

**New York State Library**  
**Family Literacy Library Services Aid Program**  
**2016-2019 Theme: *Ready to Read at New York Libraries***  
***Through Public Library Systems***  
**Final Project Summaries**

**Brooklyn Public Library— Early Literacy Professional Development for BPL Staff (\$70,432)**

Brooklyn Public Library’s (BPL) children’s specialist and public service staff were trained in a comprehensive and intensive program of early literacy professional development to improve services and programming for young children, parents and caregivers. The training incorporated the five components of New York State Library’s “*Ready to Read at New York Libraries: Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program.*” The program focused on improving the skills, knowledge and confidence of children’s specialists, that includes children’s librarians and children’s associates, as well as other public service staff. Through this project, BPL offered 106 training sessions to 661 staff members, developed 371 new partnerships with community groups, and 208 early literacy workshops were held for parents, caregivers, and educators. In addition, 58 early literacy spaces were created. Through these programs, BPL helped children across the borough build critical early literacy skills and foster a love of reading while bolstering the potential for future academic and individual success.

**Buffalo and Erie County Public Library— Ready to Read at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (\$39,441)**

During the project cycle all libraries in the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (BECPL) completed the Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis and an Early Literacy Partnership and Outreach plan. Library staff identified community stakeholders, agencies, and non-profits that work with young children and their families. As a result of the analysis and planning, BECPL has increased partnerships with agencies and individuals devoted to early childhood and parent services from 28 to 63, a 125% increase. Libraries conducted 290 outreach sessions to children in the 0 - 5 age group, representing a 145% increase over three years. Approximately 6,300 books were added to the circulating collection through support from the project. Library staff received training in three components of *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* (Early Literacy Community Asset Analysis, Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach to Families with Young Children, Strengthening Young Families through Early Literacy Practices) with two training sessions completed each year. In three years, BECPL conducted 8,377 Early Literacy Programs, with a total attendance of 365,785, which shows a 13% increase in the number of programs offered and an 11% increase in attendance when compared to the previous three years 2013-2016.

## **Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System— Ready to Read in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties (\$25,356)**

Over the course of this project, Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System (CCLS) conducted eight trainings in the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* - Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program series. Four workshops were presented by professional trainers for the staff of member libraries. One hundred and seventeen staff members representing 25 (66%) of the member libraries attended the trainings and workshops. Twenty-one staff from neighboring library systems and the local learning council also attended the workshops. Eighteen member libraries (47%) made changes to their spaces to be more accommodating to early learning and 184 items were distributed to member libraries to enhance their early learning spaces and resources. Thirteen items were added to the professional collection and 316 items were added to the Storytime circulating collection available for loan to member libraries. Over 96% of workshop attendees indicated that they had increased their knowledge and that they were confident about what they learned and over 95% strongly agreed that the training would improve their library's ability to provide services to the public.

## **Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System— Ready to Read This Summer at CEFLS Member Libraries (\$25,356)**

The goal of this project was to measurably improve the quality of public library early learning services in Clinton, Essex, and Franklin Counties. Twenty-three member libraries used mini-grants to update early literacy collections and provide engaging programs to promote early literacy. Eighteen of the member libraries reported collaboration with 48 unique local organizations and agencies that share the target group of early learners and their families. All locations indicated that the training and support provided by CEFLS led directly to enhanced collaboration with these community organizations. These results illustrate the tremendous impact of the program. This project produced great benefits for young readers at member libraries throughout the CEFLS service area.

## **Finger Lakes Library System— Ready to Read at The Finger Lakes Library System (\$25,356)**

Over the three-year cycle of this project, 82 Finger Lakes Library System (FLLS) member library staff received training in Ready to Read at New York Libraries and 27 libraries used mini grants to implement the foundation training components at their libraries. Member libraries estimated that they signed up more than 450 new parents and young children for library cards as a result of the trainings and mini grants. FLLS also updated early literacy collections and resources, such as the Storytime boxes for library staff which circulated more than 1,300 times during this project period and offered two supplemental workshops: Yoga in Storytimes and Inspiring Sensory Play.

## **Four County Library System— Training & Promoting Every Child Ready to Read (\$25,356)**

During this project, the Four County Library System (4CLS) held six *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* training sessions for member library staff members and trustees with a total attendance of 100 participants. After the trainings, 97% of participants reported that they felt confident in using these skills, and 96%

reported that they were likely to apply what they learned in their work with young families. Member libraries applied for and were awarded sixty-eight awarded mini grants to fund projects related to the principles that they learned in the training sessions through the project cycle. As a result of these projects, libraries reported new connections with other community organizations, and several libraries made changes to their children's areas that make them more welcoming and comfortable for families with young children. Member libraries also shared their plans to continue their early literacy work by fostering new relationships and enhanced their existing programs and services for young children.

### **Mid York Library System — Early Learning Project (\$25,356)**

The Mid York Library System's (MYLS) family literacy project focused on professional development, early literacy resources, and mini grants in smaller libraries. Trainings offered to library staff during this project focused on the importance of play, reading, and family time and encouraged networking and collaboration with local school librarians and nonprofits, promoting local 'ready for kindergarten' initiatives and growing the reputation of the public library as a literacy provider. Due to limited budgets and staff resources, local libraries need the assistance of the System consultants and cooperative services such as shared collections of books, which has reached a collection of 820 titles that rotate between ten of the smallest libraries in the system. Through the three-year cycle, libraries have used mini grants to add items such as LEGOs, low shelving bookcases for easier access, age-appropriate seating, themed family bags, and even a Story Walk.

### **Mid-Hudson Library System — MHLS Family Literacy Mini Grant Program 2016-2019 (\$39,441)**

Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) provided a total of 20 training sessions attended by 207 library staff members. Twenty-two member libraries participated in one of the Early Literacy Cohorts formed by MHLS and received training through the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries- Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program* which helped them update and upgrade their early literacy practices and skills. The first Early Literacy Cohort consisted of 10 member libraries. Over the span of 18 months, these staff members increased the number of early literacy program held at their libraries by 21% and increased attendance at these programs by 24%. The second Early Literacy Cohort consisted of 12 member libraries. Over the course of 18 months, they increased the number of early literacy programs held at their libraries by 10% and increased attendance at these programs by 21%. 100% of the second group said they have benefitted from the program, and 100% of the participants and library directors said that they would recommend the program to others.

### **Mohawk Valley Library System—Ready to Read (\$25,356)**

The Mohawk Valley Library System (MVLS) goals were to strengthen member library staff skills and increase skills of early literacy program presenters who were lacking professional training. The system also sought to enable libraries to connect with parents through content rich emails that encourage early literacy activities and library usage. The main accomplishment of this project is that an Early Literacy Storytime Training program is in place which is updated and offered annually. All but two of MVLS's 22 member libraries and branches have participated in training, with some returning for additional training, and some libraries sending new staff due to local changes. Science, Technology, Engineering,

and Math (STEM) learning for the preschool ages has increased as well, with staff counting on MVLS for early literacy training support.

## **Monroe County Library System— Building a Strong Learning Community (\$39,441)**

The Monroe County Library System (MCLS) offered continual training to seasoned staff and new staff to help member libraries ensure early literacy program offerings are assisting parents and caregivers prepare children to be ready for kindergarten. There were 25 training sessions focused on the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*-Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program that helped staff articulate the value of parental engagement in early learning with parents, caregivers, and teachers. MCLS member libraries were offered a well-rounded series of 25 trainings with 350 attendees that maximized funding. MCLS collaborated with the Pioneer Library System, WXXI, a local PBS station, the Rochester City School District, Action for a Better Community Head Start, and the Rochester Regional Library Council who helped to host nationally recognized experts in the early literacy and learning fields. Six member libraries reported back to the system that 189 programs were held with a total of 9,489 people in attendance. Children’s Librarians were trained in Early Learning Spaces, and Everyone Serves Families with Young Children. Staff serving children in any capacity were invited to the training. In addition, member libraries were offered the Mother Goose on the Loose and Transforming Storytime training. Mother Goose on the Loose is a proven method for planning and presenting programs that focuses on the WHOLE CHILD and incorporates research-based theories of learning, music, puppets, picture books, nursery rhymes, art, play, and language. Participants were given information about baby brain development and school readiness. MCLS collaborated with PBS/WXXI to offer family engagement events through a series of projects relating to PBSKids programs. Participating libraries were also given materials on Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Literacy to use in family programs.

## **Nassau Library System— Ready to Read at NY Libraries Through Public Library Systems (\$39,441)**

During this project, Nassau Library System (NLS) trained 128 member library staff in four of the core components of the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program (Strategies for Successful Partnerships and Outreach to Families with Young Children, Strengthening Young Families through Early Literacy Practices, Early Learning Spaces and Everyone Serves Families with Young Children). NLS worked to bring in nationally recognized early childhood experts to supplement one of the core components of the Program and strengthen and enhance member library’s abilities to offer the best early literacy programs possible and be seen as early literacy experts in their communities. In addition, NLS emphasized the unique opportunity that library staff have to impact the lives of their young patrons and support parents and caregivers by providing programming that teaches them how important they are to their child's healthy brain development and ultimately their child’s ability to start kindergarten ready to learn. In each project year, youth services staff overwhelmingly indicated that they learned something new and were likely to apply what they had learned in the early literacy workshops.

## **The New York Public Library — Early Literacy Program (\$70,432)**

The New York Public Library (NYPL) established enhanced Early Literacy sites at 87 branches in the three boroughs it serves, ensuring that young children have access to free, high-quality learning opportunities in a welcoming and supportive environment. NYPL’s Early Literacy Initiative served approximately 550,000 attendees each year. Meanwhile, NYPL has developed an intensive early literacy training for library staff, *Raising the Bar*, which is now available for free access online at [nypl.teachable.com](http://nypl.teachable.com). Over 150 NYPL staff members have completed this training in early education best practices, building quality as well as the quantity of the Library’s Early Literacy services. NYPL has also created and distributed over 90,000 Early Literacy Kits over the past three years, equipping parents and caregivers with critical resources and best practices to support early literacy at home.

## **Nioga Library System— Library Gift (Generate Imagination in Families Today) (\$25,356)**

The Library G.I.F.T. (Generate Imagination in Families Today) project took a two-tier approach. The first tier was to train library staff in the 5 Foundation Components of *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*-Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program. This allowed Nioga Library System (NLS) member library staff to assess community needs and develop high quality programs to prepare young children in reading readiness. To date, 12 of 21 libraries (57 percent of libraries) have staff that have completed all of the Every Child Ready to Read modules. Training included ways to develop collaborative partnerships with organizations in their community to enhance the impact of these early literacy services. There are currently 74 ongoing partnerships in NLS communities, which grew from seven in the first year of the project. In the last year, four libraries presented their own Early Literacy workshops for parents. In addition to Early Literacy programs, libraries offering special needs programming has increased. The second tier was to help educate families about the five essential activities that promote early literacy: talking, singing, reading, writing, & playing. Many parents were unaware of the fundamental difference that they make in a child’s development. Reaching the correct audience was imperative since families who are uninformed about early literacy don’t visit the library. Sixty-six crates of used books were placed in strategic places in the community where underserved families gather. In addition to the crates, 84 early literacy educational posters were hung, over 5,000 early literacy handouts, 1,050 brand new board books and hundreds of gently used books were shared and distributed throughout the G.I.F.T. crate locations across three counties. These giveaways helped put books in the hands of children who have never owned a book before. All 21 libraries also established a play space in the first year of the project. To date, there have been a total of 339 books and toys added to member library play spaces with funds from the NYS Family Literacy Project.

## **North County Library System— Connecting with Caregivers: Building Early Literacy Skills with Families (\$25,356)**

The North Country Library System (NCLS) goals were to provide member library staff training in the best practices in early literacy, via the five components of *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*, and

create early literacy resources to loan to families and/or youth serving organizations. Over the last three years, member library staff have strengthened their knowledge of early literacy practices by attending *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* classes at the NCLS and have developed their early literacy programs by participating in a series of annual projects. Initially, 11 member libraries received mini grants to improve their early learning spaces, purchasing such items that would create a space for family engagement with child-scaled furniture and educational toys. In the second year, seven libraries received mini grants to hold classes for parents and caregivers using the Every Child Ready to Read curriculum. In the final year, 16 libraries developed loanable kits containing early literacy resources for families to use at home, and two of these libraries have plans to expand the project with their own funds. Eleven trainings were offered by NCLS throughout the four-county service area during the three-year project cycle.

### **Onondaga County Public Library— Get Ready to Read with Onondaga County Public Libraries (\$39,441)**

This Onondaga County Public Library (OCPL) project enabled all 32 libraries in Onondaga County to better serve families with young children. Each library had staff trained in the *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* Early Childhood Public Library Staff Development Program, including the five practices of Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR). The basic modules were augmented with additional training such as a Math & Movement workshop to enhance preschool programming. In addition, each library received a Play and Learn Center with themed toys over the 3-year cycle. These custom Play and Learn Centers allowed for consistent early learning spaces and places of discovery for children ages 0-5 across Onondaga County. Parents, caregivers and families had the opportunity to engage in meaningful play experiences with their children using age-appropriate materials. Approximately 70,000 users interacted with the centers, and 100% of the member libraries reported that having the Play and Learn Centers at their library improved the perception of early learning services at the library. The project also allowed for new ways to reach community members through targeted Outreach projects. The Literacy Coalition of Onondaga County, Early Childhood Alliance, and Imagination Library were vital in collaborating on large scale Early Literacy events such as Tykes Tuesday at Destiny USA, and participation in the annual Syracuse St. Patrick's Day Parade. These events, along with registrations from the Imagination Library, allowed for OCPL to connect with over 20,000 Onondaga County residents. This project also inspired member libraries to focus more on families with young children offering 2,904 ECRR sessions with 42,810 residents in attendance.

### **Pioneer Library System— Building a Strong Learning Community (\$25,356)**

The Building a Strong Learning Community project, while still offering quality early literacy training to all Pioneer Library System (PLS) member libraries, evolved into focusing on the smaller libraries that offered little to no early literacy programs in their community. This focused attention and funding over the three years allowed smaller libraries to grow their early literacy programming and create welcoming spaces for the youngest members of their communities. A mini workshop format and one on one consultations allowed access to training for staff that rarely attend early literacy workshops. The mini workshops were held in smaller, more remote libraries. In these workshops, facilitated discussion of early literacy concepts occurred along with participant creation of Storytime and sensory play resources. In this small group environment attendees became more confident in their expertise and were able to coach one

another. All 32 member libraries provided some form of early literacy programming as a result of the training.

### **Queens Borough Public Library—Ready to Read at New York Libraries (\$70,432)**

Through this project, Queens Borough Public Library (QBPL) was able to significantly deepen its engagement with families with young children. The previous project offered to QBPL staff at forty youth-serving libraries, provided a great introduction to a staff development plan. By shifting to a training model that was child focused and family directed, QBPL increased the effectiveness of its early learning spaces and programming. The staff at QBPL's ten sites with designated Early Learning Spaces explored strategies for engaging families with various elements of the environment to stimulate young children's innate sensory perception, motion, and curiosity. In addition, the staff created a network of additional community partners to rely on as programming expands. Early Childhood trainings were open to QBPL staff at all levels. As a result, the notion that whole library systems are needed to support families with young children is becoming part of the system's institutional culture. The increased attention to QBPL's Toddler Learning Centers (TLC) can be measured, in part, with the evaluation tool that came out of this project. It allowed TLC staff to track caregiver's interactions with young children as the workshops progresses. As a result, QBPL adjusted the times of day when TLC workshops were held, and the order of the topics covered over the six weeks. Evaluation and participant feedback has also facilitated larger changes, such as the introduction of increased play materials that encourage open ended, creative play, and support specific developmental stages.

### **Ramapo-Catskill Library System— Ready to Read at New York Libraries through Public Library Systems (\$39,441)**

The Ramapo-Catskill Library System (RCLS) provided six early literacy workshops for member libraries, with a total attendance of 140 staff, doubling the number of anticipated workshops. Workshops ranged from Every Child Ready to Read trainings, to a workshop on how every library staff person can make an impact on young children. Of the 47 RCLS member libraries, 37 sent a staff person to at least one workshop. Additionally, member libraries were encouraged to create programs and purchase early literacy materials that would benefit their communities through mini grants. As a result of these mini grants and the early literacy workshops, many RCLS member libraries reported that library use of early literacy materials increased, and they were able to identify new library users.

### **Southern Adirondack Library System— Early Literacy Staff Development Project (\$25,356)**

During the Early Literacy Staff Development Project, Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS) held five Early Literacy continuing education workshops with 41 attendees. Workshops included an Eco-Healthy Child workshop presented by the Southern Adirondack Child Care Network; a Bridges Out of Poverty Workshop; and the Whole Book Approach, reading with children presented by the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. SALS also supplemented continuing education by providing Early Literacy educational eBooks through the system eBook lending software. These titles were downloaded a total of 624 times. SALS facilitated two Community Baby Showers with 118 participants and will continue to

facilitate this program. The Community Baby Showers involved a partnership with a Southern Adirondack Library, Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex (WSWHE) BOCES, Women, Infants & Children (WIC), local hospitals and health care providers, and the Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany (NABA). New and expecting parents were invited to attend the program and received gift bags with sensory items such as board books and other items for newborns, raffle baskets with items for families with a newborn. A wide variety of games and activities that focus on early literacy skills were held at the library. In addition, there was also a presentation on the importance of early literacy, cognitive development, and early literacy tips. Eleven libraries were actively promoting and using Beanstack, a web app that encourages reading, delivers weekly early literacy tips and reader's advisory, with roughly 1,716 unique emails delivered to participating families throughout the program. Member libraries also partnered with local pre-schools and other community organizations to promote using the web application to participate in the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative.

### **Southern Tier Library System— Looking Inward, Looking Outward— Becoming a Premiere Resource for Early Literacy (\$25,356)**

Southern Tier Library System's (STLS) project titled "Looking Inward, Looking Outward-Becoming a Premiere Resource for Early Literacy," focused on sustainability of training. Emphasis on key factors to deliver excellent early literacy programs to local communities was integrated into a wide variety of programs and workshops. Storytime practitioners incorporated small ideas, utilized Storytime tools and activities such as song and/or rhythm cubes, scarves, and parachutes to promote and share the basic precepts and foundations of early literacy. As a result of the Statewide initiative, *Ready to Read at New York Libraries*, and the support and activities of "Looking Inward, Looking Outward," library staff, Storytime practitioners, as well as library trustees are increasingly aware of the benefits of talking, singing, reading, writing and playing as the developmental skills necessary for literacy.

### **Suffolk Cooperative Library System— Early Literacy at Suffolk Libraries (\$39,441)**

Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) has greatly expanded its offerings to youth services librarians and staff through professional development opportunities as well as materials made available as giveaways and through the SCLS Lending Library. Throughout these three years SCLS has been able to bring in trainers from various parts of the country that provided workshops on topics including traditional storytime, the science behind early literacy, how to talk to parents about early literacy, and incorporating languages and diversifying storytime. Not only have these workshops helped librarians and library staff increase their knowledge to better serve their library communities and expand and improve programming, but it also supports them in their continued learning. Throughout this project's cycle, SCLS was able to offer eight workshops with a total of 215 library staff members in attendance. Along with introducing librarians to these new skills, SCLS was also able to create a number of kits and provide items that are made available to staff to enhance their programming and implement what they learned at the trainings. With the help of the workshops and circulating items, SCLS was able to not only build on member library staff's already existing early literacy knowledge, but also introduce them to new and exciting topics in the field.

## **Upper Hudson Library System— Ready to Read at New York Libraries Through Public Library Systems (\$39,441)**

The Upper Hudson Library System's (UHLS) goal was to increase and strengthen skills of early literacy program presenters and library staff lacking professional training. Of the 26 libraries participating in the project, 22 boards, totaling 187 trustees, completed early literacy training, and the remaining four will complete after the project concludes. UHLS collaborated with Mohawk Valley Library System (MVLS) by offering a system-wide *Ready to Read at New York Libraries* (RTR) workshop on the last two components: Spaces and Everyone Serves Young Families. Separately, 286 staff from 13 member libraries were trained on how to welcome families with young children, and more early literacy trainings are scheduled. Additionally, 65 Youth Services staff members also benefitted from outside training opportunities. Materials such as books, toys, instruments, felt boards, stickers, bookmarks, as well as digital reading program software were added to collections to help libraries reach caregivers and children.

## **Westchester Library System— Early Literacy Skills and Connections (\$39,441)**

Westchester Library System (WLS) met its goals of increasing professional awareness of early literacy principles and practices and was successful in building knowledge among the staff and parents at early childhood/preschool centers. Professional education included 5 in-person and online trainings that engaged 105 library member staff. Outreach efforts, which included system-led interactive early literacy parent workshops at early childhood/preschool centers, resulted in increased awareness of library services, guided parent visits to host libraries to learn about library programs and resources (both for adults and for children), dedicated family nights, and Saturday family programming. Notably, many of the parents reached were those who neither spoke nor read English and who did not have library experience either as children or adults in their countries of origin. In addition to supporting member libraries through the registration of new library card users, new and stronger relationships were forged with their local community organizations. Sixteen presentations were provided at the Early Childhood Parent Council meetings of Westchester Community Action Program (WestCOP) and Family Services of Westchester (FSW), representing over 30 early childhood/preschool centers throughout Westchester, serving over 1,900 families. Finally, the project prompted WLS to translate several flyers in multiple languages and provided printed materials (e.g., an early literacy songbook), that will continue to be used as part of outreach efforts.