

Early Childhood Reading Program Engages Families in Literacy Development

An innovative literacy program that encourages parents to read with their preschool children received tremendous local support in Ida County. With funding totals beyond \$5,000 from the Ida County Empowerment, Ida County Betterment Foundation, Dollar General and Target literacy grants the *Family Storyteller Program* positively impacted sixteen families at five weekly sessions. Perfect attendance was attained by 75% of the families, and each received \$25 Food Pride gift certificates. As a result of this program opportunity a total of 22 adults and 21 children engaged in stimulating reading, language, and relationship building activities with 3 trained facilitators. Local youth volunteered 20 hours of child care. Adult facilitators donated 20 hours of contact time with participants and at least 24 more hours in training and preparation. Free meals, child care, educational door prizes and take home literacy activities were added benefits provided by the financial and in-kind support of partners with Ida County Extension. As a further success, seven of these families chose to continue attending ISU Extension sponsored parenting classes offered in Ida County the following month.



Success Stories from participants ~



- “We find ourselves reading more books and the extra family time is great.”
 - “I read the title and author now and illustrator.”
 - “We have been using the skills we go over at the sessions. We spend time together doing the take home activities and we enjoy reading the books we get to each other.”
 - “I learned how important it is to read to your children. I also learned that if you read to your children they do better in school.”
 - “...more time reading, allowing my child to choose the book, doing activities related to the story”
- “We take more time to read every night.”
 - “We read more using the skills provided in the program.”
 - Evaluation results indicated 100% of the participants would attend *Family Storyteller* again and would also recommend this program to their friends.

For more information about this program or other Iowa State University Extension resources, contact the Ida County Extension Office at 712-364-3003. Information is also available on the Iowa State University Extension website at www.extension.iastate.edu and the Ida County Extension website at www.extension.iastate.edu/ida .

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Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.