



# DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

## **The Denver Public Library's Read Aloud Program**

Thank you for your interest in the Denver Public Library's Read Aloud Program! This program impacts children in a meaningful and permanent way; by reading to children once a week, you will help to instill in them a life-long love of books that will help them in school and beyond.

The Read Aloud Program asks volunteers to make a commitment to visit a classroom once a week, usually for 14 – 17 weeks depending on the school calendar. There is a fall session, which runs from September – December and a spring session, which runs from January–May. Visits typically last from fifteen minutes to a half-hour and take place during school hours. The books are carefully selected by Read Aloud staff and will be delivered to the Denver Public Library (DPL) branch most convenient to the volunteer. Over the course of the school year, children will hear approximately 140 books. We have substitute readers who can fill in should you need to be away during the session.

If you are interested, please send me a completed application and background check form. If accepted, there will be an obligatory training session for new volunteers. Please call me if you have any questions. Thank you for your interest in sharing the love of reading with children! I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sarah McNeil  
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Read Aloud Coordinator  
Early Literacy Department  
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## **Job Description for Read Aloud Program Volunteers Philosophy**

A Read Aloud volunteer should feel comfortable promoting the major objectives of the Read Aloud Program, which are:

- ❖ To provide opportunities for children to experience the joy of reading and to develop a love of books.
- ❖ To promote the use of the Denver Public Library and its branches among preschoolers and their families.
- ❖ To develop pre-reading skills among Denver's children.

### **Responsibilities**

As an ambassador of the Denver Public Library, a Read Aloud volunteer makes a commitment:

To visit and read to a preschool classroom for approximately 30 minutes, once a week for fifteen weeks.

- ❖ To pick up the prepared Read Aloud backpacks weekly at a convenient DPL branch.
- ❖ To prepare for storytime each week by practicing reading the books aloud.
- ❖ To read the stories and discuss the books with the children.
- ❖ To discuss books and share read-aloud techniques and prepared booklists with teachers.
- ❖ To promote library services and library card registration to children and their families.

### **Time Required**

Because the Read Aloud Program serves preschool classrooms, almost all volunteer opportunities are for weekdays between 9am and 4pm. The fifteen-week session includes the following time commitments:

Training Session and Orientation	3 hours	one time
Picking up and returning backpacks	10-20 minutes	once a week
Preparing for each storytime	30 minutes	once a week
Visiting and reading at classroom	About 30 minutes	once a week
Travel time to and from classroom	15-20 minutes	once a week

### **Qualifications**

- ❖ A Read Aloud volunteer should have:
- ❖ A love of books and of the library.
- ❖ A respect for children as unique, important individuals.
- ❖ A desire to help children learn about themselves and their world.
- ❖ A sensitivity to economically disadvantaged children and families.
- ❖ Reliable mode of transportation.
- ❖ Must be 18 years old or older to be a volunteer.

### **Training and Benefits**

A training and orientation program is offered before each session. The program covers the benefits of being a Read Aloud Volunteer, the Denver Public Library's Read Aloud philosophy and techniques, volunteer expectations, and other logistics.



## **READ ALOUD: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

### **Will I be reading at the library?**

**No.** The storytimes take place at various Head Start Centers and Early Childhood Education Centers in the Denver area. Reliable transportation is required.

### **May I choose the center where I read?**

**Yes.** Based on the time when you and the teacher are available, the program coordinator will help match you with a center. We will try to find a convenient location; however that may not always be possible. Most of the centers are about a 15 - 20 minute drive from downtown. **To guarantee participation in this program, you must be willing to drive to any location in Denver.**

### **May I choose my own books?**

The Read Aloud program has its own collection, separate from the general DPL collection, of over 600 titles and 30,000 books. These titles have been selected for their excellence in developing pre-reading skills and importance in children's literature. Each book pack contains books that have been carefully chosen for developmental appropriateness and to engage a variety of interests and learning styles.

### **Where do I pick up my backpack?**

You may select any Denver Public Library branch near your home or office or the Central branch.

### **Will I be teaching the children to read?**

**No.** The Read Aloud Program provides a weekly 30-minute storytime provided by you at the center to help children *learn to love to read*. You will not be tutoring or teaching the children.

### **What ages are the children I will be reading to?**

The children are in preschool. They are 3-5 years old.

### **What is the program's philosophy?**

The program serves children from lower-income families who are attending Head Start and Early Childhood Education Centers. The Read Aloud Program strives to give these children the opportunity to experience the joy of reading, to develop a love of books, and to promote the use of the library.

### **What are the main responsibilities?**

- Visit and read to a preschool classroom for approximately 30 minutes, once a week for thirteen-fifteen weeks.

- Pick up the prepared Read Aloud book packs once a week at a convenient Denver Public Library branch.
- Prepare for storytime each week by practicing reading the books aloud.
- Read and discuss the stories with the children.
- Discuss books and share prepared booklists with teachers.

**How much time is required each week?**

The semester-long session includes the following time commitments:

- |                                       |                         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Training Session and Orientation    | 3 hours one time        |
| • Picking up and returning book packs | 10-30 minutes weekly    |
| • Preparing for each storytime        | 30 minutes weekly       |
| • Visiting and reading at classroom   | About 30 minutes weekly |
| • Travel time to and from classroom   | 20-60 minutes weekly    |

**Do I need special qualifications?**

A Read Aloud Volunteer should have:

- A love of books and of the library.
- A respect for children as unique, important individuals.
- A desire to help children learn about themselves and their world.
- Sensitivity to economically disadvantaged children and families.
- Reliable mode of transportation.
- Must be at least 18 years old to be a volunteer.

**Who does the Program serve?**

Educationally-at-risk children in Denver who attend government-supported agencies such as Head Start and Early Childhood Education Centers.