



A child's path to a brighter future is paved with books.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FERST FOUNDATION FOR CHILDHOOD LITERACY ANNOUNCES REBRAND AS “FERST READERS”**

*Ferst Readers provides books and resources for local children age 0 – 5,  
laying the groundwork for future academic success.*

*Photo caption: Ferst Readers' parent and child enjoy reading their monthly book.*

Carrollton, GA (1-4-19): Local nonprofit Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy of Carroll County is a thing of the past – at least in terms of its name. The organization has rebranded with the new name of “Ferst Readers” along with a refreshed logo and recharged mission to “strengthen communities by providing quality books and literacy resources for children and their families to use at home during the earliest stages of development.” The local program will be known as Ferst Readers of Carroll County.

“The word ‘foundation’ in our name has always been a bit misleading,” said Karen Hartley, Board Chair of Ferst Readers of Carroll County, Inc. “It implies that we grant money to other people and organizations. Our new name, ‘Ferst Readers,’ more accurately reflects what we do, which is provide quality books and literacy resources for children and their families to use at home during the earliest stages of development.”

More than 3600 of Carroll County children ages birth to five have received books and resources, free of charge, from the Ferst Readers program. That number continues to climb as the program gains momentum in Carroll County.

“Reading to your children, starting at birth, is one of the best ways to ensure they graduate from high school,” said Hartley. “Not only does exposure to rich language experiences provide a brighter future for every child, but the entire community benefits when more children are able to succeed academically and graduate from high school. We’ve facilitated the program throughout Carroll County for 14 years and continue to be inspired by the success stories made possible by something as simple as a book.”

As children around the country go back to school, many of them are not prepared to be successful learners. Programs like Ferst Readers can help change that.

“One of the most significant factors influencing a child’s early educational success is the introduction to books and being read to at home before kindergarten. Yet the majority of low-income families (61 percent) do not have a single book in the home suitable for a child,” said Hartley. “Not only low-income families benefit from our program. All children ages birth to 5 can receive our books simply by registering to participate. Tanner Health helps us by suggesting parents register children at birth. The local public libraries also have registration forms available and can help parents with registration. We believe our program will encourage parents to read with their children early and often and will ultimately help those children succeed in school.”

“This past year, we began a program to train trainers for a program we call Conversations Count,” says Tony Childers, Vice Chair for Ferst Readers of Carroll County. “This program provides insight and materials to help parents of young children understand the importance of early learning and then learn how to talk with and read to their children. We hope to reach as many as 800 families across the county with the Conversations Count program in the next year. We want to train facilitators in churches and other groups who work with families of young children.”

Ferst Readers is closing the achievement gap by mailing bookstore-quality books directly to children at home every month, from birth to age five, at absolutely no cost to the family. Ferst Readers currently sends books to more than 45,000 children every month and has placed more than 5.5 million books in homes. Each book is carefully selected for maximum developmental impact by a team of early child development/education experts and is accompanied by helpful tips and book-centered activities to help parents better engage with their child while reading.

“It’s important to know that Ferst Readers is not a needs-based program. We want every child age birth to five to have access to great books at home regardless of household income. For only \$40 a year, a child can receive a quality book and literacy resources mailed to the home every month. We raise the funds to provide those books to the children. With support from our community – individuals, schools, businesses, civic groups, churches, etc. - we can ensure that more children enter school ready for academic success. “

## **About Ferst Readers**

Ferst Readers is a nonprofit organization that strengthens communities by providing quality books and literacy resources for children and their families to use at home during the earliest stages of development. Ferst Readers currently delivers books to more than 45,000 children every month and has placed more than 5.5 million books in homes since 1999. More than 700 volunteers across seven states are raising awareness about the importance of early literacy and are helping prepare young children in their communities for reading and learning success. For more information, support or enrollment, visit [www.FerstReaders.org](http://www.FerstReaders.org).

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