

From Home Visits to Library Visits: How High Plains Library District is Supporting Parents in Early Literacy



The SPELL blueprint (s.lrs.org/blueprint) was created to assist library staff in their effort to support caregivers in practicing early literacy techniques with their children. In November 2014, eight libraries in Colorado were selected to implement the blueprint in their communities. Each library created a programming prototype that guided the library in collaborating with community partners, and providing outreach to low income and high need communities. One of the SPELL libraries was High Plains Library District (HPLD), located in northeast Colorado. Read on to learn about its prototype.

Community Profile - Greeley, Colorado

Population (City of Greeley): 98,666
Racial Makeup: 59% White, 36% Latino/a, 3% Two or More Races
K-12 % Minority: 52%
Median Income: \$42,321
% Below Poverty Line: 13%

Prototype

Cross-training with partner: Family Connects trained library staff on the impact of social-emotional skills on literacy and working with English language learners, and in return HPLD trained Family Connects staff on how to support early literacy efforts.

Elimination of fines for all materials (children and adult) except DVDs.

Library orientations for Family Connects families (tour, storytime, and giveaways of book totes and picture books).

Modeling of early literacy strategies and enrollment in HPLD's 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program during partner home visits.

Joint partner/library events such as library staff speaking about early literacy at HIPPY and PAT family graduations, and a bookmobile visit at a Family Connects event.

Partners

Family Connects: an organization that supports low income, high need families through two programs, HIPPY and PAT. Their curriculum includes a section on supporting early literacy. The families they work with in Greeley speak more than five languages, so home visits occur in the parents' native language with English supports given as needed.

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschoolers (HIPPY): serves 3-5 year olds

Parents as Teachers (PAT): works with families from pregnancy through toddlerhood

A 14-month-old in our PAT program knows that when the bag is in the car it means they are going to get new books! He and Mom had never been to [the library] before but met me there for a visit and it's now one of their favorite places to go. She loves how quiet it is and how many toddler books there are. Her favorite are the board books because she doesn't worry as much about him being rough with them. He knows that when the bag is full of books that's all the ones they can check out!
 - HIPPY mentor

[A HIPPY mentor] went to the library to study and saw one of her families there with their book bag; the dad and children were in the children's section and the mom was printing a resume to apply for a job! By seeing them there she knew that on their own, with very little English, they not only got a library card but figured out how to use and print on the computers!
 - Family Connects Staff Member

Project Resources

Funding: \$36,914 (24% federal grant, 76% HPLD)

Purchases:

- 1,463 children's books
- 48 manipulatives
- 150 book bags
- 966 promotional and 200 informational materials
- 155 games

Activities

23 onsite parent consultations about early literacy that included HIPPY and PAT staff

99 HIPPY and PAT home visits

1 Bookmobile visit to Family Connects

1 Every Child Ready to Read® regional training

1 Family Connects Fall Festival

162 caregivers and 158 children participated in SPELL programming

Outcomes

After completing a library orientation,

- more than 9 in 10 parent survey respondents agreed the library is a place they can come to learn with their child(ren); and
- more than 4 in 5 parent survey respondents agreed the library is a place they can come to play with their child(ren).

More details about this prototype are available at spellproject.weebly.com/research.