

Appleton Ready to Read (ARTR) was created as a result of the Leading Indicator for Excellence (LIFE) study conducted by United Way Fox Cities. In 2011, the LIFE study found that third grade reading scores had declined every year since 2006. Among those with declining reading scores, 36% were Asian (predominately Hmong) and 38% were Multilingual language learners (MLL) who were predominately Hispanic.

ARTR was originally launched as an outreach program for Hmong and Hispanic Families and has expanded to include any multilingual families with children ages birth to five. The program is based on the American Library Association's Every Child Ready to Read initiative, which provides strategies that caregivers can use to develop children's early literacy skills.

A Hmong Family Outreach Specialist, Sia Chang, and a Hispanic Family Outreach Specialist, Norma Oliveras, were hired to work closely with local families. Originally grant funded, these positions are now an integral part of the Children's Department and the library as a whole. Sia and Norma educate families on the importance of building early literacy skills through five practices: reading, writing, singing, talking, and playing. ARTR's goal is to better prepare Multilingual children for kindergarten and school success.

Norma and Sia reach out to the community through programs, events and local partnerships. Interested families can also visit the library website to request more information about the program and a meeting with Norma or Sia.