

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL EXPANDS RAISING A READER  
*More Classrooms in Ashe County to Have Early Literacy Program***

**Jefferson, NC** – Ashe County Partnership for Children announced today the expansion of the Raising A Reader program in the county. Raising A Reader began as a pilot program funded through the Smart Start initiative and coordinated by Kay Philipp, Child Care Resource & Referral Director. Through a mini-grant from the Ashe County Children’s Trust Endowment, the number of children touched by this early literacy program will increase by 60 over the course of the next few years.

Raising A Reader programs across the country instill a love of reading in children that lasts a lifetime. Based on a proven theory of change, Raising A Reader is a child-driven program encompassing early childhood educators, parents and librarians in a coordinated “read-aloud” effort. Each week, bright red book bags filled with beautiful picture books are rotated into homes. The book bag and its contents quickly become a child's favorite toy. The result is an irresistible request: “Please read to me!”

Early childhood professionals are taught ways to engage parents in “read-aloud” strategies anchored to language development research and storytelling traditions. These approaches can help to inspire low-literacy or limited English-speaking families to share books with their children. The program and its materials are age-appropriate and tailored to suit diverse cultural traditions, as well as ethnic and linguistic demographics.

Ashe County Partnership for Children is a non-profit organization that provides programs and services for families and children in Ashe County. They fund or directly run various programs such as: Smart Start programs to benefit children ages birth through five and their families; Domestic Violence prevention and awareness services, including shelter services; a Family Literacy program with transportation, child care and family support; and Family Support Services offering playgroups, parenting support and education.

The Ashe County Children’s Trust Endowment was established in 1999 by the Cooperative Extension/4-H Program and Ashe County Partnership for Children. Through the generous





donations of the community, the trust endowment is able to fund programming for children of all ages.

For more information about Ashe County Partnership for Children, visit [www.ashechildren.org](http://www.ashechildren.org), or call (336) 982-4588. For more information about the Ashe County Children's Trust Endowment, call (336) 846-5850. For more information about Raising A Reader, visit [www.raisingareader.org](http://www.raisingareader.org).

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