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Early Literacy Texting Program Gets Children Ready 2 Read

Kalispell, MT – A new program launched by the Montana State Library is helping preschoolers build early literacy skills – via text messages.

The free program, called Ready 2 Read, launched statewide in October 2015. Participants receive weekly text messages designed to help parents and caregivers build early literacy skills in their preschoolers.

In the Flathead, ImagineIF Libraries is helping to promote the Ready 2 Read texting program for parents and caregivers of young children. Each week more than 120 infants and preschoolers attend programs at ImagineIF that build early literacy skills, but not every child is able to visit a library. Ready 2 Read is a fun and easy way for busy parents and caregivers to try out early literacy activities at home.

“Research shows that children who start kindergarten armed with a set of early literacy skills not only succeed in school, but also in life,” said Sara Groves, Ready 2 Read project director at the Montana State Library. “The Ready 2 Read texting program will help parents and caregivers learn about these skills and help their kiddos develop them through easy practices families can do every day at home, like reading, singing, talking, playing and writing together.”

The Ready 2 Read texting program is based on research developed by Stanford University that found if parents of preschoolers received text messages focusing on early literacy skills development, those children scored significantly higher in kindergarten assessments.

The Ready 2 Read texting program is free to Montana families. Participants do not need a library card to sign up. To get started, text the word “signup” to 406-204-3583.

Participants receive three messages per week for a total of eight months. The messages start at a basic level and build on skills developed through the program. While the program officially began in October, families can sign up at any time. Regardless of when they sign up, families will begin with the program’s first message and continue to receive messages for eight months.

If, for any reason and at any time, participants want to stop receiving text messages, they just have to text the word “stop” to the same number.

The Ready 2 Read texting program is part of the Montana State Library’s Ready 2 Read project, which is designed to help parents and caregivers understand the value of sharing language and literacy with their children beginning at birth. Various aspects of the Ready 2 Read project have been funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the form of Library Services Technology Act monies. For more information, visit <http://ready2readmontana.org> or contact Sara Groves at 406-444-5357 or sgroves@mt.gov.

ImagineIF Libraries encourage exploration, fresh ideas and self-discovery. ImagineIF offers activities and services for all ages. For more information, visit www.imagineiflibraries.org.

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