

Family Storyteller Club boosts quality time, love of reading

For about a dozen Adair County parents and their children who gathered one night a week last Fall at the Family Rewards Building in Greenfield, quality time was measured in number of books read, pictures drawn and puzzles solved—together.



Iowa State University Extension in Adair County recently embarked on two pre-school educational programs designed to stimulate a love of reading through fun, friendships and increased family time together. Thirteen families joined the initial *Family Storyteller* group, which met once a week for six weeks during September and October. The sessions were funded by grants from Fact Empowerment Area and Prevent Child Abuse Iowa.



Despite a significant commitment of time, most parents were sorry to see *Family Storyteller* end—mainly because of all the new friendships made and obvious learning progress shown by the children.



The solution was to start a *Book-of-the-Month Club* for *Storyteller* “graduates.” The format was similar but, as the name implies,

meetings were limited to once a month. Parents meet separately, first, to discuss what’s been done during the past month to reinforce literacy skills learned through *Storyteller*. Then, they talk about the new book to be sent home next

month before rejoining their children for reading and related activities.



Eleven of 13 families completing the initial *Family Storyteller* series are continuing with *Book of the Month Club*. Plans are to make the *Club* an ongoing activity in the community, adding new *Family Storyteller* graduates as they become available.

“Reading has helped him in so many ways, from colors to numbers to counting. It’s all been positive.”
-Kristi Burg, on son Brady’s participation in *Book of the Month Club*

“We’ve gone from reading no books at night to reading two or three each night at bedtime. He’s really picked up on his ABC’s and his numbers—plus, it’s a lot of fun.”

-Dallas Mavis, and son, Sterling

For more information about this and other Iowa State University Extension programs and services, contact Nina Utterback, ninau@iastate.edu or Angie Powell, powella@iastate.edu, at Adair County Extension, 641-743-8412, OR, visit the Adair County/ISU Extension website at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/adair/>.

February, 2009