



OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY

Nationally, 46% of kindergarten teachers report at least half of their pupils have specific problems with entry into kindergarten, including lack of academic skills, difficulty following directions, disorganized home environments and problems working independently.*

In Colorado, a 2001 Educare survey of kindergarten and first grade teachers found that teachers believed four out of ten children (40%) entering the classroom were not academically prepared to learn. A significant number of children struggle with reading readiness and literacy skills.

Children, who start school behind, typically stay behind. They are at substantial risk for academic difficulties. The **story begins well before school entry.** There are large differences in children's early exposure to experiences that support skills. Children's experience with books plays an important role. Many children enter school with thousands of hours of experience with books. Their homes contain hundreds of picture books. They see their parents and brothers and sisters reading for pleasure.

Other children enter school with almost no time of shared book reading. There are few, if any, children's books in their homes. Parents, friends, brothers and sisters aren't readers.

Little children DON'T need to learn to read, be forced to practice with pencils or memorize the alphabet. But from birth through kindergarten, they MUST take part in many activities (play to them) to prevent later difficulties in reading, writing, and other formal schooling tasks. Preschoolers need food, shelter, love; they also need the nourishment of books.

Several studies point to a relationship between shared reading (adults and children looking at books together) and the emotional development of young children. The age at which shared reading begins is a strong predictor of young children's language abilities. The age at which parents start to read to their child is associated with their child's interest in and enjoyment of reading activities. In turn, a child's interest in reading activities is an important predictor of his or her later reading achievement.

Who can have fun with babies and young children and, at the same, time, help them get ready for reading? Everyone!

- * Parents
- * Babysitters
- * Preschool teachers
- * Neighbors and friends
- * Grandparents and other relatives
- * Childcare providers
- * Older brothers and sisters
- * Libraries

* (Rimm-Kauffman, S.E., Pianta, R.C. and Cox, M.J. [Early Childhood Research Quarterly](#), Vol. 15, No. 2 cited in Early Education Clearinghouse "Kindergarten Teachers Perceive Difficulty in Transitions to School," Facts in Action, Associated Day Care Services (11/2000) www.factsinaction.org/brief/brnovool.htm.

What can you do to help?

- Have lots of books around the house, the childcare center, the preschool, from infancy onward.
- Have these books where children can reach them at ANY time.
- Read regularly (every day if possible) from infancy onward.
- Talk with children about the stories and things around them. Let them talk, ask questions, and make up answers.
- Talk, sing, make up rhymes with children from infancy onward.
- Create scrapbooks, posters, and picture books by pasting pictures from magazines and greeting cards.
- Tell stories about yourself or family out loud.

Libraries can help!

- Public libraries are FREE to all!
- You can borrow many, many free books to use at your house, childcare center, or preschool for several weeks at a time!
- Libraries have free entertainment like story hours!

Services for Early Childhood Education from the Colorado State Library

Contact us for information on Colorado libraries. Our areas of interest include:

Children's Literacy Resources

<www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/Childrens_Literacy_Resources.htm>

Children are a priority for libraries. Free books, story times, activities, and welcoming staff are the qualities of children's library services. This website leads you to numerous materials and links for the public as well as libraries.

Colorado Talking Book Library <www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/ctbl.htm>

If children are not able to enjoy books or magazines because they have a physical or reading disability that causes difficulty in reading conventional print, they may receive help through this service. The Colorado Talking Book Library has recorded, Braille and large print materials that it sends free of charge to eligible Coloradans. The staff is happy to work with classroom teachers who need assistance for their students. Call 303-727-9277 or 800-685-2136, or e-mail ctbl.info@cde.state.co.us.

Colorado Virtual Library <www.coloradovirtuallibrary.org>

Find the book, magazine, or CD you need, anywhere in the state. This handy, easy-to-use tool for library resources on the web searches multiple Colorado library catalogs, digitized collections of historical photographs, and quality websites simultaneously. And it's absolutely free! Part of the CVL is the Colorado Virtual Library for Kids, a search interface to thousands of websites chosen by librarians and school media specialists, unbeatable resources to support education. Visit the home page and select "Kids."

Diversity Toolkit <www.diversity.aclin.org>

The Toolkit improves cultural awareness of diverse groups and enhances library services. It's a handy guide for teachers and parents, too. It includes a calendar of events, holidays, and the birthdays of notable individuals; a bibliography of print, audiovisual and electronic resources; and a set of bookmarks. Addresses eight major groups, including ethnicities.

Reading Programs and Promotions <www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/slpromo.htm>

Annual events can spotlight the work of libraries in literacy and lifelong learning. Use this website for toolkits, downloadable materials (such as a READ poster featuring the Governor!), and links to other resources, for these activities as well as others:

- National Library Week, mid-April
- Summer Reading Program, every summer
- Constitution Day, September 17
- Teen Read Week in October

“Reading Tips for Parents” (English and Spanish) pamphlet

<www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/slreadtips.htm>

This **free, colorful, easy-to-understand pamphlet** provides parents and caregivers plenty of help in reading readiness, reading to children, and age-appropriate ideas and techniques from birth to six years of age. Available in English and Spanish, download the pamphlet from the websites, or contact the Colorado State Library for copies.

“Ready, Set, Go—Kindergarten Readiness” (English and Spanish) pamphlet

<www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/Kindergarten_Readiness.htm>

Brief tips for parents and caregivers to prepare children age four to five for their very first days in school. The **free, colorful, easy-to-understand** brochure offers tips and ideas on what children should know in order to function well from the beginning of kindergarten, along with ideas for parents and caregivers of children four and five, with activities that help, most useful for children from about age four to five.

Speakers and Training: CSL is happy to provide speakers for conferences and larger meetings on library-related topics, with sufficient notice. Some of these include:

- **Early literacy training**—Every Child Ready to Read @your library—workshops for library staff, parents, and caregivers with formal curriculum and materials.
- The children’s literacy connection at libraries: summer reading program, bibliographies, materials; activities.
- Children’s voluntary reading: library programs that help kids with skills.
- Colorado Talking Book Library: free services for the visually/physically impaired.

Star Fall: Extensive web site for learning to read, for kids about three to seven. Letter, word, and phonics made fun with stories and activities. <www.starfall.com>

Summer Reading Program <www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/SummerReading/index.htm>

Studies show that free, voluntary reading helps children maintain reading skills and probably even increases their skills. It prevents **summer set-back!** Each year CSL sponsors a Summer Reading Program through public libraries. Schools are invited to participate and can use materials on the websites for their own programs or simply cooperate with local public libraries to encourage students to get involved.

**For other Colorado State Library resources, visit our websites at
www.cde.state.co.us/csl.htm
 or contact 303-866-6900**

Other Useful Internet Sites

- Association for Library Service to Children, links to booklists, activities, promotions and other sites, including African American, Latino and general children’s booklists. [<www.ala.org/alsc/>](http://www.ala.org/alsc/).
- Every Child Ready to Read @your library, Public Library Association and ALSC formal early literacy program with curriculum, script, videos, games, activities. Local libraries are implementing the program. [<www.ala.org/ala/alsc/ECRR/ECRRHomePage.htm>](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/ECRR/ECRRHomePage.htm)
- General social, community atmosphere and impact on reading skills (It’s the Climate, Stupid!), [<www.trelease-on-reading.com/whatsnu_2.html>](http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/whatsnu_2.html).
- PBS kids’ shows contacts, with Arthur, Barney, and others, containing activities, coloring sheets, adult tips, [<www.pbs.org/>](http://www.pbs.org/). “Between the Lions” is literacy-based and has newsletters and teaching tips. [<http://pbskids.org/lions/>](http://pbskids.org/lions/)
- US Dept of Education portal, leading to tip sheets, brochures in the “Helping Your Child Succeed in School” series, publications with the Federal No Child Left Behind act and reading. Also in **Spanish**. [<www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/partnership-tips.html>](http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/partnership-tips.html)

Early Literacy Brochures * FREE Information for Adults to Help Reading Readiness

I would like to order FREE copies of the following brochures (insert number needed):

Version	English	Spanish
Reading Tips for Parents		
Kindergarten Readiness		

Your name _____ Position _____

Organization name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Purpose or use of brochures (example—distribute to parents; use in training staff, etc.) _____

Name of your local public library _____

Where/when did you receive this order form? _____

Send this form by mail, e-mail or fax to Receptionist, **Colorado State Library**, 201 E Colfax #309, Denver, CO 80203; (v) 303-866-6900; (f) 303-866-6940. You may also order brochures **ONLINE** at [<www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/brochures/brochuresorderform.htm>](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/brochures/brochuresorderform.htm)