

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Thursday, April 30, 2020

**CONTACT:** The Lastinger Center  
for Learning, Cathy Schroeder at  
[Cathy.Schroeder@coe.ufl.edu](mailto:Cathy.Schroeder@coe.ufl.edu) or  
(850) 363-9990

### **UF Lastinger Center and the Florida Grade-Level Reading Campaign Partner to Keep Students Reading**

*Research-based literacy tools help families and teachers during COVID-19*

**FLORIDA** - Today, the [University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning](#) and [The Florida Grade-Level Reading Campaign](#) announced that they are partnering to bring new [resources](#) for those teaching young children to read during the COVID-19 pandemic. Current data reveals that about 67 percent of students nationwide are not proficient readers by the end of third grade. As high-quality early learning programs and schools remain closed, children run the risk of falling further behind. These literacy resources will curb learning loss and increase student progress.

“The COVID-19 pandemic creates even greater disparities for Florida’s at-risk populations especially those living in poverty,” said Jenn Faber, Director of Grade-Level Reading at the Florida Children’s Council. “By partnering with the Lastinger Center we make these materials even more accessible to families and ensure better outcomes for students.”

Resources include research-based [tip sheets](#) and [videos](#) culled from the latest data on high-quality reading instruction. The tip sheets are tailored to two audiences—families and teachers. Dozens of practical, easy-to-follow recommendations include *Make Read Alouds Interactive*, *Promote Print Awareness Through Storybook Reading*, and *Support Language by Expanding Child’s Responses*. There is a corresponding video featuring ‘Miss Angie’ for each tip sheet to provide additional guidance on implementing strategies successfully.

“Reading is a fundamental skill necessary to succeed in school and life,” said Dr. Philip E. Poekert, Director of the Lastinger Center. “This partnership bridges the gap to support students when they need it most. Together we alleviate the stress of these challenging times and reduce the negative impacts.”

A [report](#), released by [NWEA](#), analyzed how students impacted by the school closures will suffer learning loss, similar to the “summer slide” they experience when out for summer breaks.

Researchers estimate in reading alone, students will begin the next school year with a 30-percent loss in learning gains. But they point out that with support, families and teachers can minimize losses.

*About Florida Grade-Level Reading Campaign*

*The Florida Grade-Level Reading Campaign (FGLRC) is a statewide initiative of the [Florida Children's Council](#), funded by [Helios Education Foundation](#) and focused on maximizing the efforts of communities and organizations working to ensure that Florida's children are reading on grade level by the end of third grade. FGLRC engages communities, supports local efforts and provides strategic guidance to help promote school readiness and quality instruction, tackle chronic absence, and improve summer learning, as well as engage parents as their children's first teacher. This collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, local officials, government agencies, and communities across Florida are working to ensure that many more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. To learn more, visit [FloridaGLR.net](#) and follow the Campaign on Twitter [@FloridaGLR](#).*

*About the University of Florida Lastinger Center*

*Housed within the College of Education, the Lastinger Center for Learning is a national leader in the design, delivery, and scaling of technology-enabled educational systems that transform teaching and learning. Focused on critical milestones of kindergarten preparedness, third grade reading proficiency, and ninth grade algebraic proficiency, the Lastinger Center envisions a world where every child and educator, regardless of circumstances, experiences high-quality learning every day. Since its founding in 2002, the Center has leveraged more than \$130 million in private and public funding to develop high-impact programs, including Early Learning Florida, Literacy Matrix, and Math Nation, that have served over one million students from birth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.*

###