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I am a Reading Recovery trained teacher who has been working with the Books In Bags program since September 2012. I work with about 34 first and second graders who are just below grade level and need that extra help to strengthen their reading. I have the student's teacher make the initial contact with the parent to tell them about the program and then I follow-up with each parent directly. I have the parent sign a contract when they come to watch a lesson at the beginning of the program. When the parents watch a lesson, I show them how to best help their child while they are reading. I also send home a video mid-program of their child reading a new book and explain to parents the reading strategies their child is using and what the next reading strategy their child can be working on. I meet with the students for 15 minutes during the week and send home the bookbags to have the parents help by listening to their child read. I take a running record on one of the books when the student returns the bookbag. I then decide if the student moves up a reading level, stays on the current level or moves down a level. The children get books at their independent level so they can easily practice the reading strategies. I graph the progress of each student and at the end of the year the graph goes into the student's records. I can also do a cumulative report for the principal of the growth of the students for the year.

I am very pleased with the program and the support that Diane Karlis supplies. She is particular in providing assistance to teachers. Not only does she provide a variety of books but they are all labeled by level and word count and a comprehension question is given. She also provides Mentor Sheets for each bookbag that lets the parents know what their child is working on and what strategies they have already mastered. Diane sends a package of book bags, labels and Mentor sheets to put the books into bags of 6-8 books. The books have held up for the many years that I have used them. There is a nice variety of fiction and nonfiction books from a variety of book companies within each bag. The program that she has created is a game changer for helping students, especially students who need that extra boost to help them become life-long readers.