



To: Casey Sharp, Grants Manager
Jenny Brandt, Director of Quality Initiatives
Paula Neth, Vice President of Programs
From: Nancy Heathman, Quality Initiatives Early Learning Coach

Date: May 11, 2015

Re: **Talk Read Play - STAR Grant updated report May 2015**
Information for funder report

I am very pleased to report the following:

On March 31st we found we had \$2,175.00 to spend with programs to support the Talk Read Play work we had been doing with the administrative team, the teachers and the families of two programs in our intensive Talk Read Play project.

As you are aware, our work was impacting 377 families between the two programs for the initial year. Over 230 of these were considered at risk because of family income, living conditions, special needs or other conditions that affected the family.

Due to a partnership that was created with **Books by the Bushel** – these funds were able to be leveraged to purchase at total of **over 621 books!!!** Even better, we were able to ensure that this was not a “one size fits all” effort. Each program was able to individually select books that met the needs of the children and families they serve. Books were chosen by teachers and leaders in each program, they included bi-lingual books, board books, hard cover and paperback. Each family will have a book to take home with them and each program has set up a system where children can check out books to take home and read with their family. Further, each classroom was able to have a few books to enhance the reading within their classroom.

I want to also recognize the partnership that was established with **Books by the Bushel**. When I contacted them all I knew was that they were identified as a family-owned children’s book company that specializes in distributing children’s books and collections to literacy programs across the country. Their tag line read - Promoting Literacy Across America. Their customer service was excellent and beyond any expectation. Within a few hours of my initial contact with customer service, the Director of Business Development, Paula Darnell had reached out and offered to help. I explained what we were trying to do, our Talk Read Play work and that we did not want each child to receive the same book if at all possible. Was I ever amazed and what was able to be accomplished. Decisions were made quickly between us, each program was able to go on line and individually order books for their families, shipping costs were waived and for every 10 books purchased they were able to choose a free book... What a way to leverage our dollars! Both programs expressed appreciation for the ease of service and the wide selection of books. This company certainly lived up to its tag line and provided us a way to nearly double our impact for the children and families in this project.

We know that by the time they are children are three years old, their brains have formed 1,000 trillion connections between neurons. We further know that “Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.” Research has told us that reading aloud to children helps stimulate their brain development.

Through this work we just put 621 books into the hands of those who directly impact over 377 children! Way to go!

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Heathman