



## **Community Texting Campaign Reaches Families of Young Children**

One common question reverberates around the country and at the community level where the work of early literacy is conducted—how do we engage parents of young children?

Springfield, Massachusetts has high poverty and less than 40% of third graders read proficiently. A series of focus groups with parents of young children, led by the *Reading Success by 4<sup>th</sup> Grade initiative* (RS4G), revealed almost universally that their primary engagement with the world comes through social media and texting.

In January 2016, we enlisted seven community organizations—the local PBS station, the local YMCA, the Springfield City Library, the Springfield Museums, Springfield Public Schools, and the local United Way's Stay in School campaign—to form a texting program that would effectively engage families in our community. Using the Springfield area code (413), the 413families texting initiative was born.

413families/familias provides local families with young children educational tips, encourages reading to children and provides information about fun, free things to do in the community and giveaways, including free tickets to community events and bookstore gift cards. Those who opt-in to the 413families texting program have the option to receive messages in English or Spanish, making the program accessible to everyone.

Started as an idea to help parents in raising young children, today 413families has nearly 2,400 families opted-in. The program is so successful that Holyoke, a neighboring city with low academic achievement, has recently joined the program. Utilizing the new tool of text messaging has helped narrow the “digital divide,” connecting families with opportunities, advancing their children toward a better future.



## Submission Key

1. 413families Summary and Submission Key
2. Press releases
  - 413families texting campaign launched
  - Surpasses goal of 1,000 opt-ins
3. 413families website ([www.413families.com](http://www.413families.com))
4. Sample 413families text messages
5. Promoting reading through 413families
6. Engaging the community

*Video of 413families opt-ins telling us what they're thankful for:*  
<https://goo.gl/BVXZcE>
7. 413families national Basketball Hall of Fame promotion
8. Graph – 2,400 413families opt-ins
9. Texting vendor EZ Texting case study about 413families

*EZ Texting did a case study about the 413families texting campaign to use as a model for achieving “extraordinary results”*
10. 413families :60 video