

## EARLY LITERACY TIPS TO HELP DEVELOP YOUNG READERS

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**I**t's no surprise that the library has a wealth of resources to promote the development of critical skills to help children become successful readers and students. Library collections, programs and services address a variety of needs and approaches: Some of the services utilize technology to facilitate growth and interaction, while others are based more on direct human interaction or even individual exploration.

In the January column in this space, we talked about two new technology tools to develop the fundamental skills to help young readers grow and develop. ABC Mouse has interactive learning activities that can be accessed through library computers, from home computers or via iPads you can check out from Fair Oaks Branch Library. Starling Early Engagement Kits help caregivers to count how many words children are hearing, providing the impetus to talk and sing more so that kids continue to develop.

In addition to these technology tools, here are a few more ways the library can be a part of the educational development of your child, grandchild, niece, nephew, family friend or next-door neighbor!

Kindercard is an annual celebration in which librarians from Redwood City Public Library visit

every school in the Redwood City School District to make sure that library cards get into the hands of every kindergartener in our community. Of course, many of these young students already have library cards, but each year we issue several hundred additional cards to excited children. The card drive is followed up by a Super Saturday event at the Downtown Library (this year's will be March 3), where performers, craft activities, costumed characters from children's books, and free books are available to every kindergartener who visits.

Early Childhood Learning Centers (ECLC) are developmental play areas at the Downtown and Redwood Shores libraries (and coming soon to Fair Oaks and Schaberg!) where young children can interact with play sculptures to develop fine and gross motor skills while learning new words, exploring the world around them and also having fun playing in colorful, interactive environments. Visit the Baby Bay in the Downtown Library or the story room at Redwood Shores to see happy children learning while they play. The new Farmers Market Truck ECLC will open at Fair Oaks after the renovation and expansion is complete this summer, and plans are in the works for Schaberg to receive an ECLC installation this summer as well.

Programs and activities focused on early learning are

available almost every day of the week at libraries in Redwood City. With 18 weekly story times and other programs like Curious Learners, Early Learners, Books and Babies, bilingual English/Spanish songs and stories, story time with Sheriff's deputies, craft activities, coding club, Paws for Tales (in which kids read to trained dogs), dance and movement programs and more, learning has never been so much fun.

Finally, you can learn more about creative ways to read, write, talk, sing and play with the children in your life by following Redwood City Public Library on Facebook (RCPLlibrary) or Instagram (@redwoodcitylibrary). Children's librarians periodically share tips and tricks on social media using the hashtag #earlyliteracy, such as: "Give meaning to written words. Label objects in your home such as 'bed,' 'table,' 'door' and point to the word as you say them. If your family is bilingual, create labels in both languages. Let your child choose which things get labels, even if some items are hard-to-read words. Children will be able to 'read' the word since it's attached to a known object." Follow us online for even more useful tips.

*Editor's note: This article is supplied by Derek Wolfram, library director at the Redwood City Public Library.*