America Reads Tutor Handbook

"My reading is getting better because my tutor helps me."
- Claude Daniel, Age 7

America Reads
Tutor Handbook

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FOREWORD

The Butterfly Effect: "A butterfly stirring the air today in Peking can transform storm systems next month in New York."

– J. Gleik

Congratulations and welcome to America Reads. As proposed by President Bill Clinton in 1996 and initially led by the U.S. Department of Education, this nationwide initiative helps American children become better readers. Studies show that students who cannot read well by the end of the third grade have a higher dropout rate and a decreased chance for success in life. Frighteningly, 40% of America's fourth graders failed to attain a basic reading level in 1994.

America Reads tutors play an important role in counteracting this serious problem by devoting time and energy to the intellectual development of America's youth. The America Reads program intervenes in the early stages of childhood development – during grades K through first, with a special emphasis on first grade.

The work is challenging, but it is also rewarding. America Reads tutors serve as role models to the children whom they mentor and must understand their responsibilities accordingly.

- ✓ America Reads tutors should arrive for work displaying a positive attitude about school and about life in general.
- ✓ Tutors must show sensitivity to children's feelings – celebrating successes while gently guiding them past mistakes – and having patience for success that sometimes comes in small steps.
- ✓ Tutors are expected to carefully read the contents of this handbook.
- ✓ Finally, America Reads tutors are expected to conduct themselves professionally and to adhere to the policies stated herein.

We are excited to have you as a member of this prestigious and important program. Good luck stirring the air as an America Reads tutor.

MISSION STATEMENT

AMERICA READS

The goal of America Reads is to ensure that every child can read well and independently by the end of the third grade. Your mission as an America Reads Tutor is to provide children with one-on-one instruction in reading, phonics, and comprehension.

AMERICA READS TUTOR POLICIES

Standards

America Reads Tutors are expected to:

- ✓ Present themselves in a manner that reflects positively on them and on the America Reads Challenge. Be courteous and dress appropriately.
- ✓ Treat all persons, including Reading Coaches and America Reads staff members, with respect and courtesy. Resolve disputes in a constructive manner.
- ✓ Commit for at least one academic year.
- ✓ Be honest in every aspect of their work. Show up for work everyday they are scheduled, keep their commitments, be punctual for all scheduled assignments and report work hours accurately.
- ✓ Respect the confidential nature of anything that they see or hear. Share concerns and information only with school staff and America Reads staff.
- ✓ Be tutors – **NOT** educators, parents, or employees of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Tutors **CANNOT** be left unsupervised with children, deviate from the tutoring curriculum, evaluate children on a formal basis, discipline children, preach their religion to children or school personnel, contact parents, give students gifts or rewards exceeding $1 in value, or give students anything edible.
- ✓ Complete the required America Reads paperwork in a timely manner.

Expectations

Eligibility

To be eligible for the America Reads Federal Work-Study Program, students must meet the following criteria:

- Students must qualify for Financial Aid and Federal Work Study
- Students must be registered for and maintain at least 6 credit hours each semester
- Florida International University Student

30 Day Probationary Period

Tutors are hired as candidates by colleges and universities to be placed at school sites. **Employment, however, is dependent upon a successful interview with the school's Reading Coach**. Although you are employed as a Federal Work Study student, the Reading Coach makes the final determination as to whether you will be hired at their specific site. In order to maintain employment as an America Reads Tutor, you must demonstrate acceptable performance at your college/university and the America Reads site.

Upon employment, all new tutors will undergo a mandatory 30 day probationary period. During this period, Reading Coaches will assess the tutor's performance to determine continued employment in the America Reads program. Assessment will be based upon the policies outlined in this tutor manual, including (but not limited to) proper implementation of the tutorial model, dress code, job performance, attitude, attendance, and punctuality.

Paid vs. Unpaid Activities

Tutors are paid strictly for work related to America Reads. Tutors will not be paid for lunch unless their shift is 4 or more hours – see the section on page 8 concerning breaks.

Paid activities include:

- tutoring
- organizing America Reads materials/preparing for tutoring sessions
- attending tutor team meetings
- assisting in the implementation of parental involvement activities
- helping organize recognition events for children in the program
- attending orientation and training sessions

Tutors may not:

- chaperone field trips unrelated to America Reads
- supervise classrooms or be left alone with children
- handle other teacher duties
- tutor more than one student at a time

NOTE: Being hired as an America Reads tutor is contingent upon being interviewed and selected by the coordinator at your assigned site–tutors must schedule an interview with the Reading Coach and convince him/her that they are worthy of the job. In addition, tutors are paid for attending orientation and training if they are "hired" by the assigned site's reading coach. However, tutors will not be paid for orientation/training if they are not "hired" by the site or if they drop out of the program before being accepted and actually begin tutoring at the America Reads site. Furthermore, tutors will need to complete a Level I background check prior to beginning their position as an America Reads tutor at the site they selected. The America Reads Coordinator will provide instructions on how to register for the background check online. This online form must be completed and submitted before visiting the assigned school site.

Channels of Communication

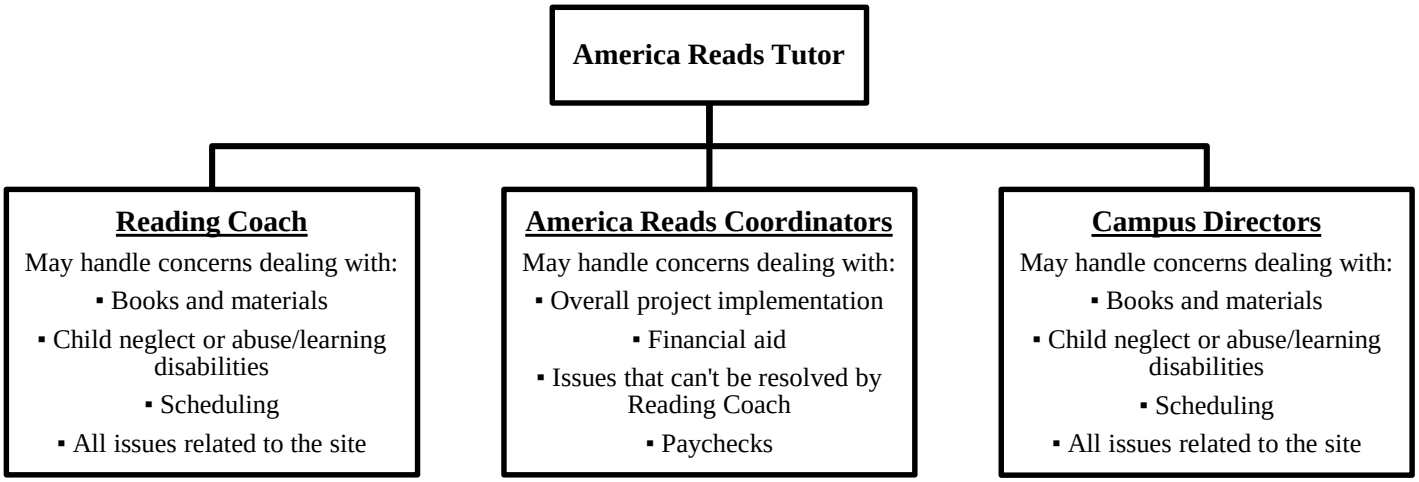
Contacting your designated America Reads site:

- Make sure that you have the correct information for your designated site.
- Make sure to call your designated site the next business day after attending the 4-hour New Tutor Training.
- Make sure to leave your name, phone number and the time you can be reached when leaving a message at the site for the Reading Coach.

America Reads Tutors are strongly encouraged to share their thoughts on a regular basis with their Reading Coaches, their America Reads Campus Coordinator, and their Campus Director. Keeping the lines of communication open helps to diffuse tensions before those tensions become problems!

Channels of Communication

Three individuals are mainly responsible for providing support to America Reads Tutors. This flow chart offers examples of possible situations each individual is best equipped to handle.



Reading Coach

Reading Coaches are best equipped to handle problems that are specific to their sites and to the children served by those sites. Examples of such concerns may include:

- Needing a new set of books or additional materials
- Suspecting that a child may have a learning disability
- Suspecting that a child is not being cared for properly at home
- Questions about the tutoring curriculum
- Problems with the classroom teacher, etc.

Reading Coaches are also responsible for scheduling work times for America Reads Tutors*.

In turn, tutors are expected to inform the Reading Coach in advance of the following:

- Changes in work availability each semester
- Missing work at any time
- Arriving late or leaving early
- Expected dates of return following winter, spring and summer breaks
- Departure from the America Reads program, etc.

*(*Note: Each semester tutors must complete an agreement that sets their work schedule. Three copies should be made – the original is to be turned into the FIU office, one copy for the tutor, and one for the Reading Coach—tutors are expected to work the agreed upon hours!)*

America Reads Campus Coordinators

Campus coordinators are also responsible for tutor training and support. Please communicate regularly with your campus coordinator and share ANY problem or concern including:

- Challenges faced
- Successes achieved
- Suggestions for improvement
- Tutor recruitment and support
- Expected dates of return following winter, spring and summer breaks
- Conflicts with scheduled orientation and training sessions
- Departure from the America Reads program, etc.

Campus Directors

Campus Directors will be contacted to resolve problems that are persistent and seemingly irreconcilable. However, if a problem arises tutors should first contact their Reading Coach as most issues can be resolved here.

Attendance

Absences

America Reads Tutors who will miss a day of work must inform their assigned Reading Coach at least 24 hours in advance of an expected absence. If the Reading Coach is not available, tutors should inform the alternate contact person (i.e. assigned teacher) at the site giving the reason for the absence as well as their expected date of return.

Even in the event of an emergency, tutors are still expected to call in BEFORE their shifts are scheduled to begin. Missing two days of work without prior notice will result in termination. Please note that tests, exams, and term papers DO NOT constitute emergencies.

MISSING 2 OR MORE DAYS WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION WILL RESULT IN TERMINATION.
This will be strictly enforced.

Consistency

Consistency is an important aspect of the job for America Reads Tutors. Tutors are expected to be at work and be on time. A tutor's failure to report to work results in:

- Six to ten children being deprived of the opportunity to receive the one-on-one attention that makes such a crucial difference in their education and their lives.
- Children feeling disappointed on a personal level since they look forward to time spent with their tutor each week.
- Reading Coaches, first grade teachers, and other tutors having to fill the gap left by an absent tutor.
- A negative reflection of the America Reads Program and the associated college/university.

New Tutor Training

America Reads Tutors must maintain high standards of excellence. Therefore, it is essential that new tutors attend one of the scheduled New Tutor Trainings. This training is MANDATORY and typically last four hours. Tutors will be paid for their participation in the New Tutor Training only if they begin tutoring. Dates, times, and locations for each session will be published well in advance.

Missing New Tutor Training Sessions

Excusable absences require advance, written notice with an acceptable excuse. Missing trainings will result in termination if you do not present an acceptable excuse. This will be strictly enforced. A tutor may not begin working until they have successfully completed the New Tutor Training.

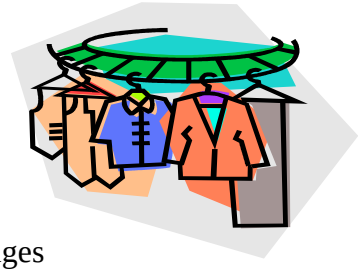
Dress Code

America Reads Tutors are held to a higher standard due to the nature of the job. They serve as role models to the children they tutor and are therefore expected to present themselves professionally. Tutors are expected to dress appropriately and appear well groomed. "Business-casual" (comfortable yet professional) is considered suitable. **Dress conservatively** and ask for feedback from other

school/site employees. Jewelry and accessories (including piercings) should be professional. Reading Coaches are permitted to use discretion when establishing a dress code and can send a tutor home that is not dressed appropriately.

America Reads Tutors are asked to **NOT** wear the following types of attire:

- ✕ All types of workout gear
- ✕ See-through garments
- ✕ Revealing garments
- ✕ Tank tops, halter-tops, low cut tops
- ✕ "Cut-offs"
- ✕ Shorts
- ✕ Short skirts and short dresses
- ✕ Any clothing containing drug, alcohol and/or cigarette logos/images
- ✕ Any clothing containing sexually explicit language and/or images



PAY SCHEDULES AND TIMESHEETS

America Reads tutors make their own schedule as long as they do not exceed their award allotment for the semester, earn $20.00 per hour and are paid bi-weekly. Your award allotment as well as a suggested amount of hours you should work for the fall and spring semester will be emailed to you at the beginning of the fall semester. Tutors may not work more than 25 hours per week. Pay periods cover two weeks at a time, see pay schedule on the following page. **In order to receive payment on time, tutors must turn in original timesheets by the dates and times specified on the pay schedule on the following page.** This schedule is subject to change, you will be notified of updates via email.

Pay Schedule

America Reads Tutors should turn in timesheets and pick up pay checks according to the following pay schedule. In addition, incomplete timesheets or timesheets that contain white-out/correction fluid or excessive modifications (e.g., missing signatures) will not be processed.

Timesheets and Bi-weekly Progress Reports

America Reads Tutors are required to:

- Maintain tutor timesheets in a safe place at the school or agency, where the timesheets will not be lost.
- Sign-in upon arriving and sign-out when leaving. A sign-in book is located at the school site, usually in the main office, and in the classroom. Tutors are required to sign-in in the office **and** in the classroom. The personnel in the front office and the classroom teacher must verify each sign-in and sign-out time with their initials or a signature. This sign-in and out process is in addition to the timesheet.
- **Write in hours worked after every shift and put a line through shifts not worked.**
- Obtain signature of the Reading Coach or alternate contact person at the site **after every shift AND at the end of every two week period.**
- Keep a copy of the timesheet for your records, and make sure your site supervisor also keeps a copy of every timesheet.

Time Sheet Submission Schedule

Pay Period		Submission Deadline	Pay Day
08/24/15	08/28/15	08/28/15 @ 12 PM	09/04/15
08/29/15	09/11/15	09/11/15 @ 12 PM	09/18/15
09/12/15	09/25/15	09/25/15 @ 12 PM	10/02/15
09/26/15	10/09/15	10/09/15 @ 12 PM	10/16/15
10/10/15	10/23/15	10/23/15 @ 12 PM	10/30/15
10/24/15	11/06/15	11/05/15* @ 12 PM	11/13/15
11/07/15	11/20/15	11/18/15✧ @ 12 PM	11/25/15
11/21/15	12/04/15	12/04/15 @ 12 PM	12/11/15
12/05/15	12/11/15	12/16/15 @ 12 PM	12/23/15

*** Deadline revised due to Veteran's Day Holiday**
✧ Deadline revised due to Thanksgiving Day Holiday

Breaks

Tutors working between four and five hours in one day are entitled to a paid 15-minute break. Tutors working five or more hours in one day are entitled to a paid 30-minute break. Tutors will not be paid for all other breaks. Unless a tutor is entitled to a 30-minute break, tutors will not be paid for lunch.

Total Hours Worked for One Day	Length of Paid Break
Less than 4 hours	No paid break
4 hours or more but less than 5 hours	15-minute paid break
5 hours or more	30-minute paid break

Prior to Submitting Timesheets

1. Complete the timesheet by adding pay period hours and writing in the total.
2. **Obtain the Reading Coach's signature on the timesheet.**
3. Submit by time and date specified on pay schedule. Incomplete timesheets will not be accepted.

Warnings

1. Falsification of hours and/or signatures will result in immediate **TERMINATION** of employment, as well as **SUSPENSION** and/or **EXPULSION** from school and possible **PROSECUTION**. **Never add hours, never sign for your Reading Coach, never put down hours you didn't work. Consequences will be severe and you will be caught**. Make sure you get your timesheet signed at the end of each day-not weekly or bi-weekly.
2. **LATE TIMESHEETS WILL RESULT IN PAY DELAYS. TIMESHEETS TURNED IN AFTER THE SPECIFIED TIME AND DATED DEADLINE WILL NOT BE PROCESSED UNTIL THE NEXT PAY PERIOD. INCOMPLETE TIMESHEETS (MISSING SIGNATURES) AND/OR TIMESHEETS CONTAINING WHITE-OUT/CORRECTION FLUID AND/OR EXCESSIVE MODIFICATIONS WILL NOT BE PROCESSED EITHER. NO EXCEPTIONS.** Chronically late timesheets will result in verbal and/or written warnings and finally termination.

TIMESHEETS

A Sample timesheet is on the following page. Please review the timesheet and complete timesheet as directed.

SAMPLE (FIU) TIMESHEET – PLEASE FILL IN EXACTLY AS FOLLOWS

- All information must be complete with no white-out, correction fluid or excessive modifications in order to be processed.
- Supervisor must sign at the end of each day worked and at the bottom every two weeks.
- Hours must be totaled and confirmed by supervisor.
- Supervisor must block out days tutor didn't work and note when tutors miss work.
- Supervisor and tutor must keep a copy on file.
- In addition to the timesheet, tutor must sign in and out at the office and classroom each day.

RC= Reading Coach; ST= Supervising Teacher

AMERICA READS

Biweekly Time Sheet

Student's Name: _____ Panther ID: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Assigned School: _____ Organization Name: MDCPS (America Reads)

FROM: _____ TO: _____

(Pay Period Beginning) (Pay Period End)

NOTICE! Enter time **IN** and time **OUT** and total for each day below. White - out, pencil, and/or scratched out entries will not be permitted, use Blue or Black ink pen ONLY. Photocopies will not be allowed.

WEEK 1				
WEEK DAYS	IN	OUT	**TOTAL**	SUPERVISOR INITIALS
Monday	9 AM	12 PM	3	RC or ST
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
WEEK 1 TOTAL HOURS			3	RC

WEEK 2				
WEEK DAYS	IN	OUT	**TOTAL**	SUPERVISOR INITIALS
Monday	9 AM	12 PM	3	RC or ST
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
WEEK 2 TOTAL HOURS			3	RC

Total Hours: 6

Tutor Orientation

Date: _____ Total Hours: _____

Tutor Training

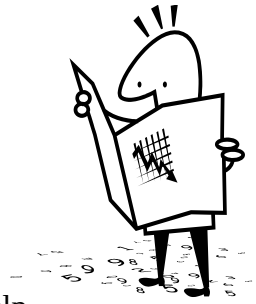
Date: _____ Total Hours: _____

VERIFICATION OF HOURS: This is an accurate record of all time worked at the above-mentioned organization during the period indicated. This work was performed in a satisfactory manner.

Student's Signature	Print Name	Date
Reading Coach's Signature	Print Name	Date
Financial Aid Office Signature	Print Name	Date

TUTORING TIPS

- ✓ Be kind and friendly to the child. Learn the proper pronunciation of his/her name. Show interest in what the child says and does.
- ✓ The tutoring curriculum must be followed in proper order.
- ✓ The written plan must be filled out for every child, every time.
- ✓ Write clearly in print, not cursive.
- ✓ Empower the child as the reader. Let him/her hold the book.
- ✓ Give the child time to think about words. Do not jump in too quickly to help.
- ✓ Always look for the positive in what the child says or does. Give positive reinforcement.
- ✓ Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- ✓ Communicate regularly with classroom teacher regarding the student's progress.



Remember that being a tutor is more than just a job!

You are a role model and someone who can impact a child's life forever.

2015-2016 CONTACT INFORMATION

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