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News Release

StoryBlocks, A New Tool To Build Early Literacy Skills Debuts

The Colorado State Library announced today the launch of www.storyblocks.org, an online video collection featuring one-minute songs and rhymes for babies, toddlers and preschool children in both English and Spanish. Filmed in partnership with Rocky Mountain PBS, librarians throughout Colorado share successful activities as well as literacy tips. Parents, child care providers and others will discover ways to engage very young children in fun and playful interactions that also build healthy brain development.

“Learning starts early and parents are the first teachers in so many ways,” said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “Having parents engage children in songs, rhymes and language is a proven way for parents to provide the kinds of stimulation that leads to improved success in school. We encourage all parents and those who engage with young children to use these activities and spark excitement about learning.”

StoryBlocks.org is a project of the Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL), an advisory group to the State Library. CLEL received a federal grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to create the videos and Web site. The goal is to build awareness and to encourage parents and others to engage with children from birth on early language and pre-literacy skills. The methods used in the videos are based on brain and child development research that show the impact that songs, rhymes and stories have on very young children.

The videos have been well received by librarians in Colorado. "What a delightful way to inspire us and show that early literacy is everyday fun!" responded one librarian. Another commented, "These little video treasures are big aids for librarians, parents and child care providers who are looking for joyful early language activities."

Carol Edwards, children's and family services co-manager at the Denver Public Library stated, "Libraries have long provided story times with superb early literacy activities. Now, thanks to a grant from IMLS and the partnership with Rocky Mountain PBS, we have great videos to share and they show the importance of why they matter to staff, child care providers and parents. I'm thrilled to have this new tool. I can't wait to see it used across Colorado."

Eight Colorado public libraries helped to fund the project: Arapahoe Library District, Denver Public Library, Douglas County Libraries, Fort Morgan Public Library, Lafayette Public Library, Salida Regional Library and Westminster Public Library. Donations also came from two non-profit organizations: Friends of Food for Thought and Library People and one anonymous donor.

Along with this grant-funded video project, CLEL offers book lists, activities and research information on early literacy at their Web site, <http://www.CLEL.org>.

For more information on StoryBlocks.org (www.storyblocks.org), contact Patricia Froehlich, youth services senior consultant at the Colorado State Library at froehlich_p@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6908.

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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