

# Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Task force formed to promote early literacy, school readiness programs at Kentucky's public libraries

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## **Contact Information:**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Dec. 20, 2013) — Research has shown that engaging in early literacy practices such as talking, singing, reading, writing and playing have more of an impact on lifetime success in school than economic status or family education level. Public libraries offer activities in their early childhood programming to learn all of these skills, but many people are not aware that these services are available free of charge in their communities.

To promote public libraries as valuable service providers of school readiness and expand literacy programs in the state, the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) has formed the Kentucky Public Library School Readiness Task Force. The 54-member task force is made up of public librarians, representatives from the Kentucky Department of Education and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood, a University of Kentucky professor and staff from KDLA.

“Public libraries in Kentucky have provided pre-school literacy services through story time groups and other activities for many years,” said task force member and KDLA children's and youth services consultant Heather Dieffenbach. “With the governor's emphasis on early childhood education, we wanted to create awareness that public libraries have long been an important community partner in providing early literacy experiences.”

In 2009, Gov. Steve Beshear created the Task Force on Early Childhood Development and Education, which is now a part of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Education. This task force created a definition for school readiness for Kentucky, which states, “In Kentucky, school readiness means that a child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child's success.”

The task force also found that “families, early care and education providers, school staff and community partners must work together to provide environments and developmental experiences that promote growth and learning to ensure that all children in Kentucky enter school eager and excited to learn.”

Paul Sawyer Public Library youth services specialist Lynn Baker was instrumental in creating the Kentucky Public Library School Readiness Task Force.

“As a public service organization connected to early childhood literacy, public libraries in Kentucky are in the perfect position to help families, children, schools and communities prepare for success in kindergarten,” said Baker.

“While the public library has long been at the forefront of early literacy services within state and local communities, traditional programs (such as story hour and outreach services, which are rich in early literacy experiences) have not been universally recognized as services meant to help prepare children, families and communities for school,” said Dieffenbach. “The Kentucky Public Library School Readiness Task Force will educate officials and parents of the important role of public libraries in school readiness.”

The Kentucky Public Library School Readiness Task Force members are:

Heather Dieffenbach, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives

Lynn Baker, Paul Sawyer Public Library (Franklin County)

Katy Grant, Louisville Free Public Library

Kate Schiavi, Louisville Free Public Library

Libby McWhorter, Boyle County Public Library

Sandy Linn, Calloway County Public Library

Cheryl Clemons, Grant County Public Library

Sherry Noon, Anderson County Public Library

Delania Adkins, Pike County Public Library

Danielle Anguish, Henderson County Public Library

Emily Snyder, Taylor County Public Library

Ashley Crace, Lincoln County Public Library

Monica Edwards, Warren County Public Library

Lise Tewes, Kenton County Public Library

Marla Ford, Mary Wood Weldon Library (Barren County)

Nellie Jordan, Carter County Public Library

Bookie Wilson, Woodford County Public Library

Tyra LaVerne, Boone County Public Library

Aimee Newberry, McLean County Public Library

Marie Rogers, Meade County Public Library

Jackie Saturley, Christian County Public Library

Kay Morrow, McCreary County Public Library

Patty Brown, Marion County Public Library

Susie Cain, Graves County Public Library

Stacy Tiller, Spencer County Public Library

Rhonda Kendziorski, McCreary County Public Library

Debbie Horn, Paris-Bourbon County Public Library

Christina Partin, Pineville-Bell County Public Library

Amanda McReynolds, Allen County Public Library  
Ari Barron, Madison County Public Library  
Cindy Franklin, Cynthiana-Harrison County Public Library  
Faith Mulberry, Owen County Public Library  
Carol Sexton, Pulaski County Public Library  
Crystal Packard, LaRue County Public Library  
Amy Reisenberg, Gallatin County Public Library  
Donna Fee, Clay County Public Library  
[Shannon Sandefur, Daviess County Public Library](#)  
Sarahbeth Farabee, Shelby County Public Library  
Kinzie Gaunce, Lexington Public Library Public Library  
Malta Fannery, Jackson County Public Library  
Jessica Bray, Jackson County Public Library  
Michele Turner, Campbell County Public Library  
Carole Ann Faulkner, Logan County Public Library  
Angel Killough, Hopkins County-Madisonville Public Library  
Misty Strain, Clark County Public Library Public Library  
Sandy Fleshman, Rowan County Public Library  
Bessie Gray, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives  
Paige Sexton, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives  
Jonathan Campbell, Floyd County Public Library  
[Jennifer Timmerman, Boone County Public Library](#)  
[Dr. Maria Cahill, University of Kentucky](#)  
Bill Buchanan, Kentucky Department of Education  
Albert Fox, Governor's Office of Early Childhood  
Kathy Mansfield, Kentucky Department of Education

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