OSCEOLA READS, ENCOURAGING EARLY AND CONSISTENT READING THROUGH FREE READING APP

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It's a novel concept – kindergartners need to be ready for kindergarten in order to be ready to achieve on the first day of school.

Literacy rate, and exposing children to reading from an early age – way before that first school day — is essential in that.

Enter **Osceola Reads**, which encourages reading early and often in an attempt to increase the literacy rate throughout **Osceola County**, a place where about half of kindergarten students are prepared for their first day of school.

Exposing children to reading by age three can help raise that number, and Osceola Reads is reaching out to do that by partnering since February 2016 with the School District of Osceola County, the Education Foundation, the Early Learning Coalition and the local city and county government.

The encouragement is to read all year, including over winter and summer breaks to avoid losing gains during the school year when reading is a topic. The tool best used is **Footsteps2Brilliance**, a free mobile reading app that doesn't even require Wi-fi to run, so children can engage in reading on the go or wherever they stop, like in the car, at the store or a doctor's office. The app accelerates achievement in phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and writing. Osceola Reads also works with teachers, supplying them with everything needed to implement Footsteps2Brilliance in their classrooms.

Since being introduced, Osceola students have logged over 245,000 hours on the app, reading the equivalent of 2.5 million books and over 762 million words.

The **Osceola Reads website** also provides parents with tips in blog form about helping their children learn to read before school starts (Parent life hack: do a bit more reading yourselves) and making it fun.

In short, Osceola Reads provide parents with ways to support their children's literacy and, in turn, their school achievement.