

# Fairfax County Public Library

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LOB #93:

## **EARLY LITERACY AND SCHOOL AGE ENRICHMENT**

### **Purpose**

The Early Literacy and School Age Enrichment LOB focuses on children and their families from birth to grade 12. Fairfax County Public Library promotes the love of books and the importance of reading by providing programs and services that support the educational and intellectual advancement of children and teens. The Early Literacy component validates FCPL's commitment to ensuring that children learn to read and enter school prepared to learn. In addition, this component connects to a pivotal mission shared by FCPL, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and private educational institutions: building the future child-by-child. The Library is committed to its public and private school partners. The School Age Enrichment component focuses on homework support, staff-administered programs to reduce knowledge loss during the summer break and enrichment during the school year, and assistance with reading recommendations and direct outreach to schools. Academic institutions are typically only open during school hours so FCPL is integral to student success providing evening, school holiday, and summer access to educational materials.

### **Description**

This LOB encompasses the Youth Services program, including Early Literacy Outreach. FCPL's programs and services for children from birth to age 12 are designed to teach information literacy, create a love for books and reading, and provide a stable foundation for lifelong learning.

Youth Services staff focuses on early literacy skills during story times. These skills are modeled for parents and caregivers to increase their ability to create a strong interaction between adult and child during future reading sessions. Youth Services staff members find age appropriate books and resources to help children develop a love of reading. Staff members provide library tours, visit community preschools and attend community events. In addition, FCPL has a dedicated outreach staff in the early literacy department. These specialists present interactive story times to preschool children in child care centers, Head Start classrooms and family child care homes; promote the importance of making books a part of everyday life by encouraging the use of library services; develop early literacy professional development workshops for teachers who work with children from birth to age 5; and design early literacy publications to assist teachers and caregivers to develop early literacy skills and provide necessary resources. These elements of the Early Literacy Program show FCPL's deep commitment to empowering children (and their families) with the academic tools to become productive, innovative citizens – a goal that is shared by FCPS and private educational institutions.

Youth Services staff members provide services and programs during all library hours, including nights and weekends. They also represent the library at preschools and community events. Early Literacy Outreach programs deliver story times on weekday mornings in Head Start classrooms, childcare centers, and family childcare homes. To ensure teachers can attend, professional development workshops are presented in branches on Saturday mornings or weekday evenings.

The program is performed by County staff and volunteers. It has been a provided service since the 1980s.

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## Benefits

This LOB helps to prepare preschoolers to be ready to read and ready for the formal education setting. Early literacy programming helps those for whom English is not their primary language, helps to close the information gap among preschoolers from different backgrounds and also provides tools for parents to encourage learning. Among school age students, library programs provide homework support, assistance with research techniques and readers' advisory. This program also encourages a love of reading which correlates to success in academic settings. Library usage can impact a student's success throughout their K-12 school years and beyond.

The Early Literacy component of the LOB validates FCPL's commitment to ensuring children learn to read and enter school prepared to learn, an essential skill that enables them to successfully start on the path to become lifelong learners. FCPL promotes the love of books and the importance of reading by providing programs and services that support the educational and intellectual advancement of children from birth to age 12 in public, private, and home school settings. These resources stimulate children's imaginations, engages them in the world of reading, ensures they enter school ready to read, and teaches them how to access and effectively use information. The Early Literacy Outreach Program visits approximately 110 child care centers, Head Start classrooms and family child care homes for story time programs. The early childhood community appreciates this invaluable service.

The Early Literacy and School Age Enrichment LOB supports the following Vision Elements: Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities, Building Livable Spaces, Connecting People and Places, Maintaining Healthy Economies, and Creating a Culture of Engagement.

## Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

## Trends and Challenges

**Trends:** FCPL continues to see an increasingly diverse population, and children are relying more heavily on electronic materials and online materials and textbooks.

**Challenges:** The challenges facing the LOB include dealing with an increasing number of children who are with caregivers who are not the parents, more developmentally challenged children, and the popularity of the Library's programs makes it challenging to maintain a high quality of service.

While many children and their families take advantage of the free programs the library offers, there are a number of children unavailable to attend story times at a branch in their neighborhood because they are in preschool and their parents are working. Other children remain on long wait lists to enter Head Start programs. As preschool teachers look for additional resources to support the learning of children in their care, there is a demand for more story times in other locations throughout Fairfax County.

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## Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
<b>LOB #93: Early Literacy and School Age Enrichment</b>			
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$2,517,741	\$2,676,816	\$2,861,811
Operating Expenses	158,552	174,270	182,288
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$2,676,293</b>	<b>\$2,851,086</b>	<b>\$3,044,099</b>
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund</b>	<b>\$2,676,293</b>	<b>\$2,851,086</b>	<b>\$3,044,099</b>
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	54 / 53	54 / 53	54 / 53
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>54 / 53</b>	<b>54 / 53</b>	<b>54 / 53</b>

## Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Early Literacy Programs					
Branch Libraries	1,319	1,324	1,399	1,400	1,400
Early Literacy Office	252	426	614	675	742
Percentage of FCPS Elementary Schools Visited	86%	86%	79%	80%	80%
Summer Reading Program Participants as a Percentage of Public School Enrollment	27%	28%	28%	28%	27%
Countywide Preschool Demographics	74,479	75,051	69,536	69,172	68,914
Number of Headstart Classroom Visits					
Branch Libraries	20	56	19	20	21
Early Literacy Office	301	449	920	966	1,014

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expected that over the next couple of years the number of early literacy programs provided will increase as the need in Fairfax County for this service continues to grow.

In FY 2015 library staff visited 79 percent of all FCPS elementary schools providing presentations to multiple classrooms at each school. These visits provide students with an introduction to library services, resources and summer reading. The number of elementary schools visited by the library is expected to increase slightly over the next couple of years as the library strives to visit every County elementary school.

The library's annual Summer Reading Program (SRP) provides school students a critical bridge between school years. In FY 2015, the library reported that more than 51,000 kids participated in the summer reading program, or 28 percent of FCPS total reported student enrollment of more than 185,000. Many studies have found that reading for pleasure is beneficial for kids which include keeping up their reading skills over the summer and helping them succeed in school. FCPL helps make reading fun by providing tools, access and incentives during its Summer Reading Program. Held in cooperation with FCPS, the Summer Reading Program invites students from preschool to high school to read for fun over the summer. To participate, kids can register online or visit any neighborhood library branch. Preschoolers through sixth graders read 15 books (kids can have books read to them), and teens in grades 7-12 read six books. Kids can read any books they choose and kids and teens can even read free eBooks available through the library on Nooks, Kindles, iPads and other devices, as well as listen to eAudio books on CD. Kids can track their reading online or through a reading log they can pick up in any Fairfax County Public Library branch. Those who want a list of reading suggestions can find them on the library's website or pick up lists of suggested authors at a branch. The library offers lots of fun events for kids all summer long as well as special events for teens. In FY 2015 the library hosted nearly 200 programs specifically for teens including author visits, book discussion groups, essay contests, and volunteer information events.

Each year, the library's Early Literacy Outreach Program reaches preschoolers, parents, caregivers and others in HeadStart centers in Fairfax County. The Early Literacy Outreach Manager and expert volunteers, many former teachers and public librarians, present story times to help children and caregivers learn the skills preschoolers need to get ready to read. Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. Research shows that children get ready to read years before they start school. The library's Early Literacy Outreach Program helps preschoolers learn important skills now so they can become good readers. Reliable studies have found resoundingly favorable long-term effects on grade repetition, special education and high school graduation rates for Head Start children, as well as a host of economic, health and social benefits. The number of visits to Head Start classrooms provided by the library has been increasing and is expected continue to increase over the next several years. Services include:

- **Love of Books - Print Motivation.** Being interested in and enjoying books;
- **Use Books - Print Awareness.** Noticing print is being read and not the pictures, knowing how to handle a book, how to follow the written word on a page and recognizing print has meaning;
- **Learn New Words – Vocabulary.** Knowing the names of things and understanding feelings and concepts;
- **Tell a Story - Narrative Skills.** Being able to describe things and events and tell stories;
- **See and Know Letters - Letter Knowledge.** Knowing letters are different from each other, knowing their names and sounds and recognizing them everywhere; and
- **Hear and Make Sounds - Phonological Awareness.** Being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds that make up words.