2,500 Bags and a Plan
By Beth Duda

130,000 Magnetic Letters
25,000 Jumbo Crayons
5,000 sets of Flashcards
2,500 Books
2,500 Drawing Pads
2,500 Erasable Alphabet Charts
2,500 Brightly Colored Tote Bags, each with a pamphlet entitled,
Kindergarten Readiness, Practical Skills Every Child Need As They Enter Kindergarten

The materials were laid out in a large conference room, and like magic, with the help of highly motivated volunteers, the stacks became 2,500 Kindergarten Readiness Bags. The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading recently distributed these Kindergarten Readiness bags to 25 Title 1 schools in Manatee and Sarasota counties. Fully funded by The Patterson Foundation, in partnership with the School District of Manatee County and Sarasota County Schools, these bags have been given to families of incoming kindergartners with the intent of helping to prepare them for school by strengthening their basic skills.

The Kindergarten Readiness bags will also help prepare parents to be actively involved in their child's education. Brain science shows that the quality of interactions with mothers and fathers have measurable impacts on future learning. For example, cognitive stimulation by parents in playful interactions during toddlerhood is related to literacy and math levels in third through fifth grade. Parents' contributions to preschoolers' literacy skills are related to overall school readiness. By engaging children in joint literacy activities and positive discussions about educational topics, parents promote successful transitions to school.

Teachers realize the powerful contribution parents make to the education of their children. A recent poll shows teachers in both Manatee and Sarasota counties listed increased Parent Engagement as one of their greatest aspirations. National Education Association (NEA) research shows that family involvement in schools improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism, and restores parents' confidence in their children's education. Students with involved parents or other caregivers earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills, and show improved behavior. Teachers and parents working together as a team give children their best pathway to success. The interactions between parent and child when using the Kindergarten Readiness Bags will build literacy, increase parent engagement, and lead to better outcomes for our most vulnerable children.

Practical Skills Every Child Needs As They Enter Kindergarten

Young minds have many questions about going into kindergarten that parents will want to answer. Discover together as questions like, "How will I know where to put my backpack?" or "Where do we eat lunch?" arise. Visiting the school and reading books about the first days of school will help.

The library is a community resource housing books like Annabel Swift, Kindergartner by Amy Schwartz, The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn, Tomorrow is the First Day of School by Maureen MacDowell, and Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come by Nancy Carlson. These books are fun reads to
Kindergarten Readiness Checklist

Play school with your child. Practice these skills and check them off as they are mastered. Then ... CELEBRATE!
### I CAN:
- recognize and name basic shapes: square, circle, triangle and rectangle
- recognize and name numbers 1-10, even when they are out of order
- count to 20
- count ten objects, pointing to each one as I count
- say or sing the alphabet
- recognize the letters of the alphabet, both uppercase and lowercase (even out of order)
- identify colors in an eight-count crayon pack
- recognize my first name in print
- sort items by size, color or shape
- hold a book and turn pages
- tell if two words rhyme
- identify some letter sounds
- say my parents' full names, address and phone numbers (at least one)
- put on my coat or jacket and zip it up

### I CAN:
- tie my shoes
- take turns and share
- sit quietly and listen
- follow simple directions
- use the bathroom by myself (including zipping and buttoning pants)
- put on my backpack
- hold a pencil or crayon
- cut with scissors
- put things away
- hang my backpack on a hook
- wash my hands with soap
- use a tissue to wipe my nose
- cough into my elbow
- stand in line
- drink from a drinking fountain
- raise my hand and wait to be called on
- open any food containers in my lunch

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**View Upcoming Events**

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**Mind in the Making**
In May of 2016, the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading held a Mind in the Making (MITM) Facilitator Institute for 27 individuals from 13 different agencies in Manatee and Sarasota counties. Since then, these facilitators have been presenting Mind in the Making's Seven Essential Skills Training Modules to over 375 people throughout the Suncoast region. Due to demand, a second Mind in the Making Facilitator Institute was held in February of 2017, raising the number of local facilitators to 50.

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is committed to bringing Mind in the Making to parents, grandparents, child care professionals, early learning educators, and caregivers. If you are interested in individually participating in these valuable workshops, or would like to have a series of workshops at your place of employment, church, or community organization, please contact bduda@thepattersonfoundation.org

The Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (SCGLR) is looking for volunteers:

Saturday, April 29 from 9:00a-2:00p for the 3rd Annual Children's Book Fair at Realize Bradenton Farmers’ Market.

Saturday, May 20 from 10:00a-12:00p for the 3rd Healthy Start Community Baby Shower at Boys and Girls Club Sarasota.

Your time spent volunteering with SCGLR will allow you to engage with families at local events to share Vroom, a free parental engagement app that turns everyday moments into brain-building moments.

Please plan on standing and engaging attendees throughout your volunteer shift. Arrangements can be made if you need to be seated while volunteering.

For more information contact Donna Puhalovich | SCGLR Volunteer
We welcome your thoughts.
Contact us at info@GradeLevelReadingSuncoast.net.

Founding Network Weavers

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