

ELIZABETH PARK

## Group has a read on child literacy

Kate Wakerley

CHILDREN at an Elizabeth Park preschool were treated to a visit by children's author Mem Fox last week.

Fox was at Elizabeth Park Primary's preschool as part of the United We Read program, which helps parents prepare their children for reading lessons at school.

Run by non-profit group United Way Australia, children aged up to five are given free books each month.

Fox, an ambassador for the program, read her book *Where is the Green Sheep?* to children and their parents before families received their own copies of the story.

She said reading to the children was "absolutely enchanting".

"When people do it they realise it's so much fun, you have children in the palm of your hand," Fox said.

"You're exposing children to the absolute joy of books and language and reading. There's so much happiness.



Those kids, when they get to school, they're going to soar."

United Way SA chief executive Ralph Day said the program was designed for disadvantaged communities to help children get ready to read and learn at school.

Under the program, children receive up to 60 books home delivered.

The program began in Elizabeth Downs last year and is now being extended into Elizabeth Park, with 775 children to receive free books across the two suburbs.

The scheme has also run in the US, UK and Canada.

Details: [www.unitedway.sa.com.au](http://www.unitedway.sa.com.au)

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Author Mem Fox reads to Blake, 4, from the Elizabeth Park Primary preschool.

Picture: TRICIA WATKINSON