

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Supporting Families Together Association
Kelly McClurg
700 Rayovac Drive, Ste. 6
Madison, WI 53711
(608) 443.4307
kelly@supportingfamilies.together.org

'Once Upon a Book Drive' Kicks Off, Collecting Books for WI Children in Need

Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) asks for your support in giving every child a happy ending through Once Upon a Book Drive, which runs from June 15 through the end of August. This annual drive benefits early education programs and families statewide by placing quality literature into the hands of children who need it most.

MADISON (June 15, 2015) – With the help of our members and community supporters, SFTA collected over 5,600 books for Wisconsin children in need during last year's first Once Upon a Book Drive—**over 5 times** our original goal. We aim to top that number this year.

"Having access to books is a crucial aspect of early development," said Kelly McClurg, SFTA Communications Specialist. "Reading, listening to and interacting with books, even as an infant, supports language processing, social emotional development, communication skills, and a variety of other developmental milestones that can determine a child's outcome later in life."

SFTA will distribute collected books to early education programs and families in need across the state, with the assistance of our member Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) and Family Resource Centers (FRCs). Level of need for receiving books will be based on several criteria set by SFTA to ensure that books go to where they will have the greatest impact. Books donated should be new or gently used and appropriate for children from 0 to 12 years old, with an emphasis on infant and toddler books (due to need). Buy books through [AmazonSmile](#) and ship them directly to SFTA, or donate them in person. [Book donation points are set up across the state](#). Madison locations are:

- [Madison Central Library & Middleton Library](#)
- [4-C](#)
- [Johnson Bank locations: East, West, & Downtown](#)

[Studies show](#) that children from lower-income families are generally less exposed to language stimulation, as you might get from reading a book. This lack of early exposure can lead to significant developmental disparities, with children from lower-income families 6 months behind their more advantaged peers in language understanding and use by the time they are 2 years old. This gap can widen as these children age, and have a notable effect on their future successes in school and career opportunities. Giving children access to a literacy rich environment early on is a big step in addressing this issue, and is the primary goal of Once Upon a Book Drive. We hope you will join us in achieving this goal for Wisconsin children.

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Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) is a non-profit organization funded by public and private entities to support and implement a variety of early childhood focused programs and services. As Wisconsin's statewide member association for organizations and individuals committed to making every early childhood a great one, we envision an environment in which all children have the opportunity to reach their highest potential and all adults understand their role and responsibilities to children. Learn more at www.supportingfamilies.together.org.