



# Guidelines for Family Readers



The following guidelines provide helpful information. The BabyRead Administrative Staff is also available to assist.

Caren von Hippel	Founder and President	864-643-8083	<a href="mailto:BabyRead@charter.net">BabyRead@charter.net</a>
Carol Engle	Reader – Family Assignments	912-577-0222	<a href="mailto:cengle640@gmail.com">cengle640@gmail.com</a>
Mary Beth Geltz	Volunteer Sign Ups	313-881-1027	<a href="mailto:mbgeltz25@gmail.com">mbgeltz25@gmail.com</a>
Rose Lowe	Volunteer Sign Ups Support and Google Drive assistance	864-710-7358	<a href="mailto:lowe.rose@gmail.com">lowe.rose@gmail.com</a>
Shelly Barber	Family Sign Ups	864-256-7010	<a href="mailto:shellybarberpt@gmail.com">shellybarberpt@gmail.com</a>
Sr Joan Kobe	Book Purchase & Distribution – Book Annex	864-718-7749	<a href="mailto:jkwis208@yahoo.com">jkwis208@yahoo.com</a>
Anne Fogel	Book Purchase & Distribution	240-577-8128	<a href="mailto:sarafina2@att.net">sarafina2@att.net</a>
Marriann Cole	Incentive Pgm Administration	630-564-5573	<a href="mailto:marrianncole@gmail.com">marrianncole@gmail.com</a>
Bill Walker	Treasurer	864-643-8074	<a href="mailto:bill4pub@charter.net">bill4pub@charter.net</a>

## GENERAL

1. Always wear your BabyRead name tag. If you don't have one, notify your book distribution contact – either Sr. Joan Kobe, [jkwis208@yahoo.com](mailto:jkwis208@yahoo.com) or Anne Fogel [sarafina2@att.net](mailto:sarafina2@att.net) . They will arrange to have one created for you.
2. You should try to meet twice each month with your family. If you find this isn't happening, please email Carol Engle, [cengle640@gmail.com](mailto:cengle640@gmail.com), right away. In the summer months (June, July, August), this is more difficult to arrange.

## PREPARATION

1. You will be assigned to either Sr Joan Kobe or Anne Fogel as your book distribution contact. Text or phone your contact at least a week before your initial meeting, so they can prepare books and snacks for you to take on your visit. They also have the calendars, the storage boxes, etc. They know the family you have been assigned so they will have age-appropriate books for you. If you have been assigned to Sr Joan, her contact information is 864-718-7749, BabyRead Book Annex, at 1448 Blue Ridge Blvd, Seneca, SC. If you have been

assigned Anne Fogel, her contact information is 240-577-8128, [sarafina2@att.net](mailto:sarafina2@att.net), 112 Maplewood Ct, Seneca, SC (Waterside Crossing subdivision)

2. Make sure the mom has your contact information and the date of the next visit, at the end of each visit, if possible.
3. Phone or text your mom the day before (or whatever you have already arranged with her) as a reminder of your meeting. Try to set up meetings at the same time and day of the week every two weeks - regularity helps. In general, phoning or texting is best. Few of our families have email or answer their email.
4. Only wait 15-20 minutes for your mom to show up at the scheduled reading session. It is important to set limits. Expect your mom to treat you with respect and vice versa, of course. We do have to keep in mind that these moms are the ones with the kids and have chaotic, busy lives. So, we have to be patient and flexible.
5. It often takes multiple phone calls or text messages to set up a meeting, particularly the first few reading sessions. Schedules change; children get sick; children break bones; and so on. Family readers have to be patient and flexible and keep trying. Don't be surprised if the moms/caregivers do not call you back. You must take the initiative. However, you need some kind of response that the family/the mom is interested in participating in BabyRead. If, after several efforts over two to three weeks, you feel the family is not interested, email Carol Engle at [cengle640@gmail.com](mailto:cengle640@gmail.com) and she will try to find you another family. DO NOT keep trying and trying to reach your family – you will get frustrated and then historically readers who do this resign or take on another volunteer task in BabyRead.
6. The first meeting in particular — getting on the bandwagon — is the hardest part for most families. Once you meet the first time, and certainly the second time, scheduling can become easier. We have never had a family that participated in BabyRead that did not like (love) it! But getting going can be rocky in some cases.

### CONDUCTING YOUR READING SESSIONS

1. The **first time** you meet with your family, ask the mom/caregiver if it's permissible for you to touch the baby.
2. **Books:** Your Mom gets to select a book to take home from the books you bring for FREE each time you meet or a total of 2 books per month. Most moms choose a book that you read to them that day. (You will receive a total of 5 books the 1<sup>st</sup> month, so that you have a surplus to read from.)
3. **Snacks:** Free snacks are given at each reading session (you will be given these snacks at the same time you pick up the books). Hand the snack to the mom (not the baby/toddler). Ask the mom if the baby is allowed to eat the snacks or if the baby has any allergies so you'll know what to bring at the next reading session. If you are reading to more than one pre-

school child, bring enough snacks and books so that you can give the mom/caregiver a free book and a free snack for each child for the mom/caregiver to take home at each meeting.

4. **Book Storage Box:** You will receive a book storage box to give to the mom/caregiver at the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. By then, she should be committed to our program. It is a clean place to keep our BabyRead books or any children's books the family has.
5. **Stuffed Animals:** BabyRead Advisory Board members recommend that from time to time readers be given a stuffed animal for their baby. The stuffed animal does not need to relate to the book being read. Most children love the stuffed animal, and it helps many of them sit and pay better attention.
6. **Incentive Programs:** Following is a summary of the programs. More details can be found on the BabyRead website under Staff Info. <https://www.babyread.org/>
  - a. New Family In Person Incentive - If a family shows up to 3 sessions in the first 2 months, explain that you will give her a \$40 gift certificate to Ingles. We find that if a family participates in 3 reading sessions in a short period of time, they quickly come to enjoy them and learn the benefits of BabyRead.
  - b. Monthly Reading Incentive - When you go to pick up the books, you will get monthly refrigerator magnets. Explain to the mom that if she checks off 20 days that she has read to her baby/toddler during a month, you will give her a \$50 gift certificate to Aldi's. It is a good idea to use this as a time to discuss with the mom when she reads to her child during her day and what she thinks about this. This monthly reading incentive is limited to six incentives, which is a total of \$300 in gift cards.
  - c. Family Referral Incentive - If a family refers another family in a separate household and the new family completes the startup participation incentive, then the referring family also gets a \$50 gift certificate to Aldi's.
  - d. For any of these incentives, notify Marriann Cole and she will either send you the applicable incentive gift card or mail it to the family. A photo of the magnetic calendar, with the family's name is sufficient. ([marrianncole@gmail.com](mailto:marrianncole@gmail.com) or 630-564-5573)
7. **Calendars:** We have paper calendars that have a square for every day, with ideas for interaction and reading with the child, to give to the mom. You can give her 1 page a month or the entire calendar. It's your decision.

You will also get a magnetic calendar for the month. Encourage the mom to check every day on it that she interacts with her baby by reading, singing, doing finger plays, etc. Tell her that if she doesn't check a day, that's fine. The calendar is meant to accurately show the routines the mom is establishing for interacting with her baby. Encourage your mom to read aloud to not only the baby, but also any older siblings. The children really enjoy it and it's fun for the mom to watch her children interact. Suggest to the mom that she can tack it up in her kitchen or wherever she wants so that she will see it often as a reminder. If it is marked for 20 days a

month, she receives the monthly incentive. (see above description of the Monthly Reading Incentive program.

Discuss the month's calendar with the mom/caregiver. How much reading to her child was she able to do? Is she enjoying it? Is the baby/toddler enjoying it? Does she use the activities for older children, for which it is appropriate?

8. **CDs / CD Players:** After you have met with a family for 3 months ask the family if they have a CD player and CDs. If they do not have one, offer to give them one. You can get both the CD player and CDs from your book distribution contact, either Sr. Joan Kobe or Anne Fogel. Listening to nursery rhymes, stories, and songs is very important for babies and toddlers. Listening comprehension precedes reading comprehension.
  - a. Why are we giving families CD players? (1) Most children love music; (2) Listening to nursery rhymes, songs and stories develops awareness of the sounds of your own language well before you can speak the words of your own language. This phonetic awareness is a precursor to being able to read, that is, listening comprehension precedes reading comprehension. (3) Listening to nursery rhymes, stories and songs requires following the narrative of them – thinking about what happened. All of this helps develop the child's brain and is needed to learn how to read later.
  - b. Finally, while it is always best if the mom reads the nursery rhymes, stories and songs to a child, it is better for the child to listen to good CDs than to place the child in front of a TV or some other electronic device.
  - c. Phonological awareness: is defined as “listening, understanding, and manipulating the different sounds and patterns of spoken language. Children experience phonological awareness by listening to rhymes and poems, singing songs, making up silly names and words by substituting one sound for another, breaking up words into syllables and noticing that some words begin with the same sound” (Burns, Griffin, & Snow, 1999; McGee & Richgels, 2003)
9. **BabyRead's Goal for the Family:** (a) for the mom/family member to read to her baby/toddler EVERY DAY; and (b) for the mom/caregiver to understand the importance of reading daily. A family can remain in the program until the child starts school.

Encourage the mom to read to her baby/toddler before he/she goes to bed each night. This is an important routine for every child. The mom should hold the baby/toddler while she is reading. This emotional bonding is crucial for the child's development. It's recommended to have the baby facing the mother when she is teaching the baby finger plays or motion songs.

Make sure that you don't end up doing all the reading. Give the book to the mom/caregiver to read to her child. If the mom/caregiver has trouble reading or hesitates, explain that she can just describe the pictures on each page. This is fine. After all, the baby doesn't know what the words under the picture say.

10. **Brain development:** Share with the mom that:

- a. Reading aloud, talking and singing help a baby's brain grow, especially in the critical first 2 years
- b. A baby's brain doubles in size in the first year, reaches 80% of an adult's by age 3. That is why BabyRead focuses on children from birth to 3 years.

**11. Good practices:** As a reader, you want to share good practices with the mom in reading to her child.

- a. This means you need to let the mom practice reading as well as you reading to her and the baby. Encourage the mom to read while you are there. Do finger plays; sing nursery rhymes. Engage the mom in the reading sessions. If you don't know why these are important, ask Carol Engle, Rose Lowe, Mary Beth Geltz, Sr. Joan Kobe or Anne Fogel.
- b. Explain to the mom that the sound of the TV is not understandable to a baby or toddler. The words are too fast, and it is a distraction. So, the mom should turn the TV off, when she is talking or reading to her baby/toddler and to her other children. The less the TV is on, the better it is for her children.

**12. Other tips:**

- a. Other siblings may attend the reading sessions with the mom and the baby. As long as you can handle this, it is fine. If it is too much for you, if the children are old enough, ask them to sit elsewhere in the library and read themselves. If they are younger, email Carol Engle and she can try to find you a second reader to help, if warranted.
- b. Regular meeting times work best and is easier for our families. If you and your family can meet the same day and time every two weeks, that is probably best. Many families cannot do this. But they have difficulties with scheduling and organizing so anything you can do in this regard is good.
- c. We publicize that we read for up to 1 hour at each of our two meetings each month. If that proves to be too long for your family and you want to cut the meeting time shorter, that is fine. You decide. You want the reading session to be enjoyable and fun for the mom and the baby/toddler. Some Family Readers spend some time talking with the mom and reading to older siblings in attendance.
- d. Nursery rhymes and finger plays: it is very useful to include nursery rhymes and finger plays while you are reading. To learn more nursery rhymes and finger plays (e.g., itsey bitsey spider) use Google or go to You Tube to find examples.
- e. Some of our Family Readers have brought to their reading sessions some props — stuffed animals, things from their kitchen like pots, measuring spoons, empty and clean plastic food containers and bathtub toys like rubber ducks. Since most babies have a very short attention span, they enjoy playing with the props as part of the reading.
- f. If the mom raises issues that you need help with something, ask Carol Engle. We do have resources. First, you can try the Internet and obvious child development web sites. Then, we can direct your questions to someone in BabyRead that we think can help you. Our web site: [www.babyread.org](http://www.babyread.org) is a useful tool.

- g. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under two years of age not be exposed to cell phones. This is a big problem since so many people, including our moms, use cell phones all the time. First, there should be no cell phone in sight during your reading sessions; secondly, you need to tell your mom what the American Academy of Pediatrics says; thirdly, babies/toddlers consider cell phones toys. They are not. Caren has written for the Journal three monthly columns in 2018 on babies/toddlers and technology. They are posted on our web site.

13. **Photos:** Please get a signed permission slip from your mom at the first or second meeting so that you can take photos (portrait & landscape) of her and her baby. If you do not have a form, email Carol Engle. All our moms in the past have signed our form. Then email/mail the signed form back to Carol Engle, 211 Windy Meadows Lane, West Union, SC 29696 or [cengle640@gmail.com](mailto:cengle640@gmail.com) It would be very helpful if you regularly take photos of the mom reading to her baby. Also, ask someone to take a photo of the mom and her baby while you are reading to them. Please do this every few months, then send photos to Caren, [BabyRead@charter.net](mailto:BabyRead@charter.net) and/or Julia Robison-Shultze, [jrshultze1@gmail.com](mailto:jrshultze1@gmail.com), webmaster. Caren needs photos for a variety of purposes: articles for newspapers and magazines; our web site; thank you letters to donors; bookmarks; attachments to grant applications; Caren and other BabyRead speakers hand out photos of our families when giving speeches.

#### END OF READING SESSION

1. Try to set up the next reading session with your mom/caregiver at the end of each session. If you can give the mom/the caregiver an index card with your name/contact information and the date of the next scheduled meeting that would be great. If not, just your contact information would be great and a verbal agreement as to when you will phone or text to set up the next meeting.
2. After each reading session, you need to complete an online report. After you have been assigned a family, Rose Lowe will send you an email invitation to join the BabyRead shared folder. Completing the online report is quick and mandatory. This is mandatory so that (a) Caren can manage this program; (b) to give all volunteers an opportunity to read about different readers' reading sessions and experiences. This site is available to BR volunteers only. In the Notes section of the online report: Please think about and write about Making a Difference: what impact your reading session is having on the mom/caregiver and the baby. Even just a few sentences would be helpful. Caren wants to know and so do the people/organizations that have given us money and want reports on how we have spent their money. Even small events – e.g. the child is excited to see the reader – are valuable.

#### **Areas available for your scheduled reading visits. We do not go to the family's home.**

Seneca Library: (864) 882-4855. 300 East South Second St., Seneca, SC 29678. Library hours are from 9am to 6pm every day but Sunday, but people are asked to leave by 5:30 pm, if you are using the conference room. They have a children's section, 2 study rooms and conference room. You do not need to call ahead to use the children's section or study rooms (as available). You do

need to phone ahead to reserve the conference room. The children's section has approximately 200 baby board books with a variety of titles. Say you are from BabyRead.

Walhalla Library: (864) 638-4133. 501 W. South Broad St., Walhalla, SC 29691. Library hours are 9am to 6 pm, every day but Sunday. You do not need to phone the Walhalla library to use their public spaces, like the children's area or the library's 2 study rooms. If you want to reserve their conference room, then you need to phone them to reserve their conference rooms. This is a good idea since in the conference room you, the mom, and the child can make noise - e.g. sing nursery rhymes. They also have approximately 200 baby board books.

Westminster Library: (864) 364-5760 Westminster Library: (864) 364-5760. 112 West North Avenue, Westminster, SC 29693. You can only read in their conference room, so you need to phone ahead to reserve it.

Foothills Community Church, 505 Bountyland Rd, Seneca. Tel: 864- 888- 8008. This is located several miles past Walmart in the direction of Westminster. The church has two lovely rooms, with carpeting and overstuffed chairs that make it a wonderful place to read in. You need to phone ahead (to Bonnie Campbell or Jennifer Rhodes) to reserve the rooms. They are interested in having BabyRead readers use their church.

Note: when you phone any of the above places to reserve a room, say you are calling from BabyRead.

Please let Carol Engle know if you have any questions or concerns. (cengle640@gmail.com)

BabyRead website is also a great source of information: <https://www.babyread.org/>



**Strong Minds Begin by  
Reading to Babies from Birth**