



Ready.Set.READ!

Star Readers

# **PROGRAM GUIDE**

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# **Thank You!**

**We are very grateful that you have  
made the decision to offer  
your volunteer time and talents  
to the Star Readers tutoring program.**

# About Ready.Set.READ!

## The Issue

Early grade reading success is a critical component of learning and an indicator of future success. Yet more than 43% of third-graders throughout Berks County are reading below grade level. That means close to 2,000 children in our community - in urban, rural and suburban schools - are four times more likely to drop out of school and 13 times more likely to drop out if they also live in poverty. They are less likely to develop skills essential for contributing to the 21st Century economy and less likely to be effective citizens.

## Our Response

Ready.Set.READ! is a community-wide initiative that brings together schools, businesses, organizations and individuals to improve early grade reading success. The mission of Ready.Set.READ! is to increase the number of students in Berks County who read proficiently by the end of third grade.

Ready.Set.READ!:

- provides support to students who are struggling to be proficient readers
- promotes language and pre-literacy development in younger children
- empowers parents and caregivers to help their children read, learn and develop
- mobilizes the community to take action to improve early grade reading success

## Our Guiding Principles

- All children can learn and succeed.
- Parents and/or primary caregivers are the first and most important teachers of their children.
- Our children's success depends on a focused, collaborative effort by parents, schools, universities/colleges, government, non-profit agencies, faith-based groups and public and private businesses.
- Early literacy development is critical to lifelong learning, success and personal fulfillment.

## Volunteer Tutor Expectations

- Complete the volunteer registration and obtain the required state and federal clearances:
  - Child Abuse Clearance
  - Criminal History State & Federal (State are free, FBI Fingerprinting = \$27.50)
  - Schools may have you sign a waiver document if you have been a resident of Pennsylvania for 10 years
  - Most schools only require the state documents
- Have available, reliable and consistent transportation
- Are literate in English, with at least average writing skills
- Are comfortable working with 7 and 8 year old children
- Agree to tutor a minimum of 45 minutes but up to 1 hour per week (or one tutoring session) for the school year
- Attend the new volunteer tutor training session (2 hours) as a first-year tutor
- Attend School Orientation session (1 hour) held at the beginning of each school year
- After the first year of tutoring, attend a returning tutor training annually
- Communicate with the School Coordinator and RSR staff on a regular basis regarding changes in schedule, changes in contact information and with questions or concerns
- Notify School Coordinator and RSR staff of absence at least 24 hours in advance or earlier
- Establish a positive working relationship with the student
- Provide positive feedback to the student with suggestions for improvement
- In each tutoring session, cover the material communicated by the school coordinator or classroom teacher
- Follow the format of a tutoring session as covered at training and in the Program Guide
- Complete Communication Log and Tutor/Family Bookmark at the end of each session
- Follow individual school policies and procedures for volunteers.

# Typical Traits of Seven and Eight Year Olds

- Eager to learn
- Becoming more self-conscious
- Becoming more independent
- Have an attention span of fifteen to twenty minutes
- Can have mood swings
- Need guidance in dealing with “failure”
- Feelings are easily hurt
- Need a lot of positive attention
- Can become attached to adults beyond their family; may try to please you and may quote you to their parents and teachers

## **Remember:**

- All children learn best in a secure relationship.
- This is an opportunity to model caring, respectful behavior.
- You may never know how you will influence their lives.

# Conversation Starters

Ask open-ended questions to put the child at ease and to get to know each other a bit.

Remember that a conversation is an exchange. Offer your ideas but focus most on what the child says. The goal is to encourage the child to speak. A good way to do this is to say, *“That’s interesting— tell me more.”*

Questions:

1. My favorite book is \_\_\_\_\_. Do you have a favorite story? If so, what is your favorite story?
2. I really like animals. I like the \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. What is your favorite animal and why do you like that animal?
3. When I am not in school, I like to do other things. I like to \_\_\_\_\_ for fun! What do you like to do for fun? \_\_\_\_\_
4. I have a big/small family. My family is \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me about your family....
5. I love sports! I love \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. What sports do you like? Why?
6. I have a best friend. Their name is \_\_\_\_\_. They are my best friend because \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me about a good friend that you have!
7. I have a favorite color and it is \_\_\_\_\_ because it reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_! What is your favorite color and tell me why do you like that color!
8. I love to eat! My favorite food is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_. What is your favorite and why?
9. My birthday is on \_\_\_\_\_ and I like to \_\_\_\_\_ on my birthday! Tell me when you have a birthday. What do you especially like to do on your special day.
10. I am special because \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me something that makes you special!

# Effective Language Tutors:

Consciously allow students to express their thoughts fully, without interruption.

Give students learning English as a second language extra processing time to process questions in English, think of answers in their first language, and then formulate their responses in English.

Use visuals, gestures, facial expressions and body language.

Build on prior knowledge—and build new academic background knowledge.

Contextualize ideas in real life situations.

Repeat and rephrase key concepts.

Maintain low anxiety and inhibition levels.

Encourage active participation.

Speak clearly using authentic natural speech.

Use shorter, less complex sentences for students in the earlier stages.

Use a slightly slower rate of speech—being careful to maintain the natural rhythm and flow of the language.

Use intonation, volume and pauses to aid meaning.

Ask questions with the answer in them. “Were they scared or angry?”

Ask, “What is one thing you understand from this,” or “What is one thing you have learned?”

Use a bookmark to cover up the text so the student sees only one line at a time.

Check for comprehension every so often. Rephrase academic questions into simpler forms.



## Positive Statements to Use While Tutoring

- Last session you read so fluently. I can't wait to hear you read today.
- I love the expression I hear in your voice. Please read that to me again.
- I like the way you paused and thought instead of guessing.
- Let's tackle that sentence together.
- As I look at the illustrations I can see why you made that prediction.  
I predict that...
- Let's read and check our predictions.

## What Not to Say to Emerging Readers

By Amy Mascott

1. "Stop. Re-read this line correctly."

**Instead: If the mistake didn't interfere with the meaning of the text let it go.**

2. "C'mon, speed up—you have to read a little faster!" or "Slow down—you're zipping through this!"

**Instead: Model appropriate pacing and fluency.**

3. "You know this!"

**Instead: What part of the word do you recognize?**

If you get no response, say, *Do you recognize this part* (point to the beginning chunk or letter) *or this part* (point to the ending chunk or letter)?

4. "You're wrong. That says..."

**Instead: Say nothing, as hard as that may be.**

# Tutor Session Outline

1

- **Build Rapport** 3 minutes

2

- **Interactive Read Aloud** 12 minutes

3

- **Read Together** 25 minutes
  - Work assigned by school staff
  - Vocabulary Building
  - Check for Understanding

4

- **Finish Session** 5 minutes



# Role of Your School Coordinator

## Your Coordinator will:

- coordinate any assignments from classroom teachers
- facilitate the transfer of the Family/Tutor Bookmark (summary of session) between tutors and families
- periodically check-in with you to provide positive feedback, to provide suggestions and to address any of your questions or concerns
- give you their school contact information
- give you a school calendar and highlight any school schedule changes that will affect your tutoring sessions.
- your Coordinator and other school staff will provide a welcoming, supportive environment for you and other volunteer tutors

## Contact Your School Coordinator When:

- you will need to miss a tutoring session. Please do this at least 24 hours in advance, sooner if possible
- your Communication Logs are blank or incomplete
- you are having trouble tutoring your student because of student behavior challenges. Your Coordinator may have suggestions for you
- the material you are being asked to cover during tutoring sessions seems consistently too easy or too hard for your student and/or too much or too little
- you have any questions or concerns about tutoring at your school site

# Materials

## Tutor Bag

- Pencil case with pencils, pen,crayons
- Dry erase board and marker
- Index cards

## Supply Box

Each school will have a file box with

- Paper (plain & lined)
- Index Cards
- Tutor Outline
- Teacher/Tutor Communication Logs
- Tutor/Family Bookmarks
- Bookmark Prompts
- Higher Order Thinking Questions

## Crate of Books/Bin of Games

Each site will have a designated green crate that includes read-aloud books and extra activities as well as a bin with literacy games.

## Other Notes:

- Pick up your bag before meeting with your student and return your bag after tutoring.
- Use the Ready.Set.READ! bag and keep tutoring materials in the bag.
- Keep bags and materials at your school site. Please do not take them home in between tutoring sessions. A substitute may need to use them to work with your student.
- If you need supply refills, check with your school coordinator. Each school has extra supplies. If you need something specific contact Diane Fiorentino at 610-685-4575 or email [dianef@uwberks.org](mailto:dianef@uwberks.org)
- You are welcome to keep personal supplies in your bag during the school year. Some tutors have a favorite pencil, a different color dry erase marker or stickers that they have brought from home in their bag/pencil box. Please clean out your tutor bag at the end of tutoring for the school year. Any materials left in the bag that are not RSR provided supplies will be removed when the bags are restocked.

# Tips for Reading Aloud

Reading aloud comes naturally to very few people. To do it successfully and with ease you must practice.

Preview the book [when possible] by reading it to yourself ahead of time. Such advance reading allows you to spot material you may wish to shorten, eliminate, or expand upon.

Use plenty of expression when reading. If possible, change your tone of voice to fit the dialogue.

Adjust your pace to fit the story. During a suspenseful part, slow down, and lower your voice. A lowered voice in the right place moves an audience to the edge of its chairs.

The most common mistake in reading aloud—whether the reader is a seven-year-old or a forty-year-old—is reading too fast. Read slowly enough for the child to build mental pictures of what they just heard you read. Slow down enough for the child to see the pictures in the book without feeling hurried. Reading quickly allows no time for the reader to use vocal expression.

*This is an excerpt from Chapter Four of The Read-Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease (Penguin, 2006, 6th edition). Used with permission.*

# What to Do Before, During and After Reading

For Interactive Read Alouds and Reading Together

## Before Reading:

- Introduce the title, author, and illustrator.
- Set a purpose for listening to the story. Statements that begin with “I wonder...” make good starting points. Ask the child to wonder about something or come up with a prediction as to what may happen.

## During Reading:

- Remember what you’ve practiced! Read slowly and clearly, with expression in your voice. Make sure the child has time to look at the pictures.
- Draw attention to illustrations that enhance the meaning of the text.
- It’s okay to stop once in a while to comment on something interesting, make a new prediction, or wonder about something new. However, make sure not to stop too frequently or it can disrupt the flow of the story.
- If there are words that may be unfamiliar to the child, you can pause briefly to explain.

## After Reading:

- Allow time for discussion. Share your own thoughts and ask the child to do the same.
- Encourage higher order thinking skills – ask questions that require the child to do more than just remember what happened in the story. Open-ended questions about the characters or events in the plot are a good starting point.
- Have the child retell the story in their own words or reread it to enhance comprehension.
- Use questions on next page to guide discussion

# Higher Order Thinking Questions

- Describe what happens when...
- How would you define...?
- Can you tell why...?
- Find the meaning of...?
- How did \_\_\_\_ happen?
- Why did...?
- How would you show...?
- How would you explain...?
- How would you describe...?
- What can you tell me about...?
- What do you predict could have happened next...?
- What was the main idea...?
- What differences exist between...?
- Can you provide an example of what you mean...?
- How would you compare...?  
Contrast...?
- State or interpret in your own words...
- Can you explain what is happening...?
- What can you say about...?
- Which is the best answer...and why?
- What can you conclude from...?
- How would you summarize...?
- Is there a better solution to...?
- Do you think...is a good or a bad thing?
- How would you have handled...?
- What changes to...would you recommend?
- Do you believe...?
- How would you feel if...?
- What do you think about...?
- Do you agree with the actions...?
- How could you change the plot?
- Why did they choose...?
- How could you determine...?

- What choice would you have made...?
- Based on what you know, how would you explain...?
- How would you compare the ideas...?
- How would you compare the people...?
- What would happen if...?
- How would you improve....?
- Do you know another instance where...?
- Could this have happened in...?
- What questions would you ask of...?
- How would you use...?
- Which events could have happened...?
- If...happened, what might the ending have been?
- How was this similar to...?
- What was the underlying theme of...?
- What do you see as other possible outcomes?
- Why did...change occur?
- How is...similar to...?
- What are some of the problems of...?
- What was the problem with...?
- How is \_\_\_related to...?
- Why do you think...?
- What evidence can you find...?



# Strategies for Reading Together

- **Choral reading**

Hold the book together and ask the child to read along with you. Begin reading in a voice that is slightly louder and faster than the child's voice. As the child becomes more comfortable with reading the text, lower your voice and slow down your reading speed. If the child slows down, increase your volume and speed again.

- **Echo reading**

Read aloud a line of text. Ask the child to read the same line. Continue taking turns reading and rereading the same lines. When the child begins to read with more expression and fluency, suggest that he read aloud on their own.

- **Paired Reading**

Explain to the child that sometimes you will read aloud together – duet reading – and sometimes he or she will read alone – solo reading. Agree on two signals the child can use to switch back and forth from solo to duet reading. When the child gives you the duet signal, you will begin reading together. When the child feels ready for solo reading, they will give the solo signal and you will stop reading.

- **Explicit modeling**

This type of modeling helps children learn to think about what they already know while they are reading. Talk about your thinking process – what you do to get meaning from the words and understand the text. For example: "That's a new word. It begins with *cl*. I don't know how to pronounce the next part – *ue*. Harriet is a spy. It must be *clue* because spies look for clues."

- **Implicit modeling**

This type of modeling also helps children think while they read. When a child is stuck on a word you can suggest strategies, he or she can use to figure it out. The child can use these strategies immediately and when reading in the future. You might say, "Try reading the sentence again." "Try reading the next sentence." "Where did the boy go at the beginning of the story?" "Where do you think he might be going now?"

## Common Core Vocabulary K-3

classify

compare

contrast

describe

develop

draw

identify

organize

recount

retell

support

alliteration

connections

explicitly

point of view

comprehend

demonstrate

determine

distinguish

explain

locate

recognize

refer

suggest

central idea

stanza

details

illustrations

theme

# Vocabulary Activities

## **SORRY**

Write vocabulary on the index cards located in your Star Readers tutoring bag, one word per card. Write the word 'Sorry' for every five vocabulary cards that you have made.

Turn the cards face down. Have the student pick a card and read the word or read the word and give a definition for the word. If the student gets it correct, they keep it; if not, they put it back into the pile. Have the second student pick a card, etc.

When a tutor or student picks a 'Sorry!' card, the player must pass all of his cards to the player on the right. The player with the most cards at the end of the game wins.

## **WORD DOMINOES**

Draw a line down the middle of about 20 index cards. Write one vocabulary word on each side of each card. Make sure to write each word on at least two cards. Then, play 'dominos.'

## **GO FISH**

Using blank index cards, make several pairs of vocabulary words. These become the playing cards. Deal five cards to each player. The remaining cards are spread out in a disorderly pile referred to as the "ocean" or "pool".

The player whose turn it is to play asks another player for their cards of a particular word. For example, Alice may ask, "Bob, do you have the word "that"?" Alice must have at least one card of the word she requested. Bob must hand over the card with the word "that" if he has it. If he doesn't have it, Bob tells Alice to "go fish" (or just simply "fish"), and Alice draws a card from the pool and places it in her own hand. Then it is the next player's turn – unless the card Alice drew is the card she asked for, in which case she shows it to the other players, and she gets another turn. The game ends when the cards have all been picked up or a set time has passed. The player with the most cards wins.

## **SHOW ME**

Write one vocabulary word on each index card. Turn the cards face up. Read a vocabulary word definition and ask the student to 'Show me' the matching vocabulary word, alternating between students.

## **BINGO**

- 1) Make Bingo checkerboards on whiteboard, paper, cardboard, etc.
- 2) Fill in spaces on Bingo board using vocabulary words and make cards using the same words plus additional words from previous lessons
- 3) As words on cards are read, student marks or covers correct words on Bingo board.

## **COMPOUND WORDS**

- 1) Make cards using half of familiar compound words - any, one, body, some, thing, day, etc.
- 2) Students put the words together to make a compound word
- 3) You can also do this using endings like "ed" "s" and "ing"

Note: Rhyming words, compound words, and adding endings to root words are common second grade skills.

**FILL IN THE MISSING LETTER/S** - (supports work with letter sounds, endings, rhyming words)

- 1) Using a whiteboard or notebook paper, write a vocabulary/sight word omitting a letter or two. Put a line in the word in place of the missing letter/s.
- 2) Student fills in the missing letter/s, either orally or in writing

## **SILLY SENTENCES (an oral game)**

1) Give students two vocabulary words and ask them to make up a silly sentence in their heads using the words. You can use cards or write the words on paper for the student to see. Be sure to give an example to show them what you want them to do. The sillier the sentence the more they will like it.

Example - "grass" "teeth" . I mow the "grass" with my "teeth." I have a lot of "teeth" growing in my "grass."

2) If the student has trouble making a sentence, start with ONE word and increase the number. Eventually, try to use 3 sight and/or vocabulary words in the silly sentences.

## **THINK IN YOUR BRAIN GAMES (these are played without paper, just using your brain!)**

1) Tell students you are going to play a game in which they are just going to use their brains and "think" the answers - no writing anything down

2) Think in your brain...a word that rhymes with....(you can give them a beginning letter or a beginning sound)

Example - Think in your brain a word that rhymes with "hall" - starts with a "c," starts with a "t," starts with a "cr," - use the actual letter or a sound

3) Think in your brain... a word that shows past tense (it happened earlier) ...Today I dance with my dog, yesterday I \_\_\_\_\_with my dog. Today I walk to school, yesterday I \_\_\_\_\_to school.

4) Think in your brain....a word that means the same (synonym) or the opposite (antonym)....My hand is over the paper. My hand is \_\_\_\_\_ the paper.

## **TIC TAC TOE**

Using a Tic Tac Toe grid choose a word for your student and one for yourself. Write them at the top of the paper or white board. Instead of using X's and O's, use the words to play the game.

## **MIX IT AND FIX IT**

Write the letters that make up a word on small pieces of paper (one letter per piece of paper) or use old letters from a scrabble board. Have the students mix the papers up and then make the words. Do this a few times. You can use the index cards provided if you want them to be sturdier to use again.

## **TABLE WRITE/AIR WRITE**

Have the student write the word on the table with their finger or in the air with their finger.

## **PICTIONARY (for advanced students)**

Have the student pick a vocabulary word to draw on the Star Readers white board. You guess which vocabulary word the student has drawn. Switch.

### **Helpful Websites**

<http://www.k12reader.com/category/book-lists/>

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/113/>

<http://www.readingrockets.org/books>

<http://www.berks.lib.pa.us/>

<http://readingpubliclibrary.org/>

<http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists/>

# Tutor/Family Connection Bookmark

**Today we read**



**I thought the book was**

**I was good at**

**My tutor says**



- Bookmarks are a half sheet of paper
- Have your student put his/her name at the top of the bookmark
- Use the Student Writing Prompts on the next page to encourage good descriptions

## Student Writing Prompts for Tutor/Family Bookmark

### **I thought the book was:**

Good

Awesome

Silly

Different

Interesting

Funny

Exciting

Sad/Happy

Realistic

Surprising

Magical

Boring

Ask “Why do you think that?” Talk it over with the student.

### **I was good at:**

Reading

Vocabulary

Sight Words

Decoding Words

Reading with expression

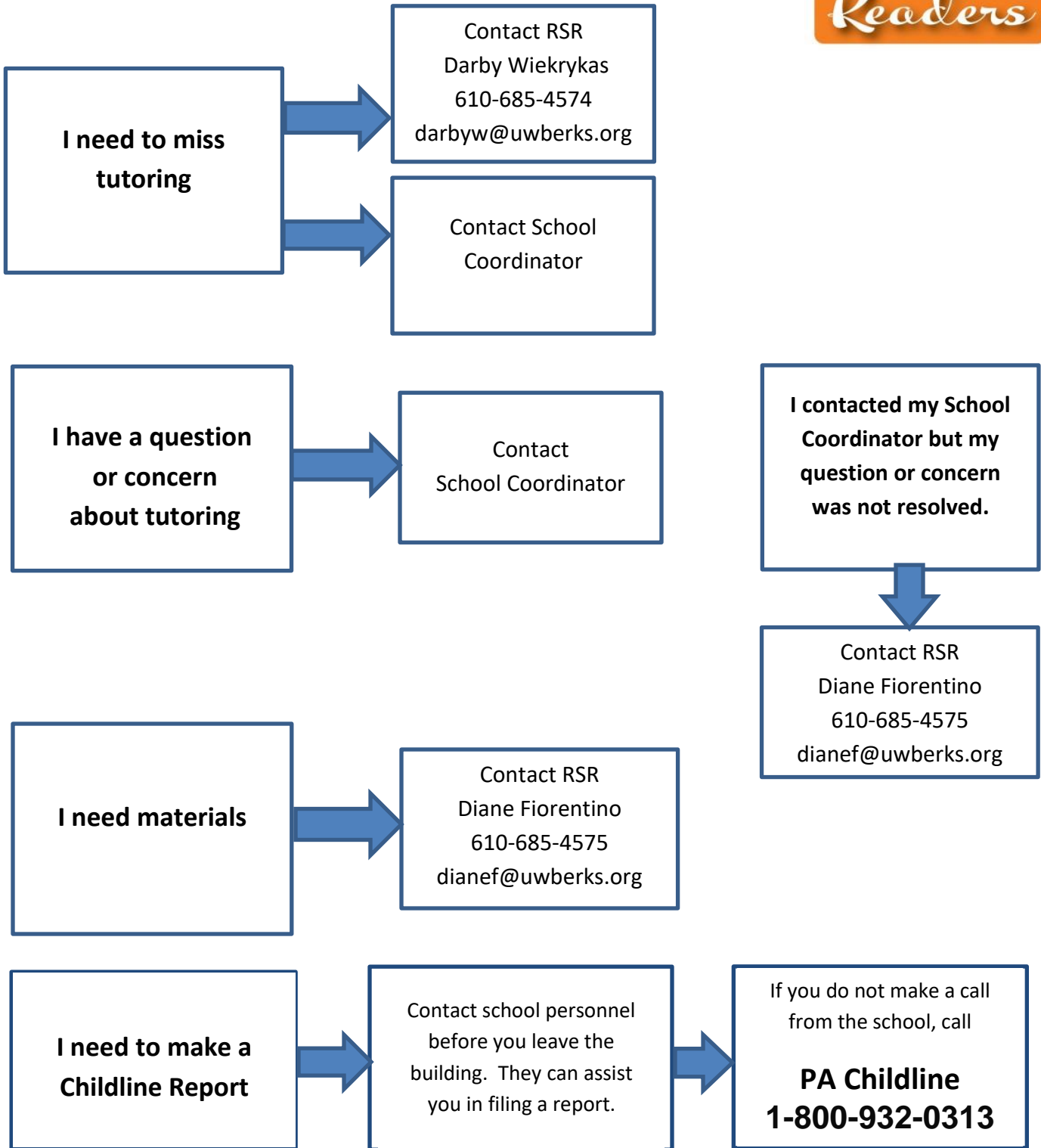
Answering questions about the story

Listening

Getting clues from pictures



# Who Do I Contact?



# Volunteer Tutor FAQs

## Attendance

### **What if my student is absent?**

Your Coordinator may not always be able to contact you ahead of time. If your student is absent, please feel free to join another tutoring group or to work with a student whose tutor is absent.

### **What if I need to miss a tutoring session?**

We understand that you may need to miss one or two sessions per semester. Please contact both your School Coordinator and RSR staff at least 24 hours in advance if you will miss a session, sooner if possible.

### **How can I find out about school closings due to inclement weather?**

Please check the local news stations to find out about school closings due to inclement weather. Please remember that in inclement weather, your Coordinator or RSR staff may not be available to alert or communicate with you.

### **How can I find out about school closings due to holidays?**

Your Coordinator will give you a school calendar to note any other closings that will affect tutoring.

## Clearances and Identification

### **Why do I need clearances?**

Clearances help keep everyone as safe as possible. Visit our website at [www.readysetreadberks.org](http://www.readysetreadberks.org) for helpful guidance through the process of obtaining your clearances if you have not already done so.

### **Who do I give my clearances to?**

Give a copy of your clearances to your School Coordinator at Orientation. Ready.Set.READ! staff do not need to collect your clearances. You may not begin to tutor until you hand in your clearances to school staff. Keep your original copies of your clearances in a safe place at your home.

### **Identification**

Many school districts are using volunteer identification systems that scan a volunteer's photo id on the first visit. The image is recorded and used to print identification badges each time the volunteer signs in at the office. Be prepared with your valid government issued photo identification card (such as driver's license) when you go to your school for orientation.

## Confidentiality

### **May I discuss my student's progress with friends or others in the community?**

Please maintain student confidentiality by limiting your discussion of students' progress to your Communication Log and Tutor/Family Bookmark and with school or RSR staff.

### **May I expect an update on my student's progress, or to see my student's report card?**

Your Coordinator may give you a general update of your student's progress. To respect student confidentiality, please do not ask your Coordinator to see your student's report card or for specific details on her or his progress.

## Gift and Food Policy

### **May I give my student gifts for birthdays, holidays or other reasons?**

To ensure fair treatment for all students, Ready.Set.READ! will provide a book for you to give to your student at the winter break and a RSR cinch bag with 3 books to give to your student at the end of tutoring. Some tutors like to give stickers or pencils to their students. That is acceptable, however it is not an expectation that tutors purchase any kind of materials or incentives with their own funds.

**I tutor after school. May I give my student snacks during tutoring?**

No. So many children have allergies today that a well-intentioned gesture of a snack could have serious implications for child. If your child complains of being hungry and cannot be redirected, please see your schools' coordinator for suggestions on how to handle the situation.

**Logistics**

**Am I responsible for picking up my students from class, or escorting them back to class?**

Your students should meet you at the designated tutoring location and return to class by themselves.

**I tutor after school. What if my student's parents don't pick her or him up on time?**

Please escort your student to the main office and ask office staff to handle the situation from there. However, this situation has happened only once or twice since Star Readers has started.

**Where do I sign in for tutoring?**

Please make sure to sign in and out following your school's policy.

**Where do I park and where are the restrooms?**

You will discuss details like parking, restrooms and emergency procedures at your Orientation.

**Materials**

**Can I take my tutor bag home in between sessions? Can I use my own tutoring bag?**

Please use the RSR tutor bag and please leave your bag and its contents at your school site. A substitute tutor may need to use your bag and its contents to work with your student.

**Am I responsible for providing a lesson plan, materials or supplies?**

Your tutor bag, your site's green bin of books and file box of supplies provide all the materials and supplies that you need for tutoring. The school will provide the material for reading practice.

**Who do I contact if I need tutor bag supplies?**

Contact Diane Fiorentino at 610-685-4575 or dianef@uwberks.org

**What books should I be using?**

**Reading Program Text:** You will use a reading textbook or program that your Coordinator will discuss with you at Orientation.

**Read Aloud Books:** You can find read aloud books in the bin of books or bring books from your personal collection or borrow books from your local library

**Miscellaneous**

**What should I do if I am concerned about my student's ability to participate in a tutoring session?**

Speak with your School Coordinator about any behavior challenges when working with a student.

**Will there be opportunities for me to connect with other Star Readers tutors, staff and trainers?**

Tutors are required to attend annual professional development trainings. This is a great time for tutors to share ideas and get to know staff and other volunteers.

**May I tutor my student in other subjects?** To support the mission of Star Readers, please tutor your student in reading only.