

August 13, 2005

Dear Early Childhood Literacy Stakeholder:

We are writing to urge you to attend one of nine regional meetings scheduled from August to October to help public libraries develop a coordinated statewide early literacy initiative plan. These Oregon meetings are being held as part of a 2005 Library Services and Technology Act grant awarded to Multnomah County Library called "*Planning for a Statewide Early Literacy Initiative.*" Oregon's public libraries need your help in order to more effectively collaborate with your organization around literacy and language projects for children, their parents, and caregivers.

With your input, Oregon's public libraries have the ability to greatly impact the early reading and learning experiences of preschool children by reaching thousands of parents, caregivers, and children. Among other things, a statewide early literacy framework led by libraries can:

- Offer opportunities for families and child care providers to learn best practices in early learning techniques for infants and toddlers;
- Help our local communities identify gaps in early literacy readiness and determine the most effective ways to address them;
- Help increase access to exemplary "ready to learn" programs;
- Provide continuing education for caregivers who need licensing or re-licensing; and
- Offer programs to parents that reaffirm messages delivered by caregivers, develop booklists, plan opportunities to learn about and visit the library, explicitly model early literacy behaviors, and provide easy strategies for parents to use at home.

Oregon's libraries big and small have a key role to play in our communities by disseminating early literacy information to parents, child care providers, early childhood educators, children's advocates, and political decision makers. We recognize the importance of coordinating with others in order to maximize each of our community's strengths and to more efficiently address issues and needs. Our most effective programs make the best use of community resources, efficiently use grant funds, and develop resources that are responsive to the needs of families and children.

We invite you to tell us three specific things that Oregon's public libraries can do to supplement the work you are doing at your agency/organization for children ages 0-4 and their parents/caregivers, so that we may fill the gaps and avoid a replication in services. Please plan now to attend the regional meeting held nearest to you. We look forward to seeing you there!

Sincerely,

Sara Behrman, Project Director

The Project Advisors: MaryKay Dahlgreen (Oregon State Library); Vikki Ricks (Oregon Department of Education); Heather McNeil (Deschutes Public Library System); Marlene Putman (Tillamook Commission on Children & Families); Claudia Jones (Eastern Oregon Early Literacy & Learning League); Ken Reading (Umatilla County Library District); Nancy Spaulding (Cedar Mill Community Library); Marion Rice (Oregon Public Broadcasting); Judy Harold (Springfield Library); Carol Snead (Head Start of Lane County); Karen Henkemeyer (Washington County Child Care Resource and Referral); Dan R. White (Douglas County Library); Renea Arnold (Multnomah County Library); Joann Contini (Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education, PSU); and Christyn Dundorf, Ph.D. (Early Education and Family Studies, PCC)