



LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS
LITERACY AWARDS
2015

BEST PRACTICES



The Best Practices publication and related programming, such as symposia and webcasts, have emerged as core components of the Library of Congress Literacy Awards Program.

Highlighting both research-validated practices and concrete implementations of these practices demonstrates how literacy promotion groups have successfully applied theory in a real-world context. These solutions provide a model for organizations seeking to create programs that use evidence-based practice to promote literacy.

Five practices are presented here. Each is illustrated by profiles of two or three organizations that have successfully used the practice to enhance and focus their literacy promotion activities. The five practices are: working with government policymakers; creating a community of literacy; selecting appropriate language of instruction; literacy in service of social goals; and providing access to readers with physical disabilities. They were selected in consultation with the Literacy Awards Advisory Board to reflect methods of addressing a range of factors that lead to low literacy, from a need for national advocacy to a lack of qualified instructors.

The 14 organizations profiled here are effectively applying these practices, often in new and creative ways. They are examples of how a program can successfully use evidence-based practice to enhance the promotion of literacy and reading.



CREATING A COMMUNITY OF LITERACY

If learners view literacy programming and reading as inaccessible or limited to a certain class or group they will not be motivated learn to read or to continue reading. Therefore, it is important for communities to demonstrate that literacy and love of reading are experiences that all members can share. This inclusiveness is the key to creating a community of literacy.

One way to include everyone in a community of literacy is to place books and other literacy promotion materials in places that many people already frequent. These could include doctors' offices or clinics, grocery stores and community centers. Public awareness campaigns can also increase interest in literacy throughout the community.

Recruiting community members as literacy promoters can create a grassroots movement in support of reading. Each individual is then in charge of encouraging friends and neighbors to read. This type of strategy allows community members to be in charge of the dissemination of reading and literacy promotion materials where they believe the materials will be most useful. This is a type of community-driven development, which holds that local communities are the best judges of their own needs.¹



Targeted outreach can also be a tool for creating a community of literacy. When using targeted outreach, organizations identify which groups are accessing services at lower rates and devote resources to connecting with members of those groups.² This can include both promoting existing programs and services and creating services that better meet the needs of the underrepresented groups.



INCLUSIVENESS IS THE KEY TO CREATING A COMMUNITY OF LITERACY



FAMILY READING PARTNERSHIP

LOCATION:
Ithaca, NY

SERVICE AREA:
Tompkins County, NY

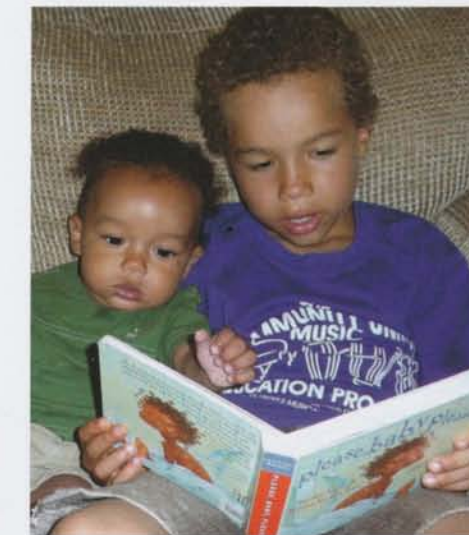
POPULATION SERVED:
Children ages 0-5

SCOPE:
30,000 books
donated/year

FOUNDED:
1997

FAMILY READING PARTNERSHIP

Family Reading Partnership works to create a culture of reading to support early literacy for children ages 0 to 5. It provides a range of family literacy initiatives designed to demonstrate the intrinsic importance of reading every day and to support families as they do this. Twelve separate projects target parents and children at different stages of development and in different circumstances.



children a book when they register for kindergarten to welcome them to the next stage of education. Give the Gift of Family Reading provides low-income parents with books to give their children as presents. These and other projects seek to help families incorporate a love of books and reading into each part of their lives.

Many of these projects work to provide diverse, age-appropriate books to all children in Tompkins County, New York, from before their birth until they are ready for kindergarten. Books Before Birth provides expectant parents at prenatal visits with a children's book as well as an adult book on the importance of literacy. Welcome to School gives



Family Reading Partnership also sponsors outreach initiatives for the whole community. One of these places twelve-foot-high banners on the sides of buildings around the city. The banners feature illustrations of shared reading and the message "Read to Me! Any Time, Any Place."

