The Maine Family Literacy Initiative and Raising Readers are pleased to present “Literacy Explorer Kits”.

Each Literacy Explorer Kit provides theme activities for the 2010 Raising Readers Collection, and the kits include the following:

- General Reading Tips and Developmental Information for the different age groups.
- A Playgroup Map that contains: discussion activities, literacy extensions, craft and snack ideas, and parent education tips. Some include science and math ideas that relate to the book.
- Parent and Child Together Time Idea Sheets that assist parents in extending the learning from the playgroup. The PACT sheet provides simple ideas for families to do together around the book, such as craft ideas and songs to sing together.
- An Explorer Bag Information Sheet lists items that can be placed in a take home “Explorer Bag” for families.
- A Journal Sheet for the parent. They can reflect on the activities they did with their child. A portion of the journal sheet is for the Family Literacy Provider to “write back” to the parent.
- Reference and Resource List

Family Literacy Providers can determine which activities will work best with their families. **All activities should be supervised by a parent or caregiver.** Most Playgroup Maps have activities for more than one playgroup. Each Playgroup Map has activities that match the Age Milestone listed by the book on the Raising Readers’ Book List. Groups Newborn through 18 Months also have ideas for the general preschool age.

Happy Reading and Playing!

A Collaboration of the Maine Family Literacy Initiative & Raising Readers
PC 2011
A Visitor for Bear by Bonny Becker

This kit includes the following:

- General Reading Tips & Developmental Information
  (Place a copy in “Explorer Bags”)

- Playgroup Map – Theme Related Activities

- Parent and Child Together Time Ideas
  (Place a copy in “Explorer Bags” with needed supplies)

- Explorer Bag Information Sheet
  (Place a copy in “Explorer Bags”)

A Collaboration of the Maine Family Literacy Initiative & Raising Readers PC 2011
General Reading Tips & Developmental Information

General Reading Tips:
✓ Find a time to read every day. Bedtime is a great time to read – it will help your child relax before bed.
✓ Cuddle Up! This is the time to get cozy.
✓ Be Silly! Be Funny! Use Sound Effects!
✓ Read it – Again and Again and Again...Children love to read the same book more than once.
✓ Follow your child’s lead; let him/her set the pace.
✓ Talk about what you read: What do you think will happen next? What would you have done if you were that character?

For your Four Year Old:
✓ Ask questions while you read
✓ Start conversations with your child by using the pictures in the book. Make comparisons. “This girl is wearing a red shirt. You are wearing a red shirt too.”
✓ Show your child that print goes from left to right.
✓ Trace the letters in your child’s name and point them out in other words. Match the letters in books, signs, posters, etc.
✓ Make Sound Affects – Act it Out – Get SILLY!

Developmental Milestones You May Notice:
✓ Prints some letters
✓ Recalls parts of a story and tells longer stories
✓ Can count ten or more objects
✓ Speaks sentences of more than five words
✓ Likes to sing, dance and act
### Playgroup Map

*A Visitor for Bear* by Bonny Becker

**Read the Book:**
- Look at the pictures with the children. Have them look at Bear’s expression. Ask them:
  - Is Bear happy, sad, scared, etc.? How do you know?
  - How do you look when you are happy, sad, scared, etc.?
- While reading the book:
  - Have the children guess where mouse is hiding
  - Show them how the print in the book is sometimes BIG. How do they think Bear is feeling when his “words” are BIG?

**Literacy Extensions:**
- Hide the Mouse
  - Print a picture of the mouse standing on top of the teakettle cover on cardstock. (Picture provided by Candlewick Press and Raising Readers)
  - Let each child have a turn “hiding the mouse” for the other families to find.
  - Provide each family with their own mouse to take home. Families will follow the directions listed on the sheet, “Hide the cut-out Mouse around your house before mealtime. Ask your child to find Mouse and invite Mouse to share the meal with you.”
- Make faces
  - Show the children pictures of other children making faces. Have them guess the *emotion* the child is feeling. Show them the word that goes with the expression: happy, sad, scared, surprised, etc.
  - Whole group “make the faces”. If you are working with a preschool group, try to show them the word without the picture for word recognition practice.

**Science:**
- Bear Cave!
  - Drape a blanket over a table or two chairs.
  - Talk about how bears hibernate.
  - Have children bring a stuffed bear from home (or have bears available, small stuffed animals can be found at discount stores).
  - Have them sing the song from the “Parent and Child Together Time” idea sheet while the bears “go to sleep”.
  - This helps families become familiar with the song from the take home PACT sheet.

**Literacy Craft:**
- Ready, Set, Action!
  - Provide each child with the set of finger puppets provided by Candlewick Press and Raising Readers (copied on cardstock).
  - Young children can act out the finger puppets while listening to the story. (Candlewick Press)
  - Older preschoolers and lower elementary children will enjoy putting on a finger play. They can use the story in *A Visitor for Bear*.
**Bear** or make up a new story with these characters.
- Children can set up behind a table (or couch at home) and show their play to the family. If possible, families might want to video the play, so that the children are able to view their “production”.
- Children prepare for their “Tea Party”
  - Have them decorate the outside of paper cups and make decorations for the table.
  - Look for white children’s aprons at your local discount store. Children can decorate them with fabric markers.
  - “Tea Hats” may be made by decorating paper plates with ribbons and bows.

**Parent Education:**

- *A Visitor for Bear* is a perfect book to do some pre-reading activities with parents. There are vocabulary words in the book that may challenge parents. Completing activities with the parents before the playgroup, allows them to feel confident while sharing the book with their child.
- Tell the parents when their children make guesses about the story, they are “predicting”.
  - There is no right or wrong answer…it is just a guess. Share with parents that this is an important reading strategy that they can use when they are reading for pleasure or school.
  - Also, ask the parents if they can locate the predictable text “Small and gray and bright-eyed, of course.”
- See if parents can locate affixes in this book. This will help them offer a definition for the words “intolerable” and “insufferable”.
  - For example: “Insufferable” What is the root word? What does it mean to “suffer”? What does Bear look like in the story when he uses this word? What do you think insufferable means?”
  - Parents need to be encouraged to share these new words and meaning with their children. Encourage them to use their new words in conversations with their child.
- This story offers a wonderful opportunity to talk about letters.
  - Encourage them to ask their children if they know any of the letters in the BIG words.

**Snack:**

- Let’s Have a Tea Party!
  - Using items from your craft “set” your table. Don’t forget to invite Mouse to the party!
  - Serve your own version of “tea” (lemonade, water, juice) cheese, crackers, and fruit.

**Attached Activity Sheets from the Publisher:**

- Mouse on Teakettle
- Finger Puppets
- “No” sign (Candlewick Publishers suggest showing the children Bear’s sign of “No Visitors Allowed”. Children can create their own “no” signs to post.
Parent and Child Together Time Ideas  
*A Visitor for Bear* by Bonny Becker

**READ THE BOOK:**
- Ask to borrow *A Visitor for Bear* and read it 3-4 times over a week. What does your child notice each time you read it to him/her?
- You can change how you read it:
  - The BIG words can be *loud*, the repeating phrases, like “small and gray and bright-eyed” can be *quiet*
  - Make guesses about where the mouse is hiding.
  - Time to make funny faces – talk about the emotions of different faces you make.

**HIDE THE MOUSE:**
- Bring home the picture of Mouse on the Teakettle Cover
- Hide Mouse right before mealtime.
- Have your child look for Mouse. Mouse can join the family for the meal!

**LET’S ENTERTAIN EACH OTHER:**
- Bear wanted Mouse to have fun during their tea time. He did a handstand and told jokes.
- Ask your child if they have something special to show, like, standing on one foot, hopping around the room. Do it with your child
- Four year olds can learn to skip! Show your child how to skip. Skip like BEAR and skip like MOUSE.
KNOCK KNOCK JOKES:
- Your child can be like Bear and tell jokes to you! Teach your child "Knock Knock Jokes".

    Knock Knock
    Who's there?
    Cow
    Cow Who?
    Cows don't say "who", they say "moo"!

SING A SONG:

    Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around
    Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground
    Teddy bear, teddy bear, reach up high
    Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the sky
    Teddy bear, teddy bear, bend down low
    Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your toes
    Teddy bear, teddy bear, go upstairs
    Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn out the light
    Teddy bear, teddy bear, say goodnight
This Explorer Bag Contains the Following:

- Reading Tips & Developmental Information For Your Four Year Old
- Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) Idea Sheet
- Supplies You Will Need For PACT Ideas:
  - Picture of Mouse standing on the Teakettle Cover
- Journal Activity Sheet
A Visitor for Bear by Bonnie Becker and Illustrated by Kady MacDonald Denton

For more read aloud fun using A Visitor for Bear:

- Print this page. It is best printed on paper like cardstock.
- Cut Mouse and the tea kettle cover out of the paper.
- Hide the cut-out of Mouse around your house before mealtime.
- Ask your child to find Mouse and invite Mouse to share the meal with you.

This activity creates a connection between the book and your child’s world which may make the book more meaningful for your child.
A Visitor for Bear
Finger Puppets
A Visitor for Bear
Make a NO Sign
What did you like about the book *A Visitor for Bear*? What do you think your child’s favorite part was?

*A Visitor for Bear* has some words in it that use **prefixes** and **suffixes** like “unbelievable” and “insufferable”. When you read other material, look for other words like this and write them here. What do you think they mean?

What PACT activity did you do with your child? What went well? What didn’t go so well?
I'll write back to you here...
LITERACY EXPLORER KITS 2010

References

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Kuffner, Trish (1999), *The Toddler Busy Book*, Meadow Brook Press, Minnetonka, Minnesota


Manoloson, Ward, and Dodington (2007), *You Make The Difference*, The Hanen Centre Toronto, ON Canada


National Center for Family Literacy and Snuggle (2002), *Reading Through The Years*, Gruner+Jahr Publishing, USA

National Center for Family Literacy (2009), *What Works – An Introductory Teacher Guide for Early Language and Emergent Literacy Instruction*, Based on the National Early Literacy Panel Report, Louisville, KY

Reading to Your Baby (n.d.), from babycenter.com retrieved August 4, 2011 from [http://www.babycenter.com/0_reading-to-your-baby_368.bc](http://www.babycenter.com/0_reading-to-your-baby_368.bc)

Springvale Public Library, *Baby Rhyme Time* (2011), Springvale, Maine


Your 4-Month-Old’s Development: Week 1 (n.d.), from babycenter.com retrieved August 4, 2011 from [http://www.babycenter.com/0_your-4-month-olds-development-week-1_1477216.bc#articlesection3](http://www.babycenter.com/0_your-4-month-olds-development-week-1_1477216.bc#articlesection3)

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.org

Baby Center
www.babycenter.com

Candlewick Press, Raising Readers
Publisher Activity Sheets for *A Visitor for Bear* by Bonny Becker and *Bob* by Tracey Campbell Pearson

Everything Preschool – Early Childhood Education Made Easy
www.everythingpreschool.com

Medline Plus
www.nlm.nih.gov

Scholastic
www.scholastic.com

Songs for Teaching
www.songsforteaching.com

The Perpetual Preschool
www.perpetualpreschool.com

What To Expect
www.whatttoexpect.com