



# Starting with Sounds

## *Call for Participants*

In January 2021, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) announced [Reading 360](#), a comprehensive approach to help more Tennessee students develop strong reading skills by supporting districts, teachers, and families.



### Why reading?

Reading is the foundation of all learning, but, before the COVID-19 pandemic, only one-third of Tennessee's third grade students were performing on grade level in English language arts.

Developing strong reading skills early in life is critical, and the ability to read proficiently at an early age is a predictor of student success later in school and later in life.

### Who can help?

Our teachers are working hard to support students. The Reading 360 initiative will help ensure all Tennesseans who want to support our youngest students learn how to read can get involved and make a difference.

That's why, in collaboration with Tennessee's six PBS stations, TDOE has launched Starting with Sounds, a statewide awareness campaign *to help parents and students understand the importance of reading in an engaging and fun way.*

It's focused on helping students develop strong phonics skills— how to hear and make sounds, how to associate sounds with letters, and how to combine sounds into words. Like reading books, reading nursery rhymes and singing songs can help students build these critical skills.



### Are you a musician, athlete, or champion of student success who wants to help Tennessee students be prepared to read?

The TDOE would like to invite you to help us raise awareness about the importance of reading by contributing a short video that we can promote to parents and families across the state.

- *Share why you enjoy reading*
- *Read your favorite children's book or nursery rhyme*
- *Sing and/or perform an age-appropriate song*

Videos should be 10-12 minutes long.

TDOE can help you identify a book to read and a song to sing; both should be age-appropriate, approved for public use, and G-rated.

If interested, we can provide staff and equipment to help you bring your video to life, but you're welcome to use your own high-quality video equipment.

Your video, along with videos from other musicians, will be aired on Tennessee's six PBS stations and included in TDOE's social media, e-newsletters, and website.

## **Help Tennessee students by Starting with Sounds!**

If you are interested in participating, contact **Scott Meltzer** at [scott.meltzer@tn.gov](mailto:scott.meltzer@tn.gov) or **(615) 881-3189**.



# Starting with Sounds

## Participant Guidance



Starting with Sounds is targeted for young Tennessee learners, pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade. Here are guidelines for reading a book, singing a song, and filming your video.



### Children's Books Options

Below is a list of children's books with copyright approval:

- [Under the Great Plum Tree](#)
- [Tiger in My Soup](#)
- [Magnificent Homespun Brown](#)
- [The One-Stop Story Shop](#)
- [The King of Little Things](#)
- [Fly Flies](#)
- [Pen Pals Forever](#)
- [Milo and Monty](#)
- [Most People](#)
- [Farmer Falgu Goes on a Trip](#)
- [Most Days](#)
- [Keith Among the Pigeons](#)
- [Nimesh the Adventurer](#)
- [Bloom](#)
- [A Story About Afiya](#)
- [The Arabic Quilt](#)

### Guidelines for Songs



### Filming Specifications and Tips



**Video Length:** 10-12 minutes



**Use high-quality video equipment.** We prefer mP4 format. We have access to a recording studio and are happy to help record your video if you do not have access to equipment.



**Use a quiet, carpeted room with a neutral color background.**



**Avoid bright windows and lights.**



**Speak clearly.** Try to stay within 1-1.5 ft. of the microphone.

### Once Filming Begins

1

Say your name, introduce yourself, and why learning to read and building sounds first skills at a young age is important.

2

Introduce the name of your book/or song.

3

Read the book/  
Sing the song.

4

Conclude by sharing your name and why helping all Tennessee students learn to read is important.

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