



CONSORTIUM
OF FLORIDA EDUCATION
FOUNDATIONS



COVID Education Innovation in Florida

Virtual Puppet Story Time (Indian River County)

Pre-COVID, The Learning Alliance's Literacy Education Manager traveled around the county in a Moonshot Rocket bus visiting schools, childcare facilities and preschools providing enriching literacy experiences as well as social-emotional support through movement and song. With those efforts stymied during the lockdown, they wanted to ensure that students could still participate in this enrichment activity, so they created an engaging series of interactive story time videos for kids. These videos featured puppets Moonshot and Bob along with other characters—including a new friend, Alaina, a bilingual puppet—to provide a literacy-rich experience using movement, music, dialogue and interaction for children from birth to third grade.

Through collaborative efforts, all story times were recorded and made available to local children, families, childcare providers and educational programs for low-income families, including Redlands Christian Migrant Association, Indian River County's VPK, the School District of Indian River County, the Economic Opportunities Council of Indian River County, Head Start and students and teachers participating in The Learning Alliance's Moonshot Academy Afterschool program.

The kids loved the puppets! No longer were there color, family dynamics, language or cultural barriers to interfere with learning. The Learning Alliance has continued to build their collection of stories and literacy experiences using Moonshot, Bob and Alaina to meet families where they are. The puppets' androgynous characteristics make them relatable to a wide range of children, no matter their sexual identity, race or culture. The puppets have even been used as spokespersons via social media as part of a community-wide literacy awareness campaign and will be featured in a children's book and in an Indian River County alphabet card series.

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The Consortium elevates the impact of Florida's local education foundations through advocacy and providing a collegial community for ongoing learning, shared resources and support. These nonprofit organizations are aligned with nearly every school district in our state and collectively they raise more than \$80 million annually to innovate learning, power potential and celebrate success.

We believe strong collaboration is essential to ensure school success. Our effort to capture, elevate and share education innovations discovered amid the disruption of the pandemic is offered in that spirit.

Our **Top 10 Takeaways: COVID Education Innovation** report can be accessed at educationinnovationspotlight.com