



*“The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention.” — OSCAR WILDE*

Jessica Rodriguez’s two-year-old already has a favorite book, *We Are a Family*, by Patricia Hegarty; they received the book from Read to Grow this fall after placing a family book request online. **Expecting her fourth child in January, Jessica was laid off from her job because of COVID.** The books she receives from Read to Grow give her ways to engage her daughter while her two older children attend school remotely and ensure that her little one is ready for school when the time comes.

**Jessica learned about Read to Grow when she gave birth to her son at St. Francis Hospital** six years ago. She received our *Welcome to the World!* book and a visit from a hospital volunteer, who **encouraged her to read to her baby every day.** Jessica filled out our reply cards with the birth of each child and received developmentally appropriate books and literacy information when her children turned three months and twelve months old.



*Jessica Rodriguez’s children show off their new books (Photo J. Rodriguez)*

Jessica didn’t realize she could request more books from Read to Grow until she attended a book bag giveaway hosted by Sheldon Oak, an affordable housing non-profit in Hartford, and noticed the Read to Grow sticker on the back of the books being distributed with the book bags. Jessica met Kathleen Rogers that day and learned that **Kathleen requests several thousand books each year from Read to Grow on behalf of Sheldon Oak.** The sight of Kathleen pulling up to the Read to Grow warehouse to pack her car full of 1,000 books to bring back to families is not uncommon.

Over the past 20 years, Read to Grow has worked with hospitals, schools, daycares, diaper banks and hundreds of other community organizations to **distribute over 2.2 million books to children across Connecticut.** In response to the pandemic, **we have given out over 61,000 books since March at meal distribution sites around the state.** We know that access to books is at the heart of language acquisition and language acquisition is one of the most important factors in determining long-term school success (Anderson, Wilson and Fielding).

Your support today means that we can continue to ensure diverse, high quality, developmentally appropriate books get into the hands of the children who need them most. **Please consider giving what you can so children like Jessica’s are prepared to be successful in a world with many challenges.**

*(over)*

**Read to Grow is an organization you can trust. In fiscal year 2020, 81% of our expenses were for programming services.**

**Your support can change the trajectory of a child's life:**

\$25 = literacy packets for 3 new moms

\$50 = 10 follow-up books for 3-month-old babies

\$75 = 15 new books for kindergarteners

\$125 = 30 new books for children picking up school meals

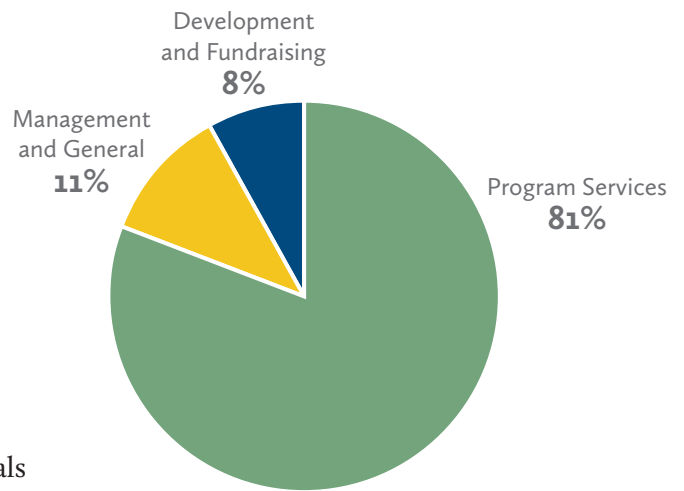
\$175 = bilingual books for 60 children

\$250 = 1 virtual literacy workshop and books for families who attend

\$300 = 125 books by Black authors featuring Black characters

\$500 = 1 month supply of books for 20 Early Steps to School Success families

\$1,000 = 400 books for a BOOK PLACE



### 3 Easy Ways To Give:

**1** Use the enclosed envelope

**2** Call 203.488.6800

**3** Go online: [www.readtogrow.org](http://www.readtogrow.org)



*Preschooler adores the book he chose at a meal distribution site (Photo L. Noe)*

**This holiday season, please consider a gift to support our work.**

**You can donate in honor or in memory of someone special. We will send a card to the person you designate, or we will mail the card to you for your delivery.**

**Please stay safe and healthy.**