Supporting Parents in Early Literacy through Libraries (SPELL): An Assessment of a Multi-Site Public Library Project

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Why SPELL?

Joan

Emily

Every CHILD Ready to READ @ your library

Home Details About Community Project History Order Now

Read.Learn.Grow.

The updated and expanded 2nd edition of Every Child Ready To Read incorporates simple practices, based on research, to help parents and other caregivers develop early literacy skills in children from birth to age five.

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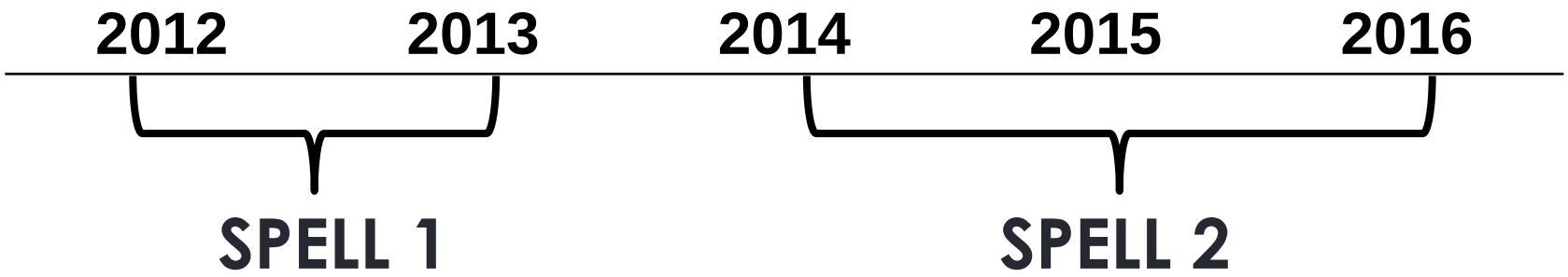
Supporting Parents in Early Literacy Through Libraries (SPELL) Project Goals

- Research & test promising practices to support low-income parents of children birth through 3
- Provide knowledge & resources to encourage parents to make early literacy activities a daily habit

SPELL Timeline



Background research to develop blueprint

Test blueprint in 8 public libraries

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

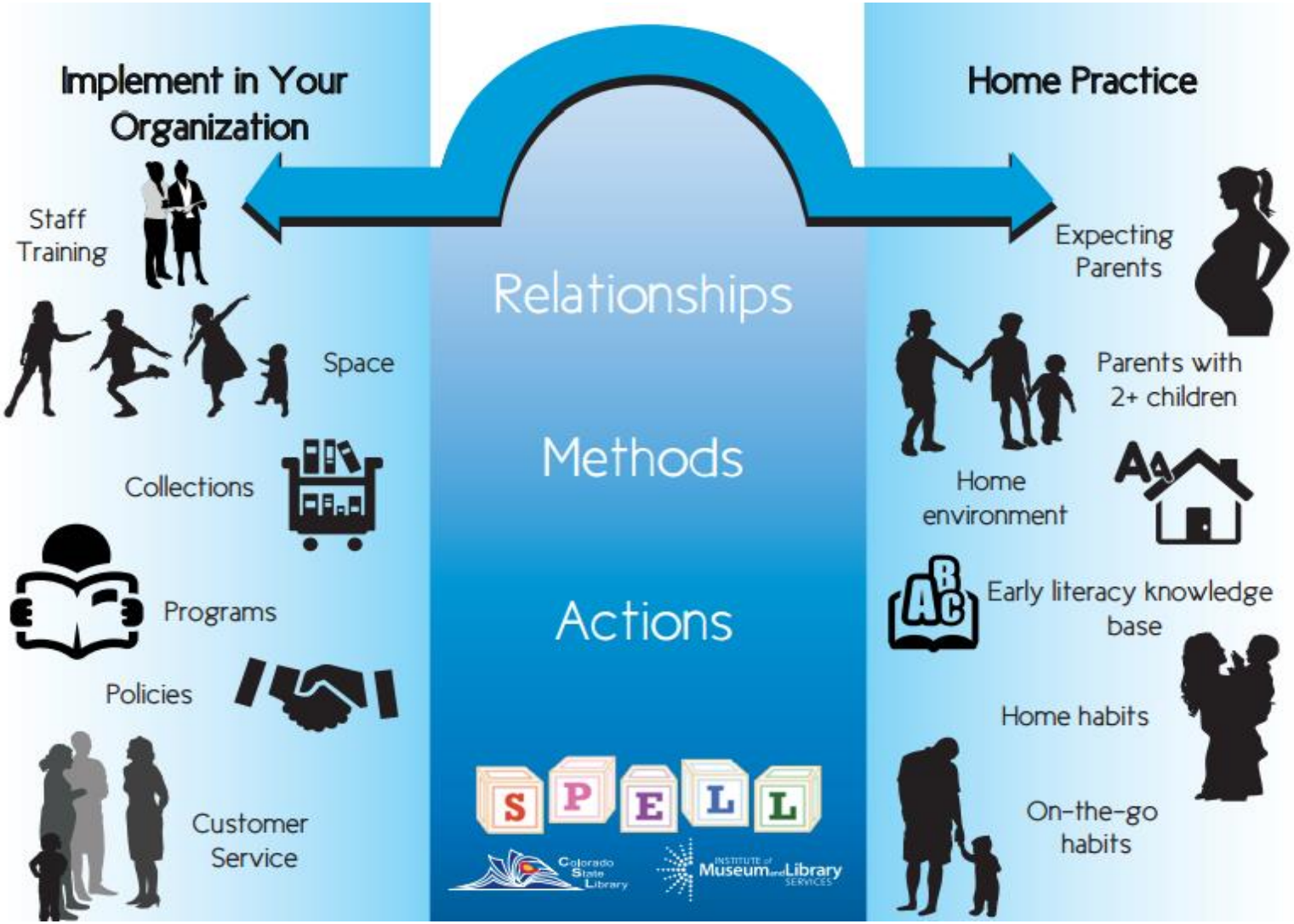
SPELL 1 (2012-2013)

Literature review

Environmental scan

Parent surveys

Parent focus groups


Implement in Your Organization
Staff Training
Space
Collections
Programs
Policies
Customer Service
Relationships
Methods
Actions
SPELL
Colorado State Library
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Home Practice
Expecting Parents
Parents with 2+ children
Home environment
Early literacy knowledge base
Home habits
On-the-go habits

Research Recommendations

Partner, partner, partner

Work through existing infrastructures of organizations that support low-income families and young children

Putting SPELL Into Action (SPELL 2), 2014-2016

- 8 Colorado public libraries/partner organizations developed and tested prototypes

- Libraries selected based on demographics, geography

Cortez Public Library

CuddleUppets, Books, & Community

Denver Public Library

Working with Migrant Families

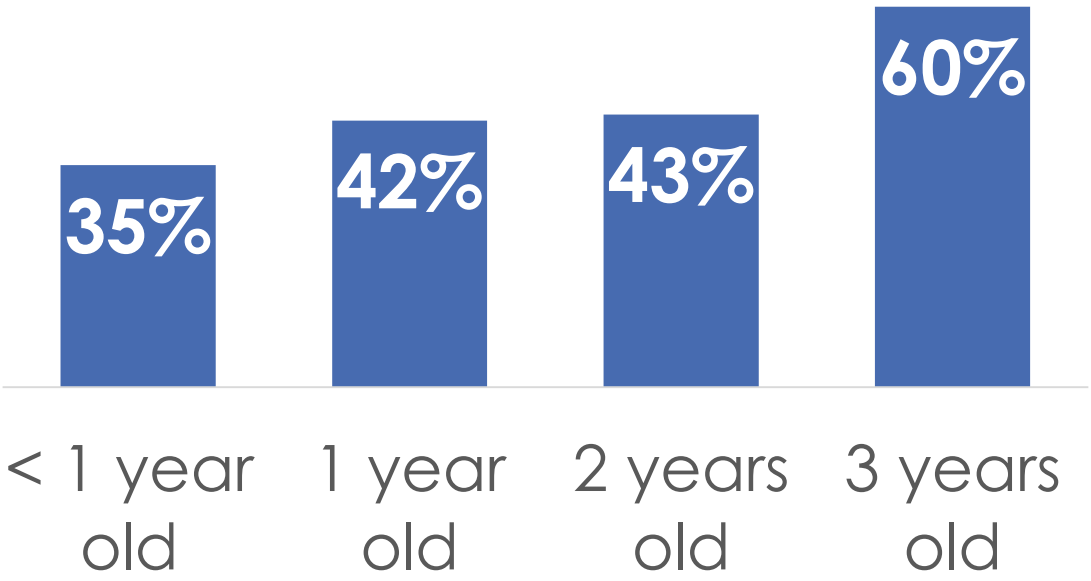
Montrose Regional Library District

Driving the Library to Families

Methodology

Monthly statistics	Parent surveys	Case studies
• Purchases • Programs • Attendance	• One-time event • Pre/post	• Observation • Interviews

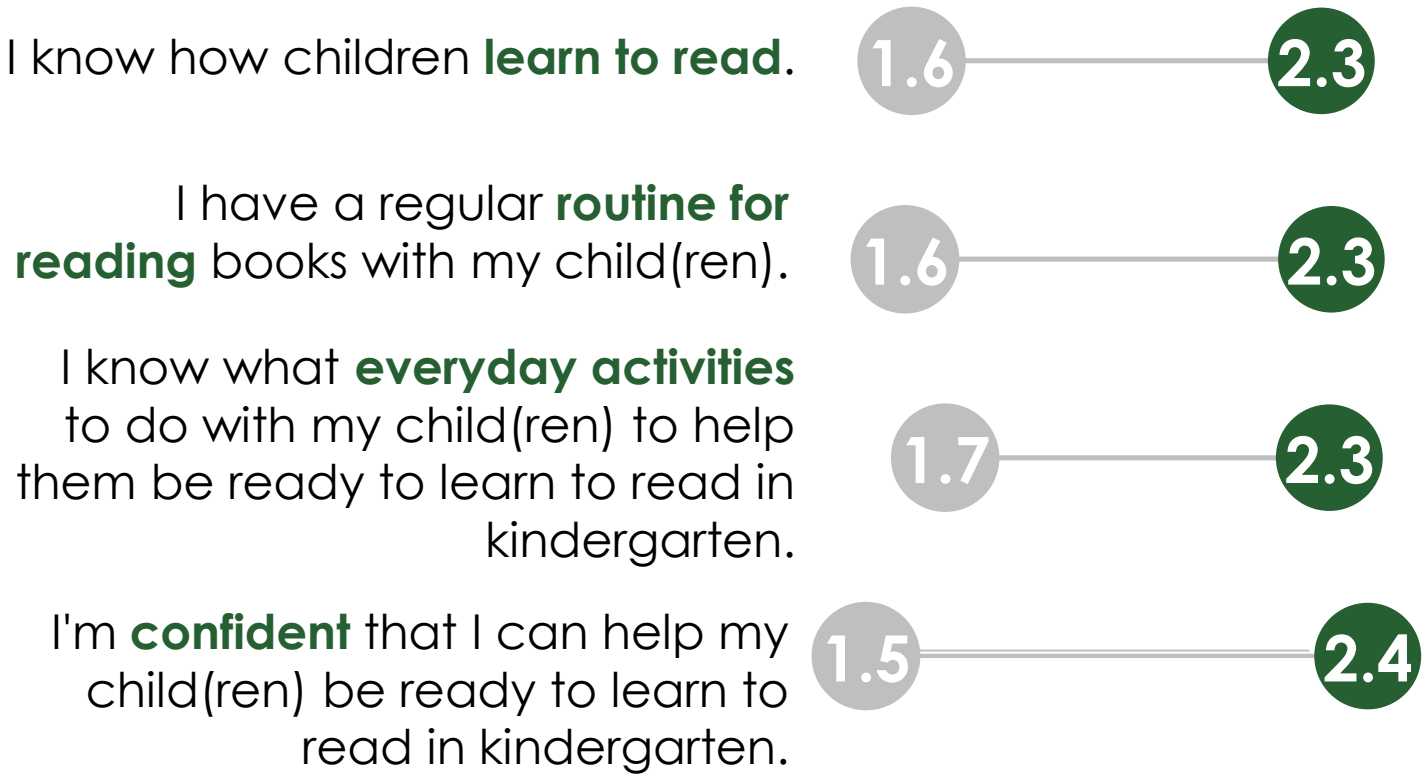
Parent survey sample



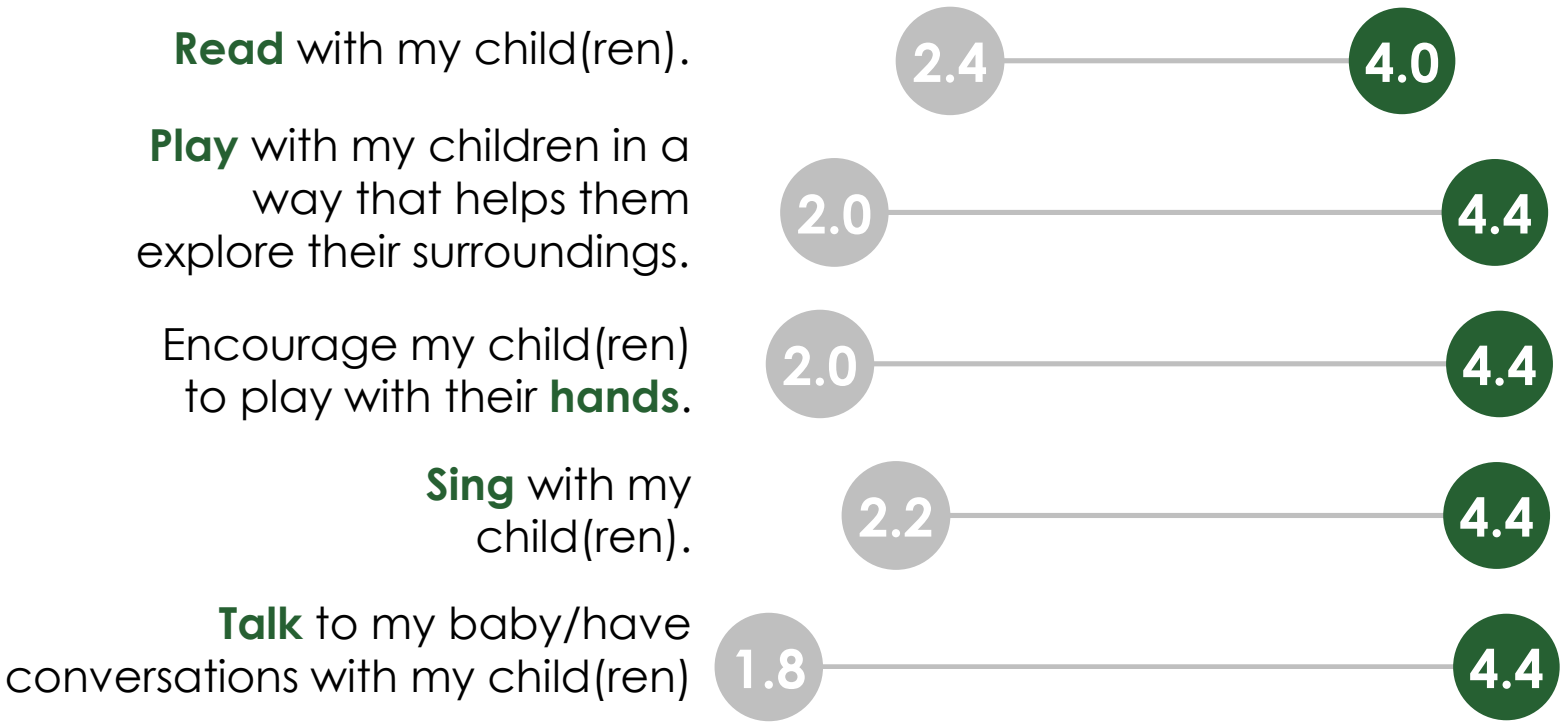
- **181** pre-program survey respondents
- **102** post-program survey respondents
- **283** total caregivers

Impact on families

From pre to post survey, parents reported significantly higher levels of agreement with the following (1=disagree, 3=agree):



From pre to **post** survey, parents reported doing the following more often (1=never, 6=several times per day):



Parent Comments

This class has given me lots of great ideas for play & learning w/ my child. I have a better understanding of how she is learning.

At home we implement the same strategy with my children, same as you did. They learn much more rapidly!

I'm pretty sure this is why my child loves books.

Sharing Results

Driving the Library to Families: How Montrose Regional Library District is Supporting Parents in Early Literacy

S P E L L

The SPELL blueprint (s.lrs.org/blueprint) was created to assist library staff in their effort to support caregivers in practicing early literacy techniques with their children. In November 2014, eight libraries in Colorado were selected to implement the blueprint in their communities. Each library created a programming prototype that guided the library in collaborating with community partners, and providing outreach to low income and high need communities. One of the SPELL libraries was Montrose Regional Library District, located on Colorado's Western Slope. Read on to learn about its prototype.

Community Profile - Montrose County, Colorado

Population: 40,946
Racial Makeup: 76% White, 21% Latino/a, 2% Two or More Races
K-12 % Minority: 42%
Median Income: $33,750
% Below Poverty Line: 15%

Partner

Montrose Early Childhood Center: A Head Start early childhood preschool center serving 230 preschoolers.

Prototype

Weekly bookmobile visits to the Montrose Early Childhood Center during parent pickup.

Elimination of fines on children's materials checked out on the bookmobile.

Early literacy round table discussions with childcare center teachers.

Parent Literacy Nights at childcare center that included early literacy trainings and demonstrations.

A non-native English speaking father came onto the bookmobile with his three-year-old son. Although his wife generally brings his son on Tuesdays, this week he was doing pickup and had never been to the bookmobile. He signed up for his very first library card and has become a library user - getting books for his young son as well as himself.

-Children's Librarian

At home we implement the same strategy with my children, same as you did. They learn much more rapidly.

– Parent

Project Resources

Funding: $23,789 (50% federal grant, 50% Montrose Regional Library District)

Purchases included:

- Bookmobile maintenance costs
- 729 children's books
- 175 parent books
- 345 manipulatives
- Program materials (computer, prizes, puppets, etc.)
- 1,590 early literacy games
- 1,550 promotional materials
- 780 informational materials

Activities

42 bookmobile visits

870 caregivers and 1,749 children visited the bookmobile

2 early literacy events for parents

2 roundtable meetings with preschool

144+ new library cards

95 onsite and 45 offsite parent consultations on early literacy

Outcomes

After participating in SPELL,

- 4 in 5 parent survey respondents have a regular routine for reading books,
- 7 in 10 parent survey respondents are more confident helping their child(ren) be ready to read in kindergarten, and
- 3 in 5 parent survey respondents read to their child(ren) daily.

More details about this prototype are available at spellproject.weebly.com/research.

This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

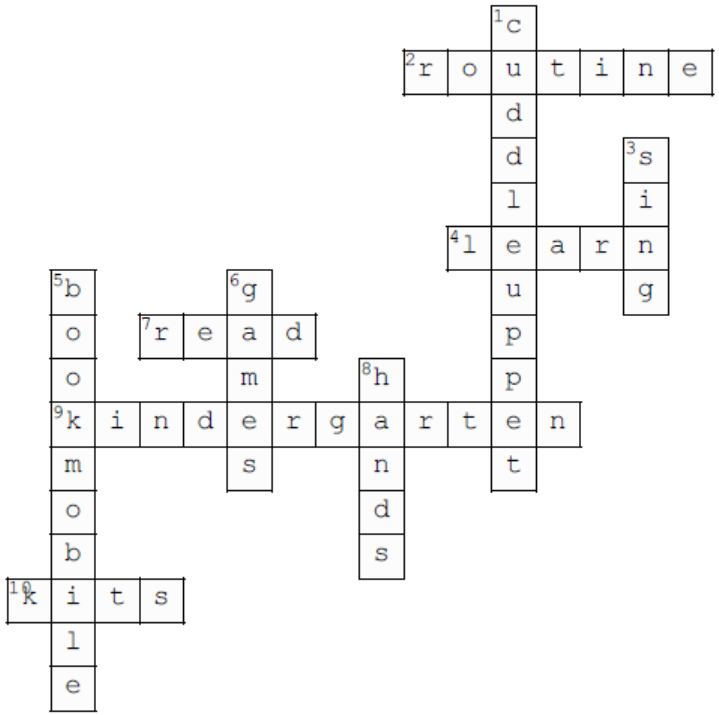
LRS

COLORADO Department of Education

SPELL

What was the impact of SPELL?

Complete the crossword below

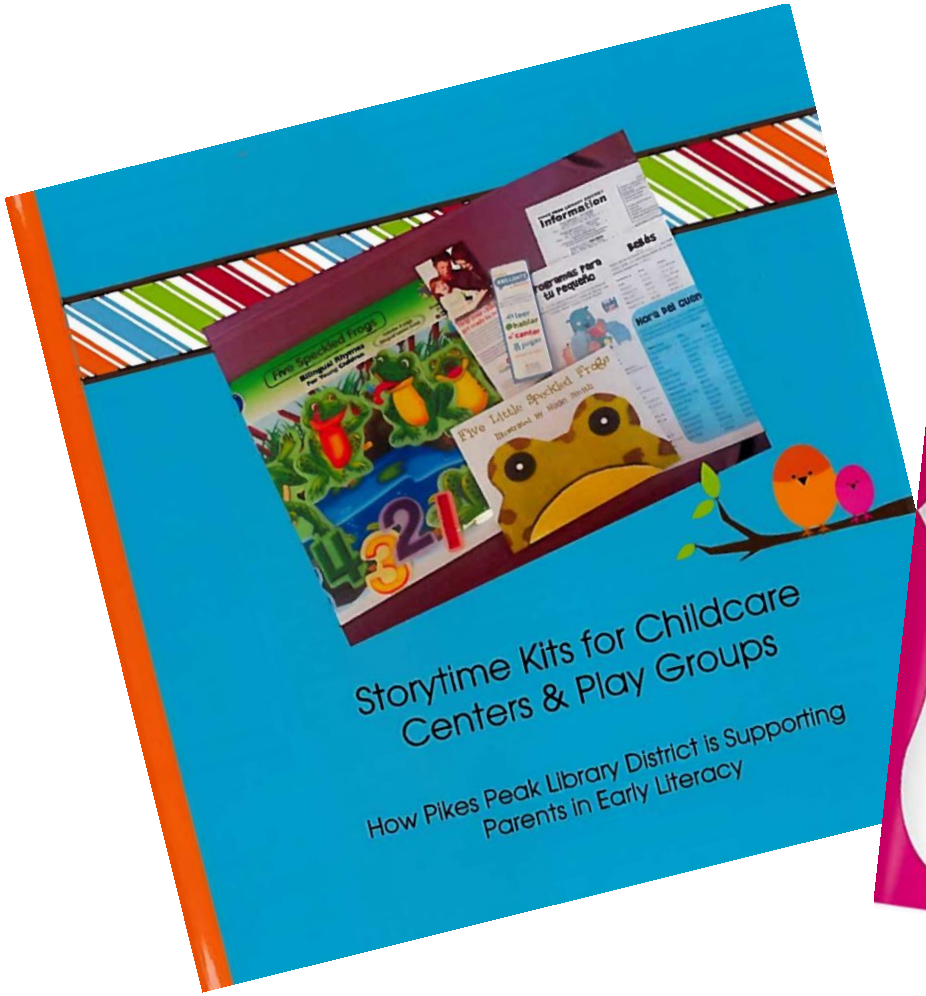


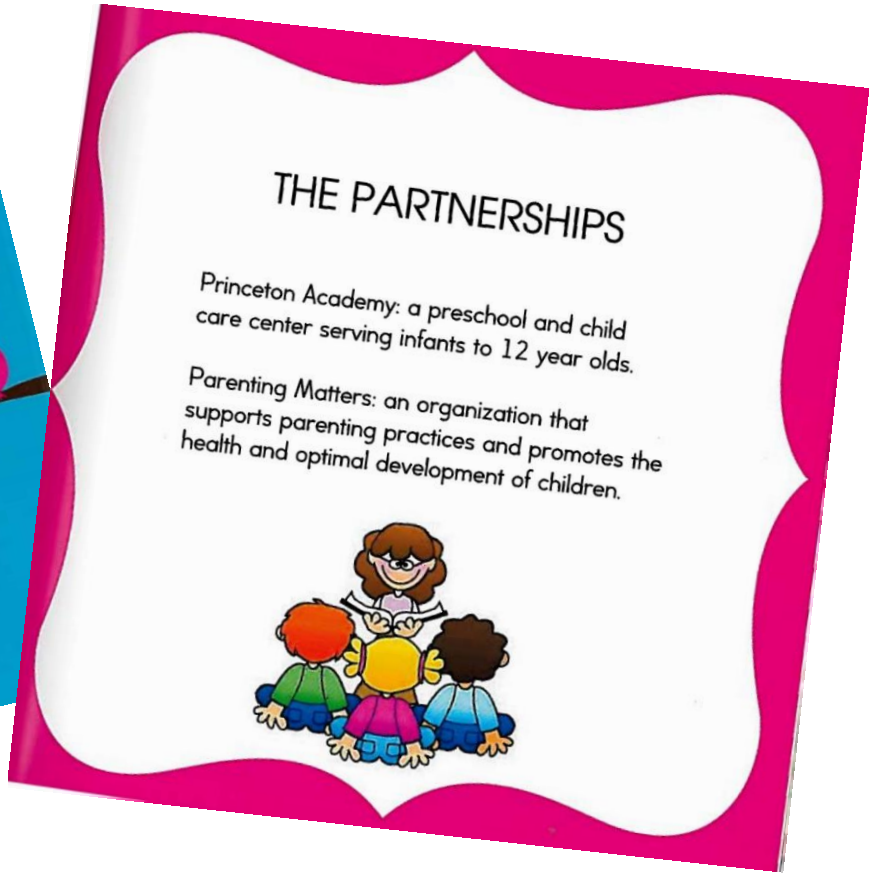
Across

2. Parents have a regular reading… (**routine**)
4. 95% of parents agree the library is a place they can come to do this with their children. (**learn**)
7. Parents know how children learn to… (**read**)
9. Parents are confident they can help their children learn to read by… (**kindergarten**)
10. In a 6-month period, one library had 72 checkouts of early literacy… (**kits**)

Down

1. This item, which one library gave to 240 families, helps families remember to read. (**cuddleuppet**)
3. Parents do this with their children more often. (**sing**)
5. One library made 42 visits with this to reach parents at the early childhood center. (**bookmobile**)
6. 2,032 of these were purchased. (**games**)
8. Parents more often encourage their children to play with their… (**hands**)





THE PARTNERSHIPS

Princeton Academy: a preschool and child care center serving infants to 12 year olds.

Parenting Matters: an organization that supports parenting practices and promotes the health and optimal development of children.

SPELL: Supporting Parents in Early Literacy Through Libraries

TIPS AND TOOLS FOR EARLY LITERACY PROGRAMMING TARGETING LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Worksheet for Evaluating Your Collection

Take some time to think about your current collection of materials for families with children birth through three.

Is your collection fresh and inviting or in need of some new material? Are toys clean and attractive? Are books in good condition?

Do you have books in languages spoken by your customers? Do your manipulatives reflect your community (toys, dolls, cultural characters)?

Do you have wordless picture books?

Will you provide literacy kits?

What will be the purpose of your kits?
(Events? Parent checkout? School or child care checkout? Partner checkout?)

How many different kits do you want or need? (Consider your storage space!)

What will you store them in? Plastic bins? Large boxes? Book bags?

Challenges and limitations

- Coordination and buy-in across multiple sites
- Survey length
- Cultural distrust of surveys
- Prototype comparisons

Next Steps

- Prototype sustainability
- Buell Foundation grant

Thank You!

http://spellproject.weebly.com/

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