

Free workshops now available for families to learn the power of active reading

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Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is offering hundreds of free Active Reading workshops to families across the county, to teach parents and caregivers the power of reading *with* their children rather than reading *to* them. Active Reading is a proven way to build kids' language and vocabulary, preparing them to be lifelong readers who love books.

Read Charlotte and Charlotte Mecklenburg Library have collaborated to double third grade reading outcomes by 2025 with initiatives like this one, designed to have an impact on children through their parents. With 90 percent of a child's brain development occurring before age 5, it is crucial to develop literacy skills during this period. The workshops are developed for families with children ages 2-5, and

in the workshops they learn how to have engaging conversations with their children using words, pictures and ideas found in kids' picture books.

"Active Reading is one of our targeted interventions to move the needle for children in Mecklenburg County," explains Read Charlotte Executive Director Munro Richardson. "We are working with providers and partners throughout the county, including Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, to incorporate Active Reading in their work. We piloted these workshops with the Library earlier this year and are proud to see this work expand to ultimately help thousands of kids learn to read."

"After attending the workshop, we now pick up a book and try to make it an experience," said Beth Murray, who attended a pilot workshop with her daughter at the Scaleybark branch. "We always tried to get from point A to point B as fast as possible. I didn't care how we got there. Now, we spend time finding what we can *get* from each book."

In addition to support from Read Charlotte, the Belk Foundation and Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation also support this initiative. An Active Reading Training Coordinator is now in place and has already begun serving as the community point person for those interested in receiving or helping deliver Active Reading Training throughout Mecklenburg County.

The library has committed to coordinate 200 Active Reading workshops this year, providing convenient times and locations for everyone. Each training session consists of four consecutive components.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to register for the four-week Active Reading Workshop at libraries (other community locations coming soon), with the first being at Mint Hill Library on August 30 at 6 p.m. Visit <http://bit.ly/cmlibraryactiveresading> for a complete list of currently scheduled workshops.

About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library:

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America's leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to improve lives and build a stronger community. For more, visit cmlibrary.org.

About Read Charlotte:

Read Charlotte is a collaborative, community-wide initiative to double the percentage of third grade students reading at grade level from 39% in 2015 to 80% by 2025. Housed under the Foundation For The Carolinas, Read Charlotte is organized as a backbone organization leading a collective impact effort across Mecklenburg County. Focusing on the continuum from birth through third grade, Read Charlotte builds collaborative partnerships and provides resources on proven practices and/or programs. Read Charlotte plays a leadership role but does not directly operate the programs. Working groups comprised of experts and community members have helped to select strategies, identify community indicators and define a strategic plan that will guide Read Charlotte's work through 2025. For more information, visit www.readcharlotte.org .

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