



Families for Literacy at Project Read

(Project Read Tutor Training)



Why have family literacy at an adult program?

Many adult learners include family-oriented goals as part of their study plan. We help these parents/caregivers improve their own skills and offer support services to assist them in the crucial role of a child's first and foremost teacher. Here's how we go about it:

Improve the parent/caregiver's literacy skills.

By meeting with a Project Read tutor, a parent/caregiver improves his own literacy skills and develops new abilities and patterns of behavior. These parents/caregivers show, by example, that they value education and personal growth. They can better support children with schoolwork and communicate more effectively with teachers and school administrators. The increased literacy skills and self-confidence can help parents/caregivers be more communicative and effective at home, work, and in the community.

Welcome families to the public library.

We offer an alternative entry point and supportive environment where families who may otherwise feel intimidated by a public library will instead experience a sense of connection and develop an ever-increasing interest in their public library and other community resources.

Provide pretty nifty family workshops.

We invite families into the Project Read office on a regular basis to choose free books and educational materials, borrow library materials, use the computer lab, engage in various literacy activities, and share delicious and nutritious food. We encourage children and parent/caregivers to share common tasks as well as pursue their individual needs and interests while developing positive relationships with library staff and other members of the Project Read community. We work with community partners such as the Exploratorium® and the University of California to present interactive and engaging workshops on science literacy, nutrition, and much more.

Build rich, diverse, and multi-generational home libraries.

We actively engage Families for Literacy learners and family members in making their own selections from a wide range of free books and learning materials when they visit the Project Read office.

Enrichen family life.

These services support our learners in fostering an environment where sharing books, engaging in learning activities, and accessing community resources like the library are a natural part of family life.

What's a tutor to do?

We encourage you to include components of family literacy in some of your tutoring sessions if you are matched with a parent/caregiver. Here are some simple things you can help parents/caregivers do to improve their own literacy abilities while helping their children develop the skills and knowledge to be happy and successful at home, school, and in the community.

- Encourage your learner to regularly engage in reading and learning activities in the home.
- Make sure that your learner knows that, no matter what his current reading ability or the age of a child, there are simple and enjoyable ways to help a child develop oral language, pre-literacy, and reading skills. He can tell a child stories, sing songs, take walks and point out things, ask questions, chit-chat and engage in conversation, look at the pictures in books and discuss them and tell his own stories. Activities like these can help a child develop vocabulary, express herself, communicate with others, make sense of the world around her, recognize the connections between words and objects, associate positive feelings with books and learning, and be prepared for the academic and social aspects of school– and beyond. It is also a fun way to spend time with a child and can be done while running errands, doing chores, taking the bus, etc. It's helpful for parents/caregivers to know that learning activities can take place pretty much anywhere, any time, and in any way that works for them.
- Check in with Project Read staff to select books to enhance, or establish, the learner's home collection. Help your learner utilize this opportunity to receive brand new books to build an engaging, diverse, and multi-generational home library.
- Have a chat about some children's books that you, or a child in your life, enjoyed when approximately the same age as your learner's child. Get copies of the books from us or borrow them from the library. Practice until your learner is comfortable reading them aloud.
- Focus on one book and stay with it until your learner knows it really well. Encourage your learner to make reading that book a family ritual.
- Encourage your learner to use the pictures in books to tell stories. She can tell the story in her own words. Perhaps it could become an exciting and creative tradition of telling the story differently each time.
- Encourage your learner to borrow children's videos, DVDs, CDs, and audio cassettes from Project Read. We have a large selection of literature based multi-media material. Some of the media is packaged with companion books and other materials with related themes. Ask us about strategies to use TV and other media as learning tools.

- Do a language experience story geared toward the learner's child. It could be the story of a family event, an experience from when the learner was his child's age, a story told to the learner when a child, or a story from a book that was read to the learner as a child. You could even use a scene or the plot from a movie, TV show, or radio broadcast that your learner has fond memories of.
- Encourage your learner to tell stories to her child at bedtime and have the child tell stories to her. Help your learner write down some of the stories they tell. Enter the text into the computer and possibly draw pictures or use clip art to illustrate. Perhaps ask the child to illustrate the typed story.
- Use the Project Read Computer Learning Lab to copy and paste the text of a children's book into Read Please. Make listening to it and following along a part of your session. It will increase your learner's confidence and ability to read the book to his child while increasing his comfort with computers and technology.
- Read some comics together. Reading and discussing comics can be an engaging, challenging, and rewarding activity for tutoring sessions. Get a daily paper and go through the comics section together. Pick a few that your learner likes and read them together on a regular basis. Make sure that at least one is good to share with the learner's child. Sharing comics can be a fun and low-stress family reading activity that creates an environment where enjoying the newspaper is a natural part of home life. You can also choose from the great selection of comic collections in our family program book larder and/or view comics online through our Computer Learning Lab Links page (use the lab computers or go to www.projectreads.org and click on *Learning Lab Links* at the bottom of the page).
- Ask for some of our families program study guide packets. They are jam-packed with information and activities to easily explore specific children's books (like *Where the Wild Things Are* and *Abiyoyo*). You can apply most of the questions and strategies to explore just about any book.
- Take your learner on a tour of the children's section of the library. Show where the various books and multi-media materials are stored. Get to know the children's department staff.
- Encourage your learner to have his/her family participate in the Project Read Families for Literacy summer book club. It has a very flexible structure and can connect folks to books in meaningful ways.

Keep in mind.

When you help a parent/caregiver develop greater comfort with reading, discussing, and sharing books – he/she gains stronger literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills. These changes can have a profound positive impact within the family and throughout our community.