



In 2012, three Arizona foundations, together with three state agency partners, saw enactment of third-grade reading promotion/retention legislation as an opportunity to pursue an integrated, statewide approach to put more children from low-income families on the path to school success.

Together with additional foundations, state agencies and community stakeholders, they used the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading's Community Solutions Action Plan framework to guide development of a 10-year Strategic Literacy Action Plan, and the state of Arizona and four initial communities submitted a unified application for the 2012 All-America City Award. That launched Read On Arizona, an exemplary, statewide public/private collaboration that is working to improve language and literacy outcomes for Arizona's children from birth through third grade.

Read On Arizona's "big tent" now involves more than 60 school districts, 750 schools and over 500 partners, reaching over 250,000 low-income children from birth through age 8 in 25 Read On communities across the state that are working on attendance, tutoring, school readiness, summer learning and family engagement. The number of funders has grown as well. Read On Arizona's philosophy is that everyone has a role to play in promoting early literacy, and it actively works to connect people from across the state of Arizona who want to get involved.

Fulfilling the original vision, Read On Arizona is more than just a cluster of communities working on early literacy; it is an ambitious effort that works both "statewide and at the state level" to support and sustain strong efforts to improve early literacy.

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Read On's commitment to bigger outcomes and sustainable scale has led to its strong focus on statewide policies and systems change necessary to move the needle and close the gap. Arizona is working to improve the quality of child care and early learning programs through the Quality First Rating System, and is working to increase the capacity of literacy providers to build a foundation of meaningful early learning experiences to ensure that children make progress in a range of contexts and across learning areas, including social and emotional development.

# ARIZONA

*Developing a Thriving Reader From the Early Years: A Continuum of Effective Literacy Practices* presents key milestones for what a child should know and be able to do from birth through age 8, explores ways adults can support achievement of those milestones and highlights effective programs and practices. It provides a touchstone for early educators, parents and funders and a guide to promote wise implementation and investment choices and is used as a shared framework by all partners.

Arizona is also working in partnership with several other states to develop a multifaceted Kindergarten Developmental Inventory and K–3 formative assessment to ensure that teachers have the information they need to guide instruction.

Read On Arizona and its partners know the critical importance of health to early school success. *Eyes on Learning* was recently launched to ensure that all children have effective vision screening and follow-up services that are essential for healthy vision. There have also been impressive gains in access to oral health care, with an increase in oral health screenings for young children from 0 to 5 climbing from 27,686 to 48,480.

Arizona has developed powerful information, tools and other vehicles to support early literacy efforts. Read On recently rolled out MapLIT, a one-stop shop for multiple data sets to inform strategic planning on early literacy efforts for partners across the state, with accompanying mapping capacity that will provide communities with readily accessible data on 25 early literacy indicators.

Arizona has also been able to track and report on statewide chronic absence data by grade and subgroup at the school level and the latest data show a decrease in chronic absence in K–3rd grades for all students and for free/reduced-priced lunch students.

Arizona further is committed to replicating and scaling what works. Among the evidence-based or promising programs that are part of its efforts are: AARP Experience Corps (volunteer tutors), Read Better Be Better, Abriendo Puertas, home visiting programs, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, Jumpstart, PBS Parents, a hybrid model connecting Reach Out and Read and Raising A Reader, and Success for All. These strategies and many others are among the ways that Arizona is addressing school readiness, attendance/ chronic absence, summer learning, parent engagement and health, and ultimately, third-grade reading.