

READY TO LEARN PROVIDENCE

Spring / Summer 2004

INSIDE:

Books and Babies,
page 2

New Library Kits!,
page 2

Tips for Parents to
help prepare their
children for school,
page 3 (English) and
page 4 (Spanish)

Mother Goose at the
Providence Library,
page 5

New Parent Opportu-
nities from Provi-
dence Public Schools,
page 5

May Early Learning
Grants Distributed,
page 6

R2LP Receives AmeriCorps Grant

Ready to Learn Providence been granted a \$405,000 award to begin a 30 member AmeriCorps program! Nicole Boothman Shepard of the RI Service Alliance was delighted to inform us that our application got a perfect score in our national peer review which she reports is “completely unprecedented, unheard of” in her ten years with AmeriCorps. Congratulations to the R2LP committee members who helped formulate the proposal and special thanks to Andrew Bramson who spearheaded the proposal writing for R2LP!

Our plan is to train and strategically place 30 AmeriCorps members in partnering organizations around the city: 10 in neighborhood library branches, 12 in early care and education settings, 5 to support our professional development activities such as HeadsUp! Reading, and 3 to help us coordinate and support integration and collaboration across all of R2LP’s activities. Among other things, members will collaborate with library staff to enhance and promote its programs for young families and to attract more non-English speaking families to the branches, help create a cohesive link between early care

and education providers (with a special emphasis on family child care providers) and their neighborhood libraries and schools, and support the capacity of early care and education providers to engage families and more fully integrate best practices into their programs.

We are working to raise the additional funds we need to make AmeriCorps a reality. While we were awarded the full funding at the Corporation for National and Community Service level, the education award program on which the RI Service Alliance relies to balance out and lower the per member cost was not funded. So our award is reduced to \$372,000. We will work closely with the Service Alliance to determine our start date, the timing of which will depend on the success of our fund raising efforts.

We are confident that the strength of our plan will resonate with funders and that we can work out a way to bring this wonderful new program to Providence. Please spread the good word and share any thoughts, ideas and suggestions you may have as we move forward.

- Joyce Butler, Director

Family Fun Day a Success!

On May 15th, the Parent Engagment Committee's International Community Family Fun Day brought over 300 Providence residents into contact with service providers and resources for early learning. Held at the Juanita Sanchez School Complex, the noon to 4pm event brought parents with their children, and some teenagers came without their parents! A variety of activities including storytime and arts & crafts were held for families at various times throughout the day.

The focus of the event was to provide information for parents about the new RI Early Learning Standards. Hundreds of childrens' books and family activity kits with information about the new ELS were distributed. Many Providence organizations set up booths with information about their programs and activities for children.

- Submitted by Kevin Novell

READY TO LEARN PROVIDENCE

READY TO

LEARN

PROVIDENCE

Ready To Learn Providence
c/o The Providence Plan
56 Pine Street, Suite 3B
Providence, RI 02903
Tel: 401.455.8880
Fax: 401.331.6840



Funding for R2LP is made possible by:

The US Department of Health and Human Services

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation

Hasbro Charitable Trust

Health & Education Leadership for Providence (HELP)

RI Department of Health

United Way of Rhode Island

Books and Babies

Goodnight Moon, *Are You My Mother*, and *Eating the Alphabet* are just three of the books being examined by a group of infant/toddler teachers in a seminar on designing curriculum based upon favorite storybooks being taught by Bobbi Rosenquest, a professor at Wheelock College.

Each month the group gathers at the Genesis Center to share with each other their plans and curriculum activities. Drawn from six centers in the Providence area, members of the seminar bring together years of teaching experience when they review new books and work together in understand just what phonological awareness and knowing the alphabet means to very young children. Each teacher brings a different perspective and a willingness to try new ideas. Out of this mix comes insightful critiques of children's literature, respect for differing opinions on the value of a book reviewed, and new ideas to test over the next weeks.

Members of the seminar have developed innovative ways to bring literature into the everyday curriculum for children who are just learning to talk and who cannot yet distinguish a real apple from a photograph and a picture from the letter A. Every seminar launches a new idea for teachers to take back to their classrooms for the month. Ideas, homemade materials, songs, rhymes, and activities are shared at the next month's session. The first seminar session opened with a plan to create materials and put together an environment that mirrored *Goodnight Moon*. Now each teacher is taking a different book and developing it into a wide-ranging curriculum plan that will surround children with pictures, vocabulary words, and memorable phrases from their favorite characters and illustrations. A final collection of ideas will take place on May 24 when photographs from teachers' classrooms and four months of work were shared with guests.

- Submitted by **Bobbi Rosenquest**

Who We Are

R2LP Governing Board

Stanley Kuziel, Chairman

Leanne Barrett

Blythe Berger

Kathyellen Bullard

Barbara Burgess

Jeanne DiIorio

John Farley

Alexandra Freed-Santos

Paulajo Gaines Mays

Jackie Jackson

Shevaun Keogh Walker

Maryclaire Knight

Aracelis Maria

Pat McGuigan

Reeva Sullivan Murphy

Kathleen Pannhorst

Janet Pettaway

Kim Pettaway

Sandy Rainone

Evelyn St. George

Judy Victor

Gail Washington

Jeffrey Williams

R2LP Staff

Joyce Butler - Director

Marcia Moon -

Education & Evaluation

Judy Victor - Parent

Engagement

Tania Quezada - HeadsUp!

Reading

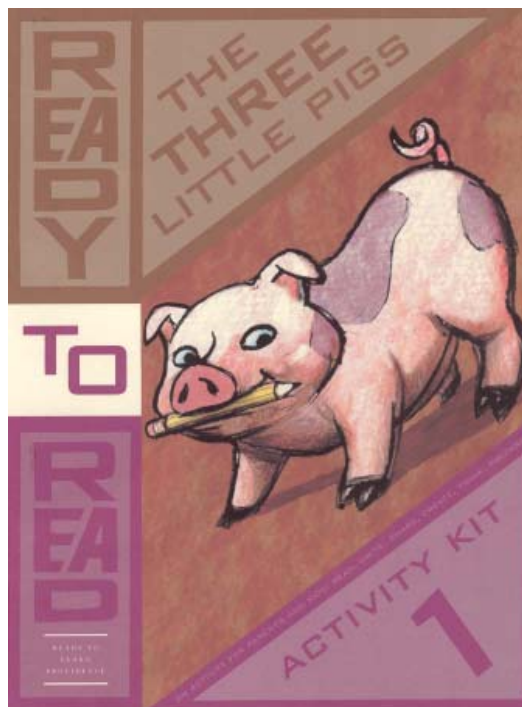
Kevin Novell -

Communications Intern

Katie Murray - Special

Projects (*on maternity leave*)

New Library Kits!



Ready to Learn Providence is introducing a series of literacy building kits for parents and their 4-6 year old children to work on together. Coming soon to each of the 10 Providence Branch Libraries are 10 different Literacy Activity Kits developed by Marcia Moon. The

goal of the kits is to enable parents to share time with their children while reading, writing, and exploring print in 10 themed areas including the alphabet, folk tales, writing, storytelling, vocabulary, conversation, and rhyming (2 will be bilingual.)

The kits correspond to specifically chosen children's books and provide activities to help parents engage their children around the content of the books. 2 to 3 quality books will be read with the children, then parents and children answer the questions in the printed kit. These questions ask children to use other resource books in the library including dictionaries, maps, cookbooks, and books by the same author. Additional quality books are suggested in the kits for more reading. Practical tips for parents are included that explain and extend the literacy and educational focus of the kits.

The graphic design studio *Pop Kitchen* is creating a different animal theme for each kit. 3 kits (with an initial printing of 2,500 each) will be available this summer. Look for them in a library near you!

- Submitted by **Marcia Moon and Kevin Novell**

For Parents and Early Care Providers -

Tips to prepare your child for school success

Kindergarten registration is well under way! And, naturally, many parents have questions about the skills their children will need to do well in school.

While it's likely kindergartners will have greater exposure to letters and writing, being successful in school is about more than learning the A-B-C's. Kindergarten teachers have identified certain social skills such as playing with others, taking turns, and following directions as being good predictors of school success.

Why social skills? There are really 2 main reasons. One is that developing academically begins by trying new things. Children with good self-esteem are more willing to take learning "risks" without fearing failure. Secondly, the classroom is essentially a "group" environment. Children with positive interaction skills are better able to work within a group without getting lost in it.

To help your child with social and emotional growth before she gets to school, there are some activities you can do at home...

- Submitted by *Desiree Manley*

Encourage your child to do things for herself like put toys away, get dressed, and wash up. Developing self-help skills boosts a child's confidence.



Incorporate opportunities for choices into the daily routine. For example, "Do you want to wear the blue shirt or the red shirt?" "Should we read a book or do a puzzle?"



Have conversations at mealtime, or anytime! Did you know that on average preschoolers only have between 5-12 minutes of conversation with a parent each day? The simple act of conversation gives children an opportunity to practice and develop their expressive language skills. It also feels really good to know that you are listening.



Encourage your child to get permission when using the belongings of others. Children will adjust more easily to the group life of school as they are helped to become more considerate and respectful of others.



Read books together everyday and talk about them. As you read the story you might ask "What do you think will happen next?" Later you could ask more open-ended questions such as "What do you think would happen if...?" or "If you were the boy in the story would you...?"



Play games together as often as you can. Try to think of some of the games you played when you were your child's age. Games are wonderful teaching tools because they involve following rules and taking turns - two very important skills for school.



Young children who play with other children adjust more quickly to school life. Have your child play with others by inviting other children to your home or by taking your child to parts and playgrounds.

The bottom line is your child can learn so much just spending time with you. So make time to play, learn, and have fun together this summer.

Para Padres y Proveedores de Cuidados

Consejos para preparar su hijo para el éxito escolar

¡La matriculación del jardín de la infancia está bien encaminada! Y, naturalmente, muchos padres tienen preguntas acerca de las habilidades que sus niños necesitan para hacer bien en la escuela.

Aunque los estudiantes que entran al jardín de niños tendrán más exposición a las letras y escritura, tener éxito en la escuela no sólo depende en saber el alfabeto. Los maestros del jardín de la infancia han identificado ciertas habilidades sociales tales como jugando con otros, tomando turnos, y seguir direcciones como indicadores buenos, del éxito escolar.

¿Por qué habilidades sociales? Hay realmente 2 razones principales. Una es que desarrollarse académicamente empieza con tratar cosas nuevas. Los niños con amor propio están más dispuestos a tomar «riesgos» de aprendizaje sin miedo a fracasar. En segundo lugar, el aula es esencialmente un ambiente de «grupo». Los niños con habilidades positivas de interacción son más capaces de trabajar dentro de un grupo sin perderse en él. Para ayudar a su niño con el crecimiento social y emocional antes de que el llegue a la escuela, hay algunas actividades que usted puede hacer en casa...

- Escrito por Desiree Manley

Aliente a su niño a hacer las cosas por el mismo como, guardar los juguetes, vestirse a si mismo, y bañarse. Las habilidades reveladoras de la autoayuda aumentan la confianza en el niño.



Incorpore las oportunidades de elegir en la rutina diaria. ¿Por ejemplo, «Tu quiere llevar la camisa azul o la camisa roja?» ¿«Quieres leer un libro o hacer un rompecabezas?»



¡Tenga conversaciones durante la hora de comida, o en cualquier momento! ¿Sabía usted que en average los niños preescolares solamente tienen de 5-12 minutos de conversación con un padre diario? El acto sencillo de conversar le da a los niños la oportunidad de practicar y desarrollar sus habilidades de lenguajes expresivos. También se siente muy bien el saber que usted está escuchando.



Aliente a su niño a pedir permiso antes de utilizar las pertenencias de otros.

Los niños se acostumbrarán más fácilmente a la vida en grupo de la escuela mientras ellos son ayudados a ser más considerados y respetuosos de los otros.



Lean libros juntos todos los días y hables sobre ellos. Mientras usted lea la historia, usted puede preguntarle ¿"Que tu crees que pasará después?" Luego podrías hacer preguntas más abiertas tales como ¿«Que crees tú que pasaría si...?» o ¿«Si tu fueras el niño en la historia, que harías...?»



Juegue juegos juntos tan a menudo como pueda. Trate de pensar en algunos juegos que usted jugaba cuando tenía la edad de su niño. Los juegos son instrumentos maravillosos de enseñanza porque ellos implican el seguimiento de las reglas y el tomar turnos - dos habilidades muy importantes para la escuela.



Los niños que juegan con otros niños se ajustan más rápidamente a la vida escolar. Deje que su niño juegue con otros, invite a otros niños a su hogar para que jueguen con su niño o lleve a su niño a partes y campos de juegos.

Finalmente su niño puede aprender tanto tan sólo con pasar tiempo con usted. Así que haga tiempo para jugar, aprender, y divertirse juntos este verano.

Mother Goose at the Providence Public Library

Walking into your neighborhood library, you might find a group of adults acting out nursery rhymes or showing off the touch-and-feel books they made at home with their child.

These activities are part of the *Beginning with Mother Goose* (BMG) program at the Providence Public Library. BMG is a program, developed by the Vermont Center for the Book, that is designed to teach adults how to share books, songs and rhymes with infants and toddlers. This program is a way for the library staff to build on and continue the relationship formed with families through Cradle to Crayons, the library's program for 1-3 year olds and their parents and caregivers. It has also allowed the library to establish and strengthen relationships with Spanish-speaking family child care providers.

This program was made possible by R2LP funding, which paid for the training of library staff last summer and the purchase of the kits around which the program is built. The kits are made up of ten pieces of quality children's literature – including *The Snowy Day*, *I Went Walking*, and *Goodnight Moon* – a parent guide, and a tape of original children's music. The parent guide provides interactive activities related to the books for adults to use with children. Each of the ten libraries in Providence now has ten kits, which will allow the library to continue offering this program into the future.

Smith Hill and Mount Pleasant branch libraries, Knight Memorial Library, Nickerson Community Center and CHisPA (Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy) have all been sites for the BMG program. The program is offered either as one three-hour session or as a one-hour weekly program for three weeks. Providers are given a certificate for three hours of credit when they have completed the session.

Each week of the session, parents go home with activities to do with their children – making a touch-and-feel book, playing with rhyming words, tapping out the syllables of a song. In addition to these activities, the weekly handouts include mini booklists of related books and two pages of rhymes – one in English, one in Spanish – for parents and caregivers to learn and say with their children.

Last fall, when the program was just getting started, I saw firsthand the dedication of a group of Providence providers who attended the program three Friday nights in a row. I had the privilege of attending their final session, where they shared animal puppets for storytelling, sang "Five Little Monkeys," enjoyed celebratory cookies and proudly received their certificates and free books for completing the program. What a great way to start the weekend!

- Submitted by Erica Wilder and Cheryl Space

New Parent Opportunities from Prov. Public Schools

Kindergarten Fair Connects Parents with Community Agencies

The Kindergarten Fair, aiding parents and students find resources they need was recently held on Saturday, February 28, 2004. Approximately 200 adults and over 60 enrolling kindergarteners attended. Various community agencies participated by meeting with families and distributing information regarding child and family well-being, fun educational activities and the importance of literacy and healthcare. The school department conducted Child Outreach screenings and the Rhode Island Department of Education gave information regarding the RI Early Learning Standards and offered family engagement packets in Spanish and English that gave concrete and fun activities for families that will help young children become ready for kindergarten. R2LP provided maps of the

city showing the location of schools that have kindergarten classrooms to assist families as they prepared for Open Schools Week.

Parents Tour Elementary Schools to Find Right One for Child

All elementary schools in the city were open for tours for parents from March 1st – 3rd. Open Elementary Schools Week was held from and was planned by the Transition to Kindergarten Advisory Team. The activities sponsored by the T2KAT were more successful than we had hoped and planning is well underway for making improvements for next year. More transition activities are being planned for this spring and summer!

- Submitted by Paulajo Gaines Mays

As a childcare provider, do you wonder what is typical in a young child's emotional and social development and behavior? The Foundations for Learning program at The Providence Center Early Childhood Institute has developed a brochure called Early Alerts for Childcare Providers. It is designed to help childcare providers identify behavior in infants, toddlers and preschool children that may indicate the beginning of social-emotional problems. It also gives suggestions for talking to parents about their child's behavior. It will be available in Spanish by September 2004.

For more information about the Early Childhood Institute visit:
For information about the Foundations for Learning program:

<http://providencecenter.org/earlychild-serv-.htm>
<http://providencecenter.org/PDF%20files/FFLspan.pdf> (en Espanol) or
<http://providencecenter.org/earlychild-ffl.htm> (in English)

May Early Learning Grants Distributed

Met with smiling faces and excited hands, the resources for the May round of Early Learning Grants were picked up from the Central Branch of the Providence Public Library during the week on July 7th. Over \$25,000 worth of books, puzzles, and teaching resources were granted in the May cycle to 15 center and family childcare providers to help providers and center teachers access professional training and conferences, help children in their care be more successful in learning, support children to be more successful when they transition to kindergarten, and help the parents of children being served. The Providence Public Library is a partner in housing the grant packages for pick-up.

Of the 15 providers receiving grants in the May, 8 were in the neighborhoods Ready to Learn Providence has identified as focus areas, 4 were graduates of the HeadsUp! Reading education program, and 2 submitted applications in Spanish. There were 31 grant applications. The grants were awarded by 5 reviewers, all members of the R2LP educational community. The grant packages came in a variety of modules, tailored to providers teaching specific needs. Packages were literacy, science, or professional development themed. All packages included quality educational props and book collections, some in pairs of English / Spanish to better facilitate bilingual learning. As part of the science packages, the Audubon

Society of RI is partnering and providing a "city science" Saturday training in June for providers and teachers. 3 Nature Kits will be developed by the Audubon Society and housed at the Providence Public Library for borrowing by center and family childcare providers.

At the end of August, a 1-page report of how the grant materials have been used by providers and teachers will be made available from Ready to Learn Providence.

- Submitted by *Marcia Moon and Kevin Novell*



Omaris Maria-Hernandez and her nephew pick up her science grant package.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Providence, RI
Permit #02490

**READY
TO
LEARN
PROVIDENCE**

READY TO
LEARN
PROVIDENCE

Ready To Learn Providence
c/o The Providence Plan
56 Pine Street, Suite 3B
Providence, RI 02903
Tel: 401.455.8880
Fax: 401.331.6840

SAVE THE DATE

Upcoming R2LP Local Council Meeting - September 29, 2004
1:00pm - 5:00pm at the Silver Lake Community Center