



**UNITED
IS THE WAY.**



TOGETHER WE CAN THRIVE.

Community is where we draw our strength and share our hope. We believe in the power of people – united through a common purpose – to accomplish anything we set our minds to.

United is the Way we come together so everyone thrives.

LOCAL. EFFICIENT. IMPACT-DRIVEN. RESULTS-BASED.

WHY SUPPORT UNITED WAY?

When it comes to supporting an organization, you have a lot of choices. So why support United Way? **IMPACT**. Our superpower is our ability to inspire neighbors, donors, volunteers and partners from all backgrounds to help create innovative solutions to community problems.

TOGETHER = BETTER

WHAT DO WE DO?

We bring people together to identify needs. We invest. And we work together to solve problems.





OUR IMPACT AREAS

Youth Opportunity – Community Resiliency

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

Children are the future, so their **NOW** matters.

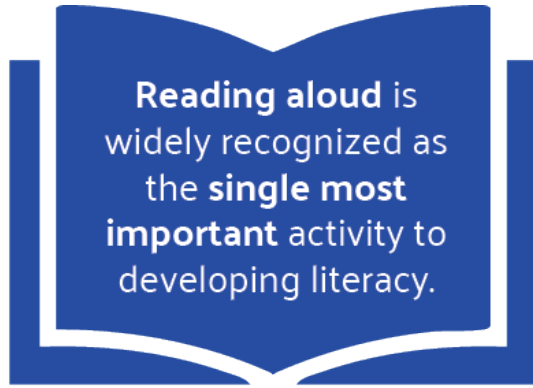
TAKING A STAND IN EARLY LITERACY

Our initiative, **United for Literacy (U4L)**, is a comprehensive approach to address the literacy crisis in Winnebago County.

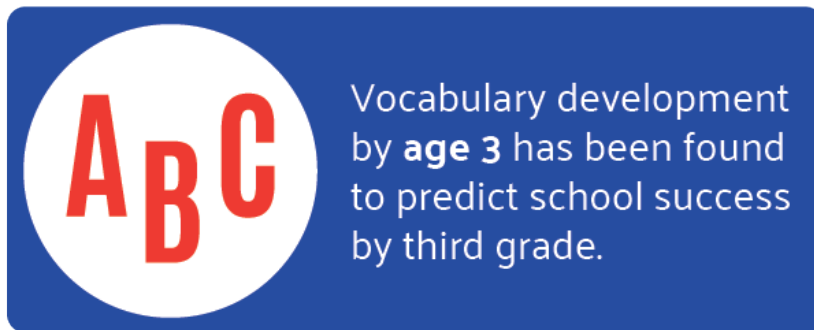
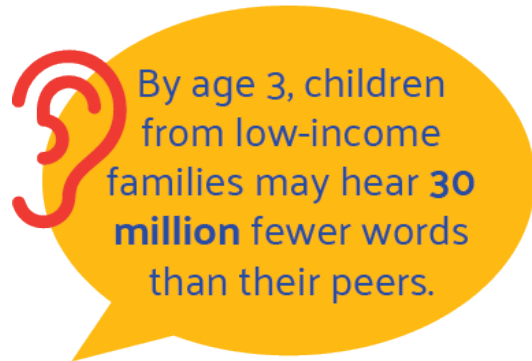
We want all kids to enter kindergarten ready to read so our schools can guide them to success.



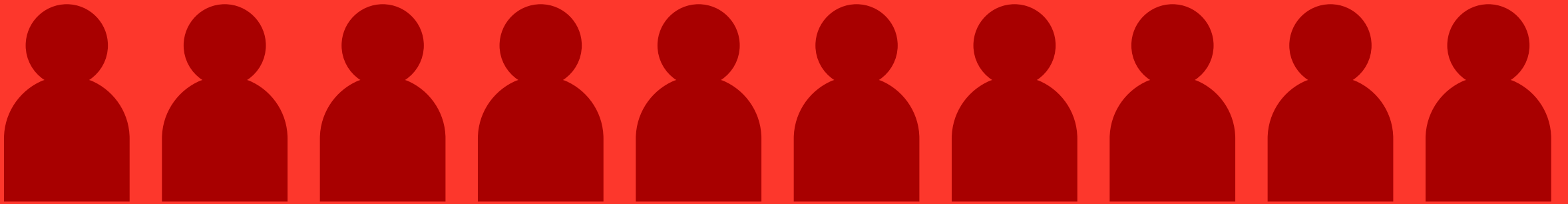
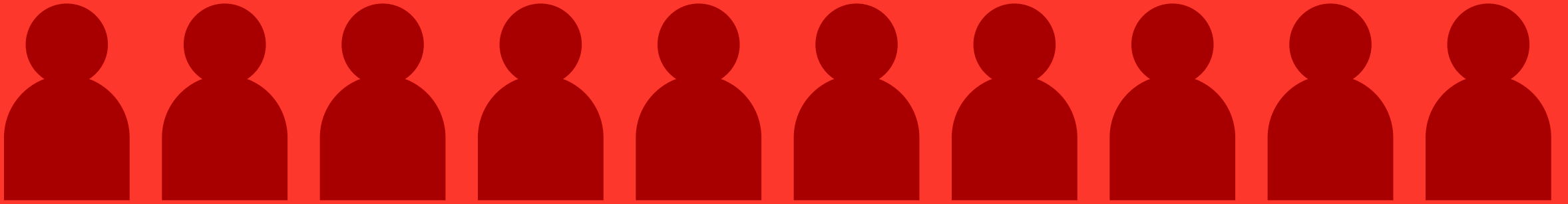
WHY WE UNITE FOR EARLY LITERACY



Literacy skills start developing **in utero**.



As of 2023 launch of U4L, **only 32%** of Winnebago County 3rd graders were reading at or above grade level.

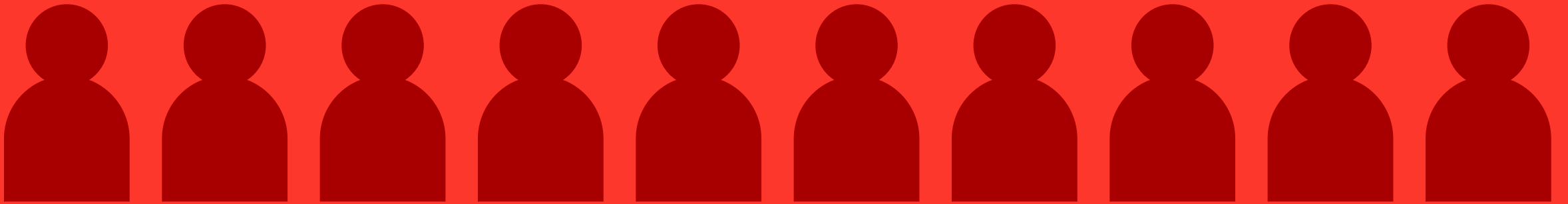
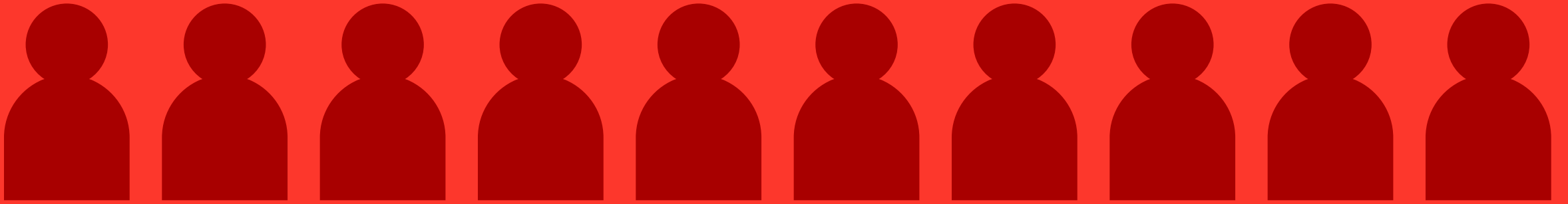


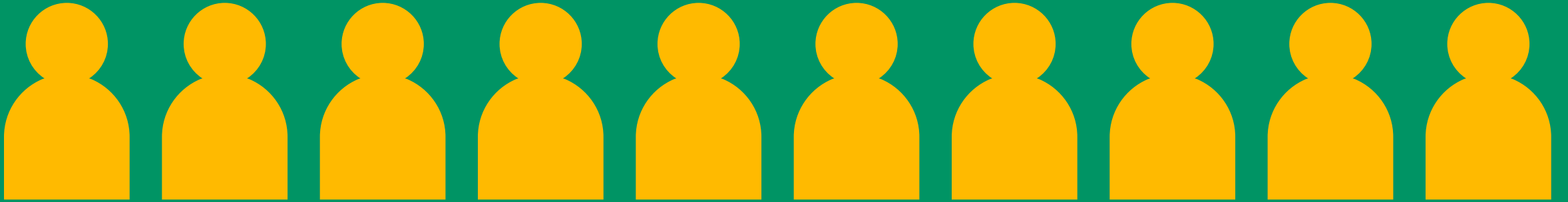


WHEN U4L STARTED, ONLY

32%

OF 3RD GRADE STUDENTS WERE READING AT
(OR ABOVE) GRADE LEVEL.







OUR BOLD GOAL:

75%

OF 3RD GRADERS READING PROFICIENTLY BY 2034

IT ALL STARTS AT THE BEGINNING

- **0-3 YEARS**
80-90% of brain development occurs
- **KINDERGARTEN**
Reading skills at this age **predict high school graduation**
- **3RD GRADE**
Standardized achievement testing occurs for basics like reading
- **4TH GRADE**
Children need to already know how to read to understand **80%** of the curriculum

LIFELONG CONSEQUENCES OF FALLING BEHIND

- If they're not reading at grade level by 4th grade, kids are **4x more likely to drop out**
- **Dropouts 5x more likely** to get arrested, **63%** more likely to be incarcerated
 - **85%** of kids in the juvenile justice system are low readers or functionally illiterate
- **43%** of adults with the lowest literacy live in poverty



THE UNITED FOR LITERACY APPROACH

How we support children and families to set them up for school success.



Programs for Children

- [Reach Out and Read](#) in all health systems
- Read-alouds and independent reading
- Literacy support in daycares and schools
- Community Storytimes
- Comprehensive book distribution
 - Tiny Turners (ages -3)
 - Page Turners (early childhood)
 - [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#)



Programs for Caregivers

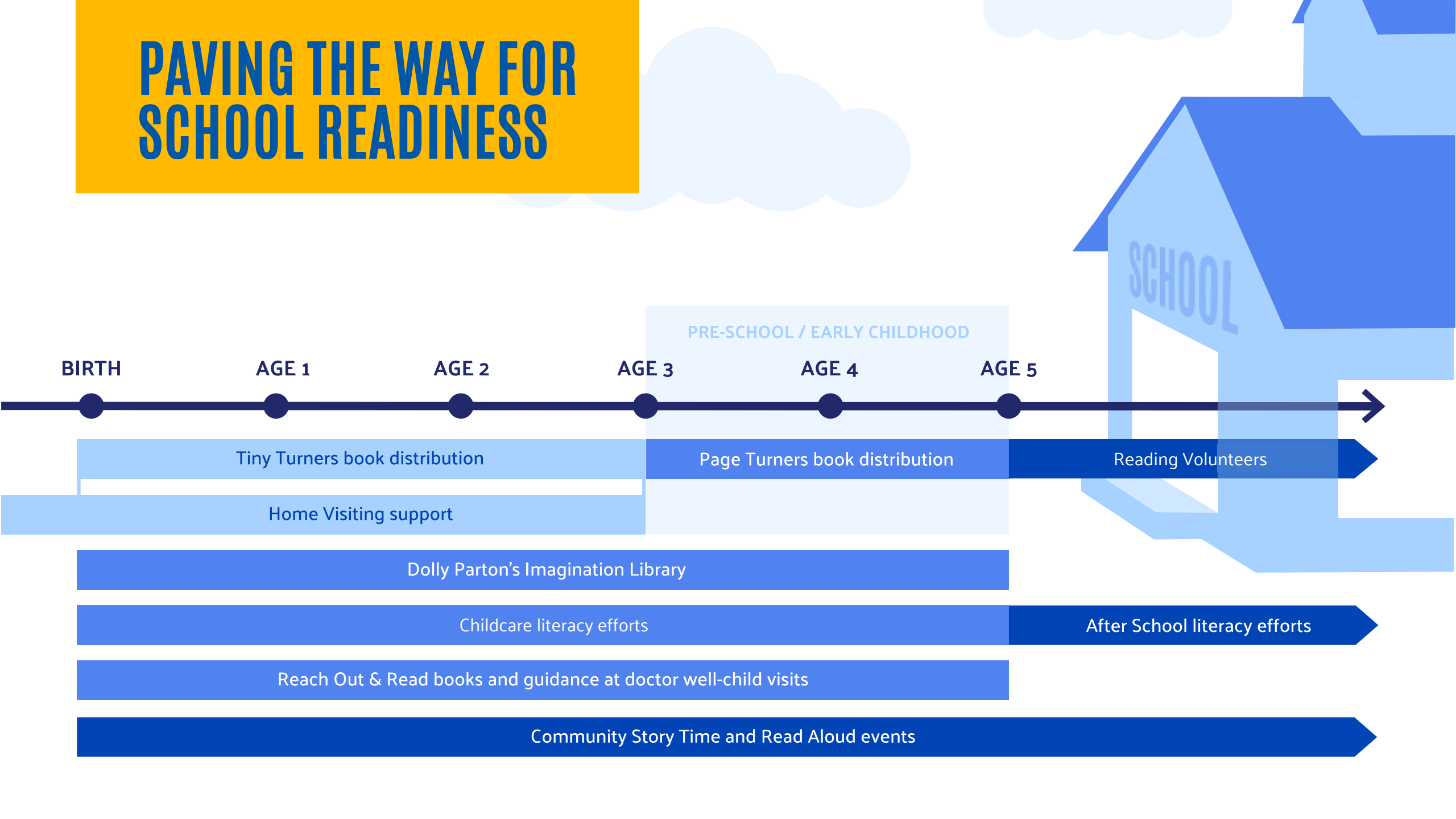
- Family Literacy Nights
- Engagement materials and instruction
- Training and outreach



Programs for Community

- Training and Professional Development
- Advocacy
- Public awareness messaging
- Additional book distribution

PAVING THE WAY FOR SCHOOL READINESS



BIRTH

AGE 1

AGE 2

AGE 3

AGE 4

AGE 5

PRE-SCHOOL / EARLY CHILDHOOD

Tiny Turners book distribution

Home Visiting support

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Childcare literacy efforts

Reach Out & Read books and guidance at doctor well-child visits

Community Story Time and Read Aloud events

Page Turners book distribution

Reading Volunteers

After School literacy efforts

SCHOOL

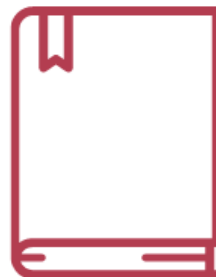
LOCAL SYSTEMIC CHANGE: REACH OUT & READ EXAMPLE

United Way brings Reach Out & Read to Winnebago County, and the ROR model infuses literacy into our children's healthcare.

Provider encourages families to read aloud daily



Book distributed at each well-child visit



Literacy-rich waiting rooms





STEAM
begins

STEAM builds better brains if active and engaged.

STEAM DOES NOT REPLACE READING.

EXCITING

Reading Builds Better Brains



2024-25 RESULTS: UNITED FOR LITERACY

12,000+

Child Interactions

18

Partner Agencies

250

Volunteer Tutors Trained

115,000

Books Distributed

105

Literacy Events

LOOKING AHEAD: 2025-26 FUNDED PROGRAMS



Dolly Parton Imagination Library



Tiny Turners



Page Turners



Reach Out & Read



Winnebago County Health Department WIC Literacy Program

LOOKING AHEAD: 2025-26 FUNDED PARTNERS

SERVICE GRANTS

- Boys & Girls Club of Rockford
- Brightpoint
- Easterseals
- Harlem School District
- Regional Office of Education
- Rockford Public Library
- Rockford Public Schools
- YMCA of Rock River Valley
- YWCA of Northwestern Illinois

BOOK DISTRIBUTION GRANTS

- Alignment Rockford
- Brooke Road UMC
- Durand Charm
- Junior League of Rockford
- Severson Dells
- South Beloit School District
- Trinity Day Care
- Jackson Charter School
- YMCA of Rock River Valley

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Connecting people to resources and help.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

United Way is working to create well-connected, supportive communities by providing programs like the **211 Helpline** and **Strong Neighborhood Houses**.



211 HELPLINE - POWERED BY UNITED WAY OF ROCK RIVER VALLEY!



Powered by United Way RRV

Get Connected. Get Help.

Whether facing personal uncertainty or crisis, Winnebago County's **211 Helpline** connects people to trained specialists who can offer information about local resources and services.

Call 211 to find:

- Rent & Utility Assistance
- Food
- Homeless Shelters
- Legal Services
- Elderly Services
- Childcare
- Medical and Mental Healthcare Help
- Much more!

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a pink top and a headset with a microphone, is shown in profile from the side, working at a desk. She is looking at a computer monitor. The background shows a typical office or call center environment with a desk, keyboard, and other equipment. The entire image has a blue tint.

NEED HELP?

DIAL 2-1-1 OR TEXT YOUR ZIP
CODE TO 898211.

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT **IL211.ORG**

STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE - IRVING AVENUE



United Way is leading a **place-based strategy** to dramatically improve the quality of life for our children and families because strong neighborhoods make a strong community.

Irving Avenue House – 312 Irving Ave, Rockford

Managed by **Youth Services Network** (YSN), this house provides a safe place for neighborhood youth to gather and find resources.



JOIN US.



**GIVE
BACK.**



**GET
INVOLVED.**



**TAKE
ACTION.**



GIVE BACK.

Give back through a recurring or one-time financial gift. Your generous donation will be directed where it is needed most to create real, lasting change in our community.



GET 
INVOLVED.

Real change is possible when people unite to take action. We make it easy and fun for individuals and groups to help build a more resilient future for all.



**TAKE
ACTION.**



Help us ensure our state resources and policies are giving families the support they need to thrive. Your voice is powerful. Use the power of your network to spread the word about the work that United Way of Rock River Valley is doing in our community.



**THANK
YOU!**

