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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Books</th>
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| **Newborn** | Baby Bear’s Books  
Melissa Sweet  
*What Does Baby See?*  
Begin Smart  
Vroom Vroom Maisy  
Lucy Cousins |
| **2 months** | Look at That!  
Guido Van Genechten |
| **4 months** | I Love Colors  
Margaret Miller |
| **6 months** | All About Me  
DK Publishing |
| **9 months** | Peek-a-Boo What?  
Begin Smart |
| **12 months** | Look at You!  
Kathy Henderson |
| **15 months** | Knees and Toes  
Rookie Toddler |
| **18 months** | Meeow and the Little Chairs  
Sebastien Braun |
| **2 years** | Pouch!  
David Ezra Stein |
| **3 years** | The Seals on the Bus  
Lenny Hort |
| **4 years** | Kiss the Cow!  
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.
Meeow and the little chairs by Sebastien Braun

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:
✓ Read to your toddler every day. Make it part of your routine and have a set time to read: before bed or naptime, after a bath.
✓ Cuddle while you read – make your toddler feel safe and loved.
✓ Reading helps build vocabulary and stimulates a child’s imagination. It also helps improve his/her communication skills.
✓ Read with expression – use different voices and make faces that match what is going on in the story.
✓ Store books in your diaper bag – they are great to have while stuck in traffic or waiting for an appointment.

For your 18 Month Old:
✓ Don’t be surprised if your toddler walks off while you are reading or wants to stand or sit next to you. (Since learning to walk, who wants to sit still?)
✓ Story time may last for only a few minutes. That’s okay – grab a few minutes to read when your toddler shows interest and keep your set reading time.
✓ Interactive books work best, touch and feel, turning dials, stories that move quickly.
✓ Let them read at their own pace, looking at pictures and asking questions for as long as they want to.
✓ Encourage play that allows them to use their imagination and creativity. Start acting out stories!
✓ Simple games are fun to play! Try puzzles and shape sorting.

Developmental Milestones You May Notice:
✓ Builds towers of two to four blocks. Imitates scribbling.
✓ Can feed themselves by using a cup and spoon.
✓ Points to familiar objects. May try to name them.
✓ Starts saying “my” as they feel ownership towards certain people and favorite objects.
✓ Language may explode at 18 months and they use a few common words
✓ Takes off some simple clothing items, mittens or socks.
### Read the Book:
- Toddlers will love this book that shows Meeow and friends working together to build an imaginary train.
- What do you notice about the friend’s names? It is the sound the animal makes, and the spelling of “Meeow” gives the reader the opportunity to make the sound a kitty would make.
- Colors are mentioned frequently in this book. Be sure when you are reading the book to mention the colors. For example, “Meeow looks in his yellow bag….can you find his yellow bag?” Children will love to interact during story time by taking turns to point out the different colors.

### Literacy Extensions:
- Read the story and then set up your train! Gather chairs and noise makers and reenact the train from the story. (Don’t forget your green flags!)
- Take the story to the next level – create a train station! Create train tickets and hats during craft time. Have children begin their journey at the station. The imaginary train takes them – where? Choose a location that fits with your current curriculum. Are you exploring colors? Have the children arrive at “Rainbow City”. Activities can be set up for their arrival. Punch their ticket and they “ride” the train back to their home location. Change destinations and modify your classroom to match the destination.
- Introduce Music: Play the song – “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad.”

### Literacy Craft:
- **Train Whistle**
  - Give each child a toilet paper tube and have them decorate for their train whistle. Cut a hole about halfway down the tube. Cover one end with wax paper and hold in place with a rubber band. The tube should make a sound for an imaginary “train whistle”
- **Train Ticket**
  - Cut rectangular pieces of cardstock. Have the children decorate them for their “train tickets”. Punch a hole in their ticket (perhaps as a shape or letter) as they reach their different destinations.
- **Green Flag (also provided in PACT Idea sheet)**
  - Provide each child with a piece of green fabric or green cardstock. Cut to triangle shape and attach to wooden stick (paint stirrer) or for a smaller green flag plastic straw.
- **Create your own Train Car.**
  - Give each child a shoe box. Have them paint it a color of their choice or assign a color for the larger train. Once the paint is
| **Music & Movement:** | dry, children may decorate their trains with stickers, markers, glitter, etc.  
| | o Punch a hole on either end of the train car. Using string connect the different cars. Children can take turns being the “conductor”. Trains can be disconnected to take home. |  
| **Music & Movement:** | • There are so many songs for a train theme! Children will pick up these catchy tunes quickly. Sing the songs while the train is “moving”, have the children march to the beat, and listen to the music while creating crafts for this kit.  
| | • If possible, provide each parent with a CD containing the songs you listen to with this theme.  
| | • Here is a sampling of songs to share and sing from [www.preschooleducation.com](http://www.preschooleducation.com) |  
| **Down by the Station** | Down by the station early in the morning,  
| | See the little train cars all in a row.  
| | Listen to the engineer pull the big whistle.  
| | Toot-toot, toot-toot! Off we go! |  
| **Choo-choo Train** | Choo-choo-choo-choo,  
| | The train puffs down the track. (Bend arms at elbows and imitate chugging.)  
| | Now it's going forward. (Chug leaning forward.)  
| | Now it's chugging back. (Chug arms back to sitting position.)  
| | Now the bell is ringing. (Imitate ringing clapper of bell.)  
| | Now the whistle blows. (Imitate pulling chain of train whistle up and down.) Chugging, chugging, chugging, chugging. (Move bent arms back and forth.) Down the track it goes! |  
| **Little Red Caboose** | Little red caboose, chug chug chug  
| | Little red caboose, chug chug chug  
| | Little red caboose, behind the train, train, train  
| | Smokestack on the, back, back, back  
| | Running down the, track, track, track  
| | Little red caboose, behind the train |
### Parent Education:

- Ask the parents if they can list the different themes of this book: friendship, colors, imaginary play, animal sounds are just a few. How do they make connections between the story (text) and real life? Making connections while you read is an important reading strategy. It helps you understand the text more clearly and helps you remember what you read.

- Help parents make connections to this story and model how they can do this for their child. For example,
  - “This story reminds me of my neighborhood when I was a little girl. I lived by a train track. My friends and I played a game when the trains came by. We guessed how many trains cars would go by and we would count them.”
  - “I like the chairs the animals use to make their train in this story. You have colored chairs at your school. What is your favorite color? Do you have a chair that you always like to sit in? How do you share it with your friends?”

### Snack:

- 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.

- 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!
READ THE BOOK:

- Read *Meeow* to your child more than once. There is so much to talk about! Colors, friendship, animals, animal sounds, and using your imagination!
- Ask your child questions as you read the story, such as, “Can you find the yellow bag that Meeow is holding?” What do you think the name of the cow is? (The story follows a pattern. Each animal’s name is the sound they make)

SET UP YOUR TRAIN!:

- Using your imagination is an important part of your play with your child.
- Encourage your child to help you “design” your own train. What can you put together to make the train cars? Placemats, pillows, small towels...
- Join your child on the train ride. Sing a train song, visit an imaginary location. For example:
  - “Let’s go to Antarctica! Brrrr…it’s getting cold; I better put my hat on. Look, do you see that Polar Bear!”

TRAIN CRAFTS:

- Green Flag (just like Moo’s flag)
  - Cut a piece of green fabric or paper into the shape of a triangle. Attach to a drinking straw.
- Shape Train
  - Provide your child with the following shapes in different colors: large rectangle, two circles, one square, and one triangle.
  - Help your child create their “train”. Decorate it with crayons or stickers.
SONG SHEET

Down by the Station

Down by the station early in the morning,
See the little train cars all in a row.
Listen to the engineer pull the big whistle.
Toot-toot, toot-toot! Off we go!

Choo-choo Train
Choo-choo-choo-choo,
The train puffs down the track.
(Bend arms at elbows and imitate chugging.)
   Now it's going forward.
   (Chug leaning forward.)
   Now it's chugging back.
   (Chug arms back to sitting position.)
   Now the bell is ringing.
   (Imitate ringing clapper of bell.)
   Now the whistle blows.
   (Imitate pulling chain of train whistle up and down.)
   Chugging, chugging, chugging, chugging.
   (Move bent arms back and forth.)
   Down the track it goes!

Little Red Caboose
Little red caboose, chug chug chug
Little red caboose, chug chug chug
Little red caboose, behind the train, train, train
Smokestack on the, back, back, back
Running down the, track, track, track
Little red caboose, behind the train

Peanut Sat on the Railroad Track
Oh, the peanut sat on the railroad track,
   His heart was all a flutter.
   Along came the 615,
   Toot, toot, peanut butter.

(You can also do this song with: lemon – lemonade, apple – applesauce, etc.)

www.preschooleducation.com

A Collaboration of the Maine Family Literacy Initiative & Raising Readers
Pamela Cote 2012
This Explorer Bag Contains the Following:

- Reading Tips & Developmental Information For Your 18 Month Old
- Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) Idea Sheet
- Supplies You Will Need For PACT Ideas:
  - Green cardstock or fabric
  - Drinking Straw
  - Different colored construction paper, scissors, glue stick, crayons
- Journal Activity Sheet
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<th>JOURNAL – Meeow and the little chairs by Sebastien Braun</th>
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<th>What did you like about the book <em>Meeow and the little chairs</em>? What do you think your child’s favorite animal was?</th>
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<th>How do you use your imagination when you play with your child?</th>
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<th>What PACT activity did you do with your child? What went well? What didn’t go so well?</th>
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</table>
I’ll write back to you here...
LITERACY EXPLORER KITS 2011

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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

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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