RAISING READERS

STORY HOUR KIT

A barnyard mask and playacting activity to be used with a read aloud of *Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Mud* by Lynn Plourde and illustrated by John Schoenherr (Down East Books) featured in the anthology, *Raising Readers: A Medley of Maine Children’s Stories.*
ABOUT RAISING READERS

It’s a fact that reading to young children makes them smarter, healthier, and better prepared for life. It is this simple truth that led Maine’s Libra Foundation to create Raising Readers, a statewide program that gives books—free of charge—to all Maine children between the ages of birth and five at well-child healthcare visits.

Through the simple act of placing books in children’s hands, Raising Readers reinforces the powerful understanding that literacy begins well before children enter kindergarten. By integrating books into birth and primary care, the program also supports the well-documented link between health and literacy.

More info: www.raisingreaders.org/about_us/

ABOUT THE KIT

This Story Hour Kit was created to celebrate the publication of Raising Readers’ tenth and last anthology, Raising Readers: A Medley of Maine Children’s Stories.

This anthology of five stories by Maine authors and illustrators published by Down East Books will be given to all Maine libraries and distributed statewide to five-year-olds at their well-child healthcare visit for a year. The kit also serves as a celebration of Raising Readers’ fifteenth anniversary and its message about supporting the importance of reading aloud to children from birth.

Raising Readers encourages partnering with one of your community’s doctors or other healthcare providers on a story hour featuring one of the books in this year’s anthology as a way to help us celebrate our program’s anniversary and the importance of early literacy. They could talk about Raising Readers and read the featured book aloud. We have included tips for involving a doctor or healthcare provider in a story hour at the end of this kit; however, doing so is not expected or required—just have fun using this kit to create a story hour that you know your community would appreciate and enjoy!

The activity in this kit (found on page 8) invites families to color in masks of barnyard animals and pretend to be stuck in the “rud.”
A barnyard mask and playacting activity to be used with Raising Readers: A Medley of Maine Children's Stories or Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud by Lynn Plourde and illustrated by John Schoenherr (Down East Books).

ABOUT THE BOOK

Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud
By Lynn Plourde
Illustrated by John Schoenherr
Published by Down East Books
Age range: 4 - 8 Years

It’s mud season, but there’s more than mud in the middle of the road! Pigs, hens, sheep, and bulls are there too! That won’t do. For a car to get through, somebody’s gotta shoo! But who? Plourde’s trademark style blends alliteration and rhyme in a story that children—and adults—enjoy reading aloud.

The book can be found at your library or within the anthology, Raising Readers: A Medley of Maine Children’s Stories (Down East Books).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lynn Plourde is the author of more than 25 children’s books, including Wild Child, At One in a Place Called Maine, and You’re Wearing THAT to School?! She also co-authored the graphic novel Lost Trail: Nine Days Alone in the Wilderness with Donn Fendler. Lynn’s books have won a variety of honors, including Chicago Public Library Best of the Best, Junior Library Guild selection, Smithsonian Magazine Notable Book, IPPY Bronze Medal, Lupine Honor Awards, Los Angeles Times Best Children’s Book, Maine Literary Award, and Oppenheim Gold Award. Lynn is a Maine native who grew up in Skowhegan and currently lives in Winthrop with her husband, Paul Knowles. She enjoys reading, walks, snowshoeing, and kayaking.

One day, children’s book author Lynn Plourde looked out the window in Madison, Maine, and saw eight piglets running down the road. Where in the world had those pigs come from, and where were they going? Later that day, Lynn was teaching a writing lesson to elementary school students. She used the pigs as an example of a great way to start a story.

This writing advice was so good that Lynn rushed home to write those piglets into the story, Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud. Lynn had been trying for thirteen years to publish a book for children. When she wrote the chorus “Oh, no. Won’t do. Gotta shoo. But who?” she thought she might have the read-aloud she had been waiting for. The publisher agreed that the chorus, rhymes, and made-up words were great, but they did not like the skunk. Skunk? What skunk? Lynn had to politely ask the skunk to leave the story, and then the publisher happily offered to make her story as a picture book.
WHAT YOU MIGHT DO - ONE MONTH OR MORE IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT

1. Locate a copy of the anthology *Raising Readers: A Medley of Maine Children’s Stories* (donated to Maine libraries by Raising Readers) or *Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud* by Lynn Plourde and illustrated by John Schoenherr (Down East Books).

2. Copy and display the Story Hour Poster (found on page 14) in this kit, hand it out in your community, post it on social media, and include it in a display. List the event in newsletters and online calendars with copy such as:

   Join us for a Raising Readers Story Hour to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the program that has given over two million books to Maine children at their well-child visits! (Use next sentence if you partner with a doctor or healthcare provider on this story hour). __________ (name) will be joining us to tell us more about the program and why reading aloud to children from birth is so important. Together we will be reading *Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud* by Lynn Plourde and illustrated by John Schoenherr (Down East Books) and making masks of animals stuck in mud in the “rud”!

3. Consider a display of other books by Lynn Plourde or those with a barnyard theme to inspire children to borrow Plourde’s books or those with a theme like that in *Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud*!

4. Gather popsicle sticks or straws to use as mask handles (1 for each anticipated participant).
WHAT YOU MIGHT DO - ONE WEEK OR MORE IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT:

1 Print out multiple copies of the *Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud* masks included in this kit on heavy paper if possible.

2 Decide whether you want to pre-cut the masks and the eye holes.

3 Consider whether you will use the masks to act out the story during your read aloud.

4 Remind everyone in your network about the upcoming Raising Readers Story Hour event.

5 Gather child-safe scissors, crayons and clear tape (for all to share).

WHAT YOU MIGHT DO - THE DAY OF THE EVENT

Getting Ready

- Place crayons, scissors, tape, popsicle sticks or straws, and masks on your craft table for all to share.

- If you plan to have families act out the book on the second reading, make sure you have a spot clear to serve as the "rud."

Read Aloud & Activity

- Have participants pick out an animal mask (a pig, a sheep, a bull, or a hen) as they arrive.

- Share some thoughts about Raising Readers using the Raising Readers Talking Points (*found on page 7*). If you have a guest doctor or healthcare provider, introduce him or her and have them share some thoughts about Raising Readers using the Talking Points; at the end of the story hour (before crafting), you can ask families if they have any questions about the program for the guest doctor or healthcare provider.
A barnyard mask and playacting activity to be used with Raising Readers: A Medley of Maine Children’s Stories or Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud by Lynn Plourde and illustrated by John Schoenherr (Down East Books).

“Pigs in the rud!”
Grandma said.

“TIME FOR SUP!”

• Explain that Raising Readers: A Medley of Maine Children’s Stories is the anthology being given to Maine five-year-olds at their well-child visits in the coming year. If you read from the stand-alone Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud, explain that the book is part of the anthology and show participants a copy of the anthology if possible.

• Read Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud. Consider acting out the story on the second reading.

• Ask volunteers to act as animals in mud in the middle of the “rud” while you read the story for the second time. Show them where the “rud” is and invite those with pig masks up to “oink” when they are first mentioned in the story, then those with hen masks to “cluck,” then those with sheep masks to “bah,” and finally those with bull masks to “lowww.” Other participants can then hold up their masks and continue making noise throughout the story. Anyone who doesn’t have a mask on can flap their hands in front of themselves whenever you read “shoo.” Send everyone back to their seats when you yell, ‘Time for sup!’ This should make for some silly story hour chaos!

• Invite all participants to the craft table to color their barnyard animal masks.

Oh no. Won’t do. Gotta shoo. But who?
“I’ll shoo. That’s who,” Brother said.
TALKING POINTS FOR RAISING READERS STORY HOURS

Celebrating 15 Years of Books for Maine’s Youngest Children

- Studies have shown that reading to young children – even for just 20 minutes a day – helps make them smarter, healthier, and more successful later in life.
- Knowing that literacy begins well before kindergarten, the Libra Foundation created the Raising Readers program in 2000 as a way to give books – for free – to all Maine children from birth through age five.
- Books are given to families at well-child visits and after birth, which helps reinforce the connection between health and literacy.
- All Maine hospitals and healthcare practices that see children participate in the program to ensure that every child in all 16 counties receives a collection of free high-quality, age-appropriate books before age five.
- The program is a collaboration between MaineHealth and EMHS, the two largest health systems in the state.
- Raising Readers is one-of-a-kind; it’s the only statewide early literacy program in the United States.
- Now in its 15th year, Raising Readers has reached over 228,000 individual children and given out more than 2.3 million books.

PARTNERING WITH A LOCAL DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

If you decide to partner with a local doctor or healthcare provider for this Raising Readers Story Hour, the following are specific steps you might want to follow:

ONE MONTH OR MORE IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT

- Contact a healthcare practice that participates in Raising Readers. Visit the Raising Readers website (www.raisingreaders.org/about_us/participating_sites/) to locate a practice near you. All Maine and other healthcare providers who see children for well child care participate in the program, so you can always ask some of your regular family visitors for suggestions on who to contact.

- Contact the selected practice and ask for the “Practice Manager.” Explain that you would like to hold a story hour celebrating Raising Readers’ 15th anniversary and ask if one of the doctors or other healthcare providers would like to participate by reading the story and talking about Raising Readers. Let the Practice Manager know that you will have talking points on Raising Readers available in advance, and that you would like the doctor or other healthcare provider to do a read-aloud.

- Once a doctor has agreed to participate, share with him or her the Raising Readers Talking Points (see sidebar at left) and An Event Overview for Local Doctors or Other Healthcare Providers (found on page 13) to help facilitate his or her participation. Encourage the doctor or other healthcare provider to come to the event dressed in a white coat and stethoscope - this goes a long way to identifying his or her job in the eyes of a child. Ask how you should introduce him or her.
BARNYARD ANIMAL MASKS

Can you pretend to be a barnyard animal in the middle of the “rud” like the animals in the picture book, *Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud*? If needed, cut out your mask and have an adult help cut eye holes. Then tape a straw or popsicle stick on the back of the mask. When we read the story for the second time today, you will be asked to use your mask to act like your animal! We will color our animals at the craft table once story time is done.
RAISING READERS STORY HOUR:
An Event Overview for Local Doctors and Other Healthcare Providers

Date:

Time:

Location:

Thank you for considering a visit to our library to promote Raising Readers to our families and to celebrate Raising Readers’ 15th anniversary! Here is an outline of what will happen at the event:

The Book

The featured book at our event will be Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud by Lynn Plourde and illustrated by John Schoenherr (Down East Books), which is in the anthology, Raising Readers: A Medley of Maine Children’s Stories. This anthology is the upcoming selection for five-year-olds. Let Raising Readers know if you need a copy to review.

Preparation

• Look over the Raising Readers Talking Points (attached) and prepare to talk for five minutes or less about why you recommend reading aloud to children every day from birth.

• Get familiar with the book, Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud by Lynn Plourde and illustrated by John Schoenherr (Down East Books). Let me know if you would like to read it aloud or whether you prefer that I do so.

• Think about what you might wear to the event that makes families “see” you as a doctor. Raising Readers tells us that wearing a stethoscope, for example, makes you instantly recognizable to families.

• Send me a short bio that will help me introduce you.

The Event

This is what we have planned for the event:

• There will be a craft table laid out with scissors, tape, crayons, and barnyard masks for an activity after the read aloud.

• I will introduce you and you will give your own rendition of the Raising Readers Talking Points.

• I will explain that Raising Readers: A Medley of Maine Children’s Stories is the anthology that is being given to all Maine five-year-olds at their well-child visits in the coming year. If we are reading the stand-alone Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud, I will explain that the book is part of the anthology and show the anthology.

• You or I will read Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud the first time. I will hold a second reading where I will invite the kids with their barnyard masks to help us act out the story.

• I will invite parents to ask you and library staff about Raising Readers and reading aloud to children.

• I will prompt the craft activity.

Thank you so much for participating with our library as we celebrate Raising Readers’ 15th Anniversary!
Celebrating 15 years and over 2.3 million books given to Maine children!

Date:

Time:

Location: