



Read to be Ready Culture of Literacy Challenge

Read To Be Ready Overview

Currently, only 43 percent of students are reading on grade level by the time they leave third grade. The goal of Read to be Ready is to increase the percentage to 75 percent by 2025. We cannot reach this ambitious goal without the help of *all* Tennesseans.

About the Culture of Literacy Challenge

While learning to read takes intentional teaching and parenting strategies, we believe part of the solution lies in sharing a culture of literacy, showing practices that build strong readers and strong parent-child relationships, embedding reading into our habits and into our media, and ensuring literacy is a primary and urgent value of our mainstream culture.

Governor's Books from Birth Foundation, Tennessee's Imagination Library, Southern Word, and Read to Be Ready are teaming up to drive the creation and sharing of content and media that celebrates positive reading habits in the everyday lives of Tennesseans.

The first two phases involve collecting images of parents reading to their children and inviting songwriters to create music based on reading themes. See attached for the request for submission.

If this initiative interests you, please be in touch with us. We are intentionally seeking the following:

- Photos of parents reading with their children, especially at bedtime and especially fathers reading with their children.
- Songs with reading related themes.
- Media partners, including social media experts and bloggers, interested in broadcasting and distributing reading related content.
- Donations of items that can be used to reward or recognize content creators who will be contributing their effort pro bono.
- Events company partners, restaurants, or entertainment venues interested in donating space, food, and beverages to bring the participating community together.

If you have interest in participating in this initiative, please e-mail us at info@southernword.org.



Call for Songs

As part of the Tennessee Department of Education's Read to be Ready initiative, Governor's Books from Birth Foundation, Tennessee's Imagination Library, and Southern Word are seeking songs that include reading themes or prominent placement of books in their lyrics.

We welcome songs that take a traditional public service announcement approach as well as songs created for children and their families. However, we are also interested in reading themes embedded in popular music for young adult and adult audiences. For example, can the girl in the sundress drinking a cold beverage on the tailgate be reading a book as part of the hit song?

Currently, only **43 percent** of students are reading on grade level by the time they leave third grade. The goal of Read to be Ready is to increase the percentage to **75 percent** by 2025.

While learning to read takes intentional teaching and parenting strategies, we believe part of the solution lies in sharing a culture of literacy and embedding literate practices into our mainstream culture and way of life.

REQUEST

In this spirit, **please accept the challenge of writing and producing a song for submission** in any genre with reading themes. We are open to all creative approaches when you include this theme.

Please let us know in advance if you are accepting this challenge by contacting us at info@southernword.org. We would love to hear about your plans and ideas.

INCENTIVE

We are working to secure broadcast and social media partners who will air selected songs from the challenge.

This is an open source initiative. To the extent that you can produce and broadcast reading-themed media on your own in your community, we encourage you to help lead the way.