Our Early Childhood Home Visiting team hosted a Reading Celebration at the Mary Pretlow Library in early March. The event coincided with Read Across America’s annual celebration of Dr. Seuss’ birthday and promoted reading awareness and motivation to the Parents as Teachers program participants.

Guest speaker Dr. Dionne Palmer of Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters gave a presentation emphasizing the importance of reading aloud to children for language skill development and parent-child bonding. The Up Center’s Parent Educator Brandie Thompson shared web based book options such as YouTube’s Storybook Nanny and rapper Ludacris’ infectious rendition of Llama Llama Red Pajama as engaging alternatives for parents with literacy struggles. Local Author Shannon McAfee gave a reading of her children’s book The Story of Conch for attendees and donated a copy of the book to each family. (McAfee so enjoyed her experience that she contacted The Up Center post-event to donate an additional 15 books to the program!)

All fifty attendees took home an assortment of Dr. Seuss board books generously donated by Freemason Street Baptist Church as well as information and giveaways from CHKD READS, United Health Care, and The Up Center.

For more information about our Early Childhood Home Visiting programs, visit theupcenter.org
This May, The Up Center is working to bring awareness and support to the work of foster families, social workers, community organizations and others who are working to improve the lives of young people in foster care across the country during National Foster Care Month.

The Up Center’s foster care program provides a safe, nurturing, trauma informed, teaching home environment specifically designed to accommodate the needs of children and youth who have been removed from their family due to a traumatic event.

We train and support our resource families, providing them with tools and strategies for parenting children who may have had difficult or negative life experiences by protecting and nurturing them to promote resiliency.

Foster care staff and resource families take on the role of teaching children and youth a new way to function and see the world around them. Our balanced and trauma informed strategies empower children and youth to experience interpersonal relationships that lead to a secure attachment and self-regulation.

“\textit{When there are children who don’t have someone to ensure that their needs are met, then there’s a loss. The Up Center helps to ensure that loss is lessened to give the kids a greater voice and support system.}”

Jerry Davis  
Foster Parent, Father of three

Foster parents are everyday heroes capable of providing shelter, sustenance, and healing to children in desperate need of stability. The Up Center strives to retain a pool of engaged, well-trained and well-supported resource families ready to welcome children into their home. Together, we work to change their trajectory from crisis to wholeness.

IN 2018...  
63 children found safety in loving foster homes.  
20 children were adopted or reunited with their biological families.  
OVER 1,000 children are currently in foster care in the eastern region of Virginia.

For more information about our Therapeutic Foster Care and Adoption program, visit theupcenter.org