

Congregations & Early Childhood

From the Early Childhood Faith Initiative, a collaboration between Durham's Partnership for Children & End Poverty Durham

Fourth Edition

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SECTION 1: FAITH COORDINATOR NEWS

23% of Durham's young children live in poverty. Most children take books for granted but not children in poverty. Early exposure of reading books to babies is critical in language development. Sharing books with babies builds a lifelong love of reading. Help that opportunity happen for our children in poverty by supporting the Holiday Book Drive at Barnes & Noble at Southpoint Mall between Nov 1- Dec 31. Durham's Partnership for Children collected 4,150 books in 2009 for 22 agencies. **Ask your congregations to participate by buying and donating a book for those young children without books.**

Contact Winnie Morgan for questions or to speak to your congregation at winniewmorgan@juno.com.

SECTION 2: RESOURCES & MATERIALS

The article, "Ministry for the Sippy-Cup Set" by Dawn Rundman challenges congregations to not ceremoniously bring babies into congregations and then in effect say: "Welcome to the club, kid. See you in three years". She shares sources for early faith formation such as Milestone Ministry (The Youth & Family Institute), Faith Stepping Stones (Faith Inkubators) and Splash! (Augsburg Fortress). If you would like to read more about Rundman's ideas for opening up possibilities of birth to three ministry in your congregations got to: http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Vocation/Lutheran-Partners/Complete-Issue/090708/090708_06.aspx

Don't forget to use the handout: *Faith in our Future: Congregations and Children Birth to Five* (<http://dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx>). Created locally & available in English & Spanish.

SECTION 3: QUOTES

Do you have "white space" in your newsletters or bulletins that you could insert a quote? Each month I will share quotes on early childhood that we hope you will enjoy and use.

One of the greatest gifts adults can give to their offspring and to their Society is to read to children.
Carl Sagan

A baby is born with a need to be loved...and never outgrows it. **Frank A. Clark**

Every child born into the world is a new thought of God, an ever-fresh and radiant possibility.

Kate Douglas Wiggin

SECTION 4: SHARING IDEAS

Early Language Development & Birth to Five in Congregations:

Parents and teachers are essential partners in a young child's development of reading, writing and language skills. You and other family members can do the following activities at home to encourage pre-school literacy. Be a model for your child. Children learn that reading and writing are important when they see adults using these skills! **Share the following literacy tips with families in your congregations:**

- * Read aloud with your child every day. Talk about stories you read to make them more meaningful.
- * Spend time in conversation with your child to develop vocabulary and knowledge of the world. Label what you see and explain how things work.
- * Play with language to help your child listen to rhymes & letter sounds. Read nursery rhymes & other rhyming books. See how many rhyming words you can think of together: hop, top, bop, mop, lop, stop, drop and flop.
- * Teach your child about letters & words. Notice words and letters in the world around you. Read cereal boxes and favorite snacks. Point out the letters in your child's name that you see in signs and billboards around town.
- * Encourage your child to draw and write by allowing access to pencils, crayons, markers, chalk and a variety of paper. Activities to develop the muscle strength needed to be able to write successfully include: playing with play dough, tearing and crumpling paper, scooping and pouring, using Lego blocks, and sticking stickers. Help your child send a letter or write a grocery list.
- * Use your child's native language when you talk, read, write, play and sing. This will create a strong sense of self and support your child's roots in addition to building a solid foundation of basic language concepts.

Source: Prepared by the Literacy Connection staff; U.S. Department of Education Early Reading First Program

See also: "Building Baby's Brain: Learning Language" by going to the Web site below on **Building Better Brains for Babies** & other listed Web sites on early literacy.

REACH OUT: Young children in poverty have fewer books and hear fewer words. Durham Libraries sponsor an early literacy outreach program called *Get Set, Get Ready, Let's Read*. The program provides high quality books and story times to child care homes with less than a 3-star rating. The children in these homes have access to limited resources and are underserved. The library is currently understaffed for this project to deliver the story times to homes that qualify. The Library could use congregational volunteers to help reach more homes. The volunteers would receive training and shadow a staff member before going solo. The commitment involves visiting a home once every other week. Contact Karlene Fyffe, 560-0172 or kfyffe@co.durham.nc.us for more info or to volunteer.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information visit & to access all newsletters and related handouts, go to:

www.dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx;

Other resources: www.endpovertydurham.org; www.heckmanequation.org; www.developingchild.harvard.edu, *Better Brains for Babies* (<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/bbb/factSheets.php>)

To unsubscribe or for more information, contact Winnie Morgan at winniewmorgan@juno.com.

We would appreciate your feedback on this newsletter and ideas to be shared with others on birth to five and their parents in congregations. Please forward this newsletter to appropriate persons on your staff or submit their e-mail.