

# READERS MAKE LEADERS

## Readers Make Leaders Online Event Planning Worksheet

### Background

Throughout May and June, Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) volunteers and staff will organize online reading events called Readers Make Leaders. At these virtual events hosted on the online video conference system called Zoom, we will celebrate the importance of reading and encourage candidates to talk about how they will help rebuild the child care industry after the significant challenges providers and the families they serve face as a result of the coronavirus.

### Why Reading Events?

The United States is facing a literacy crisis. Right now, [63% of fourth graders are reading below grade level](#). Children who aren't reading at grade level by the third grade [are 4 times more likely to drop out of high school](#), limiting their life opportunities.

Increasing familiarity with books and language early in a child's life can help address the literacy crisis. Parents, together with high-quality early childhood education, can help improve kindergarten readiness and start kids on the path to be strong readers. Unfortunately, the coronavirus has disrupted early learning opportunities, such as child care, that provides this connection to literacy.

While these online events will not replace any of the quality early learning children were receiving before COVID-19, they will help remind kids and families about the fun of reading. In addition, during this online reading event we will mobilize parents to speak out on behalf of kids, working families and child care providers who are struggling with the financial fallout from the coronavirus. Due to COVID-19, child care centers must consider temporarily closing, but are faced with the real fear that they may not be able to open again when the virus subsides. If fewer children are able to access to quality child care, our nation's low literacy rates could decline even more.

### Event Structure

Our virtual Readers Make Leaders events will involve parents and young children in fun and engaging activities – all from the comfort and safety of their homes. The events will include:

- **Local celebrity readers who will read two books** to children in attendance. We encourage you to feature books about children's leadership and civic engagement. Check out [our book list](#) or select one of your favorites.
- **Fun activities** for children attendees.
- **Information for parents** about the importance of literacy and early childhood education.
- **An online petition for parents to sign** urging presidential candidates to talk about their plans to rebuild the child care industry that kids, families and the economy rely on.

- **Promotion of Save the Children's Read a Story. Change Their Story campaign.** This campaign raises money for the organization's early learning programs in the United States. Parents log their children's minutes reading and corporate sponsors donate to Save the Children's U.S. programs based on the number of minutes logged.

Working with your SCAN staff contact and other volunteers in your community, complete the worksheet below to organize your Readers Make Leaders event.

### Planning Questions

1. What time will you host the event? Remember that parents are working variable hours these days and many are working from home. Consider what time might work best for both children and parents and then market the event as such. For example, you could organize a lunchtime reading event or a bedtime reading event.
2. Who will you invite to be a featured reader at your event? To help generate online interest in an increasingly crowded space and media attention, consider a local celebrity, such as a local TV station human interest or lifestyle reporter, a community leader or popular local sports team members. 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. Who could you partner with for this event? Potential partners include the local library, Head Start, local literacy groups, Girl Scouts, pre-K programs, child care centers, the YWCA or the YMCA.
4. How will you promote this event? Don't forget about submitting the event to online community newsletters (especially those that market to parents) and on social media, especially new Facebook groups that have popped up around the coronavirus.
5. What media outlets might be interested in covering this event? Knowing who your celebrity reader(s) will be could help expand the media opportunities. For example, if a local basketball legend will be a featured reader, you could reach out to sports reporters in addition to lifestyle reporters.



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## Create a Timeline

Work with your Community Action Team or other SCAN volunteers in your community to assign tasks for your reading event to ensure every task is completed on time.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Assigned Tasks</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Legislative</b>		
<b>Outreach</b>		
<b>Communications</b>		
<b>Political</b>		



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