



READING  
**rockets**  
@your library®

**A Toolkit  
for Librarians**

[www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)

## TOOLKIT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of people provided valuable input into the development of these materials. We are grateful for their time and good counsel.

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February 2003

Dear Librarian:

Public and school libraries have a long history of supporting children's emerging literacy. Libraries also have the resources to support adult and family literacy efforts, which, of course, have a lasting impact on children.

The American Library Association (ALA) is pleased to have a partnership with a new program that brings together information on learning to read and supports it with the stuff of which libraries are made: books and information resources. This project is called Reading Rockets.

Reading Rockets is a multimedia project dedicated to helping young children learn to read and giving adults who live and work with them the information they need to create lifelong learners. The components of this unique project, funded primarily by the U.S. Department of Education, include a five-part PBS series (a full set of videos has been sent to all state library agencies) and a Web site ([www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)) with current information for teachers, parents, and caregivers; interviews with children's book creators; and booklists. And Reading Rockets recently introduced a separate bilingual site in Spanish and English ([www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org)), featuring graphics by David Diaz. To help librarians use all this information in their communities, Reading Rockets now offers you this toolkit.

We urge you to use this toolkit, find out more about this fascinating project, and join other Reading Rockets partners in your community. In addition to the ALA, partners include the International Reading Association, the National Center for Family Literacy, and many more.

For additional information or if you would like to share your Reading Rockets experience with other librarians, e-mail [info@ReadingRockets.org](mailto:info@ReadingRockets.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Malore J. Brown".

Malore Brown, Executive Director  
Association for Library Services  
to Children

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie A. Walker".

Julie Walker, Executive Director  
American Association of School Librarians



## FOREWORD

Learning to read is more like rocket science than we once thought! Reading Rockets is a literacy initiative that looks at how young children learn to read, why so many children struggle, and what adults who live and work with children can do to help. It really does take a village to get and keep kids reading — and libraries are a crucial part of a supportive learning community.

WETA is pleased to provide you with the Reading Rockets Toolkit for Librarians. You will find a range of resources to use for workshops in the library and for outreach activities in the community, with established partners or with new ones. The toolkit includes video clips for parent and staff workshops, a bilingual family guide in Spanish and English, a teachers' and a viewers' guide, and some great resources from [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders), and [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org) — our new bilingual Web site for families whose first language is Spanish.

Reading Rockets has collaborated with the Association for Library Services to Children and the Association of School Librarians of the American Library Association on this toolkit. We hope these resources can be easily integrated into your existing workshops for parents and other caregivers, as a component of in-service training activities, and with your outreach activities. We hope these materials will enrich your library's services to children and families and provide an ongoing resource for your own professional development.

Several libraries are piloting Reading Rockets programs and can serve as a resource for you. They'd be happy to share their experience on how they use these materials. You can find out how to reach them in Section 2 of this toolkit.

Be sure to check out "Ordering Additional Reading Rockets Materials" on page 9 to find out how to order hard copies of this toolkit as well as any Reading Rockets videos you may wish to add to your library collection.

Good luck with Reading Rockets!

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## Introduction

### What Is Reading Rockets? A Brief Overview

Reading Rockets is a literacy initiative that looks at how young children learn to read, why so many struggle, and how librarians, parents, and educators can help them.

Elements of Reading Rockets include videos to use in workshops, parent discussion groups, and in-service training for childcare staff, library staff, and others; print guides for teachers and parents; and Web sites that offer an ongoing source of downloadable materials for workshops, a children's literature database, and much more.

Because Reading Rockets is fueled by the latest research and advice from today's top reading experts and children's literature specialists, you can use these resources confidently with your staff, partners, and the general public.

## Reading Rockets and Libraries

What do Reading Rockets and libraries have in common? In addition to sharing an interest in getting and keeping children reading, they have lots of resources to share.

Reading Rockets can be used in school and public libraries in many ways. These include but are certainly not limited to:

- » Circulating Reading Rockets videos from the library's audiovisual department. Some libraries have special program collections. These are usually educational videos that have public performance rights.
- » Using Reading Rockets videos in children's areas to introduce parents to ideas and information that they can then follow up on by using other library resources.
- » Using Reading Rockets as in-service training for library staff, possibly in collaboration with school library media specialists and reading specialists.
- » Hosting community forums with local experts, using Reading Rockets videos to launch discussions.
- » Encouraging parents, teachers, and other adults to visit the Reading Rockets Web sites for current information about reading research, parent forums, book clubs, and lists of children's books on various subjects and by featured authors and illustrators:

- [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)
- [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org)
- [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders)

See Section 2: Reading Rockets in Action, beginning on page 10, to find out how libraries are putting Reading Rockets to use in their communities.

## Reading Rockets Resources

There is a wealth of materials available for your library:

» **Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers** is a five-part television series that covers the foundations of literacy from preschool through third grade. It includes:

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 videos and DVDs are available for purchase. Please see page 9 for more information. You may want these for your library's circulating collection of videos or for use in library-initiated programs.

A **companion Web site** for the video series, [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders), has been developed especially for parents. There are downloadable one-page tip sheets for parents, which can be reproduced by the library or printed by parents or organizations. It also includes an overview of the five stages of reading and corresponds with each of the five television programs in the Launching Young Readers series.

A **viewers' guide and a teachers' guide** for the video series are available.

- » The bilingual **Reading Rockets Family Guide** in Spanish and English provides tips for parents and other adult caregivers on helping children get the most out of reading, pointers on working with schools and

teachers, and great ideas for use in libraries. It includes computer tips, valuable Web site addresses, and more.

- »» The **comprehensive Reading Rockets Web site** at [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org) provides articles, research reports, a daily news service, and other resources. It helps library users and staff learn more about basics of literacy, helps librarians answer questions, and provides up-to-the-minute information about literacy work that is being done in communities across the country. Also, there are monthly interviews with children's book authors and illustrators, thematic book lists, and the ability to search for titles by age or subject.
- »» The **bilingual Web site in Spanish and English** at [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org) is geared to Spanish-speaking parents and professionals who work with families whose children are English language learners. Caldecott Medal-winning artist David Diaz contributed the artwork for the site.

### ***New Reading Rockets Initiatives***

- »» ***A Tale of Two Schools*** is a one-hour television documentary that looks at how two schools — and two dedicated teachers — take on the challenge of teaching young kids to read. Narrated by Morgan Freeman, the program premiered on PBS stations in September 2003. Local dates and times of upcoming broadcasts

are posted on [www.ReadingRockets.org/twoschools/broadcast.php](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/twoschools/broadcast.php). A companion Web site can be found at [www.pbs.org/twoschools](http://www.pbs.org/twoschools).

- »» **Teleconferences** for educators and librarians. Topics include effective reading programs, parents as partners, and teaching English language learners to read. Participation information is available at [www.ReadingRockets.org/teleconferences.php](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/teleconferences.php).
- »» ***Reading Rocks!*** is a fun, 30-minute television program that motivates kids who struggle with reading. It includes interviews with children who have overcome reading difficulties.

A **parent special** is in the works for broadcast on PBS in Spring 2005. Of special interest to parents of struggling readers, this new television program will focus on school programs that have succeeded with research-based reading programs that rely on parental involvement.

## Ordering Additional Reading Rockets Materials

To order online, go to

[www.ReadingRockets.org/store](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/store)

## Reading Rockets @ your library

### A Toolkit for Librarians

Complete Toolkit \$89.95

Includes:

- » a VHS copy of the five modules for use in workshops, as outlined in Section 3 of the toolkit
- » a DVD copy of the five-part series, *Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers*
- » copies of the bilingual family guide, teachers' guide, and viewers' guide

## Additional Videos

*Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers*, a five-part television series, is available for purchase on VHS videotapes or on DVD. A full set of the series has been sent to your state library agency. Additional copies may be purchased:

### Videotape Set \$89.95

Includes a complete set of five VHS videotapes, the viewers' guide, and your choice of either the family guide or the teachers' guide.

### DVD \$39.95

Discounted Price for Libraries

With the purchase of a Toolkit, libraries may purchase additional copies of the DVD for the discounted price of \$39.95 (a substantial savings from the regular retail price of \$89.95).

The DVD contains all five episodes plus bonus segments featuring additional interviews with reading experts, teachers, and others; the viewers' guide; and your choice of either the family guide or the teachers' guide.

### Individual Videotapes \$19.95

Includes one 30-minute episode (see titles below) and a viewers' guide.

- » The Roots of Reading
- » Sounds and Symbols
- » Fluent Reading
- » Writing and Spelling
- » Reading for Meaning

## Reading Rockets in Action

Reading Rockets provides opportunities for programs in your library or at library-sponsored workshops at community sites (e.g., a school, childcare facility, or parent meeting). Reading Rockets can also be used to enhance in-service training for library or school staff.

### *Workshop Materials Especially for Use by Librarians*

- »» **Video modules** for use in library workshops and programs. These are accompanied by guides and handouts that can be downloaded from [www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries).

Each of the video modules on the enclosed VHS tape is three to four minutes long and has been selected from the *Launching Young Readers* series.

These modules can be used to highlight and encourage use of your library's resources — both children's materials and resources from the adult collection. (See Section 3: Reading Rockets Workshop Leader Guidelines, beginning on page 14, and Section 4: Reading Rockets Workshop Handouts, beginning on page 25.)

- »» Librarians can share **print materials** with schools, childcare centers, parents, and other organizations. The print materials — including Reading Rockets family guide and the *Launching Young Readers* teachers' and viewers' guides can be found at [www.ReadingRockets.org/guides.php](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/guides.php).

The **family guide**, written in Spanish and English, can be used in all kinds of venues where the library shares information with adults. It contains tips for helping children learn 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.

### *A Few Ideas to Get You Started*

- »» **Conduct 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 has proven to be a great service for parents who would like to get more involved in their children's literacy development. It is especially helpful for parents and other caregivers whose children are struggling readers. And what better place to bring it together than at the library, where all the resources come together?

»» **Partner with Your Local PBS Station.**

If you schedule a viewing or develop a weekly or monthly series of forums — e.g., *Helping Your Child Learn to Read* — your local PBS station might be able to help you get the word out. In addition, the station might be able to provide the tapes and either you or the station could engage a reading specialist to facilitate a discussion after the viewing. This is a relatively easy activity, does much to give parents the tools they need to help their children, and gives you an opportunity to introduce new families to your library.

»» **Partner with Your PTA.**

Many PTA meetings feature a learning component, and *Launching Young Readers* is full of resources for parents with children in preschool through third grade. Recruit a teacher, perhaps a reading specialist, from the school where the PTA meeting is held to facilitate the discussion. Not only could your library make the videotapes or DVDs available for use at the meeting, you could also make them available from your circulation desk. A PTA meeting in a school is a great time for you to showcase the books and other library resources that support children's emerging literacy.

»» **Host a Meeting of Local Reading Specialists and Classroom Teachers.**

Introduce them to Reading Rockets and other library 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 share more information about reading and library resources with parents.

»» **Meet with Head Start and Even Start Parents.**

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. And using the library and its resources is an important part of the whole picture.

»» **Partner with Family Literacy Programs.**

Nearly all comprehensive family literacy programs use library resources regularly. In fact, libraries often sponsor these activities. Make Reading Rockets resources available to established family literacy groups or invite new ones to learn more about Reading Rockets and other resources at the library.

»» **Partner with Other Childcare Centers in Your Community.**

Every community has a broad range of childcare facilities. [There are private childcare centers, licensed childcare homes, and "inclusive" Easter Seals childcare centers, which serve a sizable population of children with disabilities.]

Most local governments have an office that licenses childcare facilities. Contact them for a listing.

***Great Ideas In Action: What Libraries Are Doing***

The collaboration between the **Maplewood (NJ) Public Library**, **Maplewood South Orange (NJ) Public Schools**, and the **South Orange Maplewood Education Association (SOMEA)** has resulted in an exciting model for library use of Reading Rockets.

»» Reading Rockets viewing stations have launched in children's rooms at three public libraries. Paid for by SOMEA, viewing stations include earphones so adults

can view the Reading Rockets videos without disturbing other library users. Since the stations are in the children's rooms, parents can watch their children and also take advantage of other library resources.

- » SOMEA held a series of in-service sessions for classroom teachers using the *Launching Young Readers* series to facilitate discussion. One hundred thirty teachers and staff attended the five-part training for which they received continuing education credits. The five sessions corresponded to the topics in the five episodes of the series.

A reading specialist moderated an additional session that included parent participation.

- » The public library hosted a community forum featuring reading expert Louisa Moats. The standing-room-only program led to the establishment of a parent group with the library serving as host — recognizing its role as a forum for broad-based public education.
- » Parent-teacher workshops were held using the Reading Rockets series to educate the community about the five components of effective reading instruction. These workshops were held at the public library on Saturday mornings during January and February 2004. An additional workshop were organized for preschool parents focusing on early literacy. SOMEA will work in conjunction with local early childcare agencies.

For more information contact:

- » Suzanne Ryan at 973-761-7083 or [suzurbryan@aol.com](mailto:suzurbryan@aol.com)
- » Rowland Bennett at 973-762-1622 or [rbennett@maplewoodlibrary.org](mailto:rbennett@maplewoodlibrary.org)

**Arlington County (VA) Department of Public Libraries** and the **Arlington County Public Schools** have developed a partnership with the following results:

- » The public library held community forums using the first episode in the *Launching Young Readers* series, *The Roots of Reading*. After participants viewed the video, a reading specialist led discussions on how children acquire reading skills and how the resources of the public library support those skills.
- » Public library children's services librarians and public school library media specialists have viewed Reading Rockets video clips for ideas on how school and public library resources could link to parent education.
- » The Arlington County Library and the Arlington County Public Schools plan to hold workshops for children's librarians and school library media specialists in the elements of learning to read. The goal is to inform librarians so they can host programs for parents and caregivers, with librarians and reading teachers serving as the "experts."

For additional information, contact:

- » Sharon Grover, Arlington County Department of Public Libraries, at [sgrove@co.arlington.va.us](mailto:sgrove@co.arlington.va.us)
- » Lizette Hannegan, Arlington County Public Schools, at [Lhannega@arlington.k12.va.us](mailto:Lhannega@arlington.k12.va.us)

In the **State of Colorado**:

- » Throughout Colorado, the Colorado Association of Libraries (CAL) underwrote Rocky Mountain PBS's broadcast of *Launching Young Readers*. The broadcast was promoted in libraries across the state as part of Colorado's @ your library campaign, sponsored by CAL. Parents and caregivers have been identified as a key

market to reach with information about the role of libraries in early literacy. The underwriting spots on the television series refer viewers to a new Web site where they can obtain additional library resources that support early literacy.

- » The Colorado State Library (CSL), in cooperation with CAL, distributed Reading Rockets flyers, along with a tip sheet that includes selections from an article published by the Public Library Association (a division of the American Library Association) about adapting library storytimes to early childhood literacy practices. To help evaluate the impact of the outreach, CAL will provide Reading Rockets family and viewer guides upon request.
- » The newest Reading Rockets PBS documentary, *A Tale of Two Schools*, will be available on loan from the CSL, as is the five-part series, *Launching Young Readers*.
- » To extend the reach and encourage closer ties between Colorado's education and library communities, CAL is sending information to a children's literacy coalition and other organizations. The CSL is reaching out to government programs in the state's Department of Education, most of which target children with special needs or who are considered at-risk, to alert them to Reading Rockets' many resources and their availability through the CSL.

For more information contact:

- » Bonnie McCune, Colorado State Library, 303-866-6891 or [mccune\\_b@cde.state.co.us](mailto:mccune_b@cde.state.co.us)

And at the **Williamsburg (VA) Regional Library**:

- » An evening program for families with preschoolers, primarily from Bright Beginnings and Head Start programs, was held in fall 2003. After supper, children were engaged in their own activities while parents watched and discussed an excerpt from the first episode of *Launching Young Readers* and took a look at the Reading Rockets Web sites on the library's computers.
- » A comparable activity has been scheduled during staff meeting time for preschool staff and teachers.
- » Reading Rockets "bags" have been prepared, one for each of the five Reading Rockets programs. Each bag will contain one Reading Rockets video, a related literacy-building activity, and a children's book from the existing collection. Information promoting library resources and activities are included in each bag. These bags are now part of the library's circulating collection.
- » The library created a link from the children's page of its library Web site to Reading Rockets.

For more information contact:

- » Sara Osborne at [sosborne@mail.wrl.org](mailto:sosborne@mail.wrl.org)
- » Nancy Ruhland at [nruhland@mail.wrl.org](mailto:nruhland@mail.wrl.org)

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.

## Reading Rockets Workshop Leader Guidelines

### Introduction

The video modules are 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 on page 2).

These video modules were selected to help you strengthen the connection between library resources and reading. They provide an opportunity to introduce parents, child-care providers, teachers, and others to a way to think about how they can use library resources to participate in children's education. The Reading Rockets materials have also been used to help library staff increase their awareness of how what they provide fits into the larger reading picture.

The videos will provide you with the ability to show workshop participants what best practices actually look like and how library resources support children's and family learning. They will go a long way toward making sure participants leave a library workshop armed with information and ideas to put into action. And what better place to go for more of both than the library!

### Organization of Video Modules

Each of the first four modules is three to four minutes long and provides a great springboard for discussion. In this section of the toolkit, you will find **suggested uses**, **talking points for workshop leaders**, and **handouts** to go along with each of the modules.

Please note that while handouts have been written to accompany specific modules, you may find most of them interchangeable. Feel free to mix and match handouts to best meet your particular needs.

### An Overview of the Modules in This Toolkit

#### »» Module 1: Finding the Right Book (Length 3:14)

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.

#### »» Module 2: Roots of Literacy (Length 3:30)

Three-year-old Mira gets a head start on reading from her parents.

#### »» Module 3: Reading as Dialogue (Length 3:05)

In a Long Island Head Start classroom, children boost their reading skills using a technique called "dialogic reading."

#### »» Module 4: Reading Together (Length 3:25)

A program called Georgetown Even Start is helping families in Washington, D.C., break the cycle of low literacy.

#### »» Module 5: Trade Secrets (Length: 20:00)

Embedded in each *Launching Young Readers* video is a three to four minute interview with a children's book author or illustrator. We have placed them together in this module for your convenience. They include:

- Norman Bridwell, author/illustrator of *Clifford* books
- Kate Duke, illustrator of *I Won't Get Lost* and others
- William Joyce, author/illustrator of *George Shrinks*, *Dinosaur Bob*, and others
- Christopher Myers, illustrator of *Harlem*, *Black Cat*, and others
- Walter Dean Myers, author of *Brown Angels*, *The Blues of Flats Brown*, and others
- Rosemary Wells, author/illustrator of the Max and Ruby books, *Yoko*, and others

### Need Help?

If you have questions about the use of these modules, please contact Reading Rockets at [info@ReadingRockets.org](mailto:info@ReadingRockets.org).

### Video Clips

You can download the video clips at [www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php).

## Module 1: Finding the Right Book

**Recommended Use:** This is a good piece for introducing the library to parents, childcare providers, and educators – and to remind educators of an easy way to get parents involved in their children’s education.

**Workshop Objectives:** Participants will be informed about the resources available at public libraries and motivated to use them. Classroom teachers will be provided with a way to encourage families to become involved in their children’s education.

**Library Links:** This module can serve as a jumping-off place to introduce the range of children’s books available at the library and to explain how children’s interests can grow with books. It allows staff to talk about the specifics of their library and its resources. Library booklists by age or subject can be promoted as well as library programs for children and families. The module can also be used as part of a library card sign-up campaign.

**Video Clips:** To view this module, go to [www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php)

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

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

**TALKING POINTS:**

- » Libraries offer children an opportunity to discover the type of books that they enjoy most. Librarians can ask questions and make suggestions to guide children through the process of self-discovery needed to choose books that they find exciting.
- » 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 can walk visitors through the library to show what is available.
- » Some libraries offer storytime or book clubs, which bring children together with their peers.
- » Once the children have found their books, adults can look for books and other material of interest for themselves.

**AFTER THE VIDEO:**

- » Engage the groups in a discussion about your library.
- » Highlight some of the upcoming family events that might be happening in your community.
- » Have booklists and other library handouts available.
- » If the program takes place in the library, take a short tour. If it takes place in another location, talk about when the participants could come to see the library and meet the staff.

**Handout:** Distribute the "Discover Your Library" handout or create your own.

**Web Sites:** For more information, direct participants to [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders), and, for Spanish-speaking families, [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org).

## Module 2: Roots of Literacy

**Recommended Use:** This module can be used in a workshop for parents and/or child-care providers, either in the library or as an outreach service. It can also be used with pre-K teachers, librarians, and curriculum-based childcare center staff to reinforce information they can share with parents and other adults.

**Workshop Objectives:** Adults will understand the importance of reading, be able to identify early literacy behaviors, gain the knowledge to model positive adult-child reading experiences, and promote and/or highlight library resources to support literacy-building activities.

**Library Links:** Books about the community, community helpers, board books, and a variety of picture books that appeal to young children may be displayed for circulation or checked out to the host organization. Also, adult books about child development may be useful to the group. Library booklists of additional suggestions are helpful.

**Video Clips:** To view this module, go to [www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php)

**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.

**TALKING POINTS:**

- »» Print awareness is important for young children. It involves children's knowledge about print and how it is typically organized on a page.
- »» 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 before beginning school. Libraries help build and sustain that print-rich environment!
- »» We can begin preparing 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 or other adults. From the parents' or other adults' perspective, they are helping the child to develop an ear for language.
- »» Shared reading on a regular basis will help set the tone — children will understand that reading is as much a part of their family's daily activities as 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 that 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.

**Handouts:**

**For Parents:** Distribute "Helping Your Child Become Aware of Print" and/or "Never Too Early to Read: Books for the Very Young" booklist.

**For Librarians and Other Professionals:** Distribute the handout entitled "Print All Around." You may also want to use the handout entitled "Reading Aloud: Tips for Reading to Children."

**Web Sites:** For more information on reading and suggested books, direct participants to the three Reading Rockets Web sites: [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders), and, for Spanish-speaking families, [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org).

## Module 3: Reading as Dialogue

**Recommended Use:** This module can be used as a core piece in workshops for pre-K teachers, childcare providers, and parents, and/or as in-service training for library staff.

**Workshop Objectives:** Participants will see modeled techniques for questioning, reading aloud, and shared reading techniques. They will better understand how comprehension is monitored and how to increase children's vocabulary. This technique could be used in an intergenerational book club in a classroom, at the library, or in the community.

**Library Links:** A great way for the library to generate interest in books is by starting an adult-child "reading club." Adults can actively engage kids in talking about books recommended by librarians. Librarians can provide lists of children's books for intergenerational book clubs as well as books from the adult collection about this type of activity.

**Video Clips:** To view this module, go to [www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php)

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

This video features Head Start students and their teacher using a reading technique called "dialogic reading." It encourages young children to become active participants in the read-aloud process. Dialogic reading helps to build comprehension and vocabulary.

**TALKING POINTS:**

*Mostly for Parents and Family (Home-Based) Childcare Providers:*

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 do not always involve reading. Keep up a run-

ning 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 have just watched together.

#### ***Mostly for Teachers and Center-Based Childcare Providers:***

In addition to supporting the activities above, teachers and childcare providers help children in slightly more formal ways.

- » 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 librarian or teacher, reading with enthusiasm, and asking questions that encourage students to express their opinions and ideas.

#### ***For All Adults:***

- » 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.
- » Talk is powerful! Young children learn the meaning of most words by listening to people talk.
- » 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 non-classroom teachers (librarians, parents, others) that although the clip showed a teacher and her students, they can use some of the same techniques in other settings. You may want to engage participants in a discussion about how the techniques used in dialogic reading can be modified for use in different situations, such as with intergenerational book clubs.

To get the discussion going, you may ask questions like these:

- » 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 children.

#### **Handouts:**

**For Parents and Home-Based Childcare Providers:** Distribute the handout entitled "Talk, Read, Listen to Your Child."

**For Librarians and Other Professionals:** Distribute "Reading as Dialogue."

**Web Sites:** For more information, direct participants to the Reading Rockets Web sites – [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders), and, for Spanish-speaking families, [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org).

## Module 4: Reading Together

**Recommended Use:** For programs and workshops for professional staff at Even Start, Head Start, and other parent programs. This module is not recommended for use in workshops for parents because the third-person presentation style may put off some participants.

**Workshop Objectives:** Participants will learn read-aloud techniques that support young children's literacy development; how families who are rebuilding their family life can help prepare their children for school; and how reading to children can also enrich family relationships.

**Library Links:** Reading aloud is not only important, it's fun! Make available library books, materials, and booklists, and be sure to have a display of books. Have parents and other adults practice reading aloud or sharing books. Partner with adult literacy groups (or library staff with this expertise) to reach out to nontraditional library users and/or provide information about opportunities for adult learners.

**Video Clips:** To view this module, go to [www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php)

**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.

**TALKING POINTS:**

The video includes several strategies that you can share with 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 family's everyday life and family history when discussing stories.
- »» Children enjoy being active participants in the storytelling process.

**AFTER THE VIDEO:**

You may want to ask follow-up questions and engage the participants in a discussion. Here are some sample questions:

- »» 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?

You may also want to discuss library resources that are available to help parents and families connect with information and other appropriate resources.

**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 [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders), and, for Spanish-speaking families, [www.ColorinColorado](http://www.ColorinColorado).

## Module 5: Trade Secrets

**Recommended Use:** For in-service training or workshops for older children, teachers, caregivers, parents, and other adults interested in children's literature.

**Workshop Objectives:** Participants will gain insight into the creative process from well-known children's book creators.

**Video Clips:** To view this module, go to [www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php](http://www.ReadingRockets.org/outreach/libraries/video.php)

**BEFORE THE VIDEO:** Choose one author or illustrator to feature in your workshop:

- » Norman Bridwell, author/illustrator of *Clifford* books
- » Kate Duke, illustrator of *I Won't Get Lost* and others
- » William Joyce, author/illustrator of *George Shrinks*, *Dinosaur Bob*, and others
- » Christopher Myers, illustrator of *Harlem*, *Black Cat*, and others
- » Walter Dean Myers, author of *Brown Angels*, *The Blues of Flats Brown*, and others
- » Rosemary Wells, author/illustrator of the Max and Ruby books, *Yoko*, and others

### TALKING POINTS:

- » Authors and illustrators often tell stories from their backgrounds or create imaginative stories that stem from their lives.
- » Authors and illustrators often like to hear from their readers, young and old. Children can write a letter to a favorite author or illustrator.

- » You can find out more about the lives of these authors and illustrators at the library from print and Web resources.

### AFTER THE VIDEO:

- » Have ready a display of books by this author or illustrator.
- » Develop a booklist or bookmark listing books at the library by a featured author or illustrator.
- » Identify biographical information about the author to complement the display.
- » Have children and parents write to the author or illustrator.
- » Have children create book promotions and displays at the library.
- » Invite parents to learn with their children about the books and their creators at the library.

**Web sites:** Visit [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org), and [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc) for more information about authors, illustrators, children's books, and for downloadable handouts.

## Reading Rockets Workshop Handouts

The handouts included in this section can be used as recommended in Section 3 or mixed and matched to meet your needs. They include, in alphabetical order:

- >> Discover Your Library
- >> Helping Your Child Become Aware of Print
- >> Never Too Early to Read: Books for the Very Young
- >> Print All Around
- >> Reading Aloud: Tips for Reading to Children
- >> Reading as Dialogue
- >> Talk, Read, Listen to Your Child
- >> You Are Your Child's First and Best Teacher

## Discover Your Library

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

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

- » Librarians who can help you find books about topics that interest your child and are at the right reading level.
  - » A special kid-friendly section designed just for children.
  - » storytimes for children. Ask your librarian for exact days and times. Books come to life during storytime. It's a great way for you to share stories with your children.
  - » Information about child and adult reading programs and information about tutoring programs for children and adults.
  - » Computers for you and your child to use free. You'll find a gold mine online. To get you started, visit these Web sites:
    - For Spanish-speaking families, find book-lists and information at [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org).
    - On [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders) you'll find lots of tips for helping your child learn to read.
    - On [www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org) you can link to your child's favorite PBS shows, such as *Between the Lions*, *Arthur*, and *Sesame Street*.
    - Find more kid-friendly Web sites at [www.ala.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ALSC/Great\\_Web\\_Sites\\_for\\_Kids/Great\\_Web\\_Sites\\_for\\_Kids.htm](http://www.ala.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ALSC/Great_Web_Sites_for_Kids/Great_Web_Sites_for_Kids.htm)
- Check it out! A library card is really a passport to adventure!
- Reading Rockets @ your library

## Helping Your Child Become Aware of Print

Parents and caregivers are critically important in helping children learn to read. In fact, parents and caregivers are children's first and best teachers. Most children who begin first grade with the ability to read fairly well have grown up with lots of print around them and adults who shared it with them.

Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- » Talk to your children. Read to them. Listen to them read and talk to you.
- » Read to children from the time they are born. Although babies may not understand the words or meanings at this age, research suggests that even six- or seven-week-old babies get excited when adults read to them.
- » Draw your children's attention to print in the world around them. Find print in books, product logos, signs, lists, and billboards. Point out letters that are familiar or have special meaning, such as a letter in their names.
- » Keep books, newspapers, and other printed materials around the house. Let children see you reading. This will show them that you enjoy reading and that you think it's important.
- » 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. Write down their words and then show them the words in their story as you read it back to them. Use family photographs to tell stories.
- » Plan activities that include recognition of letters and words (such as word games, educational videos, alphabet cards, and writing the child's name).
- » Visit your library regularly. Get a library card. Check out books. Attend storytimes and more.

Reading Rockets @ your library

## Never Too Early to Read: Books for the Very Young

### For children from birth to two years old

*Black on White and White on Black* by Tana Hoban (Greenwillow, 1993)

*Freight Train* by Donald Crews (Greenwillow, 1978)

*Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Clement Hurd (HarperCollins, 1992 issue)

*Sheila Rae's Peppermint Stick* by Kevin Henkes (Greenwillow, 2001)

*Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill (Putnam, 1980)

### And then ... predictable books for children three to five years old

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr., illustrated by Eric Carle (Holt, 1992 rev)

*Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina (HarperCollins, 1947)

*Mice and Beans* by Pam Muñoz Ryan, illustrated by Joe Cepeda (Scholastic, 2001)

*Ten, Nine, Eight* by Molly Bang (Greenwillow, 1983)

*The Three Bears* retold by Paul Galdone (Houghton Mifflin, 1985)

Reading Rockets @ your library

## Print All Around

Books, magazines, posters, labels, and other printed materials are the focal point of learning places such as libraries, classrooms, and homes that are designed to help build children's literacy. These all help create a print-rich environment that supports a child's learning.

Here are some suggestions for creating learning places in which children are eager to participate in language activities as they speak, listen, read, and write:

- » Create a setting, whether it's in the library or the classroom, that encourages children to explore different kinds of print in real-world settings. For example, make a special place where children can write — or draw — cards, posters, and signs. These can be mailed or hand-delivered to a relative or friend.
- » Draw attention to letters and print, especially letters that are familiar or have a special meaning, such as the letters in children's names. Encourage them to link the letter with its sounds. ("See, Jimmy, the word 'jump' begins with the same sound as your name: '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.
- » Talk about differences between books, signs, billboards, and lists. This helps children understand that different types of print carry different messages.
- » Help children recognize different parts of a book, such as front and back cover, pages, and spine. Teach them the names of these parts.
- » 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 learning place by posting appropriate behaviors; various schedules; calendars of events or activities; labels on activity centers, shelves, or objects; and charts and samples of children's work.
- » Keep it fresh by adding different books from the library and replacing those borrowed by children.

Reading Rockets @ your library

## Reading Aloud: Tips for Reading to Children

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

### Before Reading:

- » Point out the front and back of the book.
- » Read the names of the author and the illustrator. Ask what they do. (The author writes the story. The illustrator draws the pictures.)
- » Talk about the cover of the book. Ask questions such as “Why do you think the boy looks sad?”
- » Ask questions such as “What do you think this book will be about?” This lets children predict what will happen. Also, this kind of question usually needs more than a one-word answer.

### 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 such as “What do you think will happen next?”

### After Reading:

- » Ask children more questions that make them think — for example, “What did you like most about the story? What did you like the least about it?”
- » Have children write or dictate their version of the story.

For more information, go to [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders), and, for Spanish-speaking families, [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org).

Reading Rockets @ your library

## Reading as Dialogue

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

Here are some suggestions to increase children's comprehension and vocabulary:

- » Read expressively and with humor, using different voices for different characters. If storytelling 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.
- » Build 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 — children comprehend and remember what they have read.
- » Build children's repertoire of words. Focus on unfamiliar words that can be found in a wide range of texts – words such as “discouraged” and “promptly,” rather than technical words from a specific field of information.
- » Ask rich questions that require children to infer — 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 yes-or-no and right-or-wrong questions that can be answered with a single word.

For more information, go to [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders), and, for Spanish-speaking families, [www.ColorinColorado](http://www.ColorinColorado).

Reading Rockets @ your library

## Talk, Read, Listen to Your Child

Parents and caregivers help children understand more by talking with them as they read aloud.

Here are some ideas to build understanding and vocabulary:

- » Read dramatically. Use different voices for different characters. Slow down or speed up while you read. Children pay attention and understand the story if they are having fun.
- » Make the child part of the reading. Have fun reading. Talk about the story. Answer questions children ask. Ask them questions. Listen to their comments. Encourage children to predict what will happen next.
- » Help the child learn new words. One way for children to build their vocabulary is by guessing what a new word could mean. They base their guess on how the word is 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. Ask questions that need a longer answer. Try to avoid yes-or-no and right-or-wrong questions that can be answered with one word.
- » Reread children's favorite books. Children like reading their favorite stories many times. They are then able to take part in telling the story.
- » Link reading to real-life experiences. Help children make the connection between what they read in books and what they do in life. If you read a book about animals, for example, remind children about the visit to the zoo or farm and the animals you saw.

For more information, go to [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org), and [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders).

Reading Rockets @ your library

## You Are Your Child's First and Best Teacher

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

- » Use the same time every day to read to your child.
- » Talk about stories and what words mean. Ask questions that your child answers with more than “yes” or “no.” Use questions that may have more than one right answer. Ask questions that need a longer response, such as “What was Jenny doing?” rather than “Did Jenny feel sad?”
- » Sit close. If your child is young enough to sit on your lap, enjoy being close.
- » Read lots of books with your child. Point out how books look different.
- » Help your child link real life with what he is hearing or reading in books. If he is reading a book about animals, remind him about a trip to the zoo and talk about the animals.
- » Talk about everyday experiences such as cooking and gardening with your child. Talk

about movies and television shows. Talking about everyday things with your child helps her listen better and understand more.

- » Tell stories. We're all storytellers! Children love to hear stories about their families. What was life like when Grandma was growing up? How about that time you won the school science fair?
- » Visit the library. Find books that inspire family stories.

For more information, go to [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org), [www.pbs.org/launchingreaders](http://www.pbs.org/launchingreaders), and, for Spanish-speaking families, [www.ColorinColorado.org](http://www.ColorinColorado.org).

Reading Rockets @ your library

## Additional Resources

### Template and Sample for Reading Rockets Library Flyer and Poster

1. From Maplewood, NJ:

Reading Rockets logo (child with book),  
then words:

Reading Rockets

[www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)

Research tells us a lot about what works in teaching kids to read and preventing reading difficulties. But setting the stage for reading success requires that parents and teachers work together to provide children with the experiences they need. Learn the basics about reading — and what homes and schools can do to ensure that every child learns to read.

Visit [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)

Brought to you by: [insert your library name here]

2. Here's another idea with less copy:

Reading Rockets logo (child with book),  
then words:

Reading Rockets

[www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)

Reading is rocket science! Come find out how to launch young readers!

Meet \_\_\_\_\_

at (place) \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by your library [and any co-sponsors]

Reading Rockets @ Your Library

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### Sample Evaluations for Use in Libraries

Keep track of how Reading Rockets has worked in your library. Simply counting the number of people who attend the programs and answering a few questions helps you and Reading Rockets figure out how the program is doing. Also, find out what participants in your Reading Rockets program think about it, so that you can fine-tune your programs and events.

Send your summary forms and participant evaluation forms to Partner Relations Director, Reading Rockets, WETA-TV, 2775 S. Quincy St., Arlington, VA, 22206.

## Sample Evaluation Forms

Here are some sample forms that you may want to consider using or adapting for your library.

### 1. Sample Evaluation for Library Staff

#### Reading Rockets Event — Summary Report



Program Title:

---

Program Location:

---

---

Date and Time of Program:

---

Co-Sponsors (if any):

---

Target Audience:

---

Was this audience reached?

---

Comments:

---

---

---

Attendance (number):

---

Outline of Program:

---

---

---

Most Successful Aspects:

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---

---

Least Successful Parts:

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---

Other Observations and Comments:

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## 2. Sample Evaluation for Participants

### Reading Rockets Evaluation



Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time of Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Program: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I attended this program as (check one or more):

Parent    Teacher    Childcare provider    Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Let us know what you think!*

I learned something that I can use with my child:

Strongly agree    Agree    Somewhat agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree

The information was presented in a way that I can use.

Strongly agree    Agree    Somewhat agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree

The best part was: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The part that needs to be improved is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for giving us your ideas!   Reading Rockets @ your library

## Clip Art for Reading Rockets Events

The following is black-and-white clip art for use in creating posters and other print material for Reading Rockets events.

