

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Promoting Early Childhood Literacy for All Maine Children
RAISINGREADERS.ORG

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

VETERAN PARENTS LOVE to talk about how time flies when raising children—an attempt on their part to encourage new parents to savor the early childhood years. Though well intentioned, it's a tall order when new parents are deep in the trenches of the often exhausting day-to-day activities involved with caring for babies and toddlers. Then, as if overnight, a new chapter begins—diaper bags are exchanged for backpacks, toddler tantrums transition to negotiations about homework and friends, and playing together becomes watching them from the sidelines of the field, classroom, stage or studio. As the mother of a now eight- and six-year-old, I can honestly attest that “time flies.”

Though it is hard to comprehend how I now have school-aged children, it seems equally amazing that Raising Readers has finished its 19th year of inspiring a love of books and reading among Maine's youngest citizens and their families. That translates to 157,000 books given out to nearly 66,000 children aged birth to 5 in hospitals, birth centers and health centers across all 16 counties in our state during the past year.

We ended our 19th year with goodbyes to two of Raising Readers' founding leaders: Deborah A. Deatruck, who retired in January, and clinical advisor, Dr. Colette Sabbagh, who left Maine for a new opportunity in Virginia. We simultaneously looked to the future and made preparations to celebrate the program's monumental 20th birthday. Likewise, the State of Maine is also getting ready to commemorate an important milestone—its bicentennial is in 2020. We hope you will take the time to celebrate with us and our beautiful state at one of many upcoming events.

From the early years of driving around Maine to deliver books from the trunks of cars to participating sites to the present day when parents and partner organizations engage with us on social media platforms, Raising Readers has grown into a program that Mainers can be proud to call their own. This success is due largely to the dedicated health care teams and hospital staff, to the Libra Foundation, the



program's sole funder for 20 years, and to the childhood educators, librarians and early literacy organizations who partner with us to ensure children are read to regularly.

To all those who have participated in Raising Readers' growth and development over the past 19 years, we thank you for your contributions. We especially thank the parents and caregivers who have made reading to their children every day a priority. Without your commitment, Maine wouldn't be ranked #1 in the United States for reading to its children four or more days per week.

Though it has all flown by, we know there is much work to do and many accomplishments to celebrate in 2020. We thank you for joining us on Raising Readers' incredible journey!

Happy 20th birthday, Raising Readers! Here's to many more!

Cassandra Cote Grantham

Cassandra Cote Grantham, MA
Director

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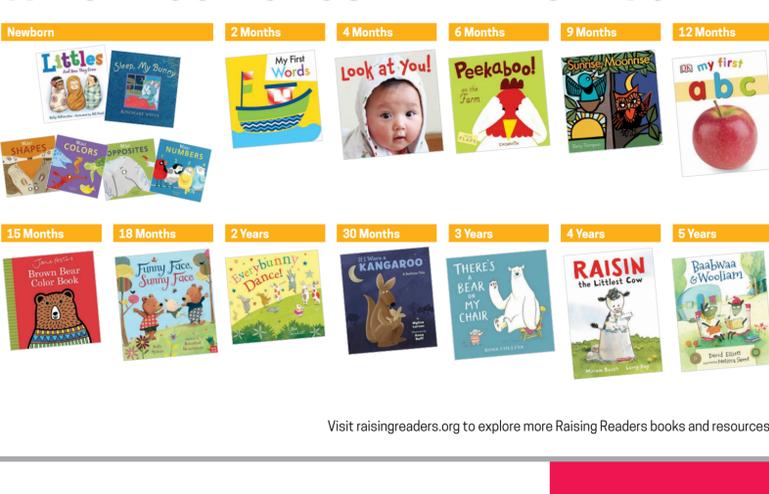
RAISING READERS' MISSION is to promote early childhood literacy and a love of reading by giving books to Maine children at birth and at well-child visits through their health care providers.

Parents and children always tell us how Raising Readers' books are treasured family favorites. Before these books ever make it from a health center into the hands of a Maine child, they undergo

rigorous review. A committee gathers each year to read and review hundreds of titles, looking for high-quality, developmentally appropriate books to share with Maine families.

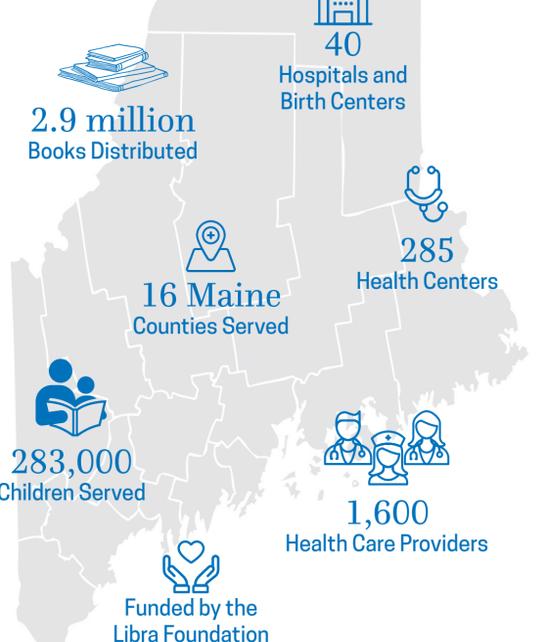
With the committee's feedback in hand, Raising Readers works with publishing partners to deliver a year's supply of customized books to Bangor, Maine. There, Raising Readers' warehouse and distribution partners, Owens & Minor, store, pack and ship the books—over 165,000 annually—to hospitals and doctor's offices where they are shared with Maine families.

WHICH BOOK IS YOUR FAMILY'S FAVORITE?



Visit raisingreaders.org to explore more Raising Readers books and resources.

ALL-TIME STATS (Since 2000)



CELEBRATING 19 YEARS OF RAISING READERS

2019 STATS:

- 157,000 Books Distributed at Well-Child Visits

- 289 Sites Visited

- 66,000 Maine Children Served

- 11,200 Totes Distributed at Birth

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"I wanted to say thank you for the incredible books you provide the children of Maine! My son received the *Little Book of Little Babies* at his four-month well-baby visit and it is still a huge hit at 9 months. The books provided by your program are superb!" — Liz

HIGHLIGHTS

The team said farewell to Raising Readers' co-founder Deborah Deatruck upon her retirement from MaineHealth, as well as one of its founding clinical advisors, Dr. Colette Sabbagh, upon her move out of state. Thank you, Deb and Colette, for sharing your gifts with Raising Readers for 19 years!



Raising Readers and The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at Maine Medical Center partnered to bring "Story Time at BBCH" to patients and their families. Pediatric providers, clinical staff and local celebrities were videotaped reading aloud their favorite Raising Readers books. This programming is now broadcast on the hospital's closed-circuit television.



QI SURVEY RESULTS

EVERY OTHER YEAR, Raising Readers sends a quality improvement survey to medical providers at hospitals and health centers to gain insight into how early literacy messaging and Raising Readers books are integrated into their practices. This year, nearly 70% of participating sites responded, a new record!



A DOCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

"We are honored to participate in a program that encourages our community to read to their children. We have seen the program's impact firsthand when a child's, whose only books at home are those from Raising Readers, eyes sparkle when the doctor hands them their brand-new book."

— Dr. John McGuckin and staff, Sanford

What did providers say about promoting early literacy in their practices?

75% of health centers and 72% of birth centers discuss the importance of talking, singing and/or reading aloud at well-child visits.

78% of health centers and 60% of birth centers explain how reading aloud is good for brain development.

67% of health centers explain the importance of pointing, naming and dialogic reading, among other developmental practices.

AN ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR EVERYONE

SOcial media gives Raising Readers the opportunity to connect with families, educators, health care professionals, literacy groups, home visitors, librarians and many others in 46 countries and counting!

- FACEBOOK**
@RaisingReadersMaine
81,500 Followers
- INSTAGRAM**
@raisingreadersme
2,800 Followers
- BLOG**
www.raisingreaders.org/blog
160 Followers
- PINTEREST**
@meraisingreader
3,100 Followers
- TWITTER**
@RaisingReaderME
1,000 Followers

The Raising Readers Blog

The Raising Readers blog continues to be an online space to explore early literacy topics like reading tips for children of all ages, book recommendations and more!



Interested in seeing what we're posting? We invite you to follow us and join the conversation!

