



# RIVER CITY READING RUSH

*A Playbook for Literacy*

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## Let's Get Reading! Overview

River City Reading Rush increases reading proficiency for middle school students through a relationship-based approach that creates excitement about reading and encourages students to build literacy skills by reading independently and with peers. Literacy mentors lead group sessions where students read aloud and practice foundational reading skills. Outside of school, students track independent reading, earning badges and reading-related prizes along the way!



## Program Goals

- Create an energetic reading environment by building relationships with students as mentors and models of literacy skills.
- Increase foundational literacy skills for older students who are reading below grade level.
- Foster a love for reading by motivating students to read every day independently and with peers.
- Provide a safe environment for students to give and receive support from peers with similar learning goals.
- Create school to home connections that promote reading.

## AFTER SCHOOL AND SUMMER LITERACY PROGRAM

### Part 1: LETS GET READING! SESSIONS

- Meeting of the Minds - Overview and Word Game
  - Objective: Set the tone, activate prior knowledge, and engage participants
- Phonics or Vocabulary Practice
  - Objective: Strengthen foundational literacy skills
- Guided Reading - Choral or Partner
  - Objective: Improve fluency, comprehension, and confidence in reading
- Writing and Response Activity - Summarize or Make a Connection
  - Objective: Build writing skills and reinforce comprehension
- Reflection and Wrap-Up
  - Objective: Review and reinforce what was learned

## Part 2: READING CHALLENGE

- Literacy mentors work with students to set personalized reading goals.
- Using the Beanstack app, students track what they read, receive reading recommendations based on the books they log, and earn badges for their achievements.
- Tailored reading lists for each student at 20 - 50L above the average Lexile level of books logged ensure appropriate challenge and growth.
- Students can choose to participate in a reading contest.



## THE RESEARCH

There is a large body of research that informs literacy interventions for lower grades. There are far fewer intervention studies on programs for older students. Interventions targeting adolescents often focus on reading comprehension instead of foundational literacy skills.

Available studies confirm that quality summer and afterschool programs can have a positive impact on adolescents' literacy abilities, academic success, and social-emotional skill development. (1)

Research suggests that older students may need support with foundational skills such as word-level skills and reading fluency. Readers who mastered phonemic awareness and phonics may still need support with reading and writing multisyllabic words, applying structural and morphemic analysis, and building their vocabulary knowledge. (2)

The amount of time spent reading, along with the number of words read is a clear component of improving reading achievement.

Reading a higher volume of texts has a strong impact on students' vocabulary and conceptual knowledge as well as their overall reading achievement. (3)

The YET Program served over 500 afterschool programs across the country. With a similar structure to RCRR, it utilized group read-alouds, phonics and vocabulary practice, writing, and an independent reading challenge. Participants showed improvement of an average of 1.2 grade levels with 180 days between tests. (4)

Motivation to engage in reading is not fixed in adolescents and can still be developed. This is important, because reading motivation is a critical contributor to reading achievement and building lifelong learners. (5)

"There are two sides to reading. On one side are the skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics, word recognition, vocabulary, and simple comprehension. On the other side is the will to read. A good reader has both skill and will. In the "will" part, we are talking about motivation to read. This describes children's enjoyments, their wants, and their behaviors surrounding reading." (6)

KidzLit is an afterschool program for grades K-8 that promotes reading skills and the motivation to read. With similar components to RCRR, facilitators organize a read-aloud, or partner reading activity and lead a group discussion. Facilitators report that participants show increased enjoyment and desire to read, an enhanced vocabulary, a greater ability to express ideas, and stronger relationships with peers. (4)

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- At least 80% of participants who achieve their personal reading plan goals will see higher than expected growth on TN Ready ELA scores.
- Students will report increased interest and confidence in reading.
- Students will report higher motivation to read.
- Students will develop supportive relationships with peers.
- Students will report increased frequency of reading at home.



1) AdLit. Adolescent Literacy interventions. <https://www.adlit.org/adlit-101-overview/adolescent-literacy-interventions>

2) Scammacca NK, Roberts G, Vaughn S, Stuebing KK. A Meta-Analysis of Interventions for Struggling Readers in Grades 4-12: 1980-2011. *J Learn Disabil.* 2015 Jul-Aug;48(4):369-90.

3) Allington, R.L., & McGill-Franzen, A.M. (2021). Reading Volume and Reading Achievement: A Review of Recent Research. *Read Res Q*, 56(S1), S231-S238

4) AdLit. Examples of High Quality Programs. <https://www.adlit.org/topics/afterschool-summer-programs/best-practices-adolescent-literacy-afterschool-and-summer>

5) Schaffner, Ellen & Philipp, Maik & Schiefele, Ulrich. (2016). Reciprocal Effects between Intrinsic Reading Motivation and Reading Competence? A Cross-Lagged Panel Model for Academic Track and Nonacademic Track Students. *Journal of Research in Reading.* 39. 19-36.

6) Cambria, J., & Guthrie, J. T. (2010). Motivating and engaging students in reading. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 46(1), 16-29.