an online petition urging presidential candidates to prioritize rebuilding access to child care, which has been especially hard hit by the coronavirus.

Follow these steps to organize a successful reading event online:

1. **Identify a good time for families:** The first step is to find a good day and time for your online event. The work situation for many parents is quite different in the time of the coronavirus. Consider talking with parents you know about a time of day that would work best for their family.

When identifying a time, pair it with a time of day that parents can participate, too, and market it accordingly. For example, a noontime event could be marketed as an “eat and read.” Or an early evening time could be marketed as bedtime event.



2. **Secure a featured reader:** To help generate more participation and media attention, ask a local celebrity to read to the children. Ideas include:
 - A local TV station human interest or lifestyles reporter
 - A popular local sports team member
 - Community leaders
 - An elected official (e.g. the mayor, a state representative or senator, or your member of Congress)

When creating your list, think through what connections you have to potential readers, prioritizing those with whom someone in your group has an existing relationship.

3. **Identify partners:** Many local partners are moving to more online programming and your partnership could create a great way to help both you and the partner reach a new audience. Partners could include:

- Your local library
- Early learning providers (e.g. child care centers, pre-k programs, Head Start)
- Local literary groups
- Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts
- The YWCA or the YMCA

4. **Promote your event:** Spread the word about your online Readers Make Leaders event through:

- Social media, including new Facebook groups that have popped up to help local communities cope with the coronavirus
- Local traditional media
- Community event calendars
- Local partners, like the groups listed above

Your SCAN staff contact can also promote the event via texting and emailing supporters in the area.

5. **Make the event fun:** Be sure there are interactive elements during your event. Ideas include:

- Poll questions parents and kids can answer together
- Resources related to crafts shared through the Zoom chat feature. You can even have some finished crafts to show to the children during the event.
- A fun game like an at-home scavenger hunt. Ask the children to go find readily available objects at home, like a spoon, a favorite stuffed animal, or a towel. Kids show their object to everyone at the event after going to find it.

6. **Follow up:** Send a thank you email to all attendees within a day or two after the event with how they can get more involved with SCAN. And don't forget to thank your featured readers. If they are on social media, you could thank them there (don't forget to tag them!), in addition to a thank you email or card.

Read a Story, Change Their Story

As part of the Readers Make Leaders event program, Save the Children Action Network will help support our sister organization, Save the Children, by promoting their [Read a Story, Change Their Story campaign](#).

The campaign is simple: people read to the children in their lives and then log their minutes online. Save the Children receives donations from corporate and other sponsors for every minute logged. The money raised goes to support Save the Children's programs here in the U.S., particularly in low-income rural communities.



Save the Children
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