



**Ready to Read at New York Libraries:
Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program**
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/index.html>

Training Overview

INTRODUCTION

Coordinated by the New York State Library, the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries: Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program* provides training and resources to develop lasting, research-based early learning services and re-imagined spaces for families with young children in public libraries across the state. The project, with its strong focus on partnership development and outreach, aims to serve all families, but particularly those with high need and/or those previously unserved.

The five-year program, using a cost-effective, train-the-trainer approach, will train more than **1,200 library staff members**, reaching **1,067 public library outlets** and **all 23 public library systems**. The final training model will be easily replicable and shared nationally.

The program was developed with a 2014 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program Planning Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

PROGRAM GOALS

Ready to Read at New York Libraries supports the following goals:

- Library staff gain knowledge and confidence in developing research-based early literacy services.
- Library staff apply what they learned in training to offer new or enhanced early literacy services.
- Training Cohort members become regional, knowledgeable early literacy advocates and certified trainers.

The ultimate goal of this project is to increase early literacy skills in young children (particularly those at-risk), to better prepare them for school, and to engage parents and caregivers in the process. However, evaluating hundreds of children statewide is not feasible, and research already supports the effectiveness of early learning services. Therefore, evaluation of the program will focus on the *measurable* goals listed above.



ACTIVITIES

The program is comprised of two phases of activities:

Phase One (2014-2016)

- Train the Training Cohort (30-35 youth services librarians from New York’s public library systems).
- Develop and test Training Tool Kits for the following Five Foundation Components:
 - *Everyone Serves Families with Young Children*
 - *Strengthening Young Families through Early Literacy Practices*
 - *Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis*
 - *Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach to Families with Young Children*
 - *Early Learning Spaces*
- Continue to work with the Advisory Group, established during the Planning Grant, to develop program partnerships and identify training topics and needs.

Phase Two (2016-2019)

- Train library staff in the five components (1,200 plus staff members).
- Finalize the Training Tool Kits with feedback from the Training Cohort and library staff.
- Offer additional webinars in supplemental topics related to early literacy (open to all).
- Offer Annual Workshops and Summits for the Training Cohort, the Advisory Group, and partners.
- Continue work with the Advisory Group, as described during Phase One.
- Support program replication nationally.
- Enhance family resources, such as the project Facebook page, Twitter account, and *DayByDayNY* (English and Spanish versions).
- Certify the Training Cohort.
- Evaluate program progress/impact regularly throughout and at program completion.



CURRICULUM

Phase One of the program focuses on training the **Training Cohort**, a group of 30-35 youth services librarians associated with New York State’s regional public library systems. The group receives comprehensive, train-the-trainer instruction from nationally-recognized experts in the **Five Foundation Components** that make up the unique curriculum of *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* (see component descriptions below).

The components cover a wide variety of skills needed to develop early learning services in libraries, including community asset analysis, partnership building, and outreach, for example. While one of the five components is based on the successful *Every Child Ready to Read Program*® (2nd edition) or ECRR2, developed by the Public Library

Association and Association for Library Services to Children, this project takes several additional steps above and beyond ECRR2 to prepare library staff.

Workshops given to the Training Cohort in each of the five components include the core curriculum, as well as techniques for teaching the content to library staff. Training Cohort members leave each component workshop prepared to offer the training within their region. While the program offers a recommended training sequence, the workshops may also be offered as stand-alone sessions if needed.

**Early literacy experts
train the Training Cohort
(via train-the-trainer workshops)**



**Training Cohort members train
library staff in all regions
of New York State**

Each component includes an online **Training Tool Kit**, complete with a comprehensive handbook, slide presentation, handouts, and evaluation tools (that employ outcome-based evaluation methods). The Training Cohort plays a key role in the evaluation and enhancement of the tool kits.

Training
Component
#1

Everyone Serves Families with Young Children

The first component empowers public library staff at all levels (including board members, and volunteers) to identify and embrace their capacity to make the library welcoming to families with young children. The training focuses on understanding the challenges faced by modern families and young children's brain, physical, and social development, as well as exploring opportunities for all library staff to promote early literacy and encourage family engagement. Participants leave with strategies for providing excellent customer service to young children and their parents/caregivers.

At training completion (via a survey), participants (Training Cohort *and* library staff members) will:

- Report increased knowledge in Component #1.
- Report increased confidence in:
 - Incorporating the latest brain and child development research into their interactions with young children.
 - Handling difficult situations in which young children are loud, upset, or misbehaving in the library.
 - Promoting family engagement in early literacy opportunities at the library.

At 3 months post-training (via a survey), library staff will:

- Report they have incorporated strategies for improving customer service to families with young children.

Training
Component
#2

Strengthening Young Families through Early Literacy Practices

The second component includes ECRR2 as its foundation, and utilizes the program's proven curriculum to help participants develop services in the library and in the larger community that support parents/caregivers with the early literacy development of their young children. Through activities and group work, participants learn to tailor their storytimes and programs to model and teach effective strategies to parents/caregivers. Participants learn how to engage families in the five early learning practices of ECRR2 (talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing). Training is customized to address the school preparedness expectations for New York State (and easily customizable for other states as well).

At training completion (via a survey), participants (Training Cohort *and* library staff members) will:

- Report increased knowledge in Component #2.

- Report increased confidence in:
 - Using the *picture walk* and *whole book approach* in programming.
 - Conducting storytimes with asides or tips for parents/caregivers (*enriched storytimes*).
 - Conducting storytimes with parents/caregivers fully engaged in the programming (*super storytimes*).
 - Presenting a *Fun for Parents and Children Workshop* (ECRR2).
 - Articulating enthusiastically the importance of library early literacy programs to stakeholders and the public.

At 6-months post-training (via a survey), library staff will:

- Report they have applied ECRR2 strategies and conducted ECRR2 workshops.



Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis

The third component provides training participants with an essential foundation for planning early literacy services in their libraries. The training focuses on collecting and interpreting information about communities, helping participants better understand the needs and assets of the areas they serve. Special emphasis is placed on identifying new or underserved audiences, such as families with young children with disabilities, families with teen parents, families with grandparents as caregivers, immigrant families, and low-income families.

At training completion (via a survey), participants (Training Cohort *and* library staff members) will:

- Report increased knowledge in Component #3.
- Report increased confidence in:
 - Finding community information and demographic data.
 - Conducting focus groups and/or interviews.
 - Identifying key informants, stakeholders, and potential partners in the community.
 - Analyzing collected community data (identifying norms, anomalies, and trends).
 - Creating an *Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis* for their library.

At 6 months post-training (via a survey), library staff will:

- Report they have completed an *Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis*.



Training
Component

#4

Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach to Families with Young Children

The fourth component builds directly on the third by using identified needs and assets to develop a plan for building partnerships and conducting outreach. Focus is on the importance of moving beyond the library walls to collaborate with others that share the

common missions of improving early literacy and fostering kindergarten preparedness. Helpful strategies for reaching all families with young children are presented, including special tips for reaching those previously unserved.



At training completion (via a survey), participants (Training Cohort *and* library staff members) will:

- Report increased knowledge in Component #4.
- Report increased confidence in:
 - Identifying potential partners/building new partnerships to create/improve the library's early literacy services.
 - Engaging the library's existing partners to create/improve early literacy services.
 - Reaching out to unserved parents/caregivers of young children (through partners, the web, and in-person).
 - Recognizing/addressing differences in the community (cultural, ethnic, economic, educational, and disability).
 - Creating an *Early Literacy Partnership & Outreach Plan* for their library.
 - Explaining the importance of library early literacy programs, partnerships, and outreach to stakeholders.

At 6 months post-training (via a survey), library staff will:

- Report they have completed an *Early Literacy Partnership & Outreach Plan* for their library.

Training
Component

#5

Early Learning Spaces

The last component teaches participants how to create a physical environment in public libraries that encourages play and supports early learning for young children and their families. Ideas and solutions are presented for multiple scenarios, for libraries of all sizes with and without readily available space, staff, and/or resources. Planning, designing, and funding welcoming, flexible spaces, choosing the right materials, and addressing accessibility and ADA compliance are all discussed.

At training completion (via a survey), participants (Training Cohort *and* library staff members) will:

- Report increased knowledge in Component #5.
- Report increased confidence in:
 - Planning and designing welcoming, flexible spaces for families with young children.
 - Making space selections (colors, furnishings, flooring, lighting, activities, toys, books, and other materials) that foster user comfort and encourage children's development and early literacy skills.
 - Making spaces accessible and ADA compliant.
 - Addressing/overcoming potential obstacles, such as a lack of library space, staff, and/or resources.

At 6 months post-training (via a survey), library staff will:

- Report they have completed an *Early Learning Spaces Plan* for their library.



Phase One overlaps with **Phase Two** of the program as the Training Cohort begins training library staff in the five components once they receive training. For example, once Training Cohort members participate in the workshop for Component #1, they proceed with conducting Component #1 training for library staff in their region and provide Training Tool Kit feedback. Through this train-the-trainer approach, the program aims to train 1,200 library staff by mid-2019.

Other activities of Phase Two include offering additional trainings, such as **webinars** to further advance staff expertise across the state, covering supplemental topics such as serving non-English speaking families, building

foundational STEM skills in young children, and fundraising ideas and strategies. **Annual Workshops and Summits** offer additional training for the Training Cohort, and bring the cohort, Advisory Group, and partners together for discussion of the latest early learning research and trends, and collaboration.

TRAINING COHORT RESPONSIBILITIES

Training Cohort members and their commitment to the program are critical to its success. Therefore, all members have the following responsibilities:

- Attend each of the Five Foundation Component sessions designed for the Training Cohort and conducted by experts (or if unavailable, attend component training offered by a Training Cohort member who will also serve as a mentor).
- Conduct library staff training in the components within their library systems or regions as needed, using the State Library-developed tool kits for *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*. With the third component, *Strengthening Young Families through Early Literacy Practices*, the ECRR2 manual should be used to supplement the Training Tool Kit.
- Follow up with library staff trained and mentor as needed.
- Participate in virtual meetings as needed to refine the tool kits and receive early literacy updates.
- Use Basecamp and other technologies to advance the work of the Training Cohort.
- Identify and mentor new Training Cohort members to either take over training at the library system if needed, or to work in collaboration with the current member to offer training for the system.
- Complete all program evaluation requirements and follow up activities.
- Participate in program webinars, and attend Annual Workshops and Summits.

CERTIFICATION

Through the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* program, the State Library offers two levels of certification for Training Cohort members:

- **Level One:** Training Cohort members are recognized as **Certified Trainers for Library Staff** at the completion of each of the Five Foundation Component train-the-trainer workshops. With this certificate, members are ready to conduct component training for public library staff. Also, the hours of professional development can be used, if needed, to meet the requirements for public librarian certification.

- **Level Two:** Training Cohort members can then become **Certified Trainers for Library Staff and the Early Childhood Workforce** in one or more of the Five Foundation Components, available to train public library staff, childcare professionals, and others in need of early literacy training in the community. In order to obtain each component certification, the Training Cohort member must complete the following:
 - Attend the Foundation Component session offered by the State Library for the Training Cohort, and receive the Certificate of Professional Development for that component.
 - Conduct at least two training sessions for library staff for that component, using the State Library-developed Training Tool Kits and evaluation materials.

Or for those Training Cohort members who were unable to attend the Foundation Component session offered by the State Library, as they were unavailable when the training was offered or joined after training was conducted (or in the case of the third component, they were already trained in ECRR2), the following is required:

- Receive Foundation Component training from a Training Cohort member who has already obtained certification as a trainer for that component and will also serve as a mentor (or for the third component, *Strengthening Young Families through Early Literacy Practices*, member participation in ECRR2 training will be accepted).
- Complete a Training Cohort Exit Evaluation for that component and submit to the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Project Director (this form is available from the Project Director).
- Conduct at least two training sessions for library staff for that component, using the State Library-developed Training Tool Kits and evaluation materials (for Level Two Certification).

All Certified Trainers for Library Staff and the Early Childhood Workforce will be listed on the State Library's *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* website, and added to *New York Works for Children*, an integrated professional development system for the early childhood and school age workforce in New York State.

MORE INFORMATION

To learn more, please visit:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/earlylit/index.html>

