Every Day is a Reading and Writing Day
The Importance of Literacy in America

Communication serves as the foundation of any successful society. However, too many American children are not exposed early in life to the learning and literacy-rich environments needed to put them on a path of academic and professional success.

Roughly one in three children arrives at kindergarten lacking the skills necessary for lifetime learning. According to the 2012 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), students in nearly 40 percent of countries scored higher than their U.S. counterparts in reading. As a result, many U.S. students find themselves struggling to compete in an ever-increasing global marketplace.

The foundation for literacy is laid years before children enter school. Early literacy includes what children know about communication, language (verbal and non-verbal), reading and writing, even before they can actually read and write. The early childhood period is critical to getting children off to a strong start in language and literacy. Now, more than ever, there is a need for resources to help families begin early.

The skills of reading and writing are vital in preparing America’s children to achieve personal and professional success.

IICF EARLY LITERACY INITIATIVE CHAMPIONS

Marlene Ibsen  
CEO & President  
Travelers Foundation

John Lupica  
Vice Chairman  
ACE Limited & ACE Group Holdings  
Chairman – Insurance, North America

Gary C. Petrosino  
Executive Vice President  
& Western U.S. Field Operations Officer  
Chubb & Son
EVERY DAY IS A READING AND WRITING DAY PROGRAM ELEMENTS INCLUDE:

» Practical video segments that engage children and families in literacy activities through everyday moments.

» A Volunteer Guide with simple, hands-on resources specifically designed for both volunteers and volunteer coordinators to plan and facilitate fun and enriching literacy-based experiences for young children and families.

» A Parent/Caregiver Guide that provides information, tips, and family activities to encourage language and literacy development in children ages 3-5.

» A dedicated webpage on sesamestreet.org that links to iicf.org and provides children with opportunities to learn literacy concepts with the Sesame Street characters, through videos, games, and downloadable activities.

» A new mobile site for families to access key literacy content on their smartphone and tablet devices.

The IICF Early Literacy Initiative and Sesame Workshop Partnership

Closing the literacy gap of America’s children is a national priority for the Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation (IICF) and the insurance industry. Through the IICF Early Literacy Initiative, we are working to provide every American child the opportunity to learn to read and write.

In 2013, the IICF began a three-year partnership with Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street, to develop a new early literacy program: Every Day is a Reading and Writing Day. This multimedia, research-based literacy program leverages the power of beloved Sesame Street friends to reach and motivate young children and families to make the most of everyday opportunities to talk, read, and write together. “This program provides families and volunteers with materials that draw from everyday life,” says H. Melvin Ming, President of Sesame Workshop, “making it easy to implement literacy into daily interactions with children.”

The Insurance Industry: Literacy Champions

IICF’s national reach uniquely positions the Foundation to engage and unite the insurance industry to become America’s literacy champions. Insurance professionals from every industry segment and region have the opportunity to make a measurable impact in closing America’s word gap. Making use of the Every Day is a Reading and Writing Day program, industry employees, volunteers, family, and friends are offered rich and engaging activities to share with children and families in their local communities.

We Need Your Help!

With your help, we can make a difference in the lives of America’s children. To learn how your organization can positively impact the IICF Early Literacy Initiative as a national sponsor, participate in volunteer activities, or to make a donation to the Every Day is a Reading and Writing Day program, visit www.iicf.org.
Talk:
- What is each of the Sesame Street friends doing?
- What's funny about this picture?
- What silly thing would you do if you were on Sesame Street?

Read:
- Read this poem aloud together while filling in the blanks:
  It's a silly day on Sesame Street!
  Big Bird wears a funny __________.
  While Rosita shakes her __________.
  A friendly pigeon lands on Bert's __________.
  While Ernie gives him a __________.
  Grover does a silly __________.
  And Abby whispers a funny joke in Elmo's __________!

Write:
- Now, grab a piece of paper and a pencil, crayon, or marker! Make up a title, and write your own silly story about this picture using drawings and scribbles.

For more fun activities, videos, and ideas, visit sesamestreet.org/literacy.