



Inspiring Minds
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A Guide to the Inspiring Minds Power Lunch Reading Program

About Inspiring Minds

Inspiring Minds is a non-profit education agency founded in 1963 dedicated to providing the educational support services students need to succeed.

What is Power Lunch?

Power Lunch is simple; it's a mentoring and literacy program that matches groups of volunteers from the public and private sector one-to-one with elementary school children, to encourage students to develop a love of reading through shared experiences with caring individuals like you. Power lunch focuses on reading enjoyment and self-esteem, therefore improving specific reading strategies, such as decoding, is outside the scope of our goals for this program.

The Power Lunch program goals are as follows:

To encourage a child's interest in reading by:

- Promoting enthusiasm for literature
- Assisting child in overcoming any apprehension toward reading
- Building comprehension, listening and vocabulary skills
- Increasing attention and concentration
- Encouraging the child to read at home

To expand a child's opportunities for success by:

- Providing a reading mentor who will act like a positive role model
- Exposing the child to new information and experiences
- Helping the child to articulate thoughts
- Enhancing imagination, insight, and independent thinking
- Building self-esteem and confidence

To facilitate meaningful volunteer contributions by:

- Matching children one-to-one with caring adults within a structured relationship
- Creating a link between schools and organizations
- Requiring minimal volunteer preparation and time commitment

What is the impact?

In 2016-2017, 71 children in 6 schools were supported through 78 volunteers representing 10 companies. Our sponsoring companies include: BankRI, United States Federal Court, Coastway Community Bank, Locke & Lord, Gilbane, Lifespan Rhode Island Hospital, The Miriam Hospital, Community Health Services, Slalom and UNFI.

How can I get involved?

Prospective volunteers and prospective work place coordinators: call us at (401) 274-3240 or email us at

inspire@inspiringmindsri.org to learn more about our program. We can schedule a "Lunch and Learn" for your office to encourage participation.

"Every Tuesday I become a better reader. My reading buddy helped me a lot. She was so much fun. Thanks guys. -Jaden

How does Power Lunch operate?

Power Lunch takes place at school, during a child's lunch and recess period. On an assigned day each week, a volunteer travels to the school, checks in with the school coordinator, meets his or her student through the school's agreed to policy, and proceeds to a designated classroom or school library to share a half hour of reading and talking. Volunteer reading partners come as a group from local businesses and organizations. Children are never alone with their reader and are never allowed to leave the school premises with their reader.

Power Lunch occurs on the same day and same time every week. Usually, a child is assigned to one reader for the whole school year. Occasionally, two readers may "share" a child, and alternate reading weeks.

Inspiring Minds screens and trains all readers before they meet the children. Children are welcome to bring books from home or class, but are not required to do so. Books are supplied by the school.

How is a child selected for Power Lunch?

Each school has a Power Lunch coordinator who works with the Reading Coach or designated person to select children for the program. Children selected are generally those who would benefit from additional literacy support, as well as those who would benefit from having a supportive adult presence. Children selected should be those who can benefit from the program, who would enjoy being there and who have the skills to cooperate with the readers.

Every child enrolled in the program must have a signed parent permission form. Once a child is in the program, they are welcome to continue each year, for as long as they and their reader are able.

What does a school have to do?

Make sure the student remembers their Power Lunch Day. Power Lunch children should get their lunch first, so they can spend the maximum amount of time with their reader.

Inspiring Minds will call the school office on Power Lunch day to check on any absent student so the Power Lunch readers are notified their student is out. Do not substitute another student if the Power Lunch child is absent.

Greet the Power Lunch reader and give them a brief summary on how the student is doing. Readers, especially those who have been working with the same child over a period of years, are attached to the children and interested in hearing how they are doing. It means a lot to have a teacher tell them the student is enjoying Power Lunch.

A Reading Mentor

Has lunch, talks and listens to the student, reads aloud with the child and encourages the child's interest in reading by exploring and discussing books together.

Provides positive, structured, consistent weekly attention.

Builds a relationship with the child.

Makes a commitment to volunteer for one school year and is encouraged to continue reading the same child in subsequent years

Comes to Power Lunch as a representative of participating companies and organizations, which recognize and support the program. Individuals join only through these partnerships.