Ready to Read at New York Libraries: an Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program

Karen Balsem
Project Director
Out of the approximately 1.4 million children age 5 and under in NYS:

…one in four are living in poverty

…one in three are a victim of maltreatment

…1.2% are homeless

…60% of children in mid and high-income households vs. 40% in low income households are being read to every day

…44% of 3 to 4 year olds are not enrolled in preschool compared to 64% of low-income 3 to 4 year olds
Public libraries can level the playing field
National and State Early Learning Goals
Ready to Read at New York Libraries

Ready to Read at New York Libraries is an initiative of the New York State Education Department designed to improve and expand the availability of high quality public library early learning services in local communities across the State. Through this initiative, families and caregivers will be provided with the knowledge needed to prepare their young children for their school years ahead.

The priority component of Ready to Read at New York Libraries through 2019 is the Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program, a train-the-trainer program that will strengthen library staff skills to ensure that families and caregivers with young children receive the highest quality services at all of New York’s 1,000 public library outlets.

Karen Balsen is the Project Director for Ready to Read at New York Libraries. For more information, contact Karen at 518-486-2194; Fax: 518-486-5254.
Public Library Survey Results

Respondents reported:

• Only 35-36% of children displayed reading readiness by kindergarten

• A majority of respondents thought that 25% or fewer of families in their communities were not proficient in English

• Many early literacy activities were desired but libraries were unable to offer them
Public Library Survey Results

Respondents reported:

• **Training needs** include developing partnerships for early literacy programs, early childhood spaces, grant writing and outreach to underserved community segments

• **Major barriers** to providing quality early childhood services are time and resources
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Goals:

• Children will enter kindergarten with the skills to succeed in the school years ahead
• Public libraries will be positioned as early literacy community leaders
• Public library staff will be viewed as “Early Literacy Navigators”
The Program:

- Has five Foundation Training Components
  1. Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis
  2. Using Every Child Ready to Read 2®
  3. Early Learning Spaces
  4. Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach to Families with Young Children
  5. Everyone Serves Families with Young Children

- Includes a train-the-trainer model
- Uses integrated evaluation tools
- Provides resources for libraries to reach families directly
The Advisory Group and Partnerships

New York State Head Start Collaboration
Reach Out and Read
Council on Children and Families
PULISDO

Collaborative Summer Library Program
NYLA/YSS
Cornell Cooperative Extension
United Way of New York
And others……….
Ready to Read at New York Libraries: an Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program

A statewide staff development program designed to improve public library services that will help young children start kindergarten with the skills needed for school success.
Timeline

Spring 2014
- Awarded 2014 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program Planning Grant
- Trained Cohort trained in Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis (ELCAA)

Fall 2014
- Training Cohort begins training library staff in ELCAA

Spring 2015
- Training Cohort trained in Using ‘Every Child Read to Read®’ (2nd edition)
- Summit culminating 2014 grant year

Fall 2015
- Training Cohort trained in Early Learning Spaces and Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach
Timeline

**Spring 2016**
- Training Cohort trained in Everyone Serves Families with Young Children

**Summer 2015 – Spring 2018**
- Training Cohort trains library staff in their region in all Foundation Components
- Enhanced training - webinars, screencasts, workshops – continues throughout the three years.
Special thanks to…

- The Advisory Group
- Training Cohort
- Public Library Systems
- NYLA & YSS
- Partners
Questions? Comments?

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