

United Way of Central Iowa

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Stuff the Bus Book Drive Talking Points

Why it matters

- About one in three central Iowa students are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade. (Iowa Dept. of Education, 2023-24)
- 25% of eighth-grade students are not reading proficiently. (Iowa Dept. of Education, 2023-24)
- Children who cannot read at grade-level by third grade are more likely to stay behind in school and are four times more likely to drop out of high school. (Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- The most successful way to improve the reading achievement of low-income children is to increase their access to print. (Newman, Sanford, et al.)
- Communities ranking high in achievement tests have these factors in common: an abundance of books in public libraries, easy access to books in the community at large, and a generous number of textbooks per student. (Newman et al.)
- Books in the home are a “marker” for a “scholarly culture” that reflects a penchant for reading and learning (Evans, Kelley, Sikora, and Treiman, 2010)
- Access to books is fundamental to a hopeful, productive life: being read to, reading for yourself, and discussing what you’ve read creates an upward, positive spiral that leads to more reading and greater academic achievement and personal fulfillment years down the line. (Cunningham and Zilbulsky, Jacobs, Neuman and Celano)

What we are doing to address it

- Books will be distributed to United Way of Central Iowa’s partner programs, child-care centers, and in-home childcare providers.
- Individuals can donate new or like-new books from a recommended list at www.stuffthebusdsm.org for children ages birth to young adult.

- This book drive is one way we can give children access to new and like-new books. Getting a variety of books promotes understanding and respect for all – especially when the books feature characters who represent different ethnicities, races, and disabilities.