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Pre-K 4 SA Partners with Vooks to Offer Free Storybook Streaming Service to Bexar County Children and Early Learning Educators

Turning screen time into quality reading time; Vooks app is mobile-friendly for smart phones and devices

SAN ANTONIO — Pre-K 4 SA and Vooks, the leading streaming service for children’s books, have partnered to provide a free, one-year subscription of Vooks to children between four and six years of age and early learning teachers across Bexar County. Vooks is the most engaging way for young children to read books, complete them and achieve self-directed read-aloud time each day. Pre-K 4 SA created curriculum-enhancements to serve as guides for parents and teachers to maximize the use of the platform in English and Spanish that align to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Standards (TEKS) for grades K-3.

In Bexar County, where three in five children are economically disadvantaged and more than 30% are not reading on grade level by third grade, the need for early access to books is tremendous. Reading on level by third grade is a critical indicator of future academic success. Children who have access to books at home are much more likely to reach this important milestone. The Vooks app is mobile-friendly for smart phones and devices. The San Antonio Public Library Foundation (SAPLF) and BiblioTech, Bexar County’s all-digital public library, have committed to extend the distribution of the subscription program and access to Wi-Fi to families across San Antonio. BiblioTech will allow families to check out personal hot spots for home access to Vooks.

“With this generous contribution from Charles Butt to the children of San Antonio and Bexar County, Pre-K 4 SA and our partners will tackle the challenge of limited book access for young children by putting the entire library of animated storybooks and specially designed learning guides in the hands of early learning educators and families with a 4-year-old to 6-year-old child,” Pre-K 4 SA CEO Sarah Baray said. “Vooks brings children's books to life with animated illustrations and narrated stories. Combining animation with reading can enhance retention even further, which makes Vooks an ideal resource for both parents and teachers.”

The Vooks subscription will be available to early learning educators and young children in Bexar County. Pre-K 4 SA will leverage its alumni network of 13,000 children, relationships with school district partners, Grants Program applicants and recipients, and the Shared Services network, along with the San Antonio Public Library and Bibliotech to reach families and educators.

“Our aim is to encourage the love of reading by retaining all of the important elements of story time: read-along pacing, life lessons, and a visual connection between words and text,” Vooks CEO Marshall Lee Bex IV said. “It’s quality screen time parents can feel good about.”

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Decades of research demonstrates that reading aloud improves word comprehension, increases vocabulary, and boosts achievement scores. Research indicates that just 20 minutes of reading aloud every day can have a significant impact on a child's development and literacy.

About Pre-K 4 SA:

Pre-K 4 SA is a comprehensive early childhood initiative aimed at changing the education and workforce trajectory of San Antonio in one generation. Pre-K 4 SA offers full-day pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds living in the City of San Antonio. Pre-K 4 SA is free for qualifying students and also accepts tuition-paying students. The school day begins at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. Extended hours are available at no additional charge from 7:15 to 8 a.m., and from 3 to 6 p.m. for working families. Breakfast, lunch and two snacks are included and free transportation is available to all students. Pre-K 4 SA has four Education Centers located throughout the city: North Education Center, 3635 Medical Dr.; South Education Center, 7031 S. New Braunfels Ave.; East Education Center, 5230 Eisenhower Rd.; and West Education Center, 1235 Enrique M. Barrera Memorial Parkway. The Gardendale Early Learning Program powered by Pre-K 4 SA is the first replication site and was made possible through a partnership with Edgewood Independent School District. This program creates greater capacity for high-quality early education with both pre-k and kindergarten classrooms. The Pre-K 4 SA Professional Learning program provides pre-kindergarten through third grade educators in San Antonio with complementary continuing education to support best practice instruction to help every child in San Antonio excel. The Pre-K 4 SA Competitive Grants program provides more than \$4 million in funding annually to increase quality and access in early childhood programs throughout San Antonio.

Visit www.prek4sa.com for more information.

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