Why “Reading Early & Often” Matters to Muskegon County’s Youngest Children
Why *Reading Early* Matters

“The early years set the stage for later learning...the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.”

*(Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading, 1986)*

*Read early. Read often.*

*Your child’s success depends on it!*
When children enter Kindergarten, significant differences in literacy and early math skills are already evident when comparing data between children of low, middle, and upper income parent(s).

On average, children from low-income families show far less developed skills in key areas necessary for success in Kindergarten and beyond.
The “30 Million Word” Gap

# Hours read to a child prior to Kindergarten entry

- Highest 20% SES families: 1,000
- Lowest 20% SES families: 25

Words spoken to a child prior to age 4

- Children from “professional families:” 45 million
- Children from families receiving welfare: 13 million

Does the “Exposure Gap” make a difference?

Muskegon County’s Very Own “Achievement Gap”

2013-14 Third Grade Reading MEAP Results

- Economic Disadvantage: Not Proficient 45.7%, Proficient 54.3%
- Non Economic Disadv. Not Proficient 74.3%, Proficient 25.7%

County Ave = 55.6%
Head Start Entry Data

Four year-old children: 2013-14 school year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sept</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter Sounds</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>13.19</td>
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<td>Upper Case Letter Recog.</td>
<td>7.63</td>
<td>15.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower Case Letter Recog.</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>14.17</td>
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</tbody>
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Head Start of Muskegon/Oceana 2013-14 Direct Assessment Data
Why Reading Early Matters

- First 5 years: brain development, the critical years
  - Studies show after 6 months of daily reading in early years, brains do “catch up”
- Building the emergent reading skills in young children/the ‘foundation’
  - Vocabulary (reducing that 30 million word gap)
  - Letter recognition
  - Oral language development
- Promotes adult-child bonding, attachment to an adult(s)
- Approaches to Learning: imagination, curiosity, role playing, problem solving
- Develops empathy/emotional development through characters’ emotions in books
- Helps develop a life-long love of reading
Read Early. Read Often.

- **Target Audience:** Parents
- **Secondary:** Siblings, Grandparents, Community Members
- **Key Message:**
  Read to infants and toddlers every day
- **Common Beliefs of Target Audience:**
  - Unaware of need/value of reading to very young
  - Time starved
  - Fast moving society with lots of crisis and needs
  - May lack tools
Champions

- **Linda Juarez**, CEO, Hackley Community Care Center
- **Sheila Bridges**, CEO, Muskegon Family Care
- **Chris McGuigan**, President and CEO, Community Foundation for Muskegon County
- **Cindy Larsen**, Pres., Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce
- **Marty Ferriby**, Director, Hackley Library
- **Richard Schneider**, Asst. Director, Muskegon Area District Library
- **Bob Szymoniak**, Superintendent Fruitport Community Schools
- **Lisa Tyler**, VP Community Impact, United Way of the Lakeshore
- **Stacey Cornett**, Director of Clinical Services, Muskegon County Community Mental Health
- **Doug Wood**, Cooperating Churches/OV Community Ed Director
- **Jane Clingman-Scott**, Great Start Coordinator
Strategic Doing

- Broadcast Comcast TV Commercial Spots
  http://www.viddler.com/v/2ef30551?secret=79900464
- Review Quick Card in Early HS & HS Homes
- Promote in Pediatrician/Primary Care Offices
- Provide Book Houses
- Stick Stickers on Food/Baby Pantry Items
- Print on Grocery Bags at Plumbs
- Display Yard Signs
- Collect Books thru Drive/Give Books Away
- Print Read Early. Read Often. on Receipts/Pay
Next Steps

• Jamie Vollmer – Reaching Full Potential
  – You are all invited! August 20, 2-4PM
  Reeths-Puffer High School Rocket Centre

• www.readearly.org Launch

• Social Media Campaign

• MLive Photos

• Individual and Organization Activities

• Follow-up Meeting in October

• AND ????
Read early. Read often.
Your child’s success depends on it!

Stuart Jones
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