

SHARE:

[Join Our Email List](#)

DONATE

CONTACT

RESOURCES

SERVICES

Reading Allowed

OCTOBER, 2026

A Note from our Executive Director



Friends,

Fall is my favorite time of year for so many reasons. I love the crisp air, watching the leaves turn beautiful shades of red, orange, and gold, and, of course, football season! As a proud Philadelphia Eagles fan, there is nothing quite like settling in for a Sunday and cheering on the Birds!

But beyond football, I love what this season represents. Fall feels like a time of new beginnings, fresh energy, and settling into new routines, and that makes it especially meaningful as we begin another school year at Reading Allowed. Our classrooms are bustling, students are getting comfortable in their routines, and our Reading Allowed team is excited to be back doing what we do best: helping students build the reading skills and confidence they need to thrive.

October is also National Book Month, which gives us another wonderful reason to celebrate the power of books. Books can open doors to new worlds, introduce us to people and experiences different from our own, and help children see themselves reflected in the stories they read.

This month, I encourage families to make time for reading simply for the joy of it. Let your child choose the book, even if it isn't the book you would choose! Graphic novels, mysteries, fantasy, humor, biographies, poetry, and picture books all count. The goal is to help children discover that reading can be something they enjoy, not just something they have to do.

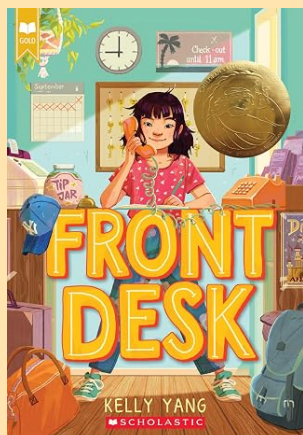
Here are a few books your family might enjoy exploring together:



Ages 8-12

The First Cat in Space Ate Pizza
by Mac Barnett and Shawn Harris

A hilarious graphic-novel adventure sure to appeal to reluctant readers and kids who love humor and imagination.

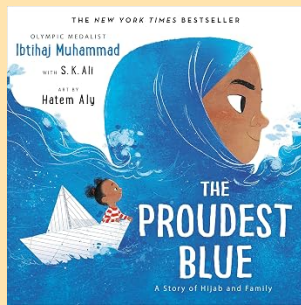


Ages 9+

Front Desk
by Kelly Yang

A compelling story about Mia, a young Chinese American girl whose family manages a motel. It explores friendship, courage, immigration, and standing up for what is right.

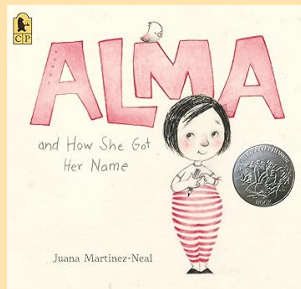




Ages 4-8

The Proudest Blue
by Ibtihaj Muhammad with S. K. Ali,
illustrated by Hatem Aly

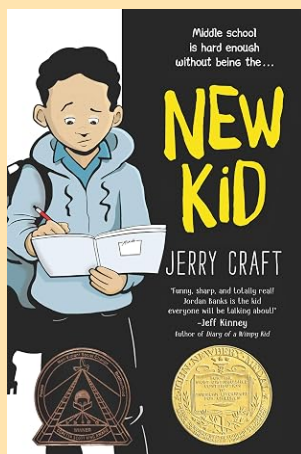
A beautiful story about identity, family, confidence, and embracing what makes us unique.



Ages 3-8

Alma and How She Got Her Name
by Juana Martinez-Neal

A wonderful picture book about family, heritage, and the stories carried within our names.

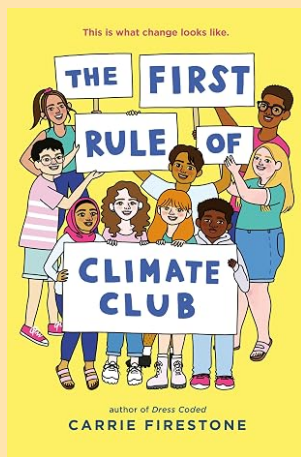


Ages 9-12

New Kid
by Jerry Craft

A graphic novel about a young Black student navigating a new school, friendships, and finding his place. It is a great choice for middle-grade readers.





Ages 10-13

The First Rule of Climate Club by Carrie Firestone

A timely and engaging story for older readers that combines friendship, school life, and taking action on an issue that matters to them



Here's to a fall filled with good books, meaningful conversations, growing confidence, and lots of reasons to smile.

Onward,



Tamara N. Smith
Executive Director
tamara@readingallowed.org

PLEASE GIVE

Events/Happenings



**Stories Served: Lights, Camera, Literacy—
and a special screening of the
documentary LEFT BEHIND Film**

Saturday, October 3, 12 pm - 2 pm

Moore College of Art & Design
1916 Race Street, Phila. PA 19103

Celebrate Dyslexia Awareness Month with A.D.E. and Learning Ally through film, lived experience, advocacy, and powerful conversations. Join live conversations that move beyond awareness, exploring what happens when families, educators, advocates, and communities decide struggling readers will no longer be left behind. Admission is free, and you also have the opportunity to donate.

DETAILS HERE



College Resorce Seminar & Fair

Wednesday, October 14, 11 am - 3 pm

Motivation High School
5900 Baltimore Ave. Phila. PA 19143

Get ready to dive into all things college at this in-person event. Whether you're a student exploring options or just curious, we've got loads of resources, expert talks, and great tips to help you navigate your journey. Meet representatives, ask questions, and hang out with others who are excited about the future. Don't miss out on this awesome chance to learn and connect!

MORE INFO HERE



**The Philly Goat Project Presents:
Free Goat Storytime
with Author Jan Zauzmer**
Sunday, October 11, 10 am - 11 am
The Farm at Awbury Arboretum
6336 Ardleigh St., Phila. PA 19138

Jan will read her book "If You Go with Your Goat to Vote." Expect songs, crafts, and yes, reading with real, live goats...not baaaaaad, huh? Expect family fun and goat mayhem. Y

READ ALL ABOUT IT



The Young People's Book Festival
Saturday, October 24, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Black Rock Middle School
1860 Montgomery Ave. Villanova, PA 19085

Join Black Rock Middle School, Children's Book World, and dozens of amazing authors and illustrators for a day of activities, fun, and books! Expect 50+ authors and illustrators, character photo opps, food trucks (pay as you go), and tons of fun activities. This is a free event with free parking. Books come alive in a dynamic celebration for all ages. See who's going [here](#).

RESERVE A SPOT



The Southeast Asian Market
Saturdays and Sundays (10 am - 6 pm)
through 10/31/26, FDR Park (near Taney Baseball Field), 1500 Pattison Avenue & S. Broad Street, Phila., PA 19145.

At Reading Allowed, we believe that not all reading has to happen in books! Amazing opportunities to read are all around us—including menus! Get set for 70 to 80 vendors offering Southeast Asian street food (yum), produce, and other items in one of Philly's top public parks. *Food + Wine* named the attraction "[one of the best food markets in the United States](#)." There's something for everyone here, even picky eaters. Pro tips: Bring cash. Credit cards

are not accepted everywhere, and there is no ATM. Also, bring a picnic blanket to bask in a sunny spot. [FAQs here](#).

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)

Did You Know



October is Emotional Wellness Month

The beginning of a new school year can bring a lot of emotions for children, young adults (and really the whole family).

Excitement, nervousness, frustration, pride, disappointment, and everything in between are all part of the experience. **Just as we help children develop the tools they need to become stronger readers, we can help them develop the tools they need to understand and manage their emotions.** Here are some tips and strategies that can help support healthy emotional wellness and development from our friends at [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org).

1. Nurture safe, stable, solid relationships in the family

Relational health is the ability to form safe, stable, and nurturing relationships. Relational health is essential to healthy mental and emotional development. When children feel safe, secure, and well connected with their caregivers, they learn to trust others, make friends, and manage their feelings.

Here are some ways parents can help:

Create predictable routines.

Structured routines give children a sense of stability and connection.

- **Have meals together.** Especially with older kids, family meals are a great time to check in with each other. They may not always be possible with busy schedules, but plan them when you can.
- **Establish a regular bedtime ritual.** For young children, a bedtime routine might include a bath, brushing teeth, and reading a book together

before tuck-in. Bonus: Prioritizing [sleep](#) makes it easier to handle everyday pressures.

- **Encourage a homework routine.** Planning when and where to work on schoolwork is a time management skills that ease stress. It also helps kids find time to practice self-care and more time to connect with family and friends.
- **Create a chores routine:** Having age-appropriate chores promotes a sense of responsibility, belonging and contribution to the family. Kids gain confidence in completing tasks, which builds self-esteem.

Plan time for play.

Play lets children explore emotions even before they have the words to express themselves. It also gives them a sense of control in their world. For older kids and teens, planning special family fun time strengthen relationships.

- **Dedicate 10-15 minutes two to three times a week to play** with younger kids. Name this special time after the child, like "Roberto's Time."
 - **Set rules for one-on-one time. Let your child choose the activity. Put away phones. Make the time unstructured with toys and activities that can promote cooperative play and problem-solving.**
 - **Focus on fun. The goal is to share joy and connect. Play regularly—not just as a reward for good behavior. Bonds you build in these moments lay ground for healthy relationships in life.**
- **Schedule time for family fun.** Mark game nights or other family activities on your calendar so that everyone can look forward to relaxing together.

Use positive parenting techniques.

Positive discipline strategies help teach children and teens to manage their behavior in a healthy way.

- **Set limits & consequences.** Have clear and consistent rules. Describe these rules in age-appropriate terms that your child or teen can follow. Calmly explain consequences if they aren't followed.
- **Model behavior you want your child to show.** When you feel frustrated, try to respond calmly. Instead of saying, "You are driving me crazy," for example, express your actual feelings: "I'm really frustrated right now." This teaches kids to say what they feel instead of critical or hurtful statements.
- **Try "sportscasting."** Provide a "play by play" of what you see your child doing. Speak in a neutral or positive tone. This conveys to the child: "I see you, I hear you and I delight in you."

Point out positive behavior. Children and teens need to know when they do something wrong—and when they do something good. Praise success and good tries, and be specific. ("Wow, I love how you shared your favorite toy with your friend!" or, "I like how you cleaned up the kitchen after dinner—it's so helpful when you do that.")

2. Foster open communication

Feeling free to express their thoughts and feelings helps kids process emotions in healthy ways. Open communication also strengthens parent-child bonds.

Start "conversations" early.

"Talking" with your baby lays a foundation for language development and emotional expression.

- Narrate your actions, describe objects and sing songs. Hearing you talk —the sounds and rhythms of speech, the look on your face and the way you hold them —teach babies about emotional expression.
- Keep the back-and-forth going. When your baby babbles, coos or flashes you a smile, don't hesitate to respond! Make eye contact and reply with smiles, nods and other facial expressions. This makes your baby feel connected and understood.

Make time to listen.

Make yourself available any time your child wants to talk. Remember that no matter how big their problems seem, what children and teens most want is love and support.

- Encourage open dialogue by actively listening. Create a supportive and non-judgmental environment so they are comfortable sharing thoughts, feelings, and concerns.
 - Remember that any time can be chat time. Chat in the car or when doing dishes together, for example. Take walks together, which offer time to talk plus physical and mental health boosts from exercise and time outdoors.
 - Ask open-ended questions. Instead of asking yes-or-no questions, ask ones that require more detailed answers. These encourage your child to share more thoughts and feelings

[READ MORE HERE](#)

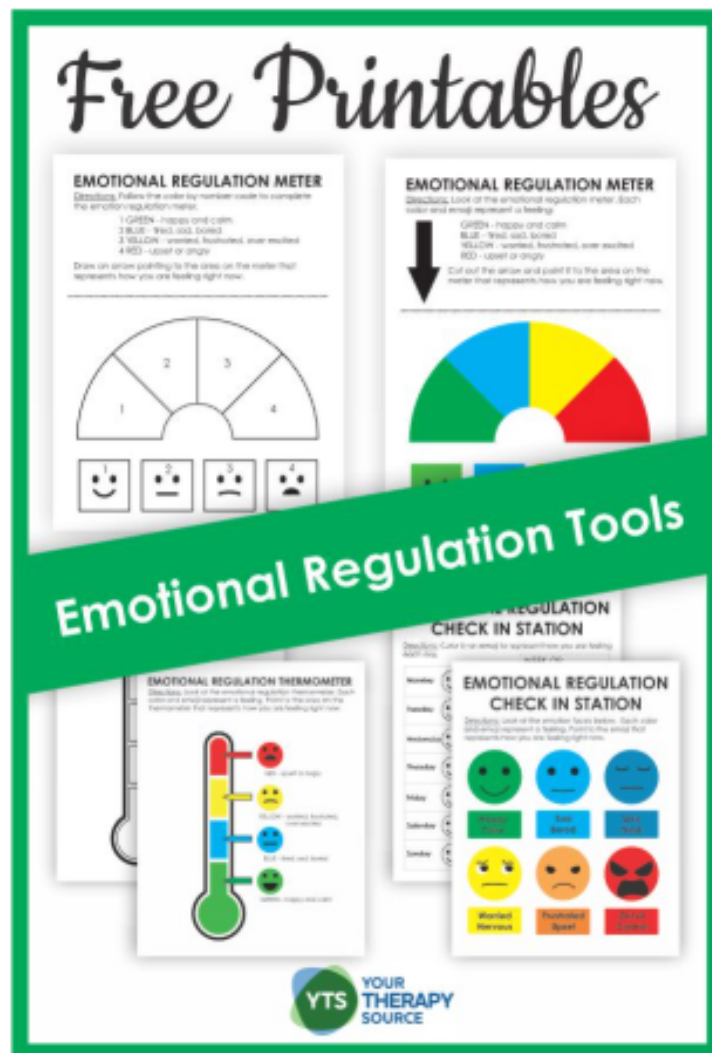
How the School District of Philadelphia Can Help



The mental health and emotional well-being of all students is, and will always be, a top priority for the School District of Philadelphia. The District believes every student deserves access to the support they need to navigate life's challenges and thrive, and it is committed to ensuring students continue to have access to a robust network of resources and support services. In addition to visiting a school counselor, individuals can use other resources available at no cost. These resources in the city of Philadelphia include, but are not limited to:

- [Office of Prevention and Intervention Resources](#)
- [STEP \(Support Team for Educational Partnership\)](#)
- [Uplift Philly and Philly Hopeline](#)
- [988 Lifeline](#)
- [Attic Youth Center \(LGBTQIA+ Support\)](#)
- [741741 Crisis Text Line](#)
- [24/Hr Suicide Prevention and Crisis Intervention Service 215-686-4420](#)
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK\(8255\)](#)

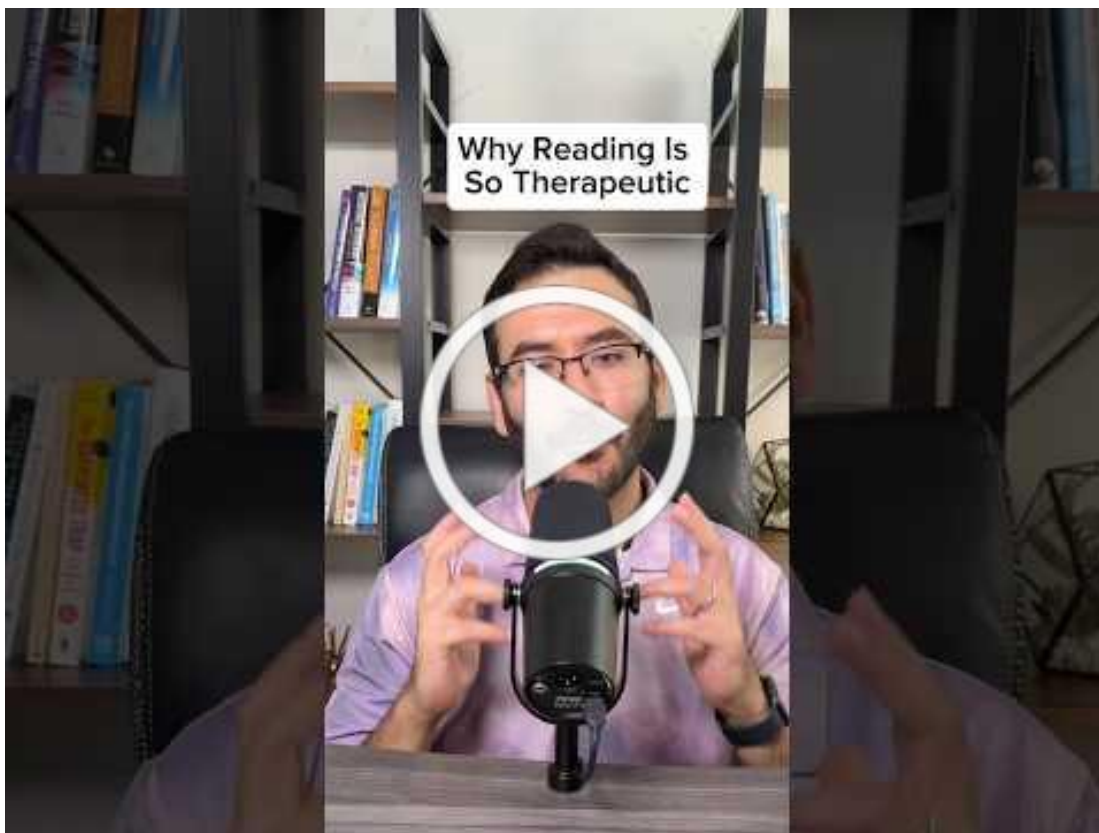
Take advantage of these free tools



Emotional regulation is the process of recognizing and managing one's emotions. It is an important life skill that can help children regulate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. This FREE emotion regulation worksheet pdf packet provides 6 worksheets to help children learn how to identify and reflect on their emotions. These resources are from [Your Therapy Source, Inc.](https://www.yourtherapysource.com/), and Reading Allowed is in no way affiliated with this organization.

[VIEW AND PRINT THE TOOLS HERE](https://www.yourtherapysource.com/)

Try Bibliotherapy for Mental Health Wellness!



Video above is courtesy of Jeffrey Meltzer, LMHC @therapytothepoint. Jeffrey Meltzer, a licensed therapist, shares mental health content, psychological insights, and practical tools to help you better understand mental health conditions, emotions, relationships, and personal growth. Reading Allowed is no longer associated with Mr. Meltzer or Therapy to the Point.

Bibliotherapy is a therapeutic approach that uses books and literature to support mental health, promote personal growth, and aid in healing. Literally meaning **"treatment through books,"** it involves a clinician or educator guiding an individual or group through carefully selected reading materials—ranging from fiction and poetry to self-help books—to help them process real-world challenges.

Bibliotherapy's effectiveness is rooted in classical psychological concepts. When we read a story that mirrors our own lives, a sequence of therapeutic stages is triggered in the brain:

1. Safe Psychological Distance (Identification)

When people face intense emotional suffering, looking directly at their own trauma can be overwhelming. Reading about a fictional character or a real person experiencing a similar crisis provides a layer of **psychological safety**. Individuals can process complex themes like loss, abuse, or anxiety externally through the character before applying those insights to themselves.

2. Emotional Release (Catharsis)

As readers become emotionally invested in a character's journey, they share in the highs and lows. This leads to **catharsis**—a deep, therapeutic release of pent-up emotions like grief, anger, or fear. Seeing a character survive or overcome a challenge offers hope and reduces feelings of helplessness.

3. Cognitive Insight

By following a narrative arc, readers observe the consequences of a character's choices, behaviors, and cognitive patterns. This fosters **self-awareness and shifts**

perspectives. For instance, a reader might realize, "The way this character blames themselves for everything is exactly what I do," opening the door to cognitive restructuring.

4. The Power of Universalization

Mental illness and trauma often cause severe feelings of isolation. Discovering a text that accurately describes one's internal struggle creates a profound sense of **universalization**—the liberating realization that others share the same struggles and that one is not alone or uniquely broken.

Philadelphia actually holds a deeply foundational place in the history of bibliotherapy. Long before it was formalized as a modern psychological practice, Philadelphia was a primary testing ground for using literature as a healing tool. Today, our great city remains a major hub for progressive literacy work, community bibliotherapy initiatives, and academic research.

🎃 GET SPOOKED! 🎃



Philly has some fantastic, family-friendly events lined up for October 2026 that perfectly blend bookish fun with spooky Halloween vibes for kids and teens. Here are the top picks for young readers, story lovers, and teens looking for bookish thrills!

Spooky Storytelling & Library Festivals:

- **Ghost Walk Stories at Chestnut Hill Library.**
 - **When:** Saturday, October 17, 2026, at 5:00 PM
 - **Where:** Chestnut Hill Library, 8711 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19118
 - **Best For:** Kids (ages 6+) and families who love a good scare.
 - **The Vibe:** This highly engaging family event features four different storytellers spinning four distinct spooky tales. It's a wonderful way to enjoy the classic tradition of ghost stories in a cozy,

neighborhood library setting.

- **Halloweek at West Oak Lane Library**

- **When:** Week of Monday, October 26, 2026, starting at 3:30 PM
- **Where:** Dwight Evans Library of West Oak Lane, 2000 E Washington Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19138
- **Best For:** Kids of all ages.
- **The Vibe:** A full week dedicated to spooky fun, games, creativity, and bookish mystery right inside the public library. It's perfect for local families looking for a structured, literacy-supported afternoon activity during Halloween week.

Spooky Book Fairs & Author Events:

- **Spooky Halloween Book Fair at Children's Book World**

- **When:** Mid-October (Author signings on select Saturdays from 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM)
- **Where:** Children's Book World, 17 Haverford Station Rd, Haverford, PA 19041 (Just outside West Philly on the Main Line)
- **Best For:** All ages, especially middle-grade readers and teens who love horror fiction.
- **The Vibe:** This independent staple throws a dedicated spooky Halloween-themed book fair. They frequently bring in fantastic horror and thriller authors (like Adam Cesare and Diana Rodriguez Wallach) for meet-and-greets, making it a prime spot for teens to grab their next creepy page-turner.
- ***Bonus:*** On Thursday, October 8, 2026, at 7:00 PM, they are also hosting a special release event for Amy Sarig King's new eerie middle-grade novel, *It Came From The Creek!* [[1](#), [2](#)]

Outdoor Spooky Movie & Reading Nights:

- **Rooftop Kids Spooktacular & Movie Marathon**

- **When:** Mid-to-late October (Sundays starting at 12:00 PM)
- **Where:** Sunset Social, 129 S 30th St, Philadelphia, PA 19014 (University City)
- **Best For:** Families with a mix of younger kids and teens.
- **The Vibe:** While it's a park space, not a traditional library, families often pack up their favorite spooky books to read on the giant green lawn before the movies start. They host a massive 60-foot-screen movie marathon starting with kid-friendly classics like Halloweentown and scaling up to teen favorites like The Nightmare Before Christmas, complete with costume contests and candy.

**Adult Literacy is one of Philly's Hidden Crises—
Need Far Outpaces Available Resources**



Adult illiteracy is quietly shaping Philadelphians' lives, from their job prospects to their most personal moments. Nationally, roughly 59 million adults have low literacy skills, which can make it hard to read a job posting or tell whether a shift is during the day or overnight. The problem also tends to pass from parents to children.

The local picture: According to a city presentation earlier this year, **about 140,000 Philadelphians don't have a high school diploma, and more than half of working-age adults read at or below a fifth-grade level.**

Local adult education programs served nearly 3,000 residents last year, but more than 1,000 people were stuck on waitlists.

The funding gap: Pennsylvania spends about \$17 million a year on adult education, compared with nearly \$12 billion on K–12 schools. Advocates say that leaves programs fighting over limited funds.

The payoff: Graduates of the state's adult education programs earned a combined \$182 million in 2023, and people who earn a high school equivalency make about \$6,700 more per year. Penn Foster's Molly Friedland frames the issue as "an opportunity gap, not an inability gap."

A human face: Dorrie Miller-Abdul-Rahim, 57, was passed from grade to grade in Philly schools before dropping out in 10th grade. After her children finished high school, she enrolled at Beyond Literacy and graduated this year. Her stronger reading skills helped her finally make sense of her ancestry results and learn who her father was. She now reads books, follows the news, and hopes to take college classes or find part-time work.

Illustration: Shoshana Gordon/Axios

[READ MORE AT AXIOS PHILLY](#)

Philadelphia's Review of its English Language Arts Curriculum



Our good friends at Chalkbeat Philadelphia published an article on September 3, 2026, highlighting additional challenges in rolling out a \$25 million reading curriculum overhaul.

"According to a new district research report, educators reported serious concerns with the new K-8 English language arts curriculum during the first year, including its phonics instruction, a lack of time and resources for students to read full books, and little support for students who start or fall behind.

The researchers, who hosted focus groups with more than 100 K-8 Philly teachers, principals, and administrators, concluded that most principals believe the new curriculum, designed by EL Education, 'is a step in the right direction.'"

Photo courtesy of Chalkbeat Philadelphia.

[READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

The Right To Read Film is Now Available on YouTube



THE RIGHT TO READ

Did you know that you can now stream this epic film for free on YouTube (with ads)? Alternately, you can also stream it in [a variety of other places](#). If you haven't seen it yet, this documentary follows NAACP activist Kareem Weaver as he works to improve low reading scores in his home of Oakland, California. Featuring stories from Weaver's own life, a teacher, and two American families, The Right to Read dives into the fight to provide our youngest generation with the most foundational skill for lifelong success: the ability to read.

The storyline makes the case that learning to read isn't just an education issue — it's a civil rights one. Directed by Jenny Mackenzie and executive produced by LeVar Burton, the film shares the stories of an activist, a teacher and two American families fighting to give kids the most foundational indicator of lifelong success: the ability to read.

At its center is Weaver, who argues that when a child can't read, their chances of incarceration, homelessness and unemployment climb — and who, fed up with bleak reading scores, files an NAACP petition demanding Oakland schools overhaul their reading curricula. Part documentary, part rallying cry, it champions evidence-based, science-of-reading instruction and leaves viewers with Weaver's gut-punch question: what good is winning the right to vote if we can't read the ballot?

You can find discussion guides and tools for policymakers [here](#) related to the film. Released in 2023, this poignant film runs 1 hour and 10 minutes as is suitable for all audiences.

WATCH IT NOW

**In Philadelphia, Too Many Students Fall Behind
We Want to Change that**

Ameer Baraka Reading Allowed - Sneak Peek

Jami Slotnick



Watch on

Before he was a film and TV actor, Ameer Baraka was a kid who couldn't read, and nobody knew why. In this preview of Reading Allowed's interview, Baraka talks about his humble beginnings and how his struggles with reading and undiagnosed dyslexia sent him into a downward spiral, first to life on the streets and then to prison.

His story shows why Reading Allowed does what it does. People who struggle with reading are more likely to drop out of high school, face unemployment, become involved with the criminal justice system, and live in poverty. Here at home, just over half of Philadelphia adults are functionally illiterate, and nearly two-thirds are low-literate.

Reading Allowed is working to change that. It is the only literacy nonprofit in the Philadelphia area offering high-dosage reading instruction from practitioners certified in the structured literacy approach. It reaches more than 400 people of all ages through sliding-scale tutoring with 70+ certified instructors, partnerships with underserved schools and community groups, and scholarships for structured literacy certification.



PLEASE DONATE IF YOU'RE ABLE

STAY CONNECTED



Reading Allowed | 1617 JFK Boulevard 20th Floor | Philadelphia, PA 19103 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!