

Reaching future Ventura Breeze readers

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Ventura Police Commander Rick Murray reading to kids at the Take 5 event at police headquarters. Photo by Michael Gordon

Take 5 and Read to Kids! is an annual effort by First 5 Ventura County to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood literacy.

On Friday, May 4, more than 55 celebrity readers read to young children throughout Ventura County to kick off the Take 5 and Read to Kids campaign! This year the Ventura Police Department hosted the effort at Police/Fire Headquarters. Police Officers and Firefighters took time to read and share important safety tips with local families.

- Take 5 encourages parents and caregivers to talk, read, and sing with young children ages 1-5 to support their early language and literacy development.
- Reading aloud, telling stories, and even singing builds pathways in the brain that will later be used to learn letters, read, and to think critically.
- Being introduced to books in the home and reading to a child before they enter school has been shown to be the strongest predictor of school success, especially for students at the greatest risk of falling behind.

That's what Take 5 is about – take 5 minutes today for a child's future.

A tour of the facility was also given.

The impressive lineup of readers in Ventura County to promote the importance of reading early to young children included Congresswoman Julia Brownley, Assembly member Dante Acosta, Supervisor Kelly Long, County Executive Officer Mike Powers, Ventura County Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen, Sheriff Geoff Dean, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Stan Mantooth, CSUCI President Erika Beck and many more.

“For young children, early exposure to books – including being read aloud to each day – is critical for long-term academic success,” said First 5 Ventura County Executive Director Petra Puls. “And yet, in Ventura County, only 58% of children are read to daily.”