



LIBRARIES & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) is currently partnering with the Public Library Association (PLA) on an initiative *Libraries for the 21st Century: It's a Family Thing*. The goal of the project is to explore family engagement in children's learning through libraries.

Families are creating learning communities. In such programs, libraries and community partners are careful to put the emphasis on learning and not on shepherding families to tote the line. Families are given tools to make their own wise decisions around what works best for their children.

TIPS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITY COLLABORATION*

- Build on existing relationships
- Learn about each other's services and share resources
- Plan and implement projects together
- Join existing coalitions and networks
- Meet with leaders individually and in small groups in informal settings
- Invite partners to your internal meetings from time to time
- Hold joint trainings and cross-train each other's staff
- Market each other's services
- Use written agreements as appropriate to clarify communication and create positive expectations
- Be proactive in group problem-solving that encourages all partners to benefit
- Ask questions of each other to evaluate and improve services
- Write collaborative grants and initiate new programs and services in partnership
- Be open and expect change
- Help each other succeed

* Adapted from Sari Feldman and Barbara Jordan, "Together Is Better: The Role of Libraries as Natural Community Partners," *Zero to Three* 21, no. 3 (2001): 30-37.

TEACHING BABY TO LOVE READING

BIRTH TO 3 MONTHS

- Sing simple tunes
- Touch baby's fingers and toes when saying rhymes
- Play recordings of Mother Goose songs and rhymes
- Place bold black and white pictures in the crib for the first 6 weeks
- Keep books in the diaper bag and the car
- Stimulate baby's senses by holding and talking to baby

3 TO 6 MONTHS

- Focus on the pictures; keep comments short like "See baby?"
- Use plenty of expression when reading, make sounds
- Tap the page with your finger to attract baby's attention
- Create homemade books with photos or pictures of familiar objects

6 TO 9 MONTHS

- Skip over the plot—talk about the pictures
- Spend just a few seconds on a page when looking at a book
- Give baby paper to tear or crinkle (wax paper, old magazines, tissue paper)
- Label or name objects in pictures

9 TO 13 MONTHS

- Make a game of sounds
- Continue to name and label things
- Allow baby to turn the pages
- Pick books that allow participation—flaps, holes, and textures
- Introduce "paper pages" with supervision

12 TO 18 MONTHS

- Start at the beginning of the book as baby's attention span increases
- Baby may want to read the same book over and over
- Ask questions—"What's that?" and "I see a ball. Can you find a ball?"
- Do the actions as they are mentioned in the story:
pat your tummy, clap your hands, etc.

18 MONTHS & OLDER

- Ask the child to find objects on the page
- Ask the child what they think will happen next in the story
- Talk about feelings
- Pause and allow the child to fill in the next word
- Talk about the characters in the story
- Encourage the child to repeat actions and rhymes in books
- Use books about what they do every day, and read about their favorite things
- Allow the child to pretend to read the book to you

MAPLA
Maryland Association of
Public Library Administrators

TALKING ♥ SINGING ♥ READING ♥ WRITING ♥ PLAYING

