



# Small Start, **Big Finish!** Fun with Early Literacy

Georgia Coleman, Community Outreach Manager  
Laura Kennett, Outreach Librarian

# Who We Are...

At Richland Library, we're guided by the promises we've made to our community:

- We are **welcoming**.
- We are **caring**.
- We are **committed to offering you the best**.
- We are **helpful**.
- We are **fresh and fun**.

# Advancing Our Community

Our early literacy initiatives are driven by strategic plan:

**Goal: Support school, college and career readiness.**

Outcome: Parents and caregivers have the knowledge, skills and materials to help their children become ready to read, learn and succeed.

**Goal: Be recognized as an organization that helps solve community problems.**

Outcome: Our partners recognize us as a vital source of insight, direction and support for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

# Eau Claire ~ Columbia, SC

- **Urban** community
- 45% of households generate an annual income **less than \$25,000**
- **47.7% of children** live below the poverty line



# Eastover, SC

- Rural community
- Average annual income of **\$20,114**
- **96.5% of children** live below the poverty line



# Small Start...

## Outreach to Childcare Centers

- Building relationships
- Modeling best practices
- *Ten Week Challenges* (based on ECRR II)

## Family Picture Book Club

- Focus on family engagement
- Early literacy tips and tricks
- Pizza and drinks



# Here Comes Kindergarten

- \$40,000 grant from the Knight Foundation
- \$5,000 grant from TD Bank
- Fundamental **shift in our approach** to Outreach services
- Creation of a **comprehensive program** with services for:
  - Parents and Caregivers
  - Preschool Teachers
  - Library Staff



# Parents and Caregivers

- Monthly **family literacy** sessions
- **Healthy** dinners (no more pizza!)
- Stories, songs, fingerplays and early literacy tips (**everyday ease**)

## The Power of Family and Talking



Tasks that children **can do on their own** help build their self-esteem (clap and give them praise). Make cleaning up fun by singing a song or turning on music. Putting everything away in the tub will grow confidence and **everyday ease!**

**Scribble, cut and glue towards writing.** It takes skill and coordination to make letters, making random marks on paper is the first step! Talk about what you write and ask your child about their drawings. You are making the connection between writing and speech!



Having a **special place for books** shows that they are important. Show your enthusiasm for reading and your child will want to read!

## FUN!

**Make talking cards** by gluing pictures of you and your child's favorite things from magazines onto construction paper. Stuck in line at the grocery store? Pull out the cards and talk about trains, shoes, the Gamecocks and more!

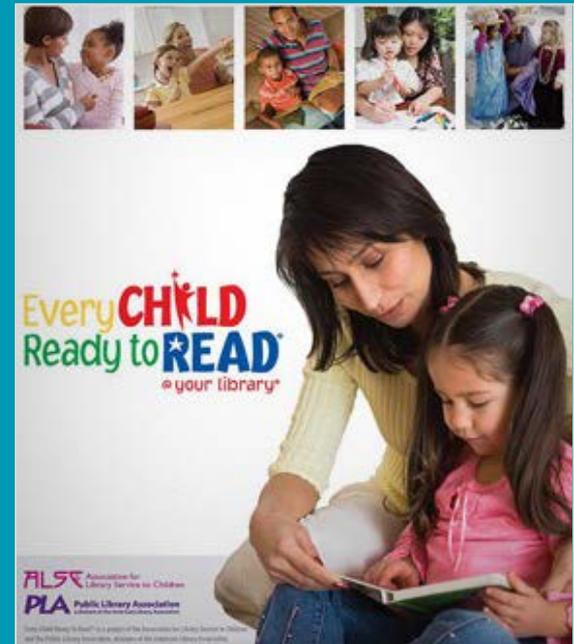
**Create "All about Us" books** by gluing photos of family onto construction paper. Looking at familiar people and things is comforting to children.

**Make stuff!** The stuff may look like a mess but your child is building skills and making connections. That clump of glue and paper may be the start of an engineer's career!



# Preschool Teachers

- **Weekly visits** from Outreach librarians
- ALA's *Every Child Ready to Read* and *Early Literacy* kits
- *Ten Week Challenges*
- *Growing Readers* picture book collections

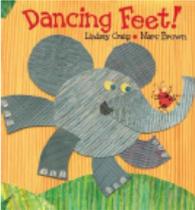


# Preschool Teachers

- *The Library Was Here* flyers for parents
- School Readiness Workshop for continuing education credit
- Circulation of iPads loaded with developmentally-appropriate learning apps

 **RICHLAND LIBRARY** This week's story time focused on

Today we **read**  
**Dancing Feet**  
By Lindsey Craig



We **sang**  
**London Bridges**  
London Bridges is falling down, falling down, falling down. London Bridges is falling down, my fair lady.

**Tip:** 20% of children are overweight. Get your child **moving** and following directions by using the words **stop and go**, and **fast and slow**. Children can **pretend** to be animals, leaves, buses or anything else that goes.

# Library Staff

- ALA's *Every Child Ready to Read* and *Early Literacy* kits
- **Training** through regular Youth Services meetings



# Library Staff

- **Resource-sharing** via Richland Library's intranet and enterprise social network
- **Comprehensive program evaluation** by the University of South Carolina's Office of Program Evaluation



# On the right track

## Building Adult Capabilities to Improve Child Outcomes: A Theory of Change

from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child

Video:

[http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/videos/theory\\_of\\_change/](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/videos/theory_of_change/)

# Success!

- Fifty-nine families (almost 175 people) participated – *nearly double our expectation.*
- 66% of participating families **attended at least five** of seven sessions.



# Success!

- Parents reported **spending more time** drawing pictures, playing games, singing songs and writing letters and numbers.
- 100% of parents reported that their **children enjoy reading** more because of the program.



# Success!

- 100% of preschool teachers reported learning new ways to read, sing, talk, play and write with their children.
- Nearly all participating library staff members reported **increased confidence in their ability** to provide school readiness resources to parents and caregivers.



# Learning from Experience

- **Crowd control** is a challenge
- Food can be a **distraction**
- We want to **increase our focus** on:
  - Family engagement during the sessions
  - Creating a reading ritual
  - Learning nursery rhymes
  - Making connections through conversation
  - Learning traditional tales and family stories
  - Making learning fun and easy

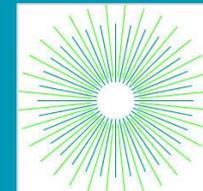
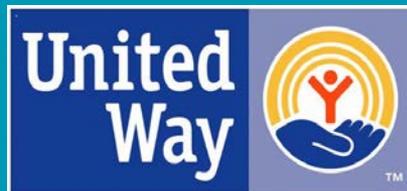
# Word Got Around...

The **Columbia Housing Authority** and the Carmen Nylund Foundation asked us to bring the program to Gonzales Gardens, a **public housing** community.



# Donors Got On Board...

- **United Way of the Midlands** - \$55,000 for Gonzales Gardens
- **Carmen Nylund Foundation** – seed funding for Gonzales Gardens
- **Vista Nights Rotary Club** - \$4,000 (in-kind) for Gonzales Gardens
- **Central Carolina Community Foundation** - \$21,650 for three Richland Library Locations
- **Women in Philanthropy** - \$10,000 for three Richland Library Locations

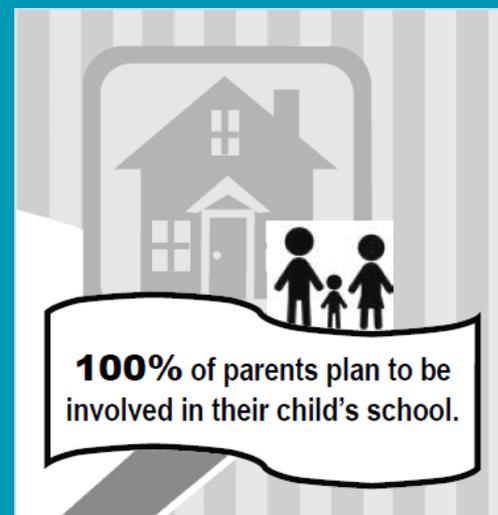
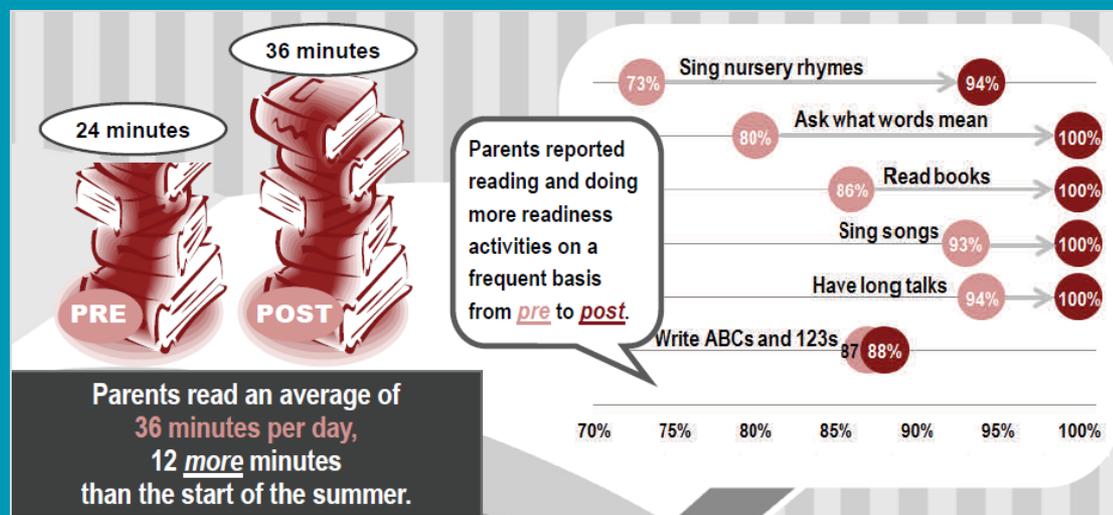


# 10 Week Pilot Program

- **Thirty-one families**, 103 participants
- 61% attended **at least five** of ten sessions
- 48% attended **at least seven** of ten sessions
- 100% of **parents reported knowing more** about getting their children ready for school
- 78% said their **children enjoy reading “a lot more”** because of the program

# 10 Week Pilot Program

- Parents reported **increases in time spent** reading, sharing nursery rhymes, having long talks, singing songs, and more
- Average **increase of 12 percentiles** on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test



# Targeting a New Population

- Added monthly family engagement sessions in our Northeast community, which has a high concentration of **Spanish-speakers**
- **Increased our efforts** to reach Latino residents in the area and offer the services they requested – computer classes, library tours, and evening English conversation groups



# Still Going...

- **Monthly sessions** at Gonzales Gardens, Richland Library Eastover, Richland Library North Main and Richland Library Northeast
- Serving more than **75 families**
- Working with USC's OPE to **evaluate** the program
- **Continuing to learn and improve!**



# And, We're Not Finished Yet!

## Exploring long-term funding with the United Way of the Midlands

- Continuation of the program for up to three **two year cycles**
- Increased focus on **public housing communities**
- Comprehensive evaluation by USC's OPE that would **follow participants through kindergarten** as well as Richland Library's Summer Stride program

# For more information...

Georgia Coleman, Community Outreach Manager

[gcoleman@richlandlibrary.com](mailto:gcoleman@richlandlibrary.com)

Laura Kennett, Community Outreach Librarian

[lkennett@richlandlibrary.com](mailto:lkennett@richlandlibrary.com)

[www.herecomeskindergarten.wordpress.com](http://www.herecomeskindergarten.wordpress.com)



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