



Focus: Thrive by Five, *part 3*

This feature will focus on learning and reading development for different age groups, beginning with birth to five from January to June, 2012, and eventually going through age 19.

To continue with the last 2 month's focus on Thrive by Five, this article will build on last month's feature of the new Early Literacy Center at Aurora Public Library's Central Branch and address creating early learning environments in a library.

There is a growing trend in public libraries—creating early learning environments for those youngest patrons and their parents/caregivers. At the recent Public Library Association (PLA) conference, for instance, I attended both sessions offered on creating learning environments to foster early literacy skills. This trend is for good reason: research shows that environments that encourage children and parents to interact with each other, as well as (from Every Child Ready to Read 2) talk, read, sing, write, and play together, help prepare 0–5 year olds to read. There are also many activities, games, and objects that can be placed in these environments to help prepare young children physically and cognitively to read and write. In addition, these are valuable spaces to teach parents about early literacy.

The presenters at the PLA sessions stressed libraries do not need a large space to have an effective early learning environment—in fact some their spaces were quite small—so even small libraries can consider creating these environments.

From the PLA sessions I attended:

Some tips on getting started:

- When planning early literacy areas, be purposeful and intentional. What are your goals? What should children and parents learn?
- Adult/child interaction is key. Early literacy environments should give opportunities and ideas for parents to interact with their children in a fun, purposeful way.
- Consider how you'll evaluate the effectiveness of the environment, and set outcomes that are measurable and achievable. Attendance; circulation of infant, toddler, and parent materials; patron satisfaction; parental participation; and levels of community collaboration are all possibilities.
- Space and budget, of course, are major considerations. Meaningful environments can be created with limited space and budgets, however!
- Think bright, colorful, interactive, and fun!

Welcome to the third issue of YS News!

This newsletter will feature articles on learning development, summer reading updates, timely tidbits, children's and teen literature news, and an exchange of what's going on in CO libraries.

Would you like to see a topic covered in the newsletter? Want to share info about your programs? Or perhaps contribute an article? Let me know!

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Summer Reading 2012: News & Ideas

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Many children receive free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch at school. But what happens during the summer? Hunger is one of the most severe roadblocks to the learning process, and makes children more prone to health problems. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) helps fill that food gap by providing free meals and snacks to help children in low-income areas get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow throughout the summer.

Communities large and small in which at least 50% of students are eligible for free and reduced-price school lunches may participate. In these areas, all children 18 and under can receive free meals at approved SFSP food sites.

There are ways your library can partner with SFSP sites in your area during your SRP. Partnering with SFSP sites can help bring both reading and health to kids in your community. Read this [SFSP handout](#) to learn more about the program and how you can collaborate.

Summer Celebrations

Celebrate these fun days at your SRP this summer!

- [Great American Backyard Campout](#): June 23



Sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation as part of its Be Out There campaign, this fun event encourages families and kids to get outside so they can enjoy a lifetime of healthy, outdoor play. Promote the program to your patrons, or hold a “campout” event in your library—it fits perfectly with the 2012 SRP theme! The event website has lots of fun ideas for [campfire songs and stories](#), [games and activities](#), and [camping tips](#) that you can use inside your library. You can [register your event](#) on their website too for a chance to win prizes, receive more resources, and more.

- **Moon Day, July 20**

Moon Day commemorates the first walk on moon on July 20, 1969. Celebrate Moon Day during your SRP with this [family day about the moon](#) from the Lunar and Planetary Institute—all activities and handouts are available online! The Smithsonian’s Air and Space Museum offers a [website on Apollo 11](#) with a timeline, videos, excellent photos, and much more.



This mouse, part of this year’s official SRP clipart on your CDs, could be your Moon Day mascot!

Soar with Reading, with PBS and JetBlue

As announced in last month’s newsletter, PBS KIDS and JetBlue are teaming up to encourage young readers to read and get involved at their local libraries this summer, and are providing libraries with fun resources for your SRP at their Soar with Reading website. This update is to announce that libraries can now request free literacy based activity kits for kids 3–8 on the project’s website. You can also request volunteers from the JetBlue staff for the Denver metro area for your SRP or other library needs this summer. Request both materials and volunteers from [this form](#).

SRP Training Videos, Ideas, and More

The California Library Association has made loads of [SRP materials](#) available on their website, all for free! You’re sure to find something useful.

“I was lucky enough not to face any required summer reading lists until I went to college. So I still think of summer as the best time to read for fun.”

—Author Margaret Haddix

Book Nook

What Kids Are Reading: The Book–Reading Habits of Students in American Schools

This report ranks the books students are reading based on the Accelerated Reader Real Time database, the largest of its kind, which houses reading records for more than 7.6 million students from 24,265 schools nationwide who read more than 241 million books during the 2010–2011 school year.

The lists and analyses represent the student perspective on book selection. To add another dimension, this year the authors asked a variety of authors, educators, and experts, “What *should* kids be reading?” The report includes a section of librarians’ picks and opinions. The report is [available online](#) (pdf).

Children’s Book Week—May 7–13, 2012— & Children’s Choice Book Awards Voting

Established in 1919, Children’s Book Week is the longest–running literacy initiative in the country. Each year, Children’s Book Week is a time to celebrate books and reading in classrooms, libraries, and homes. [Visit the website](#) for logos, sample tweets, ideas for celebrating the week for kids and teens, and much more.

An important part of Children’s Book Week is the [Children’s Choice Book Awards](#), in which kids and teens select the winners by voting online. There are 4 age levels with appropriate books in each level. Encourage kids and teens at your library to vote; the winners will be announced during Children’s Book Week!

NPR’s Backseat Book Club

National Public Radio (NPR) hosts the [Backseat Book Club](#) for kids. Each month, kids can read the selected book and post questions about it for the author online. At month’s end, NPR asks the

book’s author some of those questions during an interview with the author on their afternoon radio program, All Things Considered.

Timely Tidbits

One Book 4 Colorado

This exciting project is coming soon—April 18–29! We have compiled materials that you can use to prepare for this exciting project; find them on [our website](#). Just a few highlights:

- [Email List](#)—there’s a list specifically for this project; you can subscribe here!
- [Webinar Recording](#)—A recording of the recent webinar on the project (1 hour).
- [Webinar Discussion Notes](#) (PDF) —Combined discussion notes from the 3/20/12 and 3/23/12 webinars
- [Press Release Template](#)

And be sure to visit the [project’s website](#) and [Facebook page](#)!

Colorado Water 2012

Throughout the year, the statewide [Colorado Water 2012](#) project will be connecting Coloradans to water through resources, events, and activities. You can get involved in your library, too! Check out these [related ideas and resources](#) for youth services librarians to incorporate the project into your programs.

Don’t miss the project’s “A Day without Water” video contest! Encourage young adults in your community to enter. Everyone is invited to participate in the contest for a chance to win awesome prizes, courtesy of the Arkansas River and Rio Grande basins! Online submissions accepted through August 1, 2012. Visit the [contest’s web page](#) for all the details.

New 2012 KIDS COUNT in Colorado! Report

Child well–being varies widely across Colorado’s 25 largest counties, and where a

child lives can substantially impact his or her chances for success, according to the new *2012 KIDS COUNT in Colorado!* report, *The Importance of Place: Variations in Child Well-Being Across Colorado. KIDS COUNT in Colorado!* is an annual publication of the Children's Campaign, providing state- and county-level data on a variety of child well-being indicators.

Modeled after the Annie E. Casey Foundation's national KIDS COUNT Data Book, this year's *KIDS COUNT in Colorado!* report includes a Colorado Child Well-Being Index, which uses 12 indicators to compare child well-being by county in the areas of health, education, and family and community.

Other findings in the report include:

- 91,000 CO children lived in extreme poverty in 2010, meaning an annual income of less than \$11,000 a year for a family of four, a 139% increase since 2000.
- Between 2005 and 2010, the number of African-American children living in poverty in CO increased by 50%. For Latino children, the increase was 37%.
- 64% of children living in poverty were in single-parent households.
- The number of children without health insurance in CO dropped from 12% in 2008 to 10% in 2009.

The [press release](#) for the report and the [report itself](#) are both available online.

Handmade capes fill school with super readers

The students at Colorado Springs School District 11 become reading superheroes when they read a certain amount and earn a fun cape. Learn about the [reading cape program here](#).

CLiC Spring Workshops 2012

The Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC) will hold its spring workshops in Pueblo, April 19-20. Sessions from the State Library will include teen

advisory groups and a summer reading program exchange. Hope to see you there!

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

Discover Tech

Deadline: May 1, 2012

The ALA Public Programs Office announces a new traveling exhibition for public libraries. Eight public libraries will be selected to host an interactive exhibition called Discover Tech: Engineers Make a World of Difference, and will receive \$1,000 to support related public programs. Through interactive elements and displays, visitors to the Discover Tech exhibition will learn that engineers, through a creative and collaborative design process, arrive at practical solutions to help solve society's problems. For more info and to apply, visit [this announcement](#).

CO Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Grants

Deadline: May 7, 2012

The CO Department of Education is offering \$5.4 million in grant funds to programs that assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge necessary for employment and self-sufficiency; assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and assist adults in the completion of secondary school education. See the [Request for Applications](#) for more info.

Dollar General Youth Literacy Grants

Deadline: May 16, 2012

Dollar General Literacy Foundation Youth Literacy Grants provide funding to schools, public libraries, and nonprofit organizations to help students who are below grade level or experiencing difficulty reading. For more info and to apply online visit the [Dollar General website](#).

Timely Tidbits continued

ALSC Courses

This spring, the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) is pleased to offer a variety of online courses. All courses will run from 4 to 6 weeks and will be taught in an online learning community using Moodle. All courses are offered asynchronously (self-directed) meaning you will never need to sign-in on a specific date/time for an online meeting. To see the offerings and sign-up for an upcoming course, visit their [online course webpage](#). Course space is limited and additional courses will be added in the future.

ALSC is also offering several webinars this spring; the [webinar webpage](#) offers more information.

If you missed the first two of these newsletters, they're archived!

- [Volume 1, Issue 1 – January 2012](#) (PDF)
- [Volume 1, Issue 2 – February 2012](#) (PDF)

Students Learn More by 'Acting Out' Text

A series of experiments by researchers at Arizona State University in Tempe and the University of Wisconsin–Madison suggests that students can understand more by physically acting out text—either in real life or virtually—than by reading alone. Read [the article](#) for more.

Save the Date for YALSA's YA Literature Symposium

YALSA's YA Lit Symposium will be in St. Louis from Nov. 2–4—save the date! The theme will be The Future of Young Adult Literature: Hit Me with the Next Big Thing. Check out the [Symposium's Ning page](#) for more info.

YALSA's Best of the Best Reading Challenge

It's no joke! On April 1, YALSA's [Best of the Best Reading Challenge](#) begins. You'll have three months to read as many titles as you can from YALSA's

2012 winners and honor books and selected list Top Tens. Everyone who completes the challenge will have the opportunity to create a response to their favorite book from the challenge that will be posted on The Hub, and you could also win a tote bag of 2012 YA lit and professional titles.

Teens are also eligible for the challenge and are encouraged to participate, so tell your patrons and students!

New Pew Research on Young Adults and Media

Three recent reports from the Pew Research Center document young adults' media habits, and how those habits affect their lives.

[Teens, Smartphones, and Texting](#) confirms that texting is the dominant daily mode of communication between teens and all those with whom they communicate. Teens on average send and receive a total of 60 texts per day. Meanwhile, teens are talking less on the phone.

The report [Millennials Will Benefit And Suffer Due to Hyperconnected Lives](#) finds that while experts see many teens becoming sharp analysts and decision-makers because of their networked world, they also warn that some constantly-connected teens will lack engagement with people and knowledge by being hyperconnected.

[The Viral Kony 2012 Video report](#) tracks teen viewing of a viral video and how teens learned of the video. The report discusses the critical role social media plays in disseminating news, and how teens and their elders at times have different news agendas and learn about news in different ways.

Thrive by Five continued

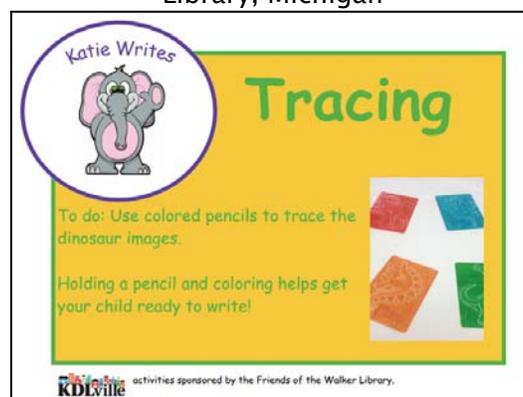
Best practices design elements:

- Have a small library? Put Early Literacy Spots wherever you can--shelf ends, table tops, elevators, the fronts of service desks, walls, even floors and bathrooms! Feature small early learning activities for kids at these Spots, with quick tips for parents on how to do the activities with their child. Place these Spots at eye level of a toddler. Magnet and felt boards, chalkboards, mirrors, lift the flap activities, counting games, even a hanging Lego board can be placed on a wall. Use magnetic paint on that pesky column or odd bit of wall space close to the ground to make a fun learning activity space. And check out these [art ideas](#) for table tops or mobile carts.

- Include activity centers based on the 5 Every Child Ready to Read 2 activities—talking, reading, singing, writing, and playing. This lends a focus for parents and models these simple activities for them that they can then practice at home.



From the West Bloomfield Township Public Library, Michigan



Writing activity station from Kent District Library



This is a chalk board!



This is a mirror!

These examples from the Kent District Library in Michigan show that you can fit in Early Literacy Spots just about anywhere!

- Research shows smaller, defined nooks and niches encourage more interaction with parents and young children, as well as among young peers. Cozy spaces also encourage richer language experiences.
- Activities that keep children engaged throughout the library and come with a fun, small incentive, like getting a sticker or hand stamp, help keep the focus on fun learning. [Here's an example.](#)

- Use self-service activity bins, labeled with photos. Fill with puzzles, animals, color sorting activities, blocks, stacking toys, hats, etc.



Colorful, labeled activity bins at the Early Literacy Center at Aurora Public Library

- Activity stations can include puppets, a playhouse with costumes and a small stage, a [writing center](#), building block station, flannel or magnetic boards, play islands with [manipulatives for small hands](#), and art and music stations are just a few possibilities. If you have more space, consider a gross motor area with larger items like Hopscotch rugs, rocker boats, and balance boards; these help young kids develop coordination and strength. [Here are some examples](#).
- Incorporate tips for parents on how to use the activities and objects to impart early literacy skills. The tips can also include how parents can create similar activities and environments in their home.



From the West Bloomfield Township Public Library

- Consider a fun mascot for your early learning center or activity stations. If your library jurisdiction has more than one branch, the mascot is a way to add branding.



Kent District Library branded their early learning centers as KDLville areas; kids are welcomed with this elephant in each branch.



Whisper tubes are fun and a great way to add an auditory component that takes little money or space.

From St. Mary's County Library, Maryland

Caring for Your Early Learning Environment

- Ask kids and parents to put items away they've used (having bins clearly labeled helps!).
- Disinfect early childhood areas at the end of each day they're open. Here's a [great video](#) to demonstrate that.

Much More from the PLA Conference!

Check out all the [PLA conference sessions online](#); many have handouts and PowerPoints.