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## **Collaborative Funded to Address Summer Learning Loss**

### **Book Harvest, North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation and First Book Form Partnership**

[United Way of the Greater Triangle](#) (UWGT) is partnering with Book Harvest, the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation and First Book in a new collaboration called Close the Gap to address summer learning loss in Durham.

Summer learning loss widens the achievement gap that separates children from low-income families from their higher income peers. In summer, students from low-income families typically lose academic gains made during the previous school year at a higher rate than their peers. While students tend to progress at the same rate during the school year, more than 80 percent of children from economically disadvantaged families lose reading skills over the summer, compounding the gap.

Research has shown that access to high-quality books, book ownership and a child's choice in book selection is an effective strategy to prevent summer slide and improve reading proficiency. Through the collaborative, Book Harvest will expand its Books on Break model to six schools with high populations of students receiving free-or-reduced lunch. At the end of the school year, children at each school will select 10 books that they then keep and use to build a home library. First Book will provide approximately 42,000 books to support the collaborative.

Research also demonstrates that children's experiences at home are critical to early language growth and learning. To better support parents, the North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation will gather and analyze perspectives on what parents most need to support their children's summer learning. The findings will drive the development of parent tools.

The three organizations received a grant as part of UWGT's new strategic direction that builds on a collaborative, two-generational approach—working with children and their families together—to significantly improve current circumstances and future opportunities for low-income households.

[Book Harvest](#) provides books to low-income children in central North Carolina. Since its founding in 2011, Book Harvest has placed more than 330,000 donated books in the hands and homes of children in need— an average of more than 1,500 books a week.

[NCECF](#) is the state lead for the [National Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#), a national collaborative effort to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship. NCECF builds public will by advancing understanding of birth-through-eight child development and promotes practice and policy solutions that drive aligned action to support each child being on a pathway to grade-level reading.

[First Book](#) is a nonprofit social enterprise that has distributed more than 130 million books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children from low-income families throughout the United States and Canada. By making new, high-quality books available on an ongoing basis, First Book is transforming the lives of children in need and elevating the quality of education. For more information, please visit [www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org) or follow the latest news on Facebook and Twitter.

[United Way of the Greater Triangle](#) is committed to supporting immediate basic needs and working toward long-term, sustainable solutions to some of the most pressing issues in four North Carolina counties—Durham, Johnston, Orange, and Wake. A new focus on low income families and children uses a collaborative approach to dramatically change the course of their futures. UWGT actively mobilizes the caring power of communities to build resources, focus investments, and foster partnerships to improve lives and inspire generations of achievement.