

Sample Key Message Sheet

Good news! The (NAME OF LIBRARY) will be joining the Family Place Libraries™ national network providing a welcoming community environment with resources that families need to nurture their children's development beginning at birth to help ensure they enter school ready and able to learn.

Talking Points

- Parents and caregivers are their children's first and most important teachers and the Library is here to support them in that role.
- Family Place Libraries™ is a growing network of children's librarians nationwide who know that literacy begins at birth, and that libraries can help build communities by nurturing healthy families.
- Between birth and five years old, children's brains develop at an astonishing rate. At birth only 25% of a newborn's brain is wired. By five years, the brain is 90% wired. How adults respond to and interact with children between birth and 5 years has dramatic effects on executive function, social, emotional and intellectual development.
- Play is how young children learn about themselves and their world. It prepares them for reading, math, and science and promotes healthy social and emotional development. Family Place emphasizes the importance of play in early learning and the importance of parents and caregivers to promote and participate in children's play.
- Our children's area now has a new, specially designed, comfortable space for very young children and their parents and caregivers. In this space young children and their adults can explore, play, share books, learn together and meet other families.
- All families need information, support and connections to local resources. Our new fun and play-based Parent-Child Workshop is a relaxed informal program where families can play and learn together, make friends and talk one-on-one with child development and early literacy specialists.

Facts/Statistics

The Family Place Libraries™ model is now in over 400 libraries in 29 states serving thousands of young children and their parents/caregivers. (NAME OF LIBRARY) is proud to be among them. At our library, this expanded public library role is made possible with support from (INSERT FUNDER NAME HERE if applicable).

Based on parent surveys and independent evaluations of the Family Place Libraries™ model:

Parents who participate in Family Place programs and interactive early learning spaces report:

- Spending more time sharing books, playing, talking and singing with their children both in and out of the library.
- Seeing an impact on the development of their child's social, emotional, verbal and early literacy skills.
- Feeling more confident in their roles as first teachers of their children.
- Being more aware of library and community resources.
- Feeling less isolated and an increased sense of community belonging.

Family Place Libraries™ throughout the country report:

- The model attracts new library users.
- Previous non-users participate in early childhood programs and avail themselves of a wide array of library resources in addition to Family Place offerings.
- Families are visiting more frequently and the duration of the visits has increased.
- The library becomes a community destination for families with very young children.
- Increased partnerships with other early childhood and family serving agencies.

One Family's Story

A mom brought her two-year-old son, John to a Parent-Child Workshop at their local library. In addition to the chance to meet other parents and children, she knew that resource professionals would be on-hand to answer questions and observe the children at play.

One of the five workshop sessions featured an expert in early childhood development. John's mom had some concerns regarding his speech and social interactions. After observing John in the program and speaking with the mom, the specialist asked if the mom would like her to arrange a home visit. After a further assessment during the home visit, John was diagnosed on the autism spectrum. Within two weeks, he was registered for a full early intervention program, expenses covered by the state Title 19 and Access programs. "I would not have all the services I have now, had she [the child development professional] not been there to meet John, see his condition, and recognize the severity of it," said John's mom. "If I hadn't gone to a Parent-Child Workshop with John-John, I don't know how much longer it would have been to diagnose his autism, and I don't know how much farther delayed he would have been. The specialist pushed like crazy to get us all the services we have. As it is right now, at four, he's reading, he's speaking, and he's learning how to interpret other people's emotions by their body language,

which is incredibly difficult for an autistic person. And we've grown a whole lot, because we've learned a lot."