

Early Literacy

What is early literacy? Early literacy is what children know about books, reading and writing even before they learn to read. It is not being taught how to read but learning and developing a familiarity with words, books and stories in a comfortable environment.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund, "Investing in children from birth to age 3 is the only way to ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential." A 2002 report developed by Developmental Tasks for Kindergarten Readiness administered by Indianapolis Public Schools found that of the 3,158 children who entered kindergarten in 2002, 44% were not ready for school.

The Early Literacy initiative known as Every Child Ready to Read began in 2000 as the Public Library Association's Early Literacy Project that was partnered with the National Institute of Child Health. In 2001, the PLA and the Association for Library Service to Children formed a partnership to test early literacy materials in twenty public libraries around the country. A second year of pilot sites, this time fourteen, was conducted in October 2002. At these sites, the six essential early literacy skills were taught and participants were shown how to use these skills to help prepare their children. The evaluation of these initial steps showed that the information taught to the parents and caregivers was being used outside the library and helping parents become more active parts of the early literacy initiative, as well as increasing the libraries' impact in early literacy development.

The Six Essential Early Literacy Skills

- **Vocabulary:** knowing the names of things
- **Letter Knowledge:** learning letters are different from each other, with names and sounds that go with specific letters
- **Narrative Skills:** being able to understand and tell stories as well as describe things
- **Print Motivation:** interest and enjoyment of books
- **Print awareness:** noticing print and knowing how to handle a book and how to follow words on a page
- **Phonological Awareness:** the ability to hear and play with small sounds in words

Examples of Early Literacy Programs

Multnomah County Public Library- Portland, Oregon
Birth to Six <http://www.multcolib.org/birthtosix/>

Hennepin County Library- Minnesota
Birth to Six- <http://www.hclib.org/BirthTo6/EarlyLit.cfm>

Oakville Public Library- Oakville, Ontario, Canada
ECRR- <http://www.opl.on.ca/ECR2R.php>

Indianapolis Marion County Public Library- Indianapolis, Indiana
Learning for a Lifetime <http://foundation.imcpl.org/childhood.html>

Denver Public Library- Denver, Colorado
Babble, Scribble, Read! <http://read.denverlibrary.org/>

ALA- Every Child Ready to Read- <http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/ecrr/ecrrhomepage.cfm>

National Center for Family Literacy- <http://www.familit.org>

Reading Is Fundamental- <http://www.rif.org/>

Ages Covered by Early Literacy Events at the Library

Early Literacy Programs will encompass children from the age of birth to 5 years. Infants will be considered children under the age of 18 months and those from 18 months to 3 years will be classified as toddlers and 3 to 5 years will be classified as preschoolers.

Budget for Early Literacy Events at the Library

In order to provide the best services to this population the library would like to have a budget of \$3,500 to cover the following costs:

- ✓ Regular Weekly Programs (primarily cost of crafts & special events) = \$1,000
- ✓ Quarterly New Parent Workshops (cost of literature and refreshments) = \$1,000
 - We also hope to receive enough books from the Libri Foundation to provide a new board book to the parents of every child born at the local hospital
- ✓ Family Evening Events (crafts, refreshments, give-aways) = \$1,000
- ✓ Summer Reading Program (age appropriate prizes) = \$500

Goals & Objectives

Objectives

- Teach parents, caregivers, and early childhood educators about the six critical early literacy skills, recent brain research and techniques for reading and selecting books for children.
- Demonstrate how to nurture these skills in children at each stage of development
- Promote lifelong learning, enrichment and enjoyment of reading

Goals

Our goal is to educate parents, caregivers and childcare providers by offering free pre-literacy workshops for three age levels: Infants (birth to 18 months), Toddlers (ages 18 months - 3) and Preschoolers (ages 3-5).

Workshops and related parents will be offered free in all neighborhood locations such as libraries, recreation centers and non-profit agencies.

- Define early literacy and explain its importance.
- Present the six pre-reading skills that help children get ready to read.
- Offer ideas to make book sharing and enjoyable experience so that parents and child read together more often.
- Suggest books, rhymes and other resources that are age appropriate.

An example Goals & Objective statement from the Indianapolis Marion County Public Library:

- “The Library Sees a critical need to reach out to parents and care-providers to help them make reading and books an important part of every child’s life.”
 - Expand its early childhood education outreach

Outreach Opportunities

In order to fulfill the library’s goal of actively involving the community the Early Literacy Program intends to provide the following services to groups within the community.

- Monthly story times will be offered to youth under the age of five (either at the library or offsite) to:
 - YMCA
 - Boys & Girls Club
 - Head Start preschool programs
 - Local Day Care centers AND providers
 - Church and community centers
- Literacy Information (including books, literature and library information) and Support will be provided to:
 - WIC participants

- Hospitals
 - Maternity Ward
 - Children's Ward
 - Birthing Centers

In addition, we will reach out to the community for support for the programs. As our theme is "All Aboard with Reading" we will seek local train experts and those who collect trains to come to the library and talk to the older (4-5 year-olds) about their hobbies/work. We will also spend some time focusing on safety in vehicles and on the street for these older children and for that we will ask members of our town police department to speak to the children and families. Finally, we will be open to adding guest speakers and/or presentations if events in the community lend support to our objectives as well as our theme.

Available Grants to Apply For

Target:

"Reading is an essential element in a child's educational process. Reading grants are awarded to schools, library, and nonprofit organizations, supporting programs such as weekend book clubs and after-school reading programs that foster a love of reading and encourage children, from birth through age 9, to read together with their families."

Guidelines:

Target will accept grant applications between March 1 and May 31, 2008 for programs taking place between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009. You should receive notification about your request by September 30, 2008. Most grants average between \$1,000 and \$3,000.

*** The library will apply for this grant in the amount of \$1,500 as its primary source of funding for the early literacy program.**

Barbara Bush National Grant Program:

"The goal of the national grant program is to develop and expand family literacy efforts nationwide, and to support the development of literacy programs that build families of readers. A total of approximately \$650,000 is awarded each year; no grant exceeds \$65,000."

Family Literacy programs funded through the Foundation's National Grant Program must include all of the following components:

- Reading instruction for parents or primary care-givers (pre-GED/GED/ESL etc.)
- Literacy or pre-literacy instruction for children
- Intergenerational activities where the parents/primary caregivers and children come together to learn and to read.

Programs can also include additional components such as parent support groups, parent involvement, home visits, job training etc.

*** The library will apply for this grant in the amount of \$2,000 as its primary source of funding for the summer reading program, new parent workshops and family evening events.**

The Libri Foundation:

“The Libri Foundation is a nationwide non-profit organization which donates new, quality, hardcover children's books to small, rural public libraries in the United States through its BOOKS FOR CHILDREN program. Only libraries within the 50 states are eligible to apply. The Libri Foundation does not offer grants to libraries outside of the United States.

Libraries are qualified on an individual basis. In general, county libraries should serve a population under 16,000 and town libraries should serve a population under 10,000 (usually under 5,000). Libraries should be in a rural area, have a limited operating budget, and an active children's department. Please note: Rural is usually considered to be at least 30 miles from a city with a population over 40,000.

Applications are accepted from independent libraries as well as libraries which are part of a county, regional, or cooperative library system. A library system may also apply if all the libraries in the system meet these requirements.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN grant recipients that have fulfilled all grant requirements, including the final report, may apply for another grant three years after the receipt of their previous grant. Grant recipients that do not fulfill all the grant requirements, including the final report, are not eligible for another grant.

*** The library will apply for this grant for books to be provided to the local hospital for newborns, no more than 1,000 books will be needed.**

Verizon Foundation:

“The Verizon Foundation is in the business of improving lives in literacy, knowledge and a readiness for the 21st Century.

Specifically, we help people to:

- Increase their literacy and educational achievement
- Avoid being an abuser or a victim of domestic violence
- Achieve and sustain their health and safety

Eligible organizations seeking grants from the Verizon Foundation must be prepared to track and report program outcomes as well as specific results that demonstrate measurable human impact. In the grant application, organizations must indicate what outcomes are targeted through programming and what results, as specified on the grant application, the organization will measure.”

*** The library will apply for this grant as a back-up for the early literacy program. The amount of \$1,000 will be requested and both local school test scores and circulation will be used to measure the impact of the program.**

All Aboard With Reading Program

Example Early Literacy Schedule of Events at the Library

Wed. January 7 @ 9:00 am: Baby & Me	Wed. January 14 @ 10:00 am: Pre-School Storytime
Wed. January 7 @ 10:00 am: Toddler Tales	Wed. January 21 @ 9:00 am: Baby & Me
Tuesday, January 13 @ 7:00 pm: Family Storytime: Read to Some-bunny	Wed. January 21 @ 10:00 am: Toddler Tales
Wed. January 14 @ 9:00 am: Pre-School Storytime	Monday January 26 @ 7:00 pm: New Parent Workshop – “Encouraging Literacy From Birth”

Program Specifics

Infants: “Baby & Me”

1st & 3rd Wednesday of the Month- 9:00 am: 20 minutes of programming, 10 minutes of parent reading/interaction

Possible Themes:

Colors, Shape Recognitions, Baby signs

Types of Activities:

Lap Rhymes, Songs & Fingerplays, Stories (2 short stories or board books with rhymes & rhythm), interaction with the Parent Reading to the Child where early literacy building techniques are introduced.

The goal is to introduce beginning literacy skills and encourage reading to their children outside the library as well as provide resources for further ideas for at home literacy interaction. Pre-registration is encouraged but not required.

Toddlers: “Toddler Tales”

1st & 3rd Wednesday of the Month- 10:00 am: 20 minutes of programming, 20 minutes of interaction

Possible Themes:

Letters, Numbers, Emotions, Opposites, Animals, Nursery Rhymes

Types of Activities:

Introductory/Hello Songs (with names), Stories (2-3 picture books), fingerplays & action

rhymes to promote motor skills, Parent/Child craft (as funding allows), songs, Parent/Child Reading Interaction and Social interaction time will be allowed for.

Introduce print awareness and vocabulary, directions as well as developing speech, motor skills and socialization skills. Pre-registration is required.

Preschoolers: “Preschool Storytime”

2nd & 4th Wednesday of the Month- Morning & Afternoon: 30-45 minutes

Themes:

Families, Weather, Days of the Week, Months, Getting Ready for School

Types of Activities:

Introduction Rhymes, storytelling (including the use of flannel boards & puppets), stories (2-3 picture books, varying in length), songs, and a small craft activity.

Help to develop phonological skills and rhymes and name recognition. Improve mental focus including detailed directions, plots and fine motor skills. Pre-registration is required.

Family Evening Storytime: “Family Time: Read to Some-bunny”

Geared towards families with children 5 and under

2nd Tuesday of every month- 7:00 pm: 1 hour

Types of Activities:

Pajamas are encouraged! There will be a variety of storytelling, songs, fingerplays, stories, “Read to Some-bunny” time (in which the family reads aloud to each other), and a small snack at the end (which can also be socialization time between families).

The goal is to encourage reading together as a family outside the library for enjoyment.

New Parent Workshop: “Encouraging Literacy From Birth”

4 times a year

Just for Parents and caregivers. Guest speakers discuss important early development topics. We will give library and library collection tours. Resources will be provided for specific age groups and recommended readings, including developmental charts. Also providing a place for new parents to meet and interact to develop playgroup opportunities/networking.

Summer Reading Program: “I think I can... READ!”

During the summer months, the regular programming will remain the same and we will encourage participation by the younger audience in the summer reading program. Part of our budget will be spent to include prizes that are appropriate for younger children. Also, Family Reading Night will encourage siblings to earn their points by reading to their younger siblings.

Sources

Bardige, Betty S. and Marilyn Segal. Building Literacy with Love. Washington D.C.: Zero to Three Press, 2005.

Blakemore, Caroline J. and Barbara Weston Ramierz. Baby Read-Aloud Basics. New York: Amacon, 2006.

Ghoting, Saroj Nadkarni, and Pamela Martin-Diaz. Early Literacy Storytimes at Your Library. Chicago: American Library Association, 2006.

Straub, Susan, and KJ Dell'Antonia. Reading with Babies, Toddlers, and Twos. Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebook, Inc., 2006.

ALA- Every Child Ready to Read- <http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/ecrr/ecrrhomepage.cfm>

Denver Public Library- Colorado
Babble, Scribble, Read! <http://read.denverlibrary.org/>

Hennepin County Library- Minnesota
Birth to Six- <http://www.hclib.org/BirthTo6/EarlyLit.cfm>

Indianapolis Marion County Public Library- Indianapolis, Indiana
Learning for a Lifetime <http://foundation.imcpl.org/childhood.html>

Multnomah County Public Library
Birth to Six <http://www.multcolib.org/birthtosix/>

National Center for Family Literacy- <http://www.famlit.org>

Oakville Public Library- Ontario, Canada
ECRR- <http://www.opl.on.ca/ECR2R.php>

Reading Is Fundamental- <http://www.rif.org/>