

Summary of the State Library of Tasmania Reading Together Program for Tasmanian ACE Conference. November 2006

Funding

A commitment of \$400,000 for the Reading Together program over four years has been outlined in the Tasmanian Labor Party's policy for education "Learning for Life".

This is in addition to \$50,000 per annum in recurrent funding through "Tasmania: a State of Learning".

Program Structure

Based on the Born to read Program conducted by Roxanne Saunders at Montello Primary School.

The program is designed

- to enable opportunities for parents/carers and their pre school aged children to learn and think about the literacy practices in their everyday lives
- to recognise and build on the literacy strengths of both parents/carers and children
- to raise the awareness of the importance of reading for empowerment, both from the perspective of pre school age children acquiring pre reading strategies, and adults modelling and engaging in reading
- to encourage and foster a supportive environment within the library and broader community which encourages adults to seek support for whatever literacy needs they may have

Two strands

- Weekly family sessions
- Adult literacy awareness raising and tutor training and provision of support

Weekly sessions of one hours duration conducted over 3 school terms held in the library. A minimum of 10 sessions per term

All sessions follow a formula which can be adapted to suit the composition of the group but which remains consistent

Sessions are conducted using the alphabet as the context.

Boxes of specially selected books available for children and parents to use and borrow

Big easel with the current letter of the alphabet displayed prominently as well as the letter from the previous week

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A parent tip suggesting strategies for supporting their child to become a reader provided each week

Each child has a folder in which they keep all their work and a name badge which is pinned to them each week when they arrive

Good modelling provided by the teacher for parents

As an example :Oxford Sound Starters” used as the book focusing on the letter for the week

Session always contains a hands on playgroup style of activity to reinforce the letter as well as rhyming and singing activities.

Examples of feedback received, collected regularly by teachers

- Rowan is always most eager to attend, and counts the sleeps until the next session.”
- “Darcy looks forward to coming each week and often talks about Reading Together at home.”
- “A lot of effort goes into the sessions by the teacher I enjoy taking my son.”
- “I have learnt different ways to help my children with the alphabet and sounds”
- “Fantastic!”

Program outcomes

- Children begin kinder / prep being able to recognise their name.
- Parents / Carers pick up good strategies for supporting children’s reading.
- Children know more letters and sounds of the alphabet.
- Children settle more quickly into routines.
- Children have a better understanding of print concepts.
- Parents / carers become comfortable in the program and may declare their own need for literacy/ essential skills support.
- Parents can be supported using the most appropriate strategies
- Program helps develop children's and parents confidence.

There are 4 key factors which contribute to the success of the program

1. The importance of relating to the children and parents on their level
2. Ensuring that a high quality personal relationships are built between the presenter, the participants, the library and other support people.
3. The use of a consistent formula each week
4. The continuity of the program

Statistics

Average participation per week prior to October 2006

	Adults	Children
Queenstown Library	12	13
Kingston Library	5	6
Dodges Ferry	11	15
Huonville	5	8
Smithton	10	12
Clarendonvale	12	13
Totals	55	67

Average participation per week currently

	Adults	Children
Queenstown	10	9
Kingston	6	5
Dodges Ferry	15	11
Huonville	8	5
Smithton	12	10
Clarendonvale	12	13
St Marys	15	12
Glenorchy	22	17
Devonport	15	12
New Norfolk	1	1
Georgetown	12	10
Mayfield	9	8
Totals	137	113

All new locations are currently under review and will be evaluated for continuation or modification.

A purely subjective analysis, conducted by the Reading Together Teachers of those adults currently attending the Reading Together Sessions, has identified that approximately 30% – 40% of participants would have some form of literacy support needs themselves. To date 5 adults have also explicitly benefited from the provision of appropriate literacy support as a result of the program.