



Literacy Roundtable

Family Literacy Day Toolkit

A Guide to Celebrating Family Literacy in North Carolina Libraries

2010

September 2010

November 1 is National Family Literacy Day. Celebrated across the U.S. since 1994, this annual event provides an occasion for libraries to put a public spotlight on activities that promote learning experiences for children and their families.

Librarians understand that parents who read to their children everyday and talk about what they are reading together promote a joy of reading and life-long literacy achievement. It is for this reason the North Carolina Library Association Literacy Roundtable is making Family Literacy Day one of its top priorities for the coming years. Our goal is to have celebrations in libraries across the state on **November 1, 2011**. We are seeking a proclamation from the Governor, developing a publicity campaign, and sharing this toolkit to help librarians plan events for their communities.

We hope that every public library in North Carolina will be involved in some way. Your library's Family Literacy Day event can be as simple as handing out bookmarks that promote family literacy or as ambitious as assembling a coalition of local providers (e.g., HeadStart, the school system) to organize the event. We encourage you to conduct a meeting on this November 1 to plan for the 2011 North Carolina Family Literacy Day observance.

We hope you will find this year's web-based Family Literacy Day toolkit helpful as you begin the planning process. If your library commemorates Family Literacy Day with a planning initiative or program, please inform Donna Phillips, Roundtable Executive Board member, at donna.phillips@waynegov.com. We would like to report your activity on our website.

Thank you for joining us as we proclaim the message that North Carolina libraries are champions of literacy for all ages.

Sincerely,

NCLA Literacy Roundtable Executive Board

Pauletta Brown Bracy, North Carolina Central University, Chair
Jeanne Fox, H. Leslie Perry Memorial Library, Vance County
Betty Mehan-Black, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries
Donna Phillips, Wayne County Public Library
Steve Sumerford, Greensboro Public Library
and
Keith Burkhead, Guilford Technical Community College

Sample Family Literacy Activities

Book Swaps

Book swaps are a good activity to combine with library reading programs. Families are asked to bring gently used books that their children have outgrown or are willing to swap to the library. After participating in a library story program, families are allowed to swap books with other families.

Scavenger Hunt

Plan a scavenger hunt at the library. Place clues around the library and have children look up information in books. This activity gives families an opportunity to help their children learn to use library resources to locate information.

Reading a Recipe

This activity can be an opportunity for parents and children to create a snack by reading and following directions from a recipe. Children will learn measurements and how to follow sequenced directions. A variation of this activity is to provide families with a recipe for making modeling clay.

Poster Contest

Organize a poster contest with themes like “What I Learned from Reading” or “Why I Like Reading” Give books away as contest prizes.

Hosting a Story Chain Event

On a large roll of paper, write “Once upon a time” invite each child or family to contribute one sentence to the story. After the story is completed, read it aloud.

Organized Parent Workshops

Organize and host parent workshops on how to help your children with reading and writing. Develop a catchy theme such as “Doughnuts for Dads” or “Pastries for Parents” to draw participants.

Library Pajama Party

Have a family pajama party at the library. Encourage everyone to wear their pajamas for a session of stories, games, and snacks.

Creating a Reading Journal

To create a reading journal, parents and children work together to create a reading log. The blank pages of the book can be filled with pictures of the child’s favorite part of the story or descriptions and feelings about the story.

Reader’s Theater

This inexpensive activity gets families to read together. Choose a prepared script or choose a book from which to develop a script. Identify all the characters and break the story into dialogue. Assign parts or have participants choose their roles themselves. Allow time for

participants to rehearse their lines. The cast reads the play aloud to an audience, often made up of parents or younger siblings.

Traveling Books

Traveling books are a great way to generate interest in your community. These books are written as a group. Have each parent and child contribute one page on a particular topic. After the books are compiled, distribute them throughout the community in places such as pediatric waiting rooms, dentist offices, beauty parlors, and other local businesses. Residents can read and write a response on a comment page.

Stuffed Animal Adventure Journals

You will need a reading bag, a stuffed animal, and a journal for this activity. After hosting an animal-themed story program, send each child home with a reading bag that contains a stuffed animal and a journal. Encourage the child and his/her family to record the animal friend's adventures. Come back together in a week or two to share these recorded adventures.

Memory Box

Encourage family members to collect objects in a box that hold special meanings for them. Some examples are family letters, a button from an old dress, or Grandma's locket. Encourage family members to share oral stories with their children about the objects in the memory box. This activity is a wonderful way to celebrate the tradition of oral storytelling. This could also be a good activity to do prior to a story telling festival.

Reading Coupon

Reading aloud is a gift children can give as well as receive. A coupon for Grandpa, designed and decorated by the child, might contain a message such as, "I will read to you for fifteen minutes so that you can rest your eyes." Supply children with paper, scissors, and an assortment of markers to make a coupon book for a loved one.

Reading Passport

Using craft supplies, family children create a passport booklet. Each time the children read a book, they write the title, author, and setting on a page in the passport. After sharing what they read, a family member stamps the passport, validating travel to this location.

Scrapbooks

Encourage families to create a scrapbook of materials they collected during a family trip. Items might include a map, brochures, photos, or other memorabilia. Encourage the family to write a story together about these adventures.

Sculpturades

Teams of children or families are given modeling clay and strips of paper that list book titles. Teams are given a specified amount of time to sculpt an object that will lead others to guess the book's title.

Easy Things You Can Do to Celebrate Family Literacy Day

1. Champion children's librarians.
2. Get the local paper to write editorials.
3. Use *Facebook* and *Twitter* to promote it.
4. Have someone from the library appear on local radio stations.
5. Have a campaign to collect gently used books to distribute to homes that have few books.
6. Collect family literacy success stories from local agencies and publicize them as part of the National Family Literacy (NFL) Day celebration.
7. Put something about literacy in bulletins of various faith communities.
8. Encourage people to volunteer to read in children's wing of a hospital.

Working Together: Partners and Coalitions

In every North Carolina community, there are partners who can help you plan for your 2011 Family Literacy Day event. Identifying those partners and inviting them to help you plan your project or event is the first step in designing a successful Family Literacy Day observance for your community.

Here are some examples of organizations that are involved in family literacy activities:

- Partnership for Children (<http://www.smartstart-nc.org/>)
- HeadStart
- Even Start Family Literacy Programs
- Local Reading Specialists
- Child Development Centers
- Community Colleges
- Local Schools
- Adult literacy/GED Providers.

On November 1, 2010, we encourage you to invite these and other appropriate partners to a planning meeting. One of the agenda items at this meeting could be to brainstorm an even larger planning group. In some communities, the following partners might also be interested:

- Health department
- Social services

- Pediatricians
- Churches and other faith groups
- Local newspapers
- Colleges and universities (especially service-learning programs, early childhood development and education departments).

What type of partnership works best?

Here are some questions to think about whenever you form a partnership:

1. Is this the library's project or does it belong to a coalition of groups?
2. How will decisions be made by the group?
3. How can the project bring benefit to every partner that participates?
4. Does the planning team represent the diversity of our community?

Other tips on building a sustaining a coalition can be found at The Community Toolbox:
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/dothework/tools_tk_content_page_71.aspx

Planning Guidelines

Step 1: Preliminary Planning

This assessment activity can be used by your planning committee in its initial planning of your library's Family Literacy Day activities and events.

Needs Assessment

How can our library assist families as they seek to support their children's literacy development?

- How do we know what kind of support families need and want?
- Have we found a reliable way to survey parents?
- Have we brainstormed with community partners?

Target Audience

Whom do we hope to reach with our Family Literacy Day Events?

- Families with children of specific ages?
- Families whose first language is other than English?
- Specific families (parents of HeadStart children, parents of children enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes)?

Goal Setting

What outcomes do we hope to achieve by offering this program?

- To increase the amount of time parents spend reading to their children?
- To model for parents how to have meaningful literacy interactions with their children?
- To provide parents with access to information that will support their children's literacy development?
- To provide parents and children with entertaining library programming that will foster a love of reading?

Identifying Community Resources

What other organizations exist in our community that we can partner with on this event?

- Partnership for Children
- HeadStart
- Even Start Family Literacy Programs
- Local Reading Specialists
- Child Development Centers
- Community College
- Local Schools

Step 2: Event Planning

Your planning committee can use this activity to plan an event for your library's observance of Family Literacy Day.

Planning Meeting

Who should be involved in planning and what tasks should be accomplished?

- Invite librarians and other interested community partners to the planning meeting(s).
- Establish program goals.
- Clarify who the target audience.
- Discuss programming ideas.
- Generate list of resources.
- Delegate tasks to be accomplished and set deadlines.
- Schedule additional meetings as needed.

Determine the Event

Develop a theme or marketing message to encourage event participation.

- Will the event showcase the importance of family literacy?
- How many activities will you offer?
- Does this event respond to community interests?
- Have families and community partners been involved in planning for the event?

Logistical Details

What needs to occur before the event?

- Schedule of dates and times.
- Agenda established for the event.
- Space/facility reserved.
- Presenters contacted.
- Promotional materials compiled and distributed.
- Refreshments planned.
- Volunteers recruited
- Press invited.

Responsibilities Assigned

Who will be responsible for the following tasks?

- Create and distribute flyers.
- Ensure cultural inclusiveness in marketing/promotional materials.
- Translate materials as needed in appropriate languages.
- Plan the distribution of materials.
- Assign someone to prepare press releases.
- Identify someone to lead the activities.
- Assign persons to greet and sign in participants.
- Identify supplies and contributions needed.
- Confirm the location of the event.
- Assign the set-up and clean-up crews.
- Ensure that special needs are accommodated.
- Identify any special equipment needed and persons responsible for acquiring it.
- Plan the distribution and collection of surveys from participating families?

Step 3: Evaluation

This tool can be used by your planning committee to evaluate your family literacy event.

Event Evaluation

Determine how you will measure the event's success.

- What method will you use to survey participants?
- Who will design the survey, how will it be collected, and how will the results be compiled?
- How will the survey results be reported?
- Will the planning committee reconvene after the event to review the outcomes?
- How will partners be recognized for their support?