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NEWS

Prosecutors: Early literacy helps prevent crime; 70% of jailed adults cannot read at a 4th-grade level

by: [Elizabeth White](#)

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LEE COUNTY, Ala. (WRBL) – Prosecutors with the Lee County District Attorney’s Office say when discussing crime prevention strategies, fostering a love of reading and learning ranks at the very top. Now, Lee County District Attorney’s and Tuscaloosa prosecutors are hoping you can help them provide a priceless opportunity for Alabama’s kids this Iron Bowl season.

Lee County DA Jessica Ventiere believes every child should be read *The Berenstain Bears Go To School* or other childhood favorites by a parent.

“The Lee County District Attorney’s Office and the Tuscaloosa District Attorney’s Office are going head to head to see who can raise the most donations for Reach out and Read Alabama, a program that matches pediatricians, parents, and books to increase literacy,” said Ventiere.

The love of reading and learning directly impacts a child’s future, including the likelihood of ending up in the criminal justice system where 70-percent of incarcerated adults cannot read at a 4th-grade level.

“I want to look at what can we do to prevent crime before it even starts? I think that is just as important as what we do in court each day,” said Ventiere.

Reach out and Read Alabama provides free books to pediatric offices that give them to families during visits. 90% of a child’s brain is formed in the first five years. So the sooner you start reading to your baby, the better.

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Ventiere.

Both Tuscaloosa and Lee County prosecutors hope to provide hundreds of new books via the Iron Bowl Book Drive and ask you to please help. During COVID, monetary donations are preferred over books. To help Lee County win, please visit this link: [***Join the Lee County DA's office for their virtual book drive***](#)

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