



*When you read with a child*

EVERYBODY  
**WINS!**  
IOWA

Reading  
Mentor  
Handbook

*“With this program, everybody truly does win, especially the children. It is amazing to see the difference that one hour a week can make in a child’s life.”*

Senator Tom Harkin, founder of Everybody Wins! Iowa and an Everybody Wins! D.C. mentor for over 10 years

# With Our Program... Everybody Wins!

## **Students:**

- ✿ Learn reading is fun and become more enthusiastic about books and learning.
- ✿ Are exposed to new places and ideas through the reading materials volunteers share with them.
- ✿ Learn to think more creatively.
- ✿ Improve their listening and vocabulary skills, which instills articulation and insightfulness.
- ✿ Are exposed to the world beyond school through their volunteers.
- ✿ Become more confident because they know their volunteers make time for them and enjoy reading with them.

## **Volunteers:**

- ✿ Give to their communities and make a difference through a well-supported, convenient, user-friendly program.
- ✿ Form meaningful and rewarding relationships with young students.
- ✿ Create a link between the schools and the community.
- ✿ Become more confident, more optimistic about the future and more positive about the world around them.
- ✿ Learn more about their communities.

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# Welcome to



# Everybody Wins! Iowa

## **A Message from the Executive Director**

Thank you for volunteering to become a reading mentor! We are very excited to have you with us. Together, we look forward to instilling the love of reading in young children.

We hope you find this Reading Mentor Handbook helpful. Although much of this material was covered during your orientation session, we ask that you read through the entire handbook to gain a complete understanding of your role and responsibilities. You will find information about our program policies and good advice on reading aloud and working with children. If you have questions at any time, please don't hesitate to contact me or your site coordinator.

Thank you again for being a part of Everybody Wins! Iowa. Together, we will improve the lives of many children!

Karen Ligas, Executive Director  
Everybody Wins! Iowa

## Everybody Wins! Iowa Mission Statement

Everybody Wins! Iowa aims to increase children's success in school through reading and mentoring experiences with caring volunteers. Through our programming, we reach children while they are young to foster their interest in reading and learning, while encouraging them to believe that they can be successful.

## Everybody Wins! History

The Everybody Wins! organization was founded by retired New York City textile industry executive Arthur Tannenbaum and his wife Phyllis in 1991 after reading a book review in *The New York Times* for Jim Trelease's *The Read-Aloud Handbook*. The Tannenbaum's started Everybody Wins! to ensure that New York City school-children would be able to discover the magic that comes from books. The program caught on in other cities and in 2002, Everybody Wins! Iowa was established. With nearly 25 percent of our Iowa fourth-graders not reading at grade level (Iowa State Report Card, 2015), we know that it is crucial for our program be introduced to more students in our state. Therefore, we recruit reading mentors and match them with elementary school children, one-to-one, for weekly reading sessions. You can learn more about us at [www.everybodywinsiowa.org](http://www.everybodywinsiowa.org).

# Why Read Aloud?

“The single most important activity for building knowledge for their eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.” – Becoming a Nation of Readers Report, The National Commission on Reading, 1985

Reading aloud gives children background knowledge, which helps them make sense of what they see, hear and read. The more that children are read aloud to, the larger their vocabularies will grow and the more they will know about the world and their place in it.

“The single most important activity for building these understandings and skills essential for reading success appears to be reading aloud to children.” –Bus, Van Dzendoor, and Pellegrini, 1995: Wells 1985

When children are read to, they are exposed to more complex language and vocabulary than they encounter in their own reading and as a result, their reading skills improve.

“Shared book reading times that involve talking about the book and other topics is the first of three recommended key practices to support language theory and literacy development.” - Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, the 1998 report of the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children

Reading aloud presents books as sources of pleasant, valuable and exciting experiences. Children who value books are motivated to read on their own.

# Program Description & Goals

Everybody Wins! Iowa is a reading and mentoring program in which adult volunteers travel to nearby schools or community partners once a week to read one-to-one to an elementary student either during their lunch hour, breakfast time or after school.

Our goals are to:

- ✿ Generate enthusiasm for books and reading.
- ✿ Improve children's listening comprehension, vocabulary, ability to articulate thoughts and background knowledge—all fundamental literacy skills.
- ✿ Increase children's self-esteem through consistent weekly attention from their mentors.
- ✿ Provide flexible, convenient volunteer experiences for area professionals and community volunteers.
- ✿ Bring community support and resources into elementary schools and expose children to people of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

# Your Site

## Coordinator's Role...

The site coordinator is a part-time Everybody Wins! Iowa staff member. He or she is responsible for the daily operation of the reading sessions at the school. The site coordinator is also responsible for enforcing all program policies and ensuring that volunteer mentors and students are satisfied with all the reading sessions.

Site Coordinators:

- ✿ Support reading mentors and offer assistance when needed
- ✿ Monitor all reading sessions
- ✿ Ensure the comfort and safety of the reading mentors and students
- ✿ Notify reading mentors if their student is absent or if the program is canceled due to school field trips or weather-related school closings

Please bring any comments, ideas, problems and suggestions to the attention of your site coordinator. However, you are also welcome to contact the regional coordinator, program manager, or executive director at any time. Your reading session should be enjoyable for both you and your student. Do not be afraid to ask for assistance; we will do whatever we can to resolve the situation!

Note: During each weekly reading session, the site coordinator may check in with reading pairs to ensure that sessions are running smoothly. Occasionally, the coordinator may have to interrupt to give pairs information. Coordinators will try to keep interruptions to a minimum. We appreciate your understanding when interruptions do occur.

# The Reading Mentor's Role...

The reading mentor meets for approximately 30-60 minutes a week with an elementary school student one-to-one. Reading mentors select books provided on-site or bring books to read while the student eats lunch. The reading mentor reports weekly to a site coordinator at the school site.

The reading mentor talks with and listens to the child, reads aloud to the child and encourages the child to share the volunteer's enthusiasm for books. The reading mentor is also a positive role model by providing consistent weekly attention.

Reading mentors:

- Build relationships by talking about shared interests, reading aloud to their students, talking about books and being positive and consistent.
- Make a commitment to volunteer for one school year, and if possible, to continue reading with the same child in the subsequent years of elementary school.
- Receive support from Everybody Wins! Iowa, specifically from the site coordinator, regional coordinator, and other Everybody Wins! Iowa staff.
- Provide structure in the reading session by bringing or helping select reading material, keeping students engaged and encouraging questioning and conversation.
- Stay with the student and other reading pairs during each session, and (where applicable) escort them to their next destination at the end of their reading session.
- Attend the kick-off and end-of-year celebrations each school year.

# Everybody Wins! Iowa Program Policies

- ✿ **Be reliable and maintain a regular schedule, committing to the same time frame and day every week through the end of the school year.**

Power Reading sessions build confidence and self-esteem.

Students who are disappointed by inconsistent volunteers may have difficulty behaving or paying attention and will not benefit from the program. Please consider your ability to commit before you agree to volunteer.

- ✿ **Call your site coordinator if you must cancel your session.** We understand that unexpected things happen, but a child will be counting on you. You must contact the site coordinator in advance of the scheduled time. If you permanently change your schedule, employment or need to resign, please notify your site coordinator immediately and schedule a goodbye session with your site coordinator and student.

- ✿ **Be considerate in the reading space.**

There may be many reading pairs sharing a small reading space, and we ask mentors to be conscious of their reading volume and any other action that might affect another pair's reading session. Please help return the space to the condition it was in before your session began.

- ✿ **Never be alone with your student.**

Please be sure you always share a room with another Everybody Wins! Iowa pairs. If you find yourself alone with your reading partner, please find your site coordinator, who will be able to help you find an appropriate reading space.

### ✿ **Refrain from giving special gifts or foods.**

As a reading mentor, you are sharing your gift of time and attention with your student. Material gifts can shift the focus from the interpersonal relationship to one based on material rewards. Sometimes a volunteer can provide items that a student's parents or guardians cannot, and this can lead to difficulties at home. When volunteers give students material gifts or treats, other students feel left out. Furthermore, volunteers who follow rules and do not give gifts feel uncomfortable when other volunteers break the rules. Notes, cards and letters are appropriate.

### ✿ **During the program, see your student only at the school (or organization).**

- For the protection of both students and mentors, contact between mentors and students outside of scheduled program time is not permitted, including during summer break. Special activities sponsored by Everybody Wins! Iowa are exceptions.

### ✿ **Do not take photographs.**

For the safety and privacy of our students and their families, mentors are not permitted to photograph their students at any time. Throughout the year, Everybody Wins! Iowa staff and approved photographers may photograph reading pairs for publicity purposes.

## **Other Considerations... Physical Contact**

Many of the young children we work with have a strong need and desire for positive physical contact with caring adults. You are encouraged to be a positive role model; however, your physical contact should be limited to holding a hand, "high-five" or fist bump, or sharing a child-initiated hug in full view of program staff. Remember that someone else may view what you see as simple, friendly affection as something entirely different.

## Social Media Policy

*Everybody Wins! Iowa* recognizes many benefits of online communication platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. We believe that these information sharing tools can help us raise awareness about our organization and the importance of quality mentoring relationships. For these reasons, *Everybody Wins! Iowa* utilizes platforms including social networking sites (*Facebook, Twitter, etc.*), news sharing sites (*program and community blogs*), photo and video sharing sites (*Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, etc.*), and other online communication platforms (*website, webinars, podcasts, etc.*) to communicate with our program participants, board members, community partners, and others.

While we recognize the inherent benefits of online communication platforms, we also understand that online communication can have negative, damaging or unintended effects when boundaries of public and private information sharing are blurred. For these reasons we have developed a social media policy to protect program participants and organizational integrity. This policy has been adapted from the Friends for Youth Mentoring Institute to fit the needs of this program.

Our program will rely on social media tools for marketing, outreach, event planning and networking; however, if a program board member, employee, volunteer, youth participant or affiliate selects to participate in social media platforms on their personal time, we hold that this is the choice and sole responsibility of the individual. *Everybody Wins! Iowa* does not intend to control online interaction among program participants; however, to protect the healthy boundaries of youth and adult mentoring relationships, we request that participants, affiliates, and employees understand and adhere to the following Social Media CARE guidelines when interacting with the program or program participants through online communication platforms.

### **Community – Appropriate – Responsibility – Exercise Common Sense (CARE):**

#### **Community –Honor it!**

Online communication platforms are an incredible resource for connecting and building community. Honoring community connection means using these mediums as ways to build support, positive interaction and shared understanding. Because people bring unique experiences, attitudes, and beliefs to the realm of

online interaction just as they do in-person, some online dialogue may illustrate differences of opinion. When this happens, remember to articulate yourself clearly and responsibly by presenting information logically, not overreacting, and objectively clarifying misunderstandings or errors as necessary.

### **Appropriate – Be it!**

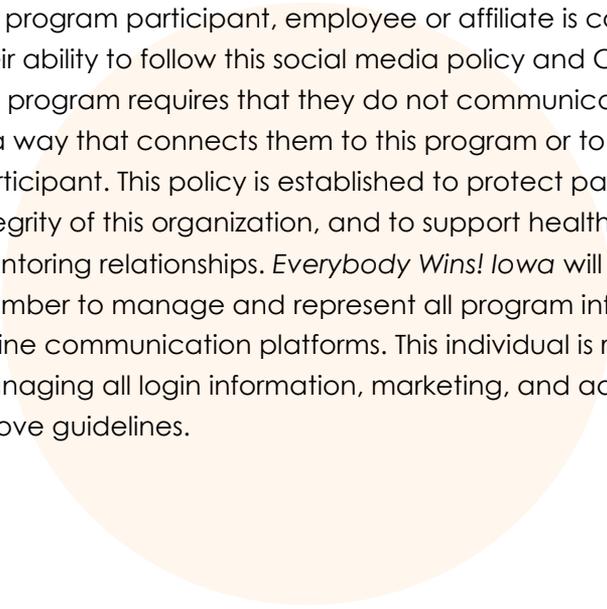
If you choose to dialogue via an online communication platform on a personal level while “linked” or connected to your formal mentoring program and/or respective match mate, be considerate, fair, and appropriate with your posts. This means considering if the information you are sharing is something that you feel comfortable with your program, match-mate, potential employer and other individuals viewing BEFORE you post. Remember all information shared through online communication platforms becomes public domain the instant it is posted.

### **Responsibility – Use it!**

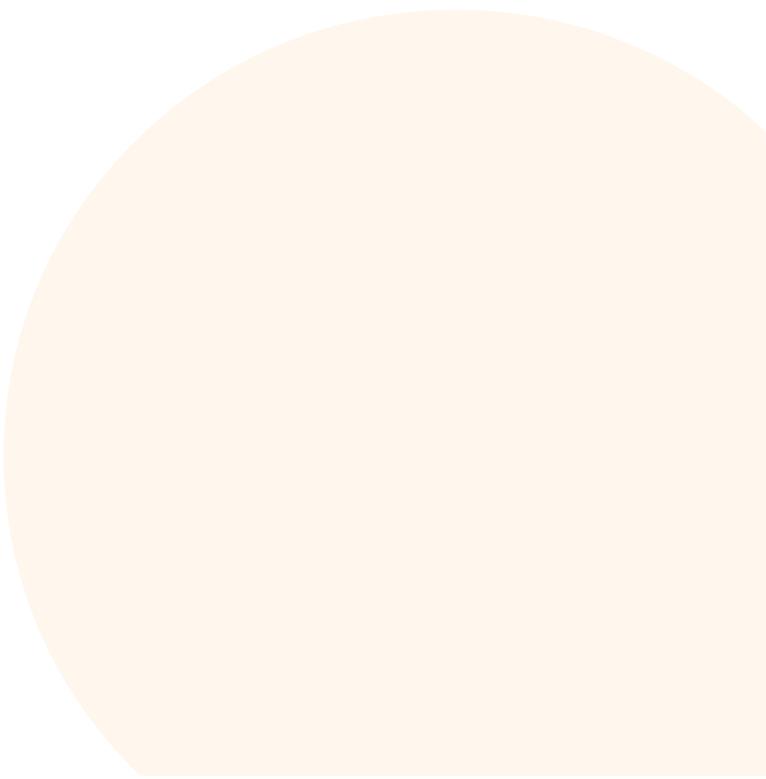
You are responsible for the information you share through online communication platforms. Exercise responsibility for your communication by demonstrating, accuracy, honesty and integrity. When you make a mistake, acknowledge and correct it immediately. Think twice before posting. Always consider if you are comfortable with the information being connected back to you by anyone. Honor confidentiality and do not disclose an individual's personal information. If you are expressing your personal opinion while referencing your mentoring program or respective match mate, be sure to indicate that you are expressing a personal belief, opinion, or attitude and not the expressed opinion of the organization, or individual with which you are affiliated.

### **Exercise Common Sense and Good Judgment –Show it!**

If you're unsure if you should post information using online communication platforms, err on the side of caution and use discretion. Understand that if you choose to connect with your program and respective match mate via online communication platforms, you are expected to share this information with the program. Recognize *Everybody Wins!* Iowa will monitor social networking sites to protect program participants and organizational integrity. Failure to follow the program's Social Media CARE guidelines may be cause for dismissal from the program.



If a program participant, employee or affiliate is concerned about their ability to follow this social media policy and CARE guidelines, this program requires that they do not communicate electronically in a way that connects them to this program or to another participant. This policy is established to protect participants, the integrity of this organization, and to support healthy youth and adult mentoring relationships. *Everybody Wins! Iowa* will select one staff member to manage and represent all program information via online communication platforms. This individual is responsible for managing all login information, marketing, and adherence to above guidelines.



## Confidentiality and Reporting

All information you are told about your student (by teachers, Everybody Wins! Iowa staff and other school staff) is confidential, and sharing that information may be against the law. Similarly, there may be information about your student's background and medical history that Everybody Wins! Iowa is unable to share with mentors (such as an ADHD diagnosis) due to student confidentiality.

The student is free to share information with you; however, there are certain things you are required to tell the site coordinator. These include the following:

- ✿ If a student confides that he or she is the victim of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse, you **MUST** notify your Site Coordinator, who will inform the principal (or Organization Leader) and Everybody Wins! Iowa's Executive Director immediately. Make a note on your calendar on the date you received this information and when it was reported as well as who you reported it to. Remember, this information is extremely personal and capable of damaging lives. **DO NOT** share it with anyone except the appropriate authorities (i.e. your site coordinator).
- ✿ If the student tells you about their involvement in any illegal activity, you must inform your Site Coordinator immediately. Again, please note the date when the information was reported and to whom it was given.

If you have any concerns about your student, please notify your Site Coordinator immediately.

## Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy

Everybody Wins! Iowa will not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any kind in volunteer locations. All employees, program students and volunteers are entitled to an environment free from all forms of harassment based on gender, race, age, color, creed, religion, national origin, veteran or marital status, gender orientation or disability.

## Involuntary Termination

A volunteer's service may be terminated for reasons including, but not limited to, the ones listed below.

- Violation of a policy
- Theft or misappropriation of property belonging to Everybody Wins! Iowa, the program site, an employee, a volunteer, a student or another person
- Misusing, destroying or defacing Everybody Wins! Iowa or program site property
- Refusing to perform duties of the volunteer reading mentor position
- Excessive lateness or unexcused absences
- Possessing illegal substances on program site property or reporting to the program under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- Unprofessional behavior toward school staff, community partners, students or volunteers

# How to Spend a Reading Session

When you arrive: Sign in, pick up your reading folder and greet your student with enthusiasm.



For 5 minutes: Conversation: Catch up on what has happened in school over the past week and review what you read in your previous session.



For 20 minutes: Read, discuss and ask questions about the book while your student eats lunch.



For 10 minutes: Write in the journal, complete the book log, complete activities from the reading folder, draw a picture related to the story or read another book or chapter.

Before you leave: Clean up any trash in your area; return books, and reading folder. Say goodbye, emphasizing any plans for the next session.

# Selecting Good Books

Reading sessions are more effective when reading mentors guide book selection.

Selecting books in advance gives mentors more control—as questions can be prepared in advance—provides more time for actual reading and makes session more enjoyable (because mentors can share their interests and enthusiasm with their student). Please do not bring any electronic reading materials (iPads, Kindles, etc.) to your reading session.

Try presenting your student with a limited choice. Before the session, select a few books that you think would be interesting to your student and at the appropriate level. Then allow the student to choose between them. This strategy allows the student to participate in the process, but also ensures that you are able to select and read the best books while being efficient with program time.

Choose books on your student's listening level rather than on their reading level. Children can comprehend what they hear at a higher level than what they read, and exposure to these more sophisticated books will increase students' vocabulary, language, and listening comprehension.

# Tips for Success

## **Give structure to your reading session: Set goals.**

You can discuss what you both want to achieve from your reading session. Write down your goals and keep referring to them.

Examples:

- ✿ "Let's try to read at least 10 books by Marc Brown this fall."
- ✿ "Let's learn about two new animals."
- ✿ "I'd like to find a new favorite author and learn more about him/her."

## **Find a topic, and then think beyond books. Use your imagination to bring in a wide range of reading material. reading material.**

Example: If you and your student both like race cars, you can:

- ✿ Read non-fiction books about cars
- ✿ Read biographies of race car drivers
- ✿ Read official race programs
- ✿ Read articles in the newspaper sports section
- ✿ Write a letter to your favorite race car driver
- ✿ Read race car magazines
- ✿ Write a story about your student as a race car driver
- ✿ Label a diagram of a race car
- ✿ Write a review of a race you both saw
- ✿ Rewrite "The Tortoise & The Hare" with race cars.

## **Build trust and confidence.**

Build trust by being consistent. If you attend the reading sessions irregularly, you may find that the student is disappointed or uncooperative. If you must miss a session, call the site coordinator immediately, just as soon as you know you will be unable attend. To build confidence, praise your student honestly and frequently. Remember, attentiveness and effort can be as important as performance.

## **Learn more about your student, and be respectful of their identity and preferences.**

Understand your student in terms of his or her own background and values. Show interest in your student as a person. Listen carefully to what he or she says. Having a conversation meets the goals of helping the child articulate thoughts and exposing the child to new information. Ask questions about favorite activities, family members, friends, hopes and dreams. By your words and actions, let your student know you care.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the best way to structure my reading session?

Reading mentors direct the reading time and have clear expectations. Reading sessions should be structured and predictable with an emphasis on the mentor reading aloud to the student. Whenever possible, the mentor guides the student with the book selection or may bring reading material. Conversation, questions about a book and a shared writing activity (utilizing Mentor Literacy Guides and Student Journal) can enhance the session.

Saying “no” is okay. Teachers repeatedly remind us that students respect and appreciate limits. Students may ask to go outside, walk around, play games or see their friends, but remember your goals. Advice and assistance are always available; please speak with your site coordinator about any concerns you may have regarding the program or with your student.

## Why are gifts or special food not permitted?

Reading mentors give the gift of time and attention. Bringing gifts or special foods causes other students to feel hurt and confused and puts pressure on other volunteers. Students misunderstand the purpose of the program when reading mentors bring gifts. If you want to reward your student for an accomplishment or honor a birthday, we suggest that you give a book to Everybody Wins! Iowa inscribed with the child's name.

## Why do mentors read aloud to students?

Reading mentors encourage children's interest in reading as they model reading for pleasure. No matter what a student's ability, reading aloud to the student and talking together will benefit the student academically and socially, and it achieves literacy outcomes. Our program research shows more gain in effective literacy outcomes compared to students simply reading aloud to their mentors. As your student gains confidence, pairs may "buddy-read" to each other however, if the mentor may do most of the reading aloud.

## How are students chosen to participate?

Students are referred to our program by their classroom teachers for one or more of the following reasons:

- The student is behind in fundamental reading skills.
- The student is an English language learner.
- The student would benefit from one-to-one interaction with a caring adult.

## Why are students and mentors not permitted to see each other outside of reading sessions?

For the protection of students, mentors, your organization, and Everybody Wins! Iowa, contact between mentors and students outside of scheduled reading sessions is not permitted. Special activities sponsored by Everybody Wins! Iowa is the only exception to this policy.

# Other things you can do to help Everybody Wins! Iowa!

- ✿ **Recruit other reading mentors.** Your friends and colleagues may be waiting for an invitation to join you as a reading mentor. Tell your colleagues, neighbors, alumni associations, churches and community organizations about the opportunity to read and mentor a student. Many students are waiting to participate because we currently do not have enough reading mentors to serve all the students who could benefit from the program.

**Refer any potential volunteer mentors to:**

Anna Sunstrom, Volunteer Outreach Manager, (515) 242-8462 or [volunteer@everybodywinsiowa.org](mailto:volunteer@everybodywinsiowa.org).

- ✿ **Tell us your ideas.** We are eager to hear from you. We want to ensure that the program is positive and successful for everyone involved.
- ✿ **Donate new books to Everybody Wins! Iowa** If you wish, we will inscribe the first name of your student, as well as your name, into any new books that you donate to our program.

## Acknowledgement of Mentor Training and Receipt of Handbook

Signing this document in the space provided below indicates the following:

I have received an electronic or physical copy of the Everybody Wins! Iowa Reading Mentor Handbook.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read the handbook and familiarize myself with the contents.

I have received training on the details of Power Read programming and understand the rules and regulations governing my participation.

I give permission for Everybody Wins! Iowa to use my photo on the website and on promotional materials.

Check one:  Yes  No

Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_



# Key Contacts

My Site Coordinator is: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

EWI Program Manager: Christine Russell  
Program@everybodywinsiowa.org  
(515) 242-8463

Executive Director: Karen Ligas  
Statedirector@everybodywinsiowa.org  
(515) 242-8461

## **Thank you for volunteering!**

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