

All aboard

# THE READING EXPRESS

All aboard *The Reading Express* as we hit the streets of Houston in collaboration with the Harris County Public Library to **deliver critical reading readiness programs** to young children and their parents in low-income areas.



## On track to reading...



LITERACY  
NOW



# The Problem

Research indicates the road to incarceration begins as early as kindergarten, linking reading difficulties with serious behavior problems most commonly seen in at-risk youth. Also, children in low-income families start school at an academic disadvantage in reading and math as compared to their peers who live above the poverty line. In fact, **60% of Houston area children enter kindergarten without the skills needed to learn to read**, thus being significantly behind even before they start school.

**There is only one book available for every 300 children in low-income areas.**

**Economically disadvantaged children hear 30 million fewer words by age three than their more affluent peers.**



# The Solution

Early intervention programming is critical to building a foundation for success. To assist with that, Literacy Now offers *The Reading Express* to help break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty throughout Houston. *The Reading Express* is a mobile classroom that delivers reading readiness programming to young children (2 months to 4 years old) and their parents/caregivers in low-income areas. **The overall goal of this innovative program is to level the playing field for these children, provide an opportunity for them to rise above their circumstances, and most importantly, have them ready to read before they enter kindergarten.** *The Reading Express* serves as a core tool for improving school readiness, enhancing social skills, and combating the negative realities of poverty.



Research indicates that the single most powerful predictor of whether or not a child can read on level by the end of 3rd grade is whether or not he/she **STARTED KINDERGARTEN READY TO READ.**

Before entering kindergarten, children in poverty have been exposed to **25 HOURS OF ONE-ON-ONE READING** in contrast to middle and upper-class children who have been exposed to **1,000 – 1,700 HOURS OF ONE-ON-ONE READING.**

# The Impact

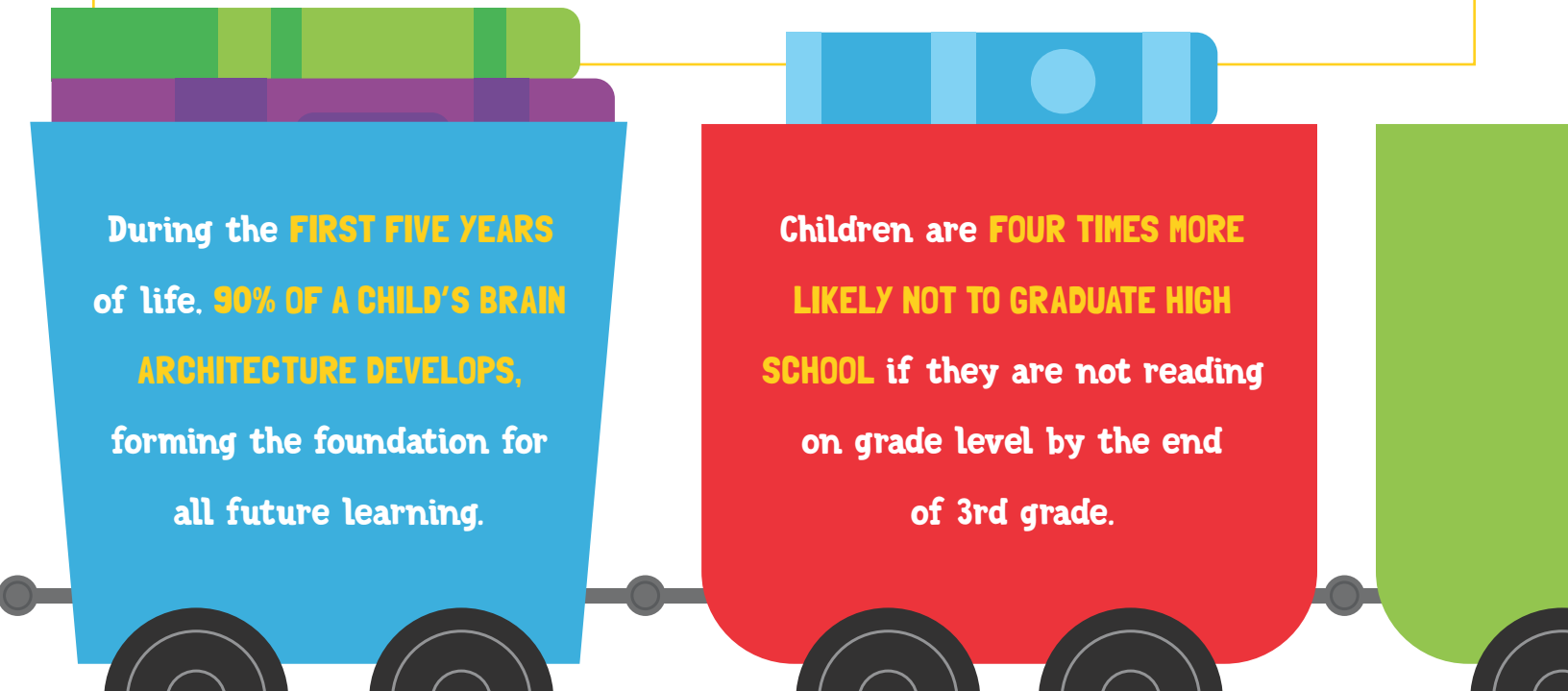
*The Reading Express* mobile classroom is a dynamic and fun school on wheels. The curriculum is designed to develop phonological and print awareness, oral language, fine motor and other early literacy skills through the exploration of books, nursery rhymes, songs, art and play. **It will reach into high-need communities throughout Harris County and provide 45-minute interactive classes that will be delivered weekly.** Classes will take place either on the bus or in community rooms in apartment complexes and/or other community-based venues. Targeted participants will be low-income and those who lack access to high quality early childhood reading readiness programs. *The Reading Express* is expected to reach at least 80 families at eight different sites each year and will run from September through May.

The mobile classroom is facilitated by highly trained staff and volunteers with programming that promotes the importance of reading to children every day. Parents/caregivers are also empowered and taught new ways to take an active role as their child's first teacher while staff and volunteers model ways to use literacy activities and books distributed after each session. In addition to providing critical early literacy development, *The Reading Express* serves as a conduit to create bonds with the families it serves and offer support, encouragement, and a hand up to those in need. Furthermore, this versatile mobile classroom will be seen on the streets of Houston drawing attention to the literacy crisis facing our community.

Success is evaluated through surveys, student and parent attendance, parent feedback, and the number of books distributed. A performance metric is utilized to measure and guide program progress.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:

- Deliver a high quality educational experience at no cost to parents and children who would not otherwise be able to afford such opportunities
- Provide a fun and stimulating atmosphere to engage parent and child in a shared bonding and learning experience
- Instill the importance of developing reading readiness skills and attending school when a child becomes of age while introducing foundations of reading through interactive play and guided lessons
- Distribute books and Literacy Activity Bags to encourage caregivers to incorporate literacy development into daily routines
- Invest in building relationships with participants and provide culturally sensitive programming



During the **FIRST FIVE YEARS** of life, **90% OF A CHILD'S BRAIN ARCHITECTURE DEVELOPS**, forming the foundation for all future learning.

Children are **FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY NOT TO GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL** if they are not reading on grade level by the end of 3rd grade.

# PUTTING THEIR FUTURES ON TRACK

## Underwriter Opportunities and Benefits

### **CABOOSE • \$10,000 ... ONLY 4 AVAILABLE**

- 12" x 6" (or comparable size) color logo on mobile classroom - **logo remains on the bus for two years**
- Logo with link on our website
- Social media mentions (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Name mention on mobile classroom press release
- Opportunity to place promotional items in Literacy Activity Bags given to each family

### **BOXCAR • \$15,000 ... ONLY 3 AVAILABLE**

All the benefits above plus:

- Increase logo size to 14" x 8" (or comparable size) color logo on mobile classroom - **logo remains on the bus for three years**
- Logo in Literacy Now Impact Report
- Participating representative at ribbon cutting ceremony
- Two (2) tickets to the Literacy Now Annual Guild Luncheon

### **COACH • \$25,000 ... ONLY 2 AVAILABLE**

All the benefits above plus:

- Increase logo size to 16" x 10" (or comparable size) color logo on mobile classroom - **logo remains on the bus for five years**
- Four (4) tickets to the Literacy Now Annual Guild Luncheon

### **LOCOMOTIVE • \$50,000 ... ONLY 1 AVAILABLE**

All the benefits above plus:

- Increase logo size to 26" x 26" (or comparable size) color logo on mobile classroom - **logo remains for the life of the bus**

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

*The Reading Express* volunteers make a two hour per week commitment and are trained to assist the Early Childhood Outreach Specialist. Duties will include developing relationships with program participants, engaging children and parents/caregivers in reading readiness activities, and overall support.

**The emotional, social, and physical development of young children has a direct effect on the adults they will become. Investing in very young children will maximize their future well-being.**

– Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[literacynowhouston.org](http://literacynowhouston.org)

