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
**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

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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.
**Kiss the Cow!** by Phyllis Root

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:
✓ 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

A Collaboration of the Maine Family Literacy Initiative & Raising Readers
**Read the Book:**

- *Kiss the Cow* is a fun book to read with families with an important message – that the words “thank you” are magical.
- There is a lot to study in this book, so make sure that you share the pictures with all of the families. It is nice to pause as you get to each family to allow them to take the whole picture in. You can reinforce this message by saying as you pause, “Everyone will get a turn to see the pictures.”
- You may want to ask children to guess, “How many children do you think Mama May has?” “Why do you think Annalisa would not kiss the cow?” “Would you want to milk or a kiss a cow?”

**Literacy Extensions:**

- What are the magic words in the story? They are in the song Mama May sings to Luella. What are the magic words when someone does something nice for you? “Thank you”. Ask the children, “How does Luella feel when she does not receive the magic words?” Have a conversation at circle time about how we can say “thank you” throughout the day. The Parent Education section focuses on teaching manners to preschoolers.
- Play this game with the families to teach the children a lesson in manners (from ehow.com)

**Miss Bea Polite Honey Treats**

Place a seat at the front of the circle time area. Pick a child to be Miss Bea. The child should sit with her back to the class and close his/her eyes. Place an item under the chair that is the imaginary stand-in for the “honey treat”. Pick a student to take the “honey pot”. The children sing, “Miss Bea Polite, you’re very sweet. May we please have a honey treat?” He/she sings, “Yes, you may,” and the class sings, “Thank you, thank you.” Miss Bea has three chances to figure out which child took the “honey treat”. This is fun, and children will want to play this again with other children taking turns!

- Sing this song at story time:

  **This is the way…**
  
  This is the way we milk the cows
  Milk the cows, milk the cows
  This is the way we milk the cows so early in the morning.
  (ask families other verses they could add based on the story)

**Literacy Craft:**

- Luella wears a bell around her neck. Make Cow Bells!
  - Collect small milk containers and clean them.
  - Paint and decorate the containers.
  - Poke a hole in the top of the container. Place a ribbon or piece of...
string through the hole and attach a small bell, so it is inside the “cow bell”.

- Create Luella!
  - Provide families with a template of a cow. Have them trace and cut their cows from a piece of cardstock or cardboard.
  - Paint the cows and allow to dry. Glue the cow to a large piece of cardstock or cardboard. Provide the children with “hay” (shredded paper or raffia paper from a craft store) and white glue. Dip the hay into the glue and decorate the paper. If you have extra bells from the cow bell activity, you may want to attach one to the cow picture.

**Science:**

- Milking Station:
  - Fill a latex glove with milk and tie at the top. Poke a small hole in the fingers. You can attach more than one glove to a rope (set up like a clothesline outside or prepare an area in the childcare center.) Children can “milk” the cow. Discuss where milk comes from.
  - What can you make with milk? BUTTER! ICE CREAM!
    - To make butter, you will need a jar with a tight cover and heavy cream. Pour the cream into the jar and tightly screw the lid on. Shake the cream for about 10 minutes to make butter. Pass the jar around so that parents can shake it with their child. Serve the butter at snack time!
    - To make ice cream, you will need:
      - 1 tablespoon sugar
      - 1/2 cup milk or half & half (makes about 1 scoop)
      - 1/4 teaspoon vanilla
      - 6 tablespoons rock salt
      - 1 pint-size plastic food storage bag (e.g., Ziploc)
      - 1 gallon-size plastic food storage bag
      - Ice cubes
    - Fill the large bag half full of ice, and add the rock salt. Seal the bag. Put milk, vanilla, and sugar into the small bag, and seal it. Place the small bag inside the large one, and seal it again carefully. Shake until the mixture is ice cream, which takes about 5 minutes. Wipe off the top of the small bag, and then open it carefully.
    - For Dairy Free Ice Cream, make with rice or soy milk.

**Parent Education:**

- Many times throughout a young child’s life, we make this statement to them, “What are the magic words?” (please, thank you, your welcome) Do children really understand why they are magic? What clues in the story tell the reader they are magic? Hint: How does Luella look when the magic words are not said?
- Lead parents through a conversation on this topic and discuss with them...
how they teach their child “manners”. Encourage parents to read the book with their child pointing out how Luella looks (and feels) because Annalisa does not give her the magic words.

- Lead a discussion about how manners can be developed with children. Developing manners is “learned behavior”. There are times throughout the day that are perfect for practicing manners, such as snack and dinner time, toy pick up time. Parents are role models for their children, and they should be sure to say the “magic words” to their child when they are being helpful.

- Teach parents this silly song to help teach table manners. All songs are listed in the PACT Idea take home sheet.

  Chewing quietly, chewing quietly
  Do not slurp, do not slurp,
  We must say excuse me
  We must say excuse me
  When we burp, when we burp

  (Sing to the tune of Frere Jacques)

### Snack:

- Serve milk (dairy and soy), along with bread, cheese, and homemade butter and ice-cream (see Science section)! Have the children take turns serving and everyone can practice their “manners”! Be sure to accommodate any allergic needs which might mean modifying your snack menu, so that everyone feels included. Remember to sing your “Chewing Quietly” song first!

- 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!
Parent and Child Together Time Ideas  
*Kiss the Cow!* by Phyllis Root

**READ THE BOOK:**

- *Kiss the Cow* is a book that teaches an important lesson, saying *Thank You!*
- Take your time reading this book to your child. Enjoy looking at the pictures. Try to guess how many children Mama May really has.
- Talk with your child about the pictures. How does Luella look when Annalisa does not say thank you? How does it feel when someone is not nice to you?

**MAKE A BARN:**

- Cut a hole in the front of a milk container to create a “barn door”
- Paint the container red and decorate it using markers to look like a barn.

**SING THESE SONGS:**

**Chewing Quietly**

Chewing quietly, chewing quietly  
Do not slurp, do not slurp,  
We must say excuse me  
We must say excuse me  
When we burp, when we burp

This is the way…

This is the way we milk the cows  
Milk the cows, milk the cows  
This is the way we milk the cows so early in the morning.
This Explorer Bag Contains the Following:

- Reading Tips & Developmental Information For Your Baby & Toddler
- Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) Idea Sheet
- Supplies You Will Need For PACT Ideas:
  - Milk Carton
  - Scissors
  - Red Paint, Paint Brush
  - Markers
- Journal Activity Sheet
JOURNAL - *Kiss the Cow* by Phyllis Root

What did you like about the book *Kiss the Cow*? How do you teach your child manners?

What did you talk about with your child while you read the book and after you read it?

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...
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

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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.whatttoexpect.com