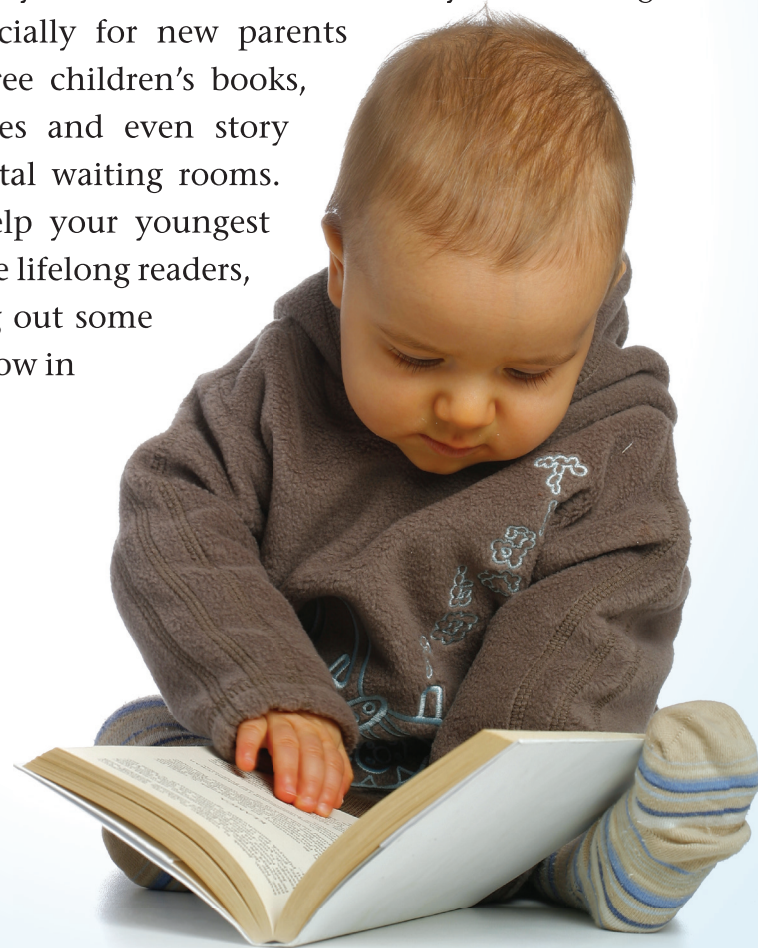


PROGRAMMING FOR NEW PARENTS

Ways to Nurture Reading from Birth

The birth of a child is a miracle that can sometimes leave mom and dad with little time to run errands, read or even sleep. That's why libraries across the country are creating programs especially for new parents that include free children's books, delivery services and even story times in hospital waiting rooms. In order to help your youngest patrons become lifelong readers, consider trying out some of the ideas below in your library.



Free Books for Babies

The Scottsdale Public Library in Scottsdale, AZ, helps new parents at both the hospital and throughout the baby's first year of life at home with the Book Bites program. This service delivers a supply of gift-wrapped board books, a library card and printed information about library services for parents to the maternity wards in local hospitals. When parents bring the library card in for activation, the library gives the new parent a special status in their computers that makes all materials fine-free for the first year of their baby's life. Upon visiting the library, parents are also given a bib with the library's logo on it, a calendar of events and much more.

That's not all the Scottsdale Public library does for new babies and their parents. The other way they reach out is called the Books and Babies Celebration. The library throws a baby shower that anyone with a child under a year old is invited to attend. During the party, guests play baby shower games, receive prizes, eat cake and listen to guest speakers who provide helpful seminars to these new moms and dads.

Waiting Room Reading and Hospital Partnerships

The Free Library of Philadelphia in Philadelphia, PA, helps out new parents by entertaining any new siblings that might be spending some time in the waiting room as part of their Reach Out and Read program, a part of the Reach Out and Read organization. They regularly hold story times in the maternity ward's waiting rooms of local hospitals and partner with local pediatricians to hand out free books at each child's checkup.

The Reach Out and Read (www.reachoutandread.org) organization currently serves more than four million children across the nation, ranging from six months to five years in age and focuses on low-income families. This non-profit organization trains and supports medical providers who give books to children and advises parents of the importance of reading aloud to children from birth at every checkup.

The La Crosse Public Library in West Salem, WI, teams up with their local hospital to host special "mom and baby" groups designed to help new moms meet other new mothers and discuss life as new parents. The early literacy librarian meets with the group every 12 weeks to discuss the importance of reading and to promote the library's parenting and children's programs. This library also works with the local hospital's maternity ward to distribute "welcome baby" packets. These packets are placed on waiting room tables and contain information about story times, popular reads for new parents and more.

Home Delivery Services

The Plainfield Library District in Plainfield, OH, offers new parent home delivery services as a way to help encourage parents to start reading to their children right away. Any new parent with a Plainfield Public Library card is eligible for these services for a period of eight weeks. Materials are delivered in a waterproof bag whether or not the patron is home, and dropped off and picked up each Thursday. A phone call alerts the patron of the delivery and pick up times, saving new moms and dads a trip.