



### **Library receives grant to provide Reading Booster Kits**

One of the recurring messages from the library during the restrictions of hours and services is that librarians have been continuously busy on our behalf.

Reading Booster Kits are now available, and they are excellent resources for those who want to boost their young kids' reading ability and have fun doing it. The library's Early Literacy Specialist, Cheri Stainforth, was instrumental in getting the grant and putting together the kits.

This project is funded (in part) with a Library Services and Technology Act grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services administered by the Library of Michigan. Upon receipt of the award, the library has a limited time in which to spend it which is fine because our library loves to make resources available as soon as possible.

Parent involvement in their children's education has itself taken a big boost these days as people struggle through the choices, challenges, and opportunities of how best to help kids learn and stay interested as the school experience changes in a variety of ways. These kits can be a great help for parents.

I had a chance to look over the Early Literacy Kits with Cheri. There are eight kits, two each for Kindergarten, first, second, and third grades.

Each one comes packed in a backpack along with a list of everything contained in the kit which helps when it's time to return it three weeks later. Second, there are no repeat materials in any kit.

However, the skills that each kit addresses are consistent: phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and phonics. If you aren't sure about the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics, here's the quick distinction. Phonemic awareness is all the sounds in a word such as C/A/T, while phonics is the relationship of sounds and letters. I looked that up and if you're still confused, don't worry but do have an increased respect for your kid's kindergarten and early grades teachers. The Reading Booster Kits will sort it out for you, and Cheri would be happy to tell you much more.

So what's in the kits? They are huge and stuffed with fun things. Cheri says, "Each one has books, lots of games, and learning tools such as DVD's, flash cards, and VOX audio books."

I've never heard of Bob Books, but I'm in love with them now and sort of sorry the grandkids are too old for them. They are written by Bobby Lynn Maslen and come in small and large sizes. The kit I looked at had color coded Bob Books, at least a dozen of them. Bob Books

progress in complexity. I was looking at Kindergarten ones. The emphasis is on a simple illustration with a simple thought that encourages phonics development. They are nice.

Then there are games. One game in a kit was the ABC Cookie Jar. It was loaded with heavy duty letters easy to manipulate with little fingers, and several games are possible with these. Another game in one of the kits is Spit It Out that encourages some speed, trusting the brain to spit out what it knows. There's a five second rule, so a child might have five seconds to spit out a word that starts with R. Each kit has several games.

But these are a lot of words for what are highly visual kits. The best way to learn about them is to check one out and play with it with a child. You can reserve a time to come in and browse the kits available or you can simply call and reserve one to pick up in the lobby.

See you at the Library!