

READING rockets Toolkit

Outreach Resources
for PBS Stations

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This toolkit was created by WETA, which is solely responsible for its content.

Outreach Tips

suggestions for How to Use Reading Rockets

There are several ways to use Reading Rockets resources — whether for your own professional development, in discussion groups for parents in your community, or in your Ready To Learn workshops. Here are just a few suggestions:

Reading Rockets Web Site

The Web site www.ReadingRockets.org provides a variety of articles, research reports, a daily news service, and other resources. It will help you learn about the fundamentals of literacy, better prepare you to answer questions that may come up in your workshops, and provide you with up-to-the-minute information about literacy research, legislative activities, and work that is being done in communities across the country. For more information, go to Section 3:

Online Resources.

Television Series

The five-part television series ***Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers*** and the companion **Teachers' Guide** cover the foundations of literacy from pre-school through third grade. The series has started airing in many of your markets and is doing very well. The audience feedback has been quite positive, both from educators and parents. If your station has not yet scheduled the series, try to get your programmer to take a look at it. If your station did not record it in October, contact Susan Petroff at spetroff@weta.com for a Beta SP (broadcast) copy of the series. WETA is sending them out on loan to facilitate dubbing.

The series covers the five fundamental areas of literacy identified by the National Reading Panel:

- 1 The Roots of Reading** — Pre-Reading Skills
- 2 Sounds and Symbols** — Phonemic Awareness and Phonics
- 3 Fluent Reading** — The Ability to Decode Quickly
- 4 Writing and Spelling** — Motivation and Vocabulary Building
- 5 Reading for Meaning** — Comprehension

The series has school record rights for one year from broadcast. Encourage your partners to tape the series when your station broadcasts it or provide them with ordering information. For more information about the series, go to Section 4: **Reading Rockets Background.**

Print Guide

Reading Rockets advisor Louise Spear-Swerling of Southern Connecticut State University wrote the companion **Teachers' Guide**. Each chapter covers one episode of the series. The information is comprehensive and includes "Typical Achievements of Children" by topic and suggested strategies for helping children develop their reading skills. A copy of the guide is enclosed in this toolkit.

Series Web Site

The companion Web site — www.pbs.org/launchingreaders — is especially targeted to parents. Among other things, you will find downloadable one-page tip sheets for parents. These are great for large functions where fliers may be too expensive. Copies of the tip sheets can be found in Section 3: **Online Resources**.

The series, with the accompanying **Teachers' Guide**, is a good resource for caregivers and teachers, something that can be used informally or for in-service work with a facilitator.

Workshop Materials

- Six video modules of 3–4 minutes in length have been selected from the series *Launching Young Readers* and placed on the enclosed VHS tape for your use in your already designed Ready To Learn workshops. These modules can be used to strengthen the television-book connection (learning triangle) in your workshops by enabling you to show “best practices” to your workshop participants. Go to Section 2: **Reading Rockets Video Modules** for workshop leader guidelines and handouts that have been created to go along with each of the six modules.
- These materials can be shared with trainers at your partner organizations. The print materials are all downloadable at www.ReadingRockets.org/stations.php. All you will need to do is make dubs of the enclosed VHS tape.
- The **Family Guide**, written in Spanish and English, can be used in all kinds of venues, including RTL workshops. It contains tips for helping children learn how to read, as well as suggestions for how parents can get involved in their children's education. The guide also includes valuable information about using library and web resources. We have a limited number of copies of the **Family Guide** available for your use. See the order form at the end of this section for more details. Also, this guide is downloadable at www.ReadingRockets.org/stations.php.

Community Forums and Parent Discussion Groups

Provide a venue for parents to watch one or more episodes of the series and participate in a facilitated discussion group. This can be a great service to parents who would like to get more involved in their children's literacy development; it's especially helpful for parents and other caregivers whose children are *struggling* readers.

- **Partner with your local libraries.** You can schedule just one viewing or a weekly or monthly series of forums — i.e., *Helping Your Child Learn How to Read*. The library and your station can promote these events, your station can provide the tapes, and either organization can arrange to find a reading specialist to facilitate a discussion after the viewing. This is a relatively easy activity that can go a long way toward giving parents the tools they need to help their children. This is also a perfect opportunity to introduce Ready To Learn to new families.

Please note that WETA is working with the American Library Association and local libraries in Virginia on a pilot community forum for parents on reading, as well as training for public and school library staffs. We will keep you informed of the outcomes.

- **Partner with your PTA.** Many PTA meetings feature a “learning” component. *Launching Young Readers* is quite suitable for parents with children in preschool through third grade. Recruit a teacher, preferably a reading specialist, from the school where the PTA meeting is held to facilitate the discussion.
- **Host a meeting of area school reading specialists.** Introduce them to all the Reading Rockets and Ready To Learn resources they can use for their work with parents and for their own professional development.
- **Conduct a workshop for parent specialists and trainers at local schools.** Many schools have ongoing programs for parents. The professionals who work with parents will welcome the opportunity to learn more about reading and media literacy.
- **Head Start and Even Start** parents gather periodically during the year at their children’s schools. Showing an episode of the series may be an excellent way for staff to engage parents in a discussion about becoming involved in their children’s reading and language development.
- **Partner with family literacy programs.** Most comprehensive family literacy programs last eight or nine months, so there are several opportunities to use *Launching Young Readers* tapes, as well as conduct Ready To Learn workshops. One of Reading Rockets’ national partners is the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL). If you are looking for a new local family literacy partner, a list of NCFL family literacy centers located throughout the United States can be found at www.famlit.org.
- **Easter Seals Childcare Centers.** There are over 50 “inclusive” Easter Seals childcare centers in the United States, most of which are certified by NAEYC. They are comprised of a sizable population of children with disabilities (40% on average). National Easter Seals is disseminating the first episode of *Launching Young Readers* to these sites along with the Reading Rockets **Family Guide**. Since these sites will already have been introduced to public television, they may be good local partner prospects for reaching children with disabilities. Go to www.ReadingRockets.org/stations.php for the list of sites and contacts.

These are just a few of the ways you can use Reading Rockets. Please keep in touch and let us know how you are using these resources and how we can help you.

Free Tapes and Guides

For a limited amount of time, we are providing a full set of tapes to any station that conducts discussion groups with parents (or teachers) around at least one episode from *Launching Young Readers*. If you are interested, check off the box on the Reading Rockets Order Form on the next page.

Reading Rockets Video Modules

For Use in Ready To Learn Workshops

Introduction

The enclosed video reel features six short segments from the Reading Rockets series, *Launching Young Readers*. The series features “best practices” and information that reflects the latest research findings including the landmark *Preventing Reading Difficulties* (from the National Research Council, 1998) and the National Reading Panel report (2000). All Reading Rockets material is carefully reviewed by our advisory panel of nationally known experts listed in the Reading Rockets Background section of this notebook.

Video Resources for Ready To Learn Workshops

These six “modules” were selected to help you strengthen the connection between television and reading (the learning triangle) in your workshops. They will provide you with the ability to show workshop participants what the “best practices” you are describing to them actually look like. They will go a long way toward making sure participants leave your workshop armed with the information to put these best practices into action. Each of the modules is 3–4 minutes in length and provides a great springboard for discussion. In this section of the notebook, you will find **workshop leader guidelines** and **handouts** to go along with each of the modules. Please note that while handouts have been written to go with specific modules, you’ll find most them interchangeable. Feel free to mix and match handouts to best meet your particular needs.

Module 1 **Roots of Literacy: Becoming Aware of Print**

Three-year old Mira gets a head start on reading from her parents. (Length 3:30)

Recommended Use: For RTL basic workshops for parents, pre-K teachers, and childcare providers.

Module 2 **Finding the Right Book**

The library is a vital resource for one mom whose son’s appetite for information — especially about dinosaurs — is growing as quickly as his shoe size. (Length 3:14)

Recommended Use: This is a good piece for basic RTL workshops for parents, childcare providers, and educators. It will also work well in book-based workshops that focus on television series like *Arthur*, *Between the Lions*, *Clifford*, and *Reading Rainbow*.

Module 3 **Reading as Dialogue**

In a Long Island Head Start classroom, children boost their reading skills using a technique called “dialogic reading.” (Length 3:05)

Recommended Use: This is a particularly good piece to use in RTL workshops for pre-K teachers and curriculum-based childcare providers.

Module 4 The Building Blocks of Reading

In Baltimore, a pre-kindergarten program called Children's Literacy Initiative helps children meet the school's high expectations. (Length 3:43)

Recommended Use: Pre-K teachers and curriculum-based childcare providers.

Module 5 Reading Together

A program called Georgetown Even Start is helping families in Washington, D.C., break the cycle of low literacy. (Length 3:25)

Recommended Use: Particularly appropriate for Head Start and Even Start staff working with low literacy parents.

Module 6 Reading for Meaning

In Washington, D.C., inmates get trained on how to run a book club for their children. (Length 4:14)

Recommended Use: For professionals and volunteers who work with incarcerated parents.

Handouts

Please note that all handouts that accompany the modules are available online, along with the rest of this toolkit, at www.ReadingRockets.org/stations.php.

Need Help?

If you have questions about the use of these modules, please contact Susan Petroff at spetroff@weta.com or (703) 998-2474.

If you have content questions about reading, please contact Latrice Seals, director of research for Reading Rockets, at lseals@weta.com or (703) 998-2440.

Workshop Leader Guidelines

Module 1: Roots of Literacy: Becoming Aware of Print *For Workshops with Parents and Home-Based Childcare Providers*

Recommended Use: This module can best be used in a basic RTL workshop for parents and home-based childcare providers.

Learning Objectives: Identify early literacy behaviors, understand the importance of reading, and gain the knowledge to model positive parent/child reading experiences.

BEFORE THE VIDEO: Prepare the audience for the video clip.

This module features three-year old Mira and shows how her parents incorporate early literacy skills into their everyday lives. The specific focus is on Mira's efforts to gain print awareness.

MESSAGE POINTS: Print awareness is important to young children.

Children who are exposed to a “print-rich environment” are more likely to become proficient readers and achieve academic success than children who experience little or no exposure to print prior to beginning school.

- You can help your child develop an ear for language by reading to her from birth onward. From the child's perspective, she is sharing a pleasurable interaction with parents. From the parents' perspective, they are helping their child to develop an ear for language.
- Shared reading on a regular basis will help to set the tone — children will understand that reading is as much a part of their family's daily activities as is eating and sleeping.
- Children who learn to “read” product names from logos found on signs, boxes, containers, and wrappers may be motivated to seek out opportunities to participate in literacy-related activities. The self-confidence that accompanies early reading success tends to motivate children to practice their reading skills often enough to become proficient readers.

AFTER THE VIDEO: You just watched a piece in which Mira's mother reads to Mira and her baby brother. Mira's mother plainly illustrates concepts that adult readers know and take for granted but which children must be taught in order to become fluent readers:

- There is a difference between words and pictures. Point to the print on a page as you read to children.
- Words on a page have meaning, and these are what we learn to read.
- Words go across the page from left to right. Follow with your finger as you read.
- Words on a page are made up of letters and are separated by spaces.

Handout Distribute the handout “Helping Your Child Become Aware of Print.”

Web sites For more information, direct participants to the two Reading Rockets Web sites — www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.

Helping Your Child Become Aware of Print

Parents and caregivers play an important role in the development of reading in children. Parents and caregivers are children's first and best teachers. Most children who begin first grade with the ability to read fairly well have home environments in which print is available, accessible, and used with youngsters.

Here are some suggestions and techniques to keep in mind:

- »» **Talk** to your children. **Read** to them. And **listen** to them read and talk to you.
- »» **Read to children from infancy:** although babies may not understand the words or meanings at this age, research suggests that even 6-or 7-week-old babies show excitement when adults read to them.
- »» **Draw your children's attention to print** in the environment around them, such as books, product logos, signs, lists, and billboards. Point out letters that are familiar or have special meaning such as the letter in their names.
- »» **Keep books, newspapers, and other print around the house.** Allow children to see you reading. This will show them that you value and enjoy reading.
- »» **Set aside 15 minutes each day to read with your children, no matter how old they are.**
- »» **Encourage children to dictate** made-up stories to you. You write down their words and then show them the words in their story as you read it back to them.
- »» **Plan activities that include recognition of letters and words** (word games, educational videos, alphabet cards, writing the child's name, etc.).

Here are some tips to remember when reading books to your children:

1 Before Reading

- Point out the front and back of the book.
- Read the author and illustrator names and ask what they do (the author writes the story and the illustrator draws the pictures).
- Discuss the cover of the book: Ask questions such as "Why do you think that the boy looks sad?"
- Ask predictive questions like "What do you think this book will be about?"

2 During Reading

- Follow the words with your finger as you read.
- Read the book with excitement; use funny voices for dialogue.
- Hold the book so that the child can see the print.
- Point out letters, punctuation marks, and pictures.
- Ask questions like "What do you think will happen next?"

3 After Reading

- Ask children questions such as:
 - What did you like most and least about the story?
- Have children write or dictate a summary of the story.

Workshop Leader Guidelines

Module 1: Roots of Literacy: Becoming Aware of Print *For Workshops with Pre-K Teachers and Curriculum-Based Childcare Providers*

Recommended Use: This module can best be used in standard RTL workshops with pre-K teachers and professional staff at curriculum-based childcare centers.

Learning Objectives: Define early literacy behaviors, emphasize the importance of reading, and model positive parent/child reading experiences.

BEFORE THE VIDEO: Prepare the audience for the video clip.

The video features three-year-old Mira and shows how her parents incorporate early literacy skills into their everyday lives. The specific focus is on Mira's efforts to gain **print awareness**.

MESSAGE POINTS: Why is print awareness important in young children?

- Children who are exposed to a “print-rich environment” are more likely to become proficient readers and achieve academic success than children who experience little or no exposure to print prior to beginning school.
- We can begin to prepare children to learn to read very early in life. Books can be read to children long before they understand what a book is — from birth onwards. From the child's perspective, she is sharing a pleasurable interaction with parents. From the parents' perspective, they are helping their child to develop an ear for language.
- Shared reading on a regular basis will help to set the tone — children will understand that literacy is as much a part of their family's daily activities as is eating and sleeping.
- Children who learn to “read” product names from logos found on signs, boxes, containers, and wrappers may be motivated and inspired to seek out opportunities to participate in literacy-related activities. The self-confidence that accompanies early reading success tends to motivate children to practice their reading skills often enough to become proficient readers.

AFTER THE VIDEO: You just watched a piece in which Mira's mother reads to Mira and her baby brother. Mira's mother plainly illustrates concepts that adult readers know and take for granted but which children must be taught in order to become fluent readers. These concepts include:

- There is a difference between words and pictures. Point to the print on a page when you read to children.
- Words on a page have meaning, and they are what we learn to read.
- Words go across the page from left to right. Follow with your finger as you read.
- Words on a page are made up of letters and are separated by spaces.

Handout Distribute the handout entitled “Helping Children Become Aware of Print.”

Web sites For more information direct participants to the two Reading Rockets Web sites — www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.

Helping Your Child Become Aware of Print

The literacy environment in the classroom should celebrate children's interest in and enjoyment of language. Books, magazines, posters, labels, and other print are the focal point of classrooms designed to encourage literacy in children.

Here are some suggestions for creating a classroom in which children are eager to participate in language activities as they increase their ability to speak, listen, read, and write:

- If you teach pre-K or kindergarten, include classroom centers that encourage children to explore different kinds of print in real-world settings. For example, include a writing center in which students can dictate, write, or draw cards, posters, and signs.
- Draw attention to letters and print, especially letters that are familiar or have a special meaning, such as the letters in their names. Encourage students to link the letter with its sounds ("See, Jimmy, the word 'jump' begins with the same sound as your name does: 'Jimmy,' 'jump.' And they both begin with the same letter, 'J'.")
- Use your finger to sweep under the words that you read. This will help children to understand that the voice of the reader matches the print on the page and that print moves from left to right and top to bottom.
- Discuss differences between books, signs, billboards, and lists. This will help children to understand that different types of print carry different messages.
- Teach students to recognize different parts of a book, such as front and back cover, pages, and spine.
- Read books with highly predictable language and connections between the illustrations and print.
- Have children search familiar text to locate an upper or lowercase letter, a known word, or punctuation.
- Create a print rich classroom by posting class rules, class schedules, class calendar, labels on centers or objects, charts, and samples of students' work.

Here are some tips to remember when reading to students:

1 Before Reading

- Point out the front and back of the book.
- Read the author and illustrator names and ask what they do (the author writes the story and the illustrator draws the pictures).
- Discuss the cover of the book. Ask questions such as "Why do you think that the boy looks sad?"
- Ask predictive questions like "What do you think this book will be about?"

2 During Reading

- Follow the words with your finger as you read.
- Read the book with excitement; use funny voices for dialogue.
- Hold the book so that the child can see the print.
- Point out letters, punctuation marks, and pictures.
- Ask questions like "What do you think will happen next?"

3 After Reading

- Ask children questions such as:
 - What did you like most and least about the story?
- Have children write or dictate a summary of the story.

Workshop Leader Guidelines

Module 2: Finding the Right Book

For Workshops with Parents and Home-Based Childcare Providers

Recommended Use: This module can best be used in basic RTL workshops for parents and home-based childcare providers.

Learning Objectives: To inform participants about the resources available at public and school libraries and to motivate them to use them.

BEFORE THE VIDEO: Prepare the audience for the video clip.

This video features Andrea Alford and her son T.J., whose trip to the library illustrates how important the library can be in growing children's appetites for books.

MESSAGE POINTS:

- Libraries offer children an opportunity to discover the type of books that they enjoy best. Librarians will ask questions and make suggestions to guide children through the process of self-discovery needed to choose books of interest.
- Books are only the beginning! Libraries are filled with educational resources such as computers, Internet access, educational videos, curriculum, educational games, and other tools. Many libraries offer formal tours, or a librarian will walk a visitor through the library to show what is available.
- Some libraries offer book clubs or storytime, which brings children together with their peers.

AFTER THE VIDEO:

- Engage the groups in a discussion about the local libraries in your area. Try to collect information in advance of the workshop, so they leave with the information they need to visit their local library.
- Highlight some of the upcoming family events that might be happening in your community.

Handout Distribute the handout "Discover Your Library."

Web sites For more information, direct participants to www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.

Discover Your Library

The public library is like a huge treasure chest, chock-full of books, magazines, videos, and programs — and it's all available with a free library card.

Here are just a few of the things you might find:

- »» **Librarians** who can help you find books about topics that interest your child and are at the right reading level.
- »» **Storytime** is offered both during the day and evenings. Ask your librarian for exact times. Books come to life during storytime. It's a great way for you to read stories with your children.
- »» **Colorful, fun, kid-friendly sections** designed just for children.
- »» **Computers** that you and your child can use for free. You'll find a gold mine online.

On www.ReadingRockets.org you can find a book for your child, get tips from other parents, and lots more.

On www.pbskids.org you can link to your child's favorite PBS shows like *Between the Lions*, *Arthur*, and *Sesame Street*.

On www.pbs.org/launchingreaders you'll find lots of tips for helping your child learn how to read.

- »» **Information** about child and adult reading programs, and information about tutoring programs for children and adults.



Workshop Leader Guidelines

Module 3: Reading as Dialogue

For Workshops with Parents and Home-Based Childcare Providers

Recommended Use: This module can be used as a core piece in workshops for pre-K teachers and childcare providers at curriculum-based childcare centers.

Learning Objectives: To model questioning, read-aloud, and shared reading techniques. To monitor comprehension and increase children's vocabulary.

BEFORE THE VIDEO: Prepare the audience for the video clip.

This video features Head Start students and their teacher using a reading program called Dialogic Reading. Dialogic Reading uses shared reading techniques that require children to become active participants in the read-aloud process. The program helps to build comprehension and vocabulary in young children.

MESSAGE POINTS: Parents can do things at home to help build comprehension and vocabulary in children.

- Parents can help build comprehension by talking about everyday activities. This helps build a child's background knowledge, which is crucial to listening and reading comprehension. Activities that foster comprehension don't always involve reading. Keep up a running patter, for example, while cooking together; take your child someplace new and talk about what you see; or discuss the movie or television show you've just watched together.
- One way to improve a child's comprehension skills is to improve his or her vocabulary. Knowing the meaning of individual words or being able to figure out the meaning of words in a sentence or paragraph is essential to comprehension.
- In young children, the meaning of most words is learned by listening to people talk. But as children grow older, what they read becomes an even more important source of new vocabulary. Many words, in fact, are rarely heard in everyday speech.

AFTER THE VIDEO:

- Remind participants that although the clip showed a teacher and her students, they can use some of the same techniques with their children at home. You may want to use this time to engage participants in a discussion about how the techniques used in dialogic reading can be modified for home use by parents and caregivers.

Handout Distribute the handout entitled "Talk...Read...Listen to Your Children — Great Read-Aloud Techniques."

Web sites For more information, direct participants to the two Reading Rockets Web sites — www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.

Talk...Read...Listen to Your Children

Great Read-Aloud Tips

Parents and caregivers can help children build comprehension and vocabulary by including animated discussions as part of the read-aloud process.

Here are some suggestions for comprehension and vocabulary building:

- **Read expressively and with humor**, using different voices for different characters. If storytelling is fun and entertaining for children, they are more likely to tune in, pay attention, and comprehend what is being read.
- **Engage the child in the reading activity and emphasize the enjoyment of reading** (discuss the story, answer children's questions, ask them questions, listen to their comments, and encourage your child to predict).
- **Encourage the child to learn new words**. Children can also build their vocabulary by taking a best guess about what an unfamiliar word might mean based on how it's being used. Afterwards, help your child look up the word in a dictionary to double-check the meaning.
- **Ask questions that may have more than one right answer and that require a longer response**. Avoid excessive use of narrowly focused, yes-or-no, or right-or-wrong questions that can be answered with a single word.
- **Reread children's favorite books**. They enjoy participating in the reading of their favorite stories.
- **Reading and experiencing**. Help children make the connection between what they read in books and what they experience in life. If you're reading a book about animals, for example, remind children about the trip you took together to the zoo or farm and the animals you saw there.

For more information, go to www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.



Workshop Leader Guidelines

Module 3: Reading as Dialogue

For Workshops with Teachers and Curriculum-Based Childcare Providers

Recommended Use: This module can be used as a core piece in workshops for pre-K teachers and childcare providers at curriculum-based daycare centers.

Learning Objectives: To model questioning, read-aloud, and shared reading techniques. To monitor comprehension and increase children's vocabulary.

BEFORE THE VIDEO: Prepare the audience for the video clip.

This video features Head Start students and their teacher using a reading program called Dialogic Reading. Dialogic Reading uses shared reading techniques that require children to become active participants in the read-aloud process. The program helps to build comprehension and vocabulary in young children.

MESSAGE POINTS: What can teachers learn from the strategies used in Dialogic Reading?

- Children who are engaged in the reading process are more likely to comprehend the story. Teachers can help students to become engaged by using big books, positioning children so that they are physically near the teacher, reading with enthusiasm, and asking questions that encourage students to express their opinions and ideas.
- One way to improve a child's comprehension skills is to improve his or her vocabulary. This seems like common sense. Knowing what individual words mean goes a long way toward helping a child understand what the sentence or paragraph means.
- In young children, the meaning of most words is learned by listening to people talk. But as children grow older, what they read becomes an even more important source of new vocabulary. Many words, in fact, are rarely heard in everyday speech.

AFTER THE VIDEO: You may want to ask follow-up questions and engage the participants in a discussion.

Sample questions:

- Did you notice how engaged the children on the tape were as they listened to the story? It was clear that the students were sharing in the storytelling process.
- What was different about Dialogic Reading as compared to what we think of as traditional story reading?
- Ask participants to share effective comprehension and vocabulary building techniques that they use with students.

Handout Distribute the handout entitled "Reading as Dialogue."

Web sites For more information, direct participants to the two Reading Rockets Web sites — www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.

Reading as Dialogue

Dialogic Reading is a type of shared book reading that improves comprehension and builds vocabulary in young children. Teachers who use techniques similar to those found in this program have found that students tend to be more engaged in story-telling because they are being pulled into the story as they go along.

Here are some suggestions for increasing comprehension and vocabulary in students:

- **Read expressively and with humor**, using different voices for different characters. If story-telling is fun and entertaining for children, they are more likely to pay attention and comprehend what is being read.
- **Engage the child in the reading activity and emphasize the enjoyment of reading.** Discuss the story, answer children's questions, ask them questions, and listen to their comments.
- **Teach comprehension strategies.** For example, show children how to summarize a story in a few sentences and how to make predictions about what might happen next. Both strategies help a child comprehend and remember what they have read.
- **Make vocabulary instruction a major component of the curriculum.** Focus on unfamiliar words that can be found in a wide range of texts (words like "discouraged" and "promptly," rather than technical words from a specific domain).
- **Ask rich questions that require children to form inferences.** For example, "Why do you think Clifford did that?"
- **Choose questions that may have more than one right answer and that require a longer response.** Avoid excessive use of narrowly focused, yes-or-no, or right-or-wrong questions that can be answered with a single word.

For more information, go to www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.



Workshop Leader Guidelines

Module 4: The Building Blocks of Reading *For Workshops with Teachers and Curriculum-Based Caregivers*

Recommended Use: This module can be used in in-depth Ready To Learn workshops as a follow-up to Module 1.

Learning Objectives: To learn strategies for teaching letter identification and sound recognition, as well as vocabulary development.

BEFORE THE VIDEO: Prepare the audience for the video clip.

The video features pre-K teacher Gail Fishbach as she demonstrates some of the ways in which she introduces letters and sounds to her students.

MESSAGE POINTS: What can teachers learn from the strategies used in this clip?

- Just because students know the alphabet does not mean that they are able to identify letters and map the correct sounds onto letters.
- Some children need more practice linking sounds to letters than others.
- Phonemic awareness and phonics instruction — the ability to identify letters and recognize sounds — can occur briefly within other activities such as reading a good book.
- It's not drill and skill! Phonemic awareness and phonics activities can be fun and can occur in the context of balanced instruction.

AFTER THE VIDEO: You may want to ask follow-up questions and engage the participants in a discussion.

- Phonemic awareness activities are not limited to those in the clip and handout. Can you think of others?
- How could you modify some of these activities for your parents to use at home? (Recommend that they check out the companion Web site to the five-part series *Launching Young Readers* for parent tips and other information. The URL is www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.)

Handout Distribute the handout “The Building Blocks of Reading.”

Web sites For more information, direct participants to visit www.ReadingRockets.org.

The Building Blocks of Reading

Letters and Sounds

The ability to identify letters and recognize the sounds they make is an essential ingredient for reading success. How can teachers and curriculum-based caregivers ensure that students acquire the phonemic awareness and phonics ability needed for children to become skilled readers?

Here are some suggestions for increasing letter identification skills in children and helping them to become sensitive to the sounds in letters:

- **Draw attention to letters and print**, especially letters that are familiar or have a special meaning, such as the letters in their names. Encourage children to link the letter with its sound (“See, Jimmy, the word ‘jump’ begins with the same sound as your name does: ‘Jimmy,’ ‘jump.’ And they both begin with the same letter, ‘J.’”)
- **Assess letter-sound knowledge** by having children “sound out” each sound in the alphabet rather than saying the letter names.
- **Teach phonemic awareness skills** such as phoneme blending — (Say the sounds /m//o//p/ and ask children to guess what word the sounds make) and segmentation — (Say the word “mop” and ask children to tell you the sounds). Teach letters for the same sounds that you are using in phonemic awareness activities.
- **Begin instruction with “continuous sound” consonants** like ‘m,’ ‘s,’ and ‘f,’ rather than “stop” consonants such as ‘b,’ ‘d,’ and ‘t’; the former are easier for children to blend.
- **In phonemic awareness activities, encourage children to watch your lips and mouth** while you form certain sounds or to think about how their own lips and tongue move while they are saying a sound. (“Can you feel how your mouth moves the same way at the beginning of the words ‘mouse,’ ‘mother,’ and ‘man’? Watch my mouth while I say them. Now you say the words and feel how your lips make the /m/.”)

- Use **multisensory activities in teaching letter sounds**, such as having children repeatedly trace a letter and say its sound at the same time.

- **Teach word decoding and spelling systematically and explicitly**, and use them to reinforce each other; but also take advantage of opportunities for incidental learning (pointing to the word “vat” in a read-aloud book, “*Look, here is another ‘v’ word. Can anyone figure out how to read it? Do you know what it means?*”)

- In teaching word decoding, **try word-building activities** with letter tiles or letter cubes, focusing on words with similar patterns; first vary the initial consonant (*mat to fat to sat*), then the final consonant (*sat to sag to sap*), then the vowel (*sap to sip*).

- Provide children with books that will give them **opportunities to apply their decoding skills** in context. Provide feedback that encourages application of known decoding skills (pointing to letters in a word that a child has overlooked or misread rather than emphasizing the use of picture cues or sentence context).

- Invite students to go pick up one object in the room that can be held in their hands and then return to their seat. Once students are sitting, say “**I am thinking of things that begin with ____** (say sound). If you are holding an object that begins with ____ (repeat sound), stand up”. Continue until all objects being held by students are accounted for.

For more information, go to www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launching_readers.

Workshop Leader Guidelines

Module #5: Reading Together

For Workshops with Teachers and Curriculum-Based Caregivers

Recommended Use: Use in basic RTL workshops with professional staff at Even Start, Head Start, and other parenting programs. We do not recommend using this module in workshops for parents because the third-person presentation style may offend participants.

Learning Objectives: To learn read-aloud techniques that support young children's literacy development. To learn how families who are rebuilding their family life can help prepare their children for school. To show how reading to children can also enrich family relationships.

BEFORE THE VIDEO: Prepare the audience for the video clip.

The video clip presents the Georgetown Even Start program (in Washington, D.C.) where shared reading concepts are introduced to parents.

MESSAGE POINTS: The video includes several strategies that you can share with your parents.

- The closeness shared between parent and child while reading is as important as the act of reading.
- Encourage parents to integrate stories from the families' everyday life and family history when discussing stories.
- Children enjoy being active participants in the story-telling process.

AFTER THE VIDEO: You may want to ask follow-up questions and engage the participants in a discussion.

Sample questions are listed below:

- In the clip, we see parents who are confident and self-assured as they read with their children. What do you think their initial reaction to reading with their children may have been like?
- What are some things that you could do to help reluctant parents participate in a program like the one at Georgetown?
- Have you made provisions in your program for parents who are non-readers or who have limited proficiency?

Handout Distribute the handout "You Are Your Child's First and Best Teacher." Teachers and caregivers may wish to hand these out to parents in meetings and workshops.

Web sites For more information, direct workshop participants to the two Reading Rockets Web sites — www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.

You Are Your Child's First and Best Teacher

Here are some suggestions for making reading a fun and rewarding experience with your child:

- **Set aside a regular time for reading** to your child every day.
- **Discuss stories and word meanings** as you read. **Ask questions that require your child to answer with more than "yes" or "no."** Use questions that may have more than one right answer and that require a longer response. **Say:** *"What was Jenny doing?"* rather than, "Did Jenny feel sad?"
- **Sit close.** If your child is young enough to sit on your lap, savor the closeness.
- Read a **variety of types of books** and expose your child to a **range of text types.**
- Help your child **link experiences with what he is hearing** (or reading) in books. If he is reading a book about exotic animals, remind him about a trip to the zoo and talk about the animals you saw.
- Discussing daily activities with your child helps to build background knowledge, which is critical in listening and reading comprehension. Discuss movies and television programs, take your child to new places, **talk about everyday experiences** such as cooking and gardening. All contribute to growth in comprehension.
- **Tell stories.** Oral storytelling indulges a child's passion to hear stories about their families' experiences: what life was like when Grandma was growing up or that time you got in trouble at school.

For more information, go to www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.



Workshop Leader Guidelines

Module #6: Father's Book Club

For Workshops with Family Literacy Workshop Leaders Who Work with Parents in Prisons

Recommended Use: In basic RTL workshops with professionals and volunteers who work with incarcerated parents.

Learning Objectives: To learn why family literacy programs are important for parents in prisons. To discover different ways in which these programs can be designed.

BEFORE THE VIDEO: Prepare audience for the video clip.

This video features a group of incarcerated fathers who have volunteered for training to set up a book club for their children. They are inmates at a correctional treatment facility in Washington, D.C.

MESSAGE POINTS:

- Many prisons have active family literacy programs to ensure that parents who are in the process of rehabilitation maintain (and often rebuild) their relationships with their children. In the process incarcerated parents can contribute to the literacy development of their children.
- Children who spend time with their parents engaged in reading-related activities, whether or not the parent is incarcerated, will likely become more proficient in reading due to:
 - Increased time spent reading
 - Increased time spent engaged in discussions related to the story
 - Increased motivation to read since it allows them to share time with their parent
 - Increased comprehension as they gain experience in exploring stories in detail
- The incarcerated parent may experience increased self-confidence and self-worth as they realize that they can:
 - Have a direct and positive influence on their child's life even though they are incarcerated
 - Contribute to their child's educational success
 - Increase their own literacy skills through the exposure to reading and discussing stories
- Parents can be trained to use comprehension strategies to engage their children in discussions. Examples include:
 - Relating the story to background knowledge shared by the parent and child
 - Generating and asking questions, helping the child to make inferences
 - Encouraging the child to predict what will happen next
 - Helping the child to summarize stories

AFTER THE VIDEO:

- Engage participants in a discussion about reading programs that exist in their correctional facilities in which they are working. What works? What doesn't work? Ask the group to share techniques for getting parents motivated and interested.

Handouts Distribute the handout “Family Literacy Programs in Correctional Facilities.”

You may also wish to distribute “Talk . . . Read . . . Listen to Your Children,” which family literacy staff may wish to duplicate for their parents.

Web sites For more information, direct attendees to www.ReadingRockets.org and www.pbs.org/launchingreaders.

Family Literacy Programs in Correctional Facilities

Here is a brief description of sample family reading programs designed for families of incarcerated parents.

D.C. FAMILY LITERACY PROJECT

The Washington, D.C. Department of Corrections sponsors the D.C. Family Literacy Project, which that helps incarcerated parents participate in the literacy development of their children. Parents learn new ideas in child development and family literacy and put them into practice during special family visits. The project takes a student-centered approach to teaching and a child-centered approach to parenting.

The Instructional Seminars:

- Typical cycle runs ten to twelve weeks, serving 15 to 25 selected residents.
- Weekly instructional seminar centers on reading, sharing, and children's literature.
- Parents plan and prepare for upcoming family visits and practice literacy-building activities that they will use in the family visits.

The Interactive Family Visits: After the first two or three weeks of the cycle, residents are ready and eager to participate in the interactive family workshops.

- The first hour is family time, where each family informally engages in a variety of literacy-building activities together. These include reading, puzzles, arts and crafts projects, and playing games together.
- During the second part of the family workshop, the children are divided into three groups, according to their age, and each resident works with one of the groups:
 - Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who engage in “circle time,”
 - Children ages six through twelve participate in the “P.J. Book Club” program
 - Teenagers participate in a rap session and book-and-article discussion group.

At each family workshop, all children receive numerous new books to keep some chosen by their parents and others chosen by the children themselves. At the final workshop and graduation each child receives a special book bag.

Family Portfolio and Audio Tapes

Samples of art and writing produced by each resident and his or her family and family photographs are collected throughout the cycle. The residents and their families assemble a family portfolio to review and store their memories of the cycle. Residents record an audiotape for their child/children of themselves reading a book.

At the end of the cycle, the children receive the audiotape book and a “walkman” tape player.

For more information, visit: www.law.georgetown.edu/clinics/dcstreet/fam_literacy.html.



Reading Is Fundamental (RIF)

RIF has recently launched literacy programs for incarcerated parents and their families. They are currently working with the Minnesota Department of Corrections, the Maryland Department of Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Literacy programs are designed best in collaboration with prison staff that meets the special needs of individual facilities, and RIF is discovering that there are many different ways to design prison literacy programs.

Minnesota Department of Corrections (pilot program)

- Currently found in 10 state facilities (women, men, and juveniles) serving about 1600 children
- The program consists primarily of two-way correspondence via mailings between parents and children rather than the in-person approach of some programs.
- Parents receive three books from RIF and then engage in mail correspondence with the child to determine which book to choose or what book they like.
- The campaign is designed to encourage discussions between the child and parent on the books that they read.
- Some inmates may get the opportunity to visit with their child and have one-on-one reading interaction.

Federal Bureau of Prisons

- This is currently the largest prison reading program that RIF oversees. It serves about 2300 children in six states — Montana, California, Georgia, Texas, Kentucky, and Connecticut.
- The goals are to:
 - Provide new, free books, and literacy resources to children and their families,
 - Motivate children to read
 - Generate community support for literacy.
- Incarcerated parents who are enrolled in education programs in the prisons and their children are eligible for the program.
- Children receive books to read with their parents during their visit.

Maryland State Dept of Correctional Education

- “*No Child Left Behind Bars*” is in place at institutions for women and men in Jessup, Maryland. The RIF pilot program is serving approximately 400 children a year.
- Parents who are enrolled in an education program at the prisons are eligible for the program.
- Librarians and teachers who work in these prisons design many of the reading activities for parents and kids. The Pratt Library of Baltimore provides some of the training to parents. Librarians go to the correctional facilities and teach parents about reading with kids.
- Every two months, social events are held at each institution where incarcerated parents and their children read books together.
- During the visit, children choose a new book to read with their parent and are able to take it home.
- The program is exploring the possibility of adding letter writing in between parent and child visits.

For more information about RIF prison programs, call 1-877-RIF-READ.

