FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

READY! FOR KINDERGARTEN™ NAMED “READERS’ CHOICE TOP 100” BY DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION MAGAZINE

K-12 administrators and community leaders across the nation endorse parent engagement program that improves education outcomes.

Kennewick, WA, January 31, 2014: READY! for Kindergarten, a program of the national Children’s Reading Foundation, has been selected as one of the best programs in education by K-12 leaders who named it to District Administration magazine’s “Readers’ Choice Top 100” in December, 2013.

In recognizing the most innovative programs and products, the annual District Administration award informs superintendents and other senior school district leaders about programs and products their colleagues across the nation are using to help their districts excel.

Children’s Reading Foundation President Nancy Kerr said, “We are thrilled to be recognized as a Top 100 program. It’s a tremendous honor administrators using READY! for Kindergarten recommended it to their colleagues through this prestigious publication. This award is yet another validation of the powerful impact our early learning program has and its ability to ensure children succeed in school.”

READY! for Kindergarten, which provides trainings, targets and tools to parents of children birth to age five, is offered in over 25 states and 115 school districts across the country. It is a research-based and proven program, helping communities ensure children start kindergarten at grade level and read proficiently by 3rd grade, a strong indicator of future success in school and in life. Classes and the curriculum are available in both English and Spanish.

“We are using READY! for Kindergarten as one strategy to reach monolingual Spanish speaking parents, increasing their knowledge of child development and the importance of their children starting kindergarten prepared,” said Chris Barge, Director of School Readiness at The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County, located in Boulder, Colorado, the most recent community to launch the READY! for Kindergarten program. “We know children who start kindergarten behind, stay behind. Research shows the READY! program has been successful in other communities; we want to bring that success to Boulder County to help reduce our significant achievement gap.”

“Parents and caregivers of children who attend READY! classes leave with materials to use at home to build pre-literacy and school readiness skills,” said Virginia Paine, National Director of READY! for Kindergarten. “Studies show nearly 80% of children whose parents take part in READY! meet the kindergarten reading readiness standard regardless of family income or ethnicity, compared to 55% of children whose parents do not attend.”
“The *READY! for Kindergarten* program directly correlates with the skills we hope our incoming kindergarteners have,” said Niki Arnold-Smith, Principal at Eastgate Elementary in Kennewick, WA. “This program is a tremendous support to our parents and students as we work together to ensure our students are prepared for school and read proficiently by 3rd grade.”

“Every year 40% of children start kindergarten already one to three years behind. They struggle to catch-up, and most of them never will,” Kerr said. “We hope the endorsement from school district administrators and community leaders brings further attention to the importance of our program and inspires more communities to prepare their students to start kindergarten at grade level.”

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**THE CHILDREN’S READING FOUNDATION® & READY! FOR KINDERGARTEN™**

Founded in 1996, the Children’s Reading Foundation’s mission is

- encourage and educate families about their important role in raising a reader
- support schools in ensuring students read on grade level by the end of the third grade
- facilitate community involvement in helping young readers be successful.

*READY! for Kindergarten* is the Children Reading Foundation’s premier school readiness program for families and child care providers. *READY!* fosters early learning that ensures children succeed in school.

The Children’s Reading Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization headquartered in Kennewick, Washington. To learn more, please visit [www.readingfoundation.org](http://www.readingfoundation.org) and [www.readyforkindergarten.org](http://www.readyforkindergarten.org)

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**THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SERVING BOULDER COUNTY**
The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County is the recognized leader in preparing Boulder County Colorado for its future challenges, expanding the culture of giving, and galvanizing diverse resources to improve the quality of life for all. Its commitment to transformational community leadership is seen in its School Readiness initiative, a community-wide focus on early learning aimed at reducing the significant achievement gap between children in poverty and those in middle- and upper- class families. For more information visit [http://www.commfound.org/ready](http://www.commfound.org/ready)

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EASTGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, KENNEWICK, WA

A public school in the Kennewick School District (KSD), Eastgate Elementary serves 495 students in grades PK-5. KSD is a pioneer in the early learning movement. In 1996, the KSD took the bold step of implementing their Third Grade Reading Goal, which states that 90% of their third grade students will read at grade level. A massive undertaking, this required enormous effort on the part of teachers and a paradigm shift in the kind of work performed by para-educators. In 2006, KSD reached 90% and has been above 87% ever since. This continues to be the district’s fundamental learning goal as it sets the foundation for a student’s ability to be successful in school. In 2002, the KSD helped launch the READY! for Kindergarten program, another strategy to reach its 90% reading goal that engages parents in their child’s early learning and kindergarten readiness.

Watch READY! for Kindergarten in action. READY! offers age-appropriate targets, trainings and tools for parents and caregivers of children birth to age five that ensure children success in school. Typically funded for school districts, foundations and community organizations, the proven program supports parents in being their child's first teacher and preparing their children to start kindergarten at grade level.

A father reviews the tools and child development information he receives at READY! for Kindergarten classes. Classes are held three times a year, covering different age-appropriate topics, and are free to parents of children age birth to five.