

# Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy

New energy for the state's library initiative



**Children — always a priority for libraries.**

**To help young children achieve early literacy skills, a strong foundation for later reading and school success, libraries are taking action.**

## **The Need:**

- Scientific research, studying brain development at young ages, shows children under six are in a stage of critical intellectual growth.
- The great majority of children under six live in families headed by a single parent or in which both parents work.
- Our culturally diverse population presents an additional challenge to insure all children have an equal opportunity to achieve.
- No formal structure trains adults providing nonlicensed care to at least 45% of this state's young children. These parents, relatives, and friends need background in early childhood language development, literacy, and social skills.

## **Libraries:**

- Are ideal to provide information, training, and modeling— especially for home-care providers or stay-at-home parents.
- Can fill in resource gaps for formal care providers.
- Are neutral locations where people go to find general information.
- Are staffed by people committed to public service.
- Already are considered important players in provision of services to children and families.
- Have it all—facilities, diverse populations, trained staff, books. We're part of the solution to change and improve things for children.

In January 2008, representatives from public libraries around the state met to begin collaborating for a comprehensive approach to deliver children's literacy services. Contact these representatives for more information or to be involved in training and outreach.

For further information, contact Susan Oakes, Denver Public Library, 720.865.1308; [soakes@denverlibrary.org](mailto:soakes@denverlibrary.org); Melissa Depper, 303-792-8999, x 12104, [mdepper@ald.lib.co.us](mailto:mdepper@ald.lib.co.us); Lori Romero, [lromero@ald.lib.co.us](mailto:lromero@ald.lib.co.us), 303-792-8999, ext. 12606; Colleen Spahr, 303.430-2400, x 2306, [Cspahr@ci.westminster.co.us](mailto:Cspahr@ci.westminster.co.us).

# EVERY CHILD READY TO READ @your library\* \*

The Colorado State Library (Colorado Department of Education) has been active in early literacy since 2004. Many Colorado libraries are using the PLA/ALSC curricula and tools to educate children and provide a model for adults. This approach emphasizes more efficient and effective use of current resources rather than an increase in resources and rests firmly on scientifically based reading research.

## **Components Include:**

- **Training:** Nearly all libraries provide early literacy activities. Read-alouds, summer reading programs, crafts, and entertainment are common. However, early literacy training refines the skills of library staff and enhances their ability to educate and model for others as well as to be purposeful in presentations.
- **Materials:** FREE brochures about early literacy. ("Ready, Set, Go—Kindergarten Readiness" and "Reading Tips") address the key skills adults should instill to prepare children for entering school. These and other resources spread the word to the general public about early literacy.
- **Partnerships:** Connections with community, education, and business organizations provide additional support for visibility and outreach.



- **Development:** A strategic plan to encourage libraries to provide training to adults and to collaborate extensively with other community partners is underway
- **Literacy skills** are:
  - ⇒ Vocabulary
  - ⇒ Print motivation
  - ⇒ Phonological awareness
  - ⇒ Narrative skills
  - ⇒ Letter knowledge
  - ⇒ Print awareness

\* A program of the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children, divisions of the American Library Association. Every Child Ready to Read® @ your library® is a registered trademark and used with permission.

### **Information on Colorado libraries' early literacy initiative, FREE resources and training.**

**[www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/Childrens\\_Literacy\\_Resources.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/Childrens_Literacy_Resources.htm)**

Project status reports:

[www.lrs.org/closer.php](http://www.lrs.org/closer.php) and [www.lrs.org/fastfacts/index.php?year=2006](http://www.lrs.org/fastfacts/index.php?year=2006)

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