

Driving the Library to Families: How Montrose Regional 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 Montrose Regional Library District, located on Colorado's Western Slope. Read on to learn about its prototype.

Community Profile - Montrose County, Colorado

Population: 40,946
Racial Makeup: 76% White, 21% Latino/a, 2% Two or More Races
K-12 % Minority: 42%
Median Income: \$33,750
% Below Poverty Line: 15%

Partner

Montrose Early Childhood Center: A Head Start early childhood preschool center serving 230 preschoolers.

Prototype

Weekly bookmobile visits to the Montrose Early Childhood Center during parent pickup.

Elimination of fines on children's materials checked out on the bookmobile.

Early literacy round table discussions with childcare center teachers.

Parent Literacy Nights at childcare center that included early literacy trainings and demonstrations.

A non-native English speaking father came onto the bookmobile with his three-year-old son. Although his wife generally brings his son on Tuesdays, this week he was doing pickup and had never been to the bookmobile. He signed up for his very first library card and has become a library user - getting books for his young son as well as himself.

-Children's Librarian

At home we implement the same strategy with my children, same as you did. They learn much more rapidly.

- Parent

Project Resources

Funding: \$23,789 (50% federal grant, 50% Montrose Regional Library District)

Purchases included:

- Bookmobile maintenance costs
- 729 children's books
- 175 parent books
- 345 manipulatives
- Program materials (computer, prizes, puppets, etc.)
- 1,590 early literacy games
- 1,550 promotional materials
- 780 informational materials

Activities

42 bookmobile visits

870 caregivers and 1,749 children visited the bookmobile

2 early literacy events for parents

2 roundtable meetings with preschool

144+ new library cards

95 onsite and 45 offsite parent consultations on early literacy

Outcomes

After participating in SPELL,

- 4 in 5 parent survey respondents have a regular routine for reading books,
- 7 in 10 parent survey respondents are more confident helping their child(ren) be ready to read in kindergarten, and
- 3 in 5 parent survey respondents read to their child(ren) daily.

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