



2021 Impact Report

Read On Canada! is a coalition initiative developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with the goal of empowering and inspiring all kids to keep moving forward on their reading journeys, even on their darkest days.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on children's literacy and children whose families were hit hardest by the pandemic are also the ones who are at greater risk of falling behind in reading achievement.

***Read On Canada!* brought reading resources directly to those families through food banks, and we also shared fun, enriching reading activities online for everyone to enjoy.**

In 2021, the second summer of Read On Canada!, our coalition of literacy organizations and food banks came together to put more than 160,000 books into the hands of children. The impact of the book distribution was enhanced by training food bank staff and volunteers in how to share literacy tips with families alongside gifting the books.

Read On Canada! is a team effort and we thank the generosity and compassion of donors, steering committee members, publishers and food bank partners who helped us reach and inspire thousands of families and children to 'read on'!

Most of all, we are inspired by the response from children who were so delighted to take home a book of their own to read, and keep. Reading is not only foundational to learning - it also brings joy and hope.

Thank you to everyone who was part of Read On Canada! this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "Ariel R. Siller". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Ariel Siller

CEO, Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation



Program Impact

June 2020 - Sept 2021



300,000

new, engaging books distributed through
food banks

178

communities involved, reaching every
Canadian province and territory

100,000+

children and families in need received
books through Read On Canada!

93%

of food banks reported that the books provided
helped families and children read more this summer



"Our clients were hungry for more than just food! While chatting with our clients, one said to me, 'It is great that you are now also feeding our soul.' That comment almost brought a tear to my eye. If it was not against COVID protocol, that woman would have got a hug."

– Lynda Hynes, Inventory Coordinator at Boundary Community Food Bank in Grand Forks, BC



The little boy's eyes widened as he looked down and saw the vibrant cover of *Your First Day of Circus School*, by Tara Lazar. Jumping with joy, he exclaimed, “I want to be in the circus when I’m older!”

The little boy grabbed the book and took off running towards his parents. Vanessa Tonic, Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank’s Youth Action Coordinator and a member of the Read On Canada! steering committee, fondly remembers this moment as she thinks back to one of three mobile markets held by the food bank this summer – featuring books provided by Read On Canada!

Research finds that children who have books of their own at home have more positive attitudes to reading, enjoy reading more, read more frequently and have higher reading attainment than children who don’t have books of their own.

By bring food and books to families in communities across Canada, together we are sparking a lifetime love of reading and, in turn, access to opportunity.

"Oooh look at the books!
This one's the one you
pointed out at the library....
wow you can keep it!"

- Parent from a participating food bank



This summer, we sent over 160,000 books to 97 food banks, reaching every province and territory.



Read more: [Food banks, literacy groups to distribute 150,000 children's books across Canada this summer \(CBC Books\)](#).

In the News



Food banks, literacy groups to distribute 150,000 children's books across Canada this summer, CBC



Canadian initiative to donate books to kids during pandemic wins World Literacy Award, CBC



Food banks partnering with literacy groups to distribute books, EatNorth.com



What is one thing we can do about children's learning loss during the pandemic? Put a book in their hands, The Globe and Mail

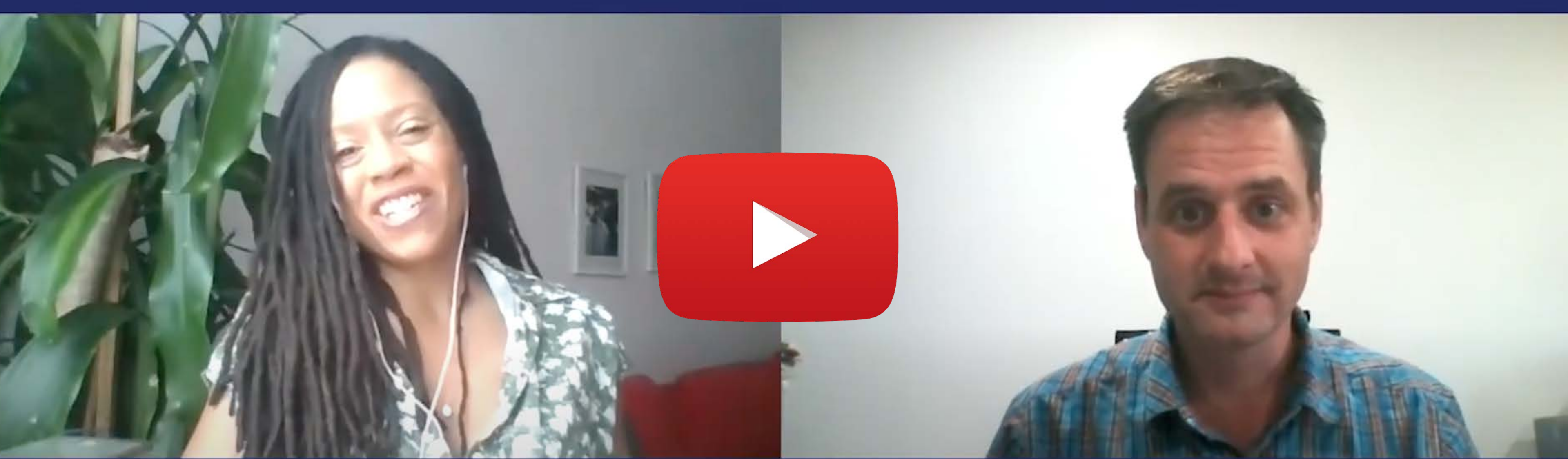


COVID-19 exacerbates the existing crisis of early literacy, Quill & Quire



Food for Thought

Dave Page (Children's Book Bank) and Suman Roy (Scarborough Food Security Initiative) chat about the Read On Canada! program, and how families can encourage their children to read, no matter what age. This video, and others like it, were incorporated into this year's training and resources for food bank staff and volunteers.



Food for Thought

In another video created as part of our guidance and training for food bank partners, Mélanie Valcin (Frontier College) and David Paradis (Solidarité Familles) discuss early literacy, book distribution, and supporting families with reading resources at the food bank.

Funding support generously provided by:



The McCall MacBain Foundation
Pandemic Response Fund



Steering committee:



Publisher and distribution partners:



