

How Reading Recovery Changed Our Lives (and a School Policy)

Sharon Johnson, Reading Recovery Parent-Teacher, Hortonville Area School District



Meredith Johnson in first grade.

I was a fourth-grade teacher pursuing a master's degree in reading when during a summer course, I learned about an early reading intervention program called Reading Recovery. It intrigued me. What a wonderful idea! Let's intervene with our early learners and help them before they get further and further behind. Imagine my delight when I returned to school in the fall to find out my school district was going to begin implementing Reading Recovery. That was the fall of 1997.

Little did I know that 3 years later, my own daughter Meredith would qualify as a first-round Reading Recovery student in the fall of 2000. Though I had learned about Reading Recovery during my master's coursework, I didn't observe an actual lesson until Meredith was in the program. My husband and I worked alongside Meredith every step of the way. My husband even accompanied her behind the glass (which she remem-

bers to this day). Meredith went through a full program and discontinued. My respect and amazement for this program grew as I watched my daughter grow as a reader and a writer.

During the spring of 2001 I learned that there would be an opening the following year in our building for a Reading Recovery teacher. I expressed my interest and reasons for wanting to become a Reading Recovery teacher to my principal. He was very supportive and hired me to fill the position. So after being a classroom teacher for 13 years, my professional life changed. I began my training year in the fall of 2001 and am currently in my fourth year as a Reading Recovery teacher. My dedication and enthusiasm for Reading Recovery remains as strong as ever.

What became of Meredith? Last year while Meredith was in fourth grade, she wrote a persuasive essay which I have enclosed. Not only did she earn an *A* on her essay; her essay was the catalyst for changing a school policy that had existed for as many years as anyone could remember. I cannot express the pride she felt for being able to make a difference. I cannot express the pride I felt that she chose as her persuasive essay a literacy topic. I am so grateful for what Reading Recovery helped my child to achieve!

As you can see, Reading Recovery changed our lives—and a school policy too!

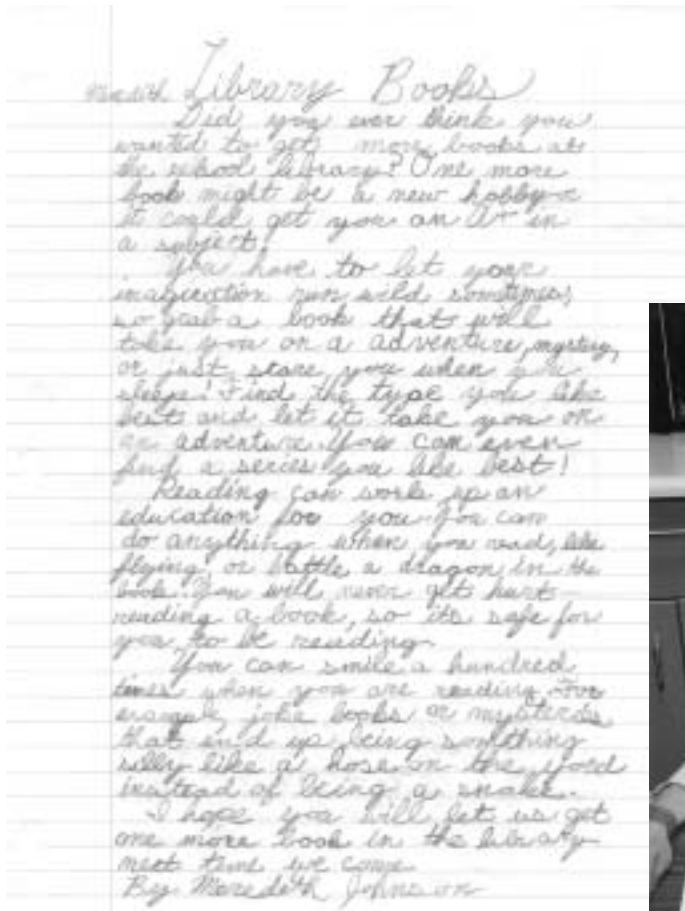
“Reading can work up an education for you. You can do anything when you read, like flying or battle a dragon in the book. You will never get hurt reading a book, so it's safe for you to be reading.”

—*Meredith Johnson*



Sharon Johnson, parent and Reading Recovery teacher.

Editor's Note: Following is Meredith Johnson's essay that changed a school policy restricting the number of library books that students were allowed to check out. After Meredith's essay, an overwhelming majority of fourth-grade students voted "yes." As a result, students are now allowed to check out an additional book per week.



Library Books

By Meredith Johnson, Fourth Grade

Meredith Johnson in fourth grade.

Did you ever think you wanted to get more books at the school library? One more book might be a new hobby or it could get you an A+ in a subject.

You have to let your imagination run wild sometimes, so grab a book that will take you on a adventure, mystery, or just scare you when you sleep! Find the type you like best and let it take you on an adventure. You can even find a series you like best!

Reading can work up an education for you. You can do anything when you read, like flying, or battle a dragon in the book. You will never get hurt reading a book, so it's safe for you to be reading.

You can smile a hundred times when you are reading. For example, joke books or mysteries that end up being something silly like a hose on the yard instead of being a snake.

I hope you will let us get one more book in the library next time we come.