



THE FAMILY LITERACY CONNECTION

Spring Issue 2007

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Volunteer Tutors

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, ABLE, last year approximately 7,000 volunteer tutors worked in Pennsylvania's Adult Literacy Education Programs.

Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth

925 West College Avenue
State College, PA 16801
Email: literacy@tlcliteracy.org
Phone: 814-867-0203
Fax: 814-867-0483

Partially funded by ABLE

It's Survey Time Again

The Bureau of ABLE Family Literacy Survey, required by the Bureau of ABLE and administered by TLC, has been mailed to all Pennsylvania Family Literacy programs. Please complete it, and return it to TLC by June 30. If you have misplaced your copy, it is available on TLC's website (www.tlcliteracy.org, click on Surveys on the left-hand side, then click on the survey to access it as an Adobe Acrobat file). TLC is also asking you to complete a survey describing what you like and would like to see in TLC family literacy workshops and newsletter articles. That also is available on TLC's website. Thank you for your cooperation with the surveys.



TLC's Summer Reading PACT

TLC has again designed a workshop to complement the Summer Reading Program theme of Get a Clue. A few popular activities will be recycled (Do the ingredients of slime give you a clue to the final product?), and new activities have been developed. Contact TLC to schedule this, or any other workshop. And don't forget, every adult attending will receive a children's book and a folder of activities to take home.

An Idea to Send Home



Here's an idea to suggest to parents to manage some of the "I'm bored" or "What is there to do?" that's likely to be heard this summer. Prepare a basket or bag as a holding place. Sit with your child, and think of fun things to do together, such as read a book, do a specific craft project, have a tea party, or walk to the park. Write the ideas on slips of paper and put them in the basket. Add ideas for things the child likes to do alone, such as play with blocks or dress and undress teddy bears. Then talk about things that you would like the child to do, such as straighten her toy box or your junk drawer. Put all those ideas on paper, and put them in the basket. Add a few educational ideas that are age appropriate. When your child claims he has nothing to do, pull an idea from the basket. To introduce the idea, read *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* by Kevin Henkes, and store the ideas in a purple plastic purse. This idea is from *Teaching With Favorite READ-ALOUDS* by Susan Lunsford (New York: Scholastic, 2004).

Management of Volunteers

The previous two issues of the TLC Family Literacy Newsletter featured articles on the incorporation and recruitment of volunteers in family literacy programs. This installment focuses on the management of volunteers.

Once I Have Volunteers, What Are Some Ways of Managing Them?

- A clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the position should be available. This description should be the basis of the management and evaluation of the volunteer. Consider having a written contract so that both parties are sure of responsibilities.
- Volunteers should be accepted for a specific length of time, such as one year, which can be renewed by both parties.
- Each volunteer should have a clearly defined supervisor, for day-to-day management and guidance, as well as for consultation and assistance.
- Maintain records on each volunteer, including dates of service, positions held, duties performed, evaluation of work, and awards received. The volunteers themselves or the appropriate staff can be responsible for the submission of this information. Volunteers can be responsible for the completion and timely submission of their own timesheets.
- If desired, provide additional training.
- Have an established worksite for the volunteer, with all required space, equipment, materials, and facilities.
- Acknowledge volunteer help and show your appreciation.
- Maintain contact on a regular basis. Make the contact personal, not just to collect hours.
 - Provide counseling and advising, and contact information to other professionals.
 - Provide a mentor to new volunteers, or make sure they know whom to contact with questions, problems, or suggestions.
 - Provide a sense of community and family with students, volunteers and staff.
 - If a volunteer is not comfortable in a particular position, find that volunteer a new position.
- Provide evaluation forms.
- Make volunteers part of the planning and implementation to encourage ownership and pride of the program.
- Treat volunteers with the same respect as the paid staff.



Suggested Volunteer Responsibilities

- Volunteers must maintain confidentiality to all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed, involving staff, clients, or other volunteers.
- Volunteers should actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the agency.
- Volunteers should adhere to the appropriate dress code.
- Volunteers should inform the supervisor as far ahead as possible if unable to meet a normal time commitment.

Provide volunteers with feedback on how they are doing through standard evaluations.

Volunteer evaluations:

- Provide volunteers with feedback on how they are doing.
- Monitor performance.
- Offer suggestions for change.
- Seek suggestions on means to enhance volunteer relationships with agency.
- Convey appreciation.
- Make sure the person is still interested in that position.
- Can be based on standards of performance.



Standards of Performance should:

- Go along with the job description.
- Be a joint function between staff and volunteer so that each party fully understands the responsibilities included and what is required of them.
- Include the following:
 - Work to be done.
 - Measurable indicators of whether the work was accomplished.
 - Appropriate timelines for accomplishment of the work.



How to Get the Best from Your Volunteer Work Force

- Assign someone, either staff or volunteer, whose sole responsibility is making certain volunteers are properly and quickly thanked when a particular activity is over, and on a regular basis.
 - Make volunteers believe that your campaign is their campaign.
 - Avoid comparing volunteers or teams with each other. Compare the results of volunteer effort against targets, not other volunteers.
 - Be available, or see that someone is available, to give immediate attention to volunteer queries.
 - Assign volunteers to work in areas in which they will look good.
- Organize volunteer events carefully. Be prepared prior to the arrival of the volunteers. All brainstorming and planning should be finished, and you should be ready to assign specific tasks. A well-organized program is more likely to attract repeat support.



Resources used in writing Incorporating Volunteers:

TxServe and the Texas Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service December 1998

www.txserve.org/

Ready, Set, Go! Maximizing Success with Museum Volunteers by Jan Davison

<http://www.astc.org/pubs/dimensions/2001/jul-aug/volunteers.htm>

Volunteer Tool Kit by Lutheran Disaster Response


www.katrinaaidtoday.org/images/File/volunteertoolkit.pdf

Aguilar, Noemi, Susan Lythgoe, et. Al. *Planning for Volunteers in Literacy: A Guidebook*. Louisville, KY: National Center for Family Literacy, 2006.

Activities with One Children's Book

A great book for enhancing time outside this summer is *Into the Woods: Who's Been Here* by Lindsay Barrett George (New York: Greenwillow Books, 1995). Look through the list of activities for ones you might want to try in your classroom, or to suggest to parents. Also explore: *Around the Pond: Who's Been Here?* or *In the Garden: Who's Been Here?*

Take a Walk



Walk and hike in different areas, such as the backyard, playground, park, or forest; watch the ground, look up in the air, as well as in front of you. Don't just look for animals, but also look for evidence that an animal has been there. Look for feathers, fur, tracks and footprints, nibbled leaves, chewed bark, spider webs, cocoons, droppings, holes in the ground, grass trampled by deer, holes in acorns, bumps on leaves, and other indications of wildlife. Look for small, hidden animals such as insects and worms under tree stumps or rocks.

Request a free booklet, *Animal Tracks*, to help you identify the tracks.

Bureau of State Parks
Rachel Carson State Office Bldg,
8th Floor
P.O. Box 8551
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8551
Dept of Environmental Education
717-772-0239

Study Footprints

Walk in sand, either barefoot or with shoes, and examine your footprint. Compare it to the footprints of others. Run across the sand. Does your footprint change?

Learn About Animals

The back of the book offers descriptions of the animals in the book.

To learn more about animals that live in Pennsylvania, download pictures of the animals from the Pennsylvania Game Commission at www.pgc.state.pa.us. Look for Education: Wildlife for Youth: Wildlife of Pennsylvania Coloring Book.

Bring the Animals to You

Put a little bit of sugar on the sidewalk, and wait for the ants to arrive.

Plant flowers, especially yellow or red flowers, so bees, butterflies, and birds will visit. Investigate which colors or flowers certain birds prefer.



Build bird feeders, and see which styles and foods certain birds prefer.



Listen Carefully

Walk outside, and find a quiet place to sit. Listen carefully for sounds all around you, including those from the grass.

Read *In the Tall, Tall Grass* by Denise Fleming, *One Small Square Backyard* by Donald Silver, or *The Quiet Cricket* by Eric Carle.

Feed the Birds

Fold over an inch at the end of a pipecleaner. Place Cheerios onto the pipecleaner (the folded over end holds them on), to cover about half. Fold the uncovered end over a branch of a tree.

Call Wildlife

Place a strip of VCR tape between two popsicle sticks. Wrap one end of the popsicle sticks with a rubber band to hold them together. Pinch the loose end with your fingertips. Blow through the popsicle sticks the way you would with a harmonica.

Use a whistle to try to copy the sounds made by birds or insects.

Help the Birds

In the spring, place bits of string, yarn, or dog hair outside near trees. Soon the materials will start to disappear, and you might see the bits in nearby nests.

House the Birds

Find an empty milk carton, and cover the outside with brown paper. Cover the roof with pieces of pinecones as shingles. Cut out a door or windows.

Identify Animals by Touch

Collect bits of fur or fleece (or fake fur from the fabric store), bones (chicken or beef?), feathers, fish scales, or leather. For younger children, look at the materials and touch them. For older children, put an object in a paper bag, and have the child identify it by touch.

Talk about how they feel; find as many specific adjectives as you can. Decide which type of animal it represents.

The Family Literacy Connection

How Do Animals Stay Warm?

Put a glove on one hand, or hold a

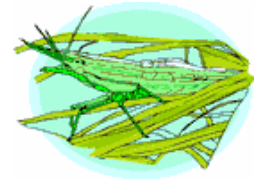


baggie of dog hair in one hand. Hold one ice cube in the gloved hand, and one ice cube in the not-gloved hand for about five seconds.

Does the glove protect your hand from feeling so cold? Animals have thick fur or hair or feathers to keep them warm. The fur gets thicker during the winter. Many animals that live in cold places, such as walruses, seals, and whales, also have a layer of blubber (fat) that keeps them warm. Place a blob of shortening in a plastic bag, place the plastic bag on your hand, and the ice cube on top of the plastic bag. Can you feel the cold of the ice cube the way you do on an unprotected hand?

Investigate Camouflage and Blending

Many animals match their environment in color and/or pattern. This helps them escape predators (or hunt more efficiently) by being hard to spot. This type of coloration is called camouflaged.



Cut strips of paper in colors you might find outside: shades of green, tan, brown. Cut the strips into grass-style strips. Cut animal shapes out of similar or the same colors. Place the animal cut-outs onto the different grasses. Are the animals easier to see when they are on similar colors of grass, or on very different shades?

Read *A Color of His Own* by Leo Lionni, *Animals Can Be So Hard to See* by Diane Swanson, or *Pop-Up: Hide and Seek* by National Geographic Society.

Institute TAKE YOUR CHILD OUTSIDE Time

What do you remember fondly from summer vacations when you were young? Time spent outside enjoying nature probably ranks highly among your favorite memories and activities. The best way to get children outside is to be outside with them. Encourage parents to share exploration and develop memories with their children.

Children learn best by experiencing with all their senses, and outside activities lend themselves to all the senses. Listen to the birds chirp, let the wet and dry sand flow through fingers, watch the dark clouds gather for a thunderstorm, and smell the clear air afterwards. Pick the ripe wild raspberries, and taste their freshness.

All learning styles also can easily be incorporated into experiencing nature (www.greenhour.org/).

Verbal
(*word smart*) Describe your adventures or keep a journal.
Use guides to look up names of plants or animals.
Make up your own names for plants or animals.



Mathematical
(*number smart*) Count birds at the feeder or petals on the daisy, or berries you've picked.
(*logic smart*) Sort or classify leaves, shells, rocks, flowers, bugs.
Measure and graph temperature, or rain in the rain gauge.

Visual
(*picture smart*) Sketch leaves, flowers, bugs, trees.
Follow trail maps or map your garden.
Look for patterns on butterfly wings.
Use twigs, nuts, pressed flowers for art projects.

Kinesthetic
(*body smart*) Fly a kite, climb a tree, balance on the curb, wade in the creek.
Scamper like a squirrel, hop like a rabbit, slither like a snake.



Musical
(*music smart*) Listen to the wind and rain.
(*rhythm smart*) Learn and imitate the calls of birds, frogs, and insects.
Create rhythm sticks of twigs or drum on rocks.

Interpersonal
(*people smart*) Plant a garden or paddle a canoe with a friend.
Participate in structured nature and hiking programs.
Take turns leading and following as you explore.



Intrapersonal
(*self smart*) Provide choices in what activities to do.
Encourage independent exploration.
Reflect quietly after an adventure.

Naturalistic
(*nature smart*) Plan and conduct experiments.
Lift up a rock in a creek and see what lives underneath.
Plant a tree or garden and care for it.

Many fear that children today are not enjoying and benefiting from those same leisurely outside activities we remember. This stems in part from children choosing to spend their time inside on the computer and watching TV, from parents uncomfortable allowing children outside unsupervised, and from time devoted to structured activities.

And what are some of the benefits besides having fun and creating great memories? Richard Louv presents research that says that involvement with nature improves standardized test scores and grade point averages; develops skills in problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making; and stimulates creativity. Deciding how best to dam a creek or keep the rabbits out of the garden can generate lots of discussion and experimentation.

So focus on fun, explore the ordinary and the unusual, and discover together.



Information and ideas for this article come from:

National Wildlife Federation Green Hour <http://www.greenhour.org/>

Louv, Richard. *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Algonquin Books, 2005.

Ryan, Kathleen. *Dirty Hands and Wet Feet*. In Penn State Cooperative Extension Toddler Topics *Plus 2007 Issue Three*.

TLC Training Calendar

JUNE:

Monday, June 4, 5:30PM-7:30PM
ESL Tutor Training
Blair County Literacy Council

Friday, June 8, 10:00AM-12:00PM
Activities with Children's Books
Somerset Technology Center-Family Literacy

Friday, June 8 & 15, 9:00AM-12:00PM
Basic Tutor Training
Huntingdon CareerLink

Tuesday, June 12, 3:30PM-5:30PM
Food Activities for Parents as Volunteers
Genesis II

Tuesday and Wednesday, June 19 and 20
8:00AM-4:00PM
Basic Tutor Training
SCI Coal Township

Friday, June 22, 10:00AM-12:00PM
Food Activities for Parents as Volunteers
Community Action Southwest

Friday, June 22, 1:00PM-3:00PM
Food Activities for Parents as Volunteers
Community Action Southwest

Saturday, June 23 and 30, 9:00AM-4:00PM
Basic Tutor Training
Catholic Social Services, Hazleton

Thursday, June 28, 8:00AM-4:00PM
Basic Tutor Training
SCI Graterford

Saturday, June 30, 9:00AM-4:00PM
Basic Tutor Training
Employment Skills Center

JULY:

Thursday, July 12, 3:30PM-5:30PM
Activities with Children's Books
Genesis II

Wednesday, July 18, 5:00PM-7:00PM
Activities with Children's Books
Altoona Area School District

AUGUST:

Friday, August 10, 12:00PM-2:00PM
Activities with Children's Books
YWCA of Pottstown

Tuesday, August 14, 3:30PM-5:30PM
Activities with Children's Books
Genesis II

SEPTEMBER:

Wednesday & Thursday, Sept. 26 & 27,
8:00AM-4:00PM
Basic Tutor Training
SCI Fayette



To schedule or receive information
about any of TLC's free trainings,
either for tutor training or family literacy
workshops, please contact Kim or Colleen
by phone at (814) 867-0203
or by email at literacy@tlcliteracy.org,
kim@tlcliteracy.org ,
or colleen@tlcliteracy.org.

For the most up-to-date listing of activities check ecampus at
<https://www.ecampus.ed.state.pa.us/> or call TLC at 814-867-0203.

Family Literacy Workshops

Offered by Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth

Parents as Volunteers and Goal Setters

Activities with Children's Books

Nature and Science Activities for Parents as Volunteers

Math Activities for Parents as Volunteers

Geography Activities for Parents as Volunteers

Food Activities for Parents as Volunteers

Volunteers in the Early Childhood Classroom

Supporting Children's Education for Volunteers

Helping Your Child Succeed in School

Family Literacy Consultations

Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth
925 West College Avenue
State College, PA 16801