

Snapshot of Success

Raising School Ready Readers

Over the summer of 2019, ISU Extension and Outreach, Polk County partnered with West Des Moines Community Education to provide refugee families an opportunity to participate in the Raising School Ready Readers program. This five-week program focused on building early literacy skills in young children through interactive activities.

With the majority of parent participants also learning English, West Des Moines Community Education provided an interpreter to help families better understand the video and directions for each activity. Each week parents came just as ready to learn as their children, and they worked together to complete the activities, and more importantly, improve their literacy skills.

“It was neat to see the excitement from the children when they explained activities to their parents,” said Cassie Odland, series facilitator and family life and nutrition educator for ISU Extension, Polk County. “It was also great knowing that the adult participants were getting as much out of the program as their kids.”

Five adults and six children attended three or more sessions of Raising School Ready Readers. After learning about the six different areas of literacy, the five adult participants were evaluated and asked what they took away from the program. All participants increased opportunities to actively engage in conversation with their child, and they encouraged their children to write and draw more. Additionally, 80 percent of participants found they increased the amount they talked about print materials when they are out and about with their children.

Most notably participants indicated other tangible changes as a result of participating in the program with one participant “going to the library” more often and another shared they are “reading more than before.”



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Polk County

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