The Washington Reading Corps (WRC) supports young children develop early language and literacy skills to prepare for success in the K-12 system.

What do AmeriCorps members do?
AmeriCorps members help preschool children develop early literacy skills, oral language, and kindergarten readiness. Members also give parents and families support through outreach and education activities.

Expected Outcomes:
- Increased pre-literacy skills, specifically:
  --Awareness of printed words (ability to notice print everywhere)
  --Knowledge of the alphabet (knowing letters are different from each other)
  --Appreciation and enjoyment of reading (motivation)
  --Awareness of phonics/pronunciation (ability to hear and play with smaller sounds in words)
  --Oral vocabulary (knowing and being able to say the names of things)
- Enhanced parent/family attitudes and skills, including:
  --Play that incorporates literacy activities
  --Creation of a “print-rich environment” in the family home
  --Strategies for reading with children and getting them “hooked on books”

Testimonials:
AmeriCorps members serve at 18 early learning sites. The following are quotes from site supervisors:

“Kindergarten readiness is happening – how to talk about a book, how to connect with a book physically, how to share supplies, use scissors, identify colors and numbers. Plus we are showing parents how to introduce these things to the kids at home as well.”

“The AmeriCorps member talks to the parents about the importance of reading and distributes books to parents. Without her, we would not be able to reach as many families. We probably would not reach 75 percent of the families we now reach.”

“AmeriCorps members are extremely valuable. It puts another person in the room with the kids. We’ve discovered that the more one-on-one attention children get with adults, the more they thrive.”

State Funds Critical to Leverage Federal Funds:
Federal funds are contingent on state funding. $1.04 million in state funds leverages $3.3 million per year in competitively awarded federal funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service. In order to receive the federal funds a non-federal cash match is required. The state funds provide the cash match.