The Maine Family Literacy Initiative and Raising Readers are pleased to present the 2011 “Literacy Explorer Kits”

Each Literacy Explorer Kit provides theme activities for the 2011 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
Pamela Cote 2012
Welcome to the 2011 Book List from Raising Readers, celebrating 11 years and over 1.5 million books given to children in Maine. For more information call 1-800-397-3263 or visit www.raisingreaders.org.

Newborn
- Baby Bear’s Books by Melissa Sweet
- What Does Baby See? by Begin Smart
- Vroom Vroom Maisy by Lucy Cousins

2 months
- Look at That! by Guido Van Genechten

4 months
- I Love Colors by Margaret Miller

6 months
- All About Me by DK Publishing

9 months
- Peek-a-Boo What? by Begin Smart

12 months
- Look at You! by Kathy Henderson

15 months
- Knees and Toes by Rookie Toddler

18 months
- Meeow and the Little Chairs by Sebastien Braun

2 years
- Pouch! by David Ezra Stein

3 years
- The Seals on the Bus by Lenny Hort

4 years
- Kiss the Cow! by Phyllis Root

5 years
- Raising Readers: A Treasury of Tales from Maine
Create a bridge between the literacy materials in your program and the books children have in their homes.
Purchase a copy of each of the RR books for your program. Experiencing the same book in the home and in your family literacy program multiplies its impact. Teach parents why they should read to their children daily and model how to engage their children with books. Provide parents with supplemental activities that they can do at home with each of the books. You may also find some of these books at your local library.

Use information from the Early Literacy Calendar in your parenting classes.
Many of the children in your program will have these books at home and this information will help parents understand how to enjoy the books with their kids.

Incorporate the books and related activities into your Interactive Literacy Activities.
Many RR books include activities linked to the book that you can use in the program. These are located in the back of the book. Developed with the staff at Maine Roads to Quality, the activities support Maine’s Infant Toddler and Preschool Learning Guidelines. Activities for additional books used in the program are available on the website.

Use the RR Topics Brochure for recommendations on books that deal with common childhood issues.
Available on the website, the Topics Brochure provides lists of children’s books on sibling rivalry, loss/grief, toilet training, etc. These books might be helpful as a reference for parents in your program or as an introduction on how parents can use literacy materials to address common childhood issues.

Use the RR website for read aloud tips, parent handouts, and as a resource for early literacy skills.
Literacy Explorer Kit

Books for Your Newborn...

*Vroom Vroom, Maisy* by Lucy Cousins
*Baby Bear’s Books* by Jane Yolen
*What Does Baby See?* Tess (EDT) Riesmeyer

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
Pamela Cote 2012
General Reading Tips & Developmental Information

General Reading Tips:
✓ It’s never too early to read to your baby. It is a great time to cuddle and bond.
✓ Reading helps build vocabulary and stimulates a child’s imagination. It also helps improve his/her communication skills.
✓ Infants should be exposed to language rich environments. Language skills are related to how many words a baby hears each day.
✓ Babies love to “mouth” books, so heavy duty board books are best for babies.
✓ Babies love to hear singing, so look for books with rhythm and nursery rhymes.

For your Baby:
✓ Babies listen to the rhythm of language (your voice), not the content. Read them anything: a children’s book, a magazine, your novel.
✓ Read aloud for a few minutes at a time.
✓ Board books with different, bright colors will be interesting to them.
✓ Sing to your baby! They love to hear your voice rhyming a nursery rhyme or lullaby.
✓ Reading to your baby makes a connection between being close to you and your voice - two things your baby loves.

Developmental Milestones You May Notice - Newborn:
✓ Your newborn’s brain is developing quickly. You promote healthy brain growth when you cuddle, sing, and care for your baby.
✓ Babies express how they feel through facial expressions and sound to tell you their needs.
✓ Newborns have all five senses. They quickly learn to recognize your face, how you sound, and your smell.
✓ Muscles start to strengthen and hands fist when your baby is very alert.
✓ Help your baby grow and develop by using a high pitched voice, gentle touch, hugs, and kisses.

A Collaboration of the Maine Family Literacy Initiative & Raising Readers
# Playgroup Map

**Primary Books:**
- *Vroom Vroom, Maisy* by Lucy Cousins
- *Baby Bear's Books* by Jane Yolen
- *What Does Baby See?* by Tess (EDT) Riesmeyer

## Read the Book:

- **Vroom Vroom, Maisy**: Everyone loves Maisy! This chubby little book will become a favorite as a child grows. See Maisy’s friends drive different types of transportation and make the noises as they move along. Encourage parents to introduce the colors of the vehicles. Read the book with a lot of animation and a sing song rhythm.

- **Baby Bear’s Books**: Baby Bear loves books! He shows readers that anytime is a good time to read: early in the morning, throughout the day, and right before bed. The book rhymes as you read it. Read it slowly, showing the pictures. Parents may wonder why this is in the Newborn category. Is Baby Bear’s message really for the parents as they begin their reading journey with their baby? Sharing this book with families provides an opportunity to have a conversation with parents about when they read to their child. Parents should read to their child every day for about 20 minutes. Brainstorm with families when they can read to their child. Have them share ideas.

- **What Does Baby See?** This book will mesmerize babies as they like to look at pictures in red, black, and white. Newborns do not see clearly, so high contrast colors will catch their attention. Model reading this book with parents. Slowly turn the pages. Point to the picture and name it. Add animal sounds, colors, etc. Encourage parents to prop the book up so their baby can look it. Parents will notice that babies have favorite pictures in this book!

## Literacy Extensions:

- **Vroom Vroom, Maisy**:
  - Tell parents that as their baby grows, they will most likely become interested in different types of transportation. Parents can point out cars, trucks, and other moving vehicles as they drive. Have them think about the different vehicles. What sounds do they think they make? Introduce sounds for the vehicles just like in Maisy’s Vroom Vroom Book! Model to parents how to make up a silly verse: “Truck, Truck…rumbles along….bumpety bump on this road!”
  - Toddlers may want to gather their stuffed animals and take them on a ride. Encourage imaginary play. “Can you create an airplane from pillows?”

- **Baby Bear’s Books**: Create a Bear Cave to read in! Using pillows, chairs, blankets from the play area, create a large “bear cave”. Pile books in the bear cave and have the children explore. They may read the books or stack the books. Call it Baby Bear’s Book Nook!
### Literacy Craft:

- **What Does Baby See?:** Explain to parents that as their baby grows their vision will develop. By age three months, babies will begin to “track” objects. Discuss this with parents and show them how they can point out objects to their baby. What pictures in the playroom do they think will most interest babies? Have them take a “walking tour” of the playroom or childcare center, pausing in different areas to see what might interest their baby. Bring them back together as a group and have them share their experience.

- **Vroom Vroom, Maisy:** Explore vehicles using construction paper shapes. Provide parents with different colored shapes and a glue stick. Have them help their child put glue on the shapes and stick the shapes onto a large piece of paper to create their own vehicle.

- **Baby Bear’s Books:** Make a Paper Crown
  - Place the short ends of two pieces of construction paper together. They should overlap about 1 inch. Tape the ends together (inside an outside)
  - Wrap it around your child’s head, so the end pieces overlap about 1 inch. Cut the paper so you have a strip that will fit on your child’s head.
  - Draw the shape you want on the top part of the paper. Do you want a crown with points or round shapes? Cut along the design.
  - Have your child decorate the crown with crayons, glitter, stickers, etc.
  - Once the crown is decorated, fit it over your child’s head with the 1 inch overlapping. Tape it securely (inside and outside)

- **What Does Baby See?**
  - Make High Contrast Cards using white card stock and black and red markers. Parents will design a few pictures of animals or objects. They should outline their pictures very simply (using the book as a model), one picture per page. They can keep them as “cards” or make a book with their pictures.

### Parent Education:

- **General Reading Tips and Developmental Information:** Review the “General Reading Tips and Developmental Information” in this packet with parents. Many parents do not understand brain development in Newborns. You may want to search for articles on brain growth in the first year to share with parents.

- **Model reading “face to face”:** Parents can hold their babies so they can see their expressions or prop up older babies and kneel in front of them. This allows parents to follow their lead.

- **Sing lullabies with parents:** Model for them how to be silly while reading the books with patterns and rhythms.

- **Introduce families to “Lap Games”** (many libraries offer story times for babies). Model singing rhymes with babies. Use the following rhyme:

  **This Little Cow**
  
  This little cow eats grass (count out cows on fingers)
  This little cow eats hay
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<th>This little cow does nothing</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>But lie in the sun all day</td>
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<td>Let’s chase her, let’s chase her,</td>
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<td>Let’s chase her away!</td>
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</table>

- Brainstorm ideas as a group on how to share books with young babies. For example, *What does Baby See?* is a great book to prop in front of a baby to look at. Parents will soon recognize that babies develop a favorite page!
- Have parents create a “Photo Hunt” for their older children. Cut out large pictures from magazines of items that would be easily found in a house or yard. Glue one picture per page onto a piece of cardstock or construction paper. Keep them separate or attach on a key ring. Bring the pictures along on walk around the house or outside. Encourage children to look for or “spy” these items.

### Snack:

- Choose a variety of healthy snacks for all ages of the playgroup. Model healthy snack choices and talk about options for different ages.
- Gather round – have a spot for everyone. Parents with newborns can be a part of snack time, too!
- Simple snack ideas: cut up bananas, soft crackers and yogurt.
**Parent and Child Together Time Ideas**

*Vroom Vroom, Maisy* by Lucy Cousins  
*Baby Bear’s Books* by Jane Yolen  
*What Does Baby See?* Tess (EDT) Riesmeyer

**READ THE BOOK:**

- Read *Vroom Vroom, Maisy* to your baby. Point out the pictures of the vehicles and colors. Make the vehicle sounds. This is a “chubby” book and will be a favorite to your older baby and toddler!
- *Baby Bear’s Books* tells a very important message...anytime is a good time to read! Read to your child every day for at least 20 minutes. It’s nice to set aside a special reading time, but also nice to have a bag of books with you wherever you go!
- *What Does Baby See?* is the perfect book for your newborn. The colors in the book are called “High Contrast” colors because babies can see them more clearly than other pictures. Read the book slowly, pointing to the pictures. You’ll want to pack this book in your baby bag. Prop it up and see if you can figure out which picture is your baby’s favorite.

**FUN WITH BEARS:**

- Toddlers will enjoy these activities with bears:
  - Collect any stuffed bears and other animals you may have and have a “teddy bear” or “animal” picnic.
  - Put a blanket or towel on your floor. Pile on the books and other items to help create your picnic.
  - Ask your child, “Which book do you think your bear would like to read?”
  - Encourage your child to “read” the book to their teddy bear. It’s fun to hear them talk about the pictures and tell “their” story!

A Collaboration of the Maine Family Literacy Initiative  
& Raising Readers  
Pamela Cote 2012
LAP GAMES:

- Babies love "lap games": songs, rhymes, and finger plays that you play on your lap.
- Try these lap games:

  **This Little Cow**
  This little cow eats grass (count out cows on fingers)
  This little cow eats hay
  This little cow does nothing
  But lie in the sun all day
  Let's chase her, let's chase her,
  Let's chase her away!
  (run fingers up baby’s arm and tickle gently under chin)

  **Open Them, Shut Them**
  Open them, shut them, open them, shut them, Give a little clap!
  Open them, shut them, open them, shut them, Lay them in your lap.

  Creep them, creep them, slowly creep them, Right up to your chin!
  Cover up your little eyes -
  And take a little peek! Peek a Boo!

  Creep them, creep them, slowly creep them, Right up to your nose.
  Creep them, creep them, Right down to your toes!
  ("them" are your hands - suit actions to words on baby's body throughout the song)

  **Touch Game**
  Touch your nose, touch your chin, (touch baby on each body part as named)
  That’s the way this game begins.
  Touch your eyes, touch your knees,
  Now pretend you feel a breeze. (blow gently on baby's face)

  Touch your hair, touch one ear,
  Touch your two red lips right here.
  Touch your elbows where they bend
  That’s the way this touch game ends.
This Explorer Bag Contains the Following:

- Reading Tips & Developmental Information For Your Newborn

- Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) Idea Sheet

- Journal Activity Sheet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOURNAL - Books for your Newborn</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Which book was your favorite? Why?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a book area in your house? Where is it? If you do not have one, how can you create one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you sing the “lap songs” to your baby? Which one did they like best?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I'll write back to you here...
LITERACY EXPLORER KITS 2011

References

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


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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

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

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

Preschool Education
www.preschooleducation.com

Scholastic
www.scholastic.com

Songs for Teaching
www.songsforteaching.com

The Perpetual Preschool
www.perpetualpreschool.com

What To Expect
www.whattotoexpect.com
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## Book List 2011

Celebrating 11 years and over 1.5 million books given to children in Maine. For more information call 1-800-397-3263 or visit www.raisingreaders.org

<table>
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<th><strong>Newborn</strong></th>
<th><strong>9 months</strong></th>
<th><strong>2 years</strong></th>
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| Baby Bear’s Books  
Melissa Sweet  
*What Does Baby See?*  
Begin Smart | *Peek-a-Boo What?*  
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<th><strong>2 months</strong></th>
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| *I Love Colors*  
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Rookie Toddler | *Kiss the Cow!*  
Phyllis Root |

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- Brainstorm ideas as a group on how to share books with young babies. For example, *What does Baby See?* is a great book to prop in front of a baby to look at. Parents will soon recognize that babies develop a favorite page!
- Have parents create a “Photo Hunt” for their older children. Cut out large pictures from magazines of items that would be easily found in a house or yard. Glue one picture per page onto a piece of cardstock or construction paper. Keep them separate or attach on a key ring. Bring the pictures along on walk around the house or outside. Encourage children to look for or “spy” these items.

<table>
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<th>Snack:</th>
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<td>- Choose a variety of healthy snacks for all ages of the playgroup. Model healthy snack choices and talk about options for different ages.</td>
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<td>- Gather round – have a spot for everyone. Parents with newborns can be a part of snack time, too!</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Simple snack ideas: cut up bananas, soft crackers and yogurt.</td>
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</table>
Parent and Child Together Time Ideas

Vroom Vroom, Maisy by Lucy Cousins
Baby Bear’s Books by Jane Yolen
What Does Baby See? Tess (EDT) Riesmeyer

READ THE BOOK:

- Read Vroom Vroom, Maisy to your baby. Point out the pictures of the vehicles and colors. Make the vehicle sounds. This is a “chubby” book and will be a favorite to your older baby and toddler!

- Baby Bear’s Books tells a very important message…anytime is a good time to read! Read to your child every day for at least 20 minutes. It’s nice to set aside a special reading time, but also nice to have a bag of books with you wherever you go!

- What Does Baby See? is the perfect book for your newborn. The colors in the book are called “High Contrast” colors because babies can see them more clearly than other pictures. Read the book slowly, pointing to the pictures. You’ll want to pack this book in your baby bag. Prop it up and see if you can figure out which picture is your baby’s favorite.

FUN WITH BEARS:

- Toddlers will enjoy these activities with bears:
  - Collect any stuffed bears and other animals you may have and have a “teddy bear” or “animal” picnic.
  - Put a blanket or towel on your floor. Pile on the books and other items to help create your picnic.
  - Ask your child, “Which book do you think your bear would like to read?”
  - Encourage your child to “read” the book to their teddy bear. It’s fun to hear them talk about the pictures and tell “their” story!

A Collaboration of the Maine Family Literacy Initiative & Raising Readers
Pamela Cote 2012
LAP GAMES:

- Babies love “lap games”: songs, rhymes, and finger plays that you play on your lap.
- Try these lap games:

  **This Little Cow**
  This little cow eats grass (count out cows on fingers)
  This little cow eats hay
  This little cow does nothing
  But lie in the sun all day
  Let’s chase her, let’s chase her,
  Let’s chase her away!
  (run fingers up baby’s arm and tickle gently under chin)

  **Open Them, Shut Them**
  Open them, shut them, open them, shut them, Give a little clap!
  Open them, shut them, open them, shut them, Lay them in your lap.
  Creep them, creep them, slowly creep them, Right up to your chin!
  Cover up your little eyes –
  And take a little peek! Peek a Boo!
  Creep them, creep them, slowly creep them, Right up to your nose.
  Creep them, creep them, Right down to your toes!
  (“them” are your hands – suit actions to words on baby’s body throughout the song)

  **Touch Game**
  Touch your nose, touch your chin, (touch baby on each body part as named)
  That’s the way this game begins.
  Touch your eyes, touch your knees,
  Now pretend you feel a breeze. (blow gently on baby’s face)
  Touch your hair, touch one ear,
  Touch your two red lips right here.
  Touch your elbows where they bend
  That’s the way this touch game ends.
This Explorer Bag Contains the Following:

- Reading Tips & Developmental Information For Your Newborn

- Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) Idea Sheet

- Journal Activity Sheet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOURNAL – Books for your Newborn</th>
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<tr>
<td>Which book was your favorite? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have a book area in your house? Where is it? If you do not have one, how can you create one?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did you sing the “lap songs” to your baby? Which one did they like best?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
I'll write back to you here...
LITERACY EXPLORER KITS 2011

References

Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2006), *A Child Becomes a Reader*, National Institute for Literacy, RMC Research Corporation, Portsmouth, NH


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

Preschool Education
www.preschooleducation.com

Scholastic
www.scholastic.com

Songs for Teaching
www.songsforteaching.com

The Perpetual Preschool
www.perpetualpreschool.com

What To Expect
www.whatttoexpect.com
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!
**BOOK LIST 2010**

Celebrating 10 years and almost 1.5 million books given to children in Maine. For more information call 1-800-397-3263 or visit www.raisingreaders.org.

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<td><em>Little Blue Truck</em>&lt;br&gt;by Alice Schertle</td>
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<td><em>Peek-a-Boo WHO?</em>&lt;br&gt;by Simms Taback</td>
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<td><em>Walk with Me!</em>&lt;br&gt;by Stella Blackstone</td>
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<td><em>A Visitor for Bear</em>&lt;br&gt;by Bonny Becker</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td><em>Books From Maine: A Raising Readers Collection</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td><em>Rainbow Colors</em>&lt;br&gt;DK Publishing</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td><em>Baby Faces</em>&lt;br&gt;by Margaret Miller</td>
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Books for Your Newborn...

*Read to Your Bunny - Very First Library* by Rosemary Wells
*Babies World* DK Publishing
*A Red Train* Boxcar Books

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”)

*PC 2011*

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

General Reading Tips:
✓ It’s never too early to read to your baby. It is a great time to cuddle and bond.
✓ Reading helps build vocabulary and stimulates a child’s imagination. It also helps improve his/her communication skills.
✓ Infants should be exposed to language rich environments. Language skills are related to how many words a baby hears each day.
✓ Babies love to “mouth” books, so heavy duty board books are best for babies.
✓ Babies love to hear singing, so look for books with rhythm and nursery rhymes.

For your Baby:
✓ Babies listen to the rhythm of language (your voice), not the content. Read them anything: a children’s book, a magazine, your novel.
✓ Read aloud for a few minutes at a time.
✓ Board books with different, bright colors will be interesting to them.
✓ Sing to your baby! They love to hear your voice rhyming a nursery rhyme or lullaby.
✓ Reading to your baby makes a connection between being close to you and your voice – two things your baby loves.

Developmental Milestones You May Notice - Newborn:
✓ Your newborn’s brain is developing quickly. You promote healthy brain growth when you cuddle, sing, and care for your baby.
✓ Babies express how they feel through facial expressions and sound to tell you their needs.
✓ Newborns have all five senses. They quickly learn to recognize your face, how you sound, and your smell.
✓ Muscles start to strengthen and hands fist when your baby is very alert.
✓ Help your baby grow and develop by using a high pitched voice, gentle touch, hugs, and kisses.
### Read the Book:

- **Read to Your Bunny Very First Library** allows you to introduce babies to books in a way they will love – through singing! Newborns respond to their parent’s voice and love the singsong quality that comes with nursery rhymes. Model singing the songs with families. You may want to provide song sheets before the playgroup.

- **Babies World** is a book that will be appreciated by children of all ages. Toddlers will especially love to see what the different babies are doing and will want to copy their movements. Be sure to move the book slowly throughout the story time, so all of the children can see the different babies.

- **A Red Train** is a book that explores colors. Babies will love to look at the brightly colored pictures. Toddlers will love the colors, shapes, and animals on the different pages. This book will become a favorite at playgroups. Toddlers will want to say the color and read the book with you.

### Literacy Extensions:

#### Read to Your Bunny Very First Library

- The following ideas are from the author, Rosemary Wells, provided in her “A Parent’s Guide to Reading Aloud”:
  - **Old MacDonald** – Sing, clap to a rhythm, name animals, make animal sounds, dance.
  - **The Bear Went Over the Mountain** – Sing, clap to a rhythm, dance, act out the song, and recognize objects from nature.
  - **The Itsy-Bitsy Spider** – Sing, play the hand game, identify objects, identify weather.
  - **Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star** – Sing, recognize household objects, recognize bedtime activities and objects, recognize the night sky, set a comforting bedtime routine.

#### Babies World

- Show the book to the babies or toddlers – be sure to ooh and ahh. Show them a second time and ask questions, “What do you think the baby’s laugh sounds like? Do you have a little nose? Can you clap your hands too? Do you cuddle with mommy or daddy?”

#### A Red Train a COLORS book

- Play a color game while reading the book. On the green page, ask children to find who is wearing green clothes that day. On the red page, look for red objects in the room.
- Name the animals on the different pages. Do animal sounds with the families.
## Literacy Craft: Read to Your Bunny Very First Library (Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

- Make constellations with toddlers or preschoolers:
  - Have children make dots/circles with white chalk (or white paint using an ear swab) on black or blue construction paper.
  - Connect the dots to make constellations.
  - Depending on the age, you may make animal or object constellations. Let your child lead!

## Babies World

- Children of all ages love to look at baby pictures! Toddlers and preschoolers especially because they think they are “all grown up”!
- Buy small photo albums at a discount store that holds 3x5 or 4x6 pictures.
- Have families create albums filled with pictures of baby, parents, caregivers, favorite objects, pets, etc. Take the pictures close up and place one picture per page in the album. You can take pictures at a playgroup and print for parents or look for inexpensive disposable cameras.
- If you want, have families cut out pictures of other babies doing silly things (from magazines) and place in album.
- Have families add this to baby’s library!
- This idea is listed in the PACT section. Families can start the albums at a playgroup and finish at home. Share albums during parent education time.

## A Red Train a COLORS book

- There are interesting shapes in this book.
- Have different colored construction paper available.
- Families choose one color and create an object or animal with their paper. Post the many colors on a large mural sheet for all to view.
- Review shapes during craft or story time.

## Parent Education:

- Review the “General Reading Tips and Developmental Information” in this packet with parents. Many parents do not understand brain development in Newborns. You may want to search for articles on brain growth in the first year to share with parents.
- Model reading “face to face”. Parents can hold their babies so they can see their expressions or prop up older babies and kneel in front of them. This allows parents to follow their lead.
- Sing lullabies with parents. Model for them how to be silly while reading the books with patterns and rhythms.
- Introduce families to “Lap Games” (many libraries offer story times for babies). Model singing rhymes with babies. Use the following rhyme and the rhymes from Read to Your Bunny.

  **This Little Cow**
  
  This little cow eats grass (count out cows on fingers)
  This little cow eats hay
  This little cow does nothing
  But lie in the sun all day
  Let’s chase her, let’s chase her,
  Let’s chase her away!
(run fingers up baby’s arm and tickle gently under chin)

- Brainstorm ideas as a group on how to share books with young babies. For example, *A Red Train a COLORS book* is a great book to prop in front of a baby to look at. Parents will soon recognize that babies develop a favorite page!
- You may want to review the PACT idea sheet with parents to make sure they know what a “collage” is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snack:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Choose a variety of healthy snacks for all ages of the playgroup. Model healthy snack choices and talk about options for different ages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gather round – have a spot for everyone. Parents with newborns can be a part of snack time, too!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Simple snack ideas: cut up bananas, soft crackers and yogurt.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Parent and Child Together Time Ideas

*Read to Your Bunny Very First Library* by Rosemary Wells
*Babies World* DK Publishing
*A Red Train a COLORS book* Boxcar Books

**READ THE BOOKS:**

- “Sing” the books from *Read to Your Bunny* to your child. Change the tone of your voice and your facial expressions. For older babies, show them the hand movements to Itsy Bitsy Spider and Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.
- Look at the different pictures of the babies in *Babies World*. Say the word for each page. Read it over and over again “face to face.” Watch your child; they will most likely have a favorite page.
- Repeat phrases when reading *A Red Train*. For example, “a RED train” then, point to the train on the opposite page and say “red train”.

**BABY PHOTO ALBUM:**

- Buy a small photo album that holds 3x5 or 4x6 pictures.
- Place one picture per page in album. Fill the album with pictures of your baby, family members, favorite toys and objects, and pets.
- You may want to write the name of the picture or object on the opposite page of the photo.
- Add this to baby’s library!

**CONSTRUCTION PAPER COLLAGE:**

- This is a simple collage that a toddler can do – they will love the ripping and tearing of the paper!
- Place different colors of construction paper in front of your child. Allow them to tear of pieces and strips.
- Dip pieces into white glue (or use a glue stick). Allow your child to arrange the pieces in a collage (collage: placing items wherever they want) on a sheet of paper.
- Name the colors with your child. Look for shapes.
LAP GAMES:

- Babies love “lap games”: songs, rhymes, and finger plays that you play on your lap.
- Try these lap games:

  **This Little Cow**
  This little cow eats grass (count out cows on fingers)
  This little cow eats hay
  This little cow does nothing
  But lie in the sun all day
  Let’s chase her, let’s chase her,
  Let’s chase her away!
  (run fingers up baby’s arm and tickle gently under chin)

  **Open Them, Shut Them**
  Open them, shut them, open them, shut them, Give a little clap!
  Open them, shut them, open them, shut them, Lay them in your lap.

  Creep them, creep them, slowly creep them, Right up to your chin!
  Cover up your little eyes -
  And take a little peek! Peek a Boo!

  Creep them, creep them, slowly creep them, Right up to your nose.
  Creep them, creep them, Right down to your toes!
  (“them” are your hands - suit actions to words on baby’s body throughout the song)

  **Touch Game**
  Touch your nose, touch your chin, (touch baby on each body part as named)
  That’s the way this game begins.
  Touch your eyes, touch your knees,
  Now pretend you feel a breeze. (blow gently on baby’s face)

  Touch your hair, touch one ear,
  Touch your two red lips right here.
  Touch your elbows where they bend
  That’s the way this touch game ends.
This Explorer Bag Contains the Following:

- Reading Tips & Developmental Information For Your Baby and Toddler
- Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) Idea Sheet
- Supplies You Will Need For PACT Ideas:
  - Small Photo Album
  - Different color construction paper
  - Long piece of white paper
  - White glue or glue stick
- Journal Activity Sheet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOURNAL – Books for Your Newborn</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which was your favorite book from the Newborn set? Which book did your baby like?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What time of day do you read to your child? Do you have a routine when you read?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What PACT activity did you do with your child? What went well? What didn’t go so well?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I'll write back to you here...
LITERACY EXPLORER KITS 2010

References

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


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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

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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.whattoexpect.com