

Addressing disparities in literacy outcomes is an act of racial justice

Due to the cumulative impacts of racial inequity in education, 80% of Black and Latinx students entering fourth grade do not read proficiently, increasing their risk for adverse life outcomes. CLI is transforming early literacy instruction by amplifying culturally sustaining methods into teacher practice. Our goal is to see the Black and Latinx children we serve learning to read as a powerful act of identity, agency, and cultural joy.

Learning to read is a strong predictor of a student's future academic achievement.

Children who are not reading on grade level by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. Our goal is to close the opportunity gap between children in under-funded districts and their more affluent peers.

Who we are and our Mission.

Founded in Philadelphia in 1988, Children's Literacy Initiative (CLI) is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit focused on strengthening public education in the United States by ensuring students can read proficiently by the end of third grade. CLI seeks to dismantle structural racism by providing Black and Latinx children with the anti-racist early literacy instruction, support and advocacy needed to create equity in education.

For Black and Latinx children, learning to read is far bigger than building skills – it is an act of liberation. By helping educators learn high-impact, culturally sustaining instructional strategies and nurturing dynamic professional learning communities, CLI builds lasting capacity in teachers and principals over time to advance equity in education. In working with teachers to improve instruction, developing a teacher's instructional expertise impacts student learning and all the children taught over the course of a teacher's career. When catalyzed within our anti-racist early literacy model, CLI programs cultivate strong and joyful readers who will become strong stewards of social justice.



What sets us apart?

We stand out from other organizations providing books and professional development—our programs are independently evaluated and proven to transform learning outcomes for children. Unlike any early literacy organization, CLI embeds anti-racist and culturally sustaining pedagogy and practices across all content areas including teacher workshops, training, coaching, and classroom book collections for children.

In randomized, control-group study, American Institutes for Research concluded that, “the CLI program produces substantial effects on teachers’ classroom environment and literacy practices, which in turn lead to measurable effects on average reading achievement in early elementary grades.”

Children’s Literacy Initiative is proud to receive four out of four stars from Charity Navigator, placing us in the top percentile of all charities for fiscal responsibility and good governance.



Why partner with us.

We value the opportunity to partner with advisors and attorneys, such as yourself, as you guide your clients in making informed and meaningful decisions that combine their desire to give to charity with their financial, tax, and estate planning goals. We are inspired to help individuals and families plan for their future while creating generational impact.

By supporting Children’s Literacy Initiative, your clients are championing racial equity and social justice by helping ensure that children get the resources and instructional support they need to learn to read. Your clients are making an investment in public education and helping to build a nation where every child possesses the power of literacy and the opportunity for a lifetime of success.



To learn more about Children’s Literacy Initiative and how we work with professional advisors, or to discuss your client’s intentions, contact our Chief Development Officer, Naimah Bilal at nbilal@cli.org, or our Officer, Major Gifts and Gift Planning, Simone Champagnie at schampagnie@cli.org.

Download CLI’s Resources for Trustees, Planners, and Advisors today.

cli.org/advisors

