The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy and Maine’s Raising Readers are pleased to present the 2012 Literacy Explorer Kits

Each Literacy Explorer Kit provides theme activities for the 2012 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!
<table>
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<th>Age</th>
<th>Books</th>
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<tr>
<td>Newborn</td>
<td><em>Book!</em> Kristine O'Connell George</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td><em>Time For Bed</em> Mem Fox</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td><em>Hip, Hop</em> Catherine Hnatov - Padded Books</td>
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<td>4 months</td>
<td><em>Homer, the Library Cat</em> Reeve Lindbergh</td>
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<td>5 years</td>
<td><em>Maine Stories for Maine Children: A Raising Readers Collection</em></td>
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<td>6 months</td>
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<td>9 months</td>
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<td>12 months</td>
<td><em>Hop a Little, Jump a Little!</em> Annie Kubler</td>
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<td>15 months</td>
<td><em>Who Hoo Are You?</em> Kate Endle</td>
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<td>18 months</td>
<td><em>Who's in the Forest?</em> Phyllis Gershator</td>
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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.
This kit includes the following:

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

2. **Playgroup Map – Theme Related Activities**

3. **Parent and Child Together Time Ideas**
   (Place a copy in “Explorer Bags“ with needed supplies)

4. **Explorer Bag Information Sheet**
   (Place a copy in “Explorer Bags“)
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.
**Read the Book:**

- **HOMER The Library Cat** is a sweet story about a cat who wants to spend his day in a quiet setting. Scared from his home by a loud noise, he goes on a big adventure to find a quiet place.
- This is a good book for predicting and for pointing out changes in text. As you read the book, pause each time Homer thinks he has found a quiet place. For example, when he is relaxing on the fire truck, ask children, “What do you think will happen next?” See if they can guess that there will be a fire, and the fire bell will ring. Remember, when predicting, the guesses do not need to be correct. We want readers to predict knowing it is okay (safe) if they make an incorrect prediction. We are encouraging them to generate ideas about their reading and make real world connections.
- Do the children notice anything about how the text changes? When there is a LOUD noise, the text gets big and is all in capital letters. You may want to have a conversation about how the first word in a sentence begins with a capital letter. The author has chosen to make the letters in the LOUD words all in capitals to emphasize the word.

**Literacy Extensions:**

- Have a conversation with families. When do the children like to be quiet – cuddling while reading, getting ready for bed, listening to mommy or daddy sing a song. When do they like to be loud – playing on the playground, making music with items from kitchen cupboards, singing a loud song like, “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” This book can lead to a great conversation about when it is okay to be quiet and when it is okay to be loud. Talk about “inside” and “outside” voices.
- Play the quiet game, “Who can be quiet the longest?” Challenge children to be quiet without making a peep – who will giggle first? This can become a very silly game, especially if you choose one child (and parent) to stand in the middle of the circle and act silly to try to get the other children to giggle.
- Choose an object to be “Homer” for this game, obviously a stuffed kitty is perfect! Have everyone close their eyes and choose one child to “Hide the Homer”. When ready, everyone should search for Homer. The child that finds Homer gets to hide it in the next round. Do your best to make sure every child receives a turn.
- Visit the local library with your families. Have each child bring one stuffed animal along (a friend like Homer 😻). The children can tour the library and parents can ask their child, “where would your (kitty, bear, turtle, etc.) like to visit? Where do you think is the quietest spot in the library?” Any time you visit a library with your families, take the opportunity to encourage them to get a library card. Before your library
visit, find out what they need to bring for proof of identification to get a card. See the Parent Education section for other ideas about library visits.

**Literacy Craft:**

- **Paper Bag Kitties:**
  - Have children create their own kittens to bring with them to their “quiet place.” Provide children with a lunch size paper bag, yarn, googly eyes, markers/crayons. Let them decorate their brown bags to resemble Homer or another kitty of their choice.

- **Quiet Place to Rest:**
  - Give each child a shoe box (without the top), paint, markers/crayons, craft supplies like stickers, glitter, feathers, etc. Using these supplies, they will create a quiet place for their kitty to sleep.
  - Paint the outside of the box and allow drying. Decorate the box with the provided craft supplies.

**Science:**

- **Map Skills, Following Clues:**
  - Children love creating maps or going on simple scavenger hunts.
  - Decide if you can safely do a parent/child hunt inside or outside at your meeting center.
  - For younger children: Create a scavenger hunt using colors or shapes. Cut out pieces of construction paper using primary colors: red, green, blue, yellow, orange. You may want to cut them as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, etc. Place them around the room. Give each child a piece of paper that shows how many circles, triangles, etc. are hidden. For example, you would draw two red circles and three green triangles if you had hidden two red circles and three green triangles. Families can search together for the hidden shapes.
  - For older children: Create a scavenger hunt by creating four to five simple clues. Think of simple phrases and/or activities that children will connect to by thinking about their daily routine at the child care center. Here is an example:
    1. First Clue: When you visit this area, you might sing this
song: “This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands. This is the way we wash our hands before we eat our snack.” Children will go to the sink area to find their second clue.

2. Second Clue: Sit quietly in a circle and listen to me read. Children will go to the area where you hold story time.

3. Continue listing clues like this. What could they find at the end? Homer or another object that is familiar and important to them.

**Parent Education:**

- Visiting the library with parents is a very important activity. (If possible, visit a bookstore with your families, too. You can hold an incentive for families, such as, so much Parent and Child Together Time equals a gift card at the bookstore, etc. You’ll be surprised how many parents have never had the opportunity to visit a bookstore. It’s a great “parent only” field trip.)

- If you visit the library, you may want to create a “Library Scavenger Hunt.” Go to the library first without your parents. Ask for any information they have on library rules, how to check out books, get a library card, etc. Explain to them that you would like to bring parents to visit the library to complete a scavenger hunt. Create a scavenger hunt (see sample – you will have to modify it for your library). You might want to put parents into small groups for this activity.

- **Reading Strategy:** Teach parents to use the 5Ws (who, what, when, where, and why) and the 1H (how) when they read fiction or non fiction. (Make sure you have a conversation about the difference between fiction and non fiction, don’t assume parents know what that means.) Model this activity with *Homer, The Library Cat.*
  - **Who:** Homer
  - **What:** Goes on an adventure to find a quiet place
  - **When:** During the Day
  - **Where:** First his home, then throughout the town, and finally at the library.
  - **Why:** He is a quiet cat who lives with a quiet lady. He is startled by a loud noise and scared from his home.
  - **How:** When he is startled by the noise, he falls out his window. He wanders through the town from place to place until he finds the library.

This is a valuable strategy for readers to learn because it allows them to quickly isolate important information. Once the 5Ws and 1H are discovered, readers can fill in details and examples using “proof” from the text.

**Snack:**

- Eat like a Kitty! Older children will enjoy imitating how a kitty would eat – remember, Homer wakes up for a snack in the library. Fill a small paper bowl with Cheerios. Allow children to dip their faces down to nibble on the Cheerios – eating like a kitty!

- Homer visits a train - Create a train with rectangular shaped crackers.
- Spread peanut butter or cream cheese on a few crackers. Connect them with pretzel sticks. Add Cheerios for wheels. Decorate with raisins, craisins, etc.

- This snack idea is also featured in the Literacy Explorer Kit *Meeow*.

- In addition, 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.
Library Scavenger Hunt

1. Go to the front desk and ask the staff person if they have an informational brochure to help you answer these questions.
   a. What days and times is the library open?

   b. How can you get a library card?

   c. Do they offer story times for children? What are the age groups?

   d. Do you notice any special rules that patrons should be familiar with or that surprised you?

2. (If needed) ask a staff person to show you how to use the card catalog. Experiment using the online catalog. Search for:
   a. A book about bedtime routines. (Hint: what key words would you use?)
   b. Homer, The Library Cat by Reeve Lindbergh
   c. A book collection, Maine Stories for Maine Children A Raising Readers Collection
   d. Any topic you would like:
3. Where is the non fiction section? What do you notice about it?

4. Where is the fiction section? What do you notice about it?

5. Does the library offer a section that has newspapers, magazines, etc.?

6. Visit the children's room. What would appeal to a child about this space?

7. Browse the children's books. Do you see any that would appeal to your child? Write down the title and author, so that you can look for the book(s) when you return.

8. Does the library have a book club or do they offer any reading programs?

9. Would you like to be in a book club? Why or Why not?
Parent and Child Together Time Ideas

HOMER The Library Cat by Reeve Lindbergh

READ THE BOOK:

- HOMER The Library Cat tells a sweet story about a cat who wants a quiet place.
- When you read this story with your child, have them guess where Homer might go next on his adventure and what sound might scare him away.
- Are there any noises that your child finds “scary” or too loud? Talk about how Homer feels with your child and then ask your child how they feel about the noises that bother them.
- There are a lot of details in the book’s illustrations. After you read the story once, enjoy looking at the pictures and pointing out things to each other.

PLACE CONNECTIONS:

- In the story Homer, The Library Cat Homer goes on many adventures. Look at the story and list the places that Homer visits. Can you find pictures in a magazine that connect to the places he visits?
- For example, a red truck for the fire station, a picture of an envelope or package for the post office.
- Help your child to cut out the pictures. Glue them to a piece of paper. How can you connect the different places? Look at the illustrations on the opening and closing pages of the book for ideas.
- You may want to change this activity and make it about your child. Where would they like to visit or what are their favorite places? Look for those pictures in magazines and create a page with their favorite places.
This Explorer Bag Contains the Following:

- Reading Tips & Developmental Information For Your 4 Year Old
- Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) Idea Sheet
- Supplies You Will Need For PACT Ideas:
  - Large sheet of paper
  - Old Magazines
  - Scissors, glue
  - Markers/crayons
- Journal Activity Sheet
<table>
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<tr>
<th>JOURNAL - <em>HOMER The Library Cat</em> by Reeve Lindbergh</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When is your child quiet? When is your child loud?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Do you think your child has a favorite place in the house where they are most comfortable?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Do you have a favorite place that you like to go to be quiet?</th>
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</table>
I'll write back to you here...
References

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


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

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.healthychildren.org

Baby Center
www.babycenter.com

Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy
www.barbarabushfoundation.com

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

The Perpetual Preschool
www.perpetualpreschool.com

What To Expect
www.whatttoexpect.com

www.barbarabushfoundation.com

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& Maine's Raising Readers
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