

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Montana State Library Launches New Early Literacy Texting Program**

**(HELENA)**--- The Montana State Library works hard to meet the information needs of all Montanans, whether it's providing online access to expensive scholarly journals for student research papers or working to purchase content for downloadable books and much more.

But there's one group of Montanans that is likely unable to articulate its information needs: preschoolers.

Now preschoolers (or at least their parents and caregivers) have a whole new way to access the information needed to set them up for success in school and in life. The Montana State Library has launched a new statewide texting program, called Ready 2 Read, designed to reach parents and caregivers with messages related to early literacy skills development via text.

The texting program launched statewide on Monday, October 19. Participants will receive three messages per week designed to help parents and caregivers build early literacy skills in their four year-old.

"Research shows that children who start kindergarten armed with a set of early literacy skills not only succeed in school, but also in life," said Sara Groves, Ready 2 Read project director. "The Ready 2 Read texting program will help parents and caregivers of four year-olds learn about these skills and help their kiddos develop them through easy practices families can do every day at home, like reading, singing, talking, playing, and writing together."

The Ready 2 Read text program is based on research developed by Stanford University that found if parents of preschoolers received text messages focusing on early literacy skill development, those children scored significantly higher in kindergarten assessments.

"As librarians, we understand how important it is for children to have these early literacy skills at a very young age so they can start school ready to learn," said Groves. "And we understand that all parents want to do what's best for their child. The Ready 2 Read text program provides free, high-quality resources for parents to help their children succeed."

The Ready 2 Read text program is free to Montana families. Participants do not need to be a patron of any library to participate. The program is designed for parents and caregivers of four year-olds, though families with other pre-school age children are welcome to join.

Participants will receive three messages per week for a total of eight months. The messages start at a basic level and build on skills developed through the program. While the program officially began on October 19, 2015, families can sign up at any time. Regardless of when they sign up to participate, families will begin with the program's first message and then continue to receive messages for eight months.

The messages are based on the latest research that has proven how children develop early literacy skills. Each message is designed to be fun and interactive between parent or caregiver and their child.

Signing up to participate is easy. Text the word "signup" to (406) 204-3583.

If, for any reason and at any time, participants want to stop receiving text messages, they just have to text the word "stop" to the same number.

"We are so excited to be able to offer the Ready 2 Read text program to Montana families as another way that they can use free, quality information to enhance their child's learning skills," said Groves.

The Ready 2 Read texting program is part of the Montana State Library's Ready 2 Read project, which is designed to help parents and caregivers understand the value of sharing language and literacy with their children beginning at birth. Various aspects of the Ready 2 Read project have been funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the form of Library Services Technology Act monies.

Through its statewide programs, the Montana State Library empowers Montanans; enhances learning in families and communities; builds 21st Century skills; and provides opportunities for civic participation. For more information about the Montana State Library, visit <http://msl.mt.gov>. For more information about the Ready 2 Read project, contact Sara Groves at (406) 444-5357 or via e-mail at: [sgroves@mt.gov](mailto:sgroves@mt.gov).

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