

Asheville Augustine Project

Providing free, long-term, 1-on-1 literacy tutoring for low-income children & teens

Mission Statement

The mission of the Augustine Project® is to improve the reading, writing and spelling abilities of low-income children and teens who struggle with literacy skills. The project trains and supports volunteer tutors who provide free, long-term, one-to-one tutoring using the Orton-Gillingham approach and Wilson Reading System® materials.

The Need

- ★ 17-22% of school aged children have reading problems; among low income families the percentage is likely higher. In 2000, the National Assessment of Educational Progress found 67% of African American 4th graders to be functionally illiterate.
- ★ Children do not outgrow poor reading; 74% of poor readers in 3rd grade are still poor readers in 9th grade
- ★ 57% of children with learning disabilities leave school without a diploma
- ★ Three-fourths of juvenile offenders have a reading difficulty and prison populations include a large percentage of non-readers
- ★ For 90% of poor readers, early, intensive intervention can increase reading ability to an age-appropriate, average skill level

Tutor Training

Literacy Council of Buncombe County tutors receive 70 hours of training before they are assigned an Augustine child. The 8-day training class includes a practicum during which the trainee evaluates a student, and then teaches three consecutive multi-sensory lessons under the supervision of a practicum tutor. The course is taught by an experienced trainer who presents such topics as the definition and characteristics of dyslexia; the history and principles of Orton-Gillingham; phonological awareness; phonology (including sounds, syllable types and spelling rules); screening instruments and procedures; sight words; phonics games and activities; decoding, fluency and comprehension; vocabulary; written expression and advocacy. Wilson Reading System® materials guide the lesson planning process. If you would like to train to become a tutor, please email Lily@litcouncil.com or call (828) 254-3442 x202.

Tutor Responsibilities

Upon satisfactory completion of the training course, trainees are assigned a student and commit to provide that student at least 60 free and individualized literacy lessons. Tutoring usually takes place twice a week – some tutors see their children more frequently – at the child's school during the school day. Lessons last about 50 minutes. Tutors may borrow phonetically controlled books and other materials from the Literacy Council library and are encouraged to call the project director or their practicum supervisor for advice. An inservice meeting where tutors and trainers can share lesson planning ideas is scheduled every

month. The project director and/or a practicum supervisor observes each trainee in the course of his or her tutoring. The trainee administers pre and post testing to show student growth.

Our Students

Augustine students are referred to the program by parents, guardians, teachers, school counselors, specialists, and psychologists. We work with low-income students (students must qualify for free or reduced lunch) in grades K-12 who struggle with reading or written language. Students might have identified special needs. Students might speak English as a second language. A student does need to have good school attendance. The director maintains a waiting list of eligible students. If you would like to recommend a student for services, please email Lily@litcouncil.com or call (828) 254-3442 x202.

