

MSUE “I Know MI Numbers” Program Summary

Improving Early Childhood Literacy to Increase Third-Grade Reading Proficiency

U.S. Department of Education statistics indicate that an alarming number of young children (nearly one in five) enter kindergarten without the emergent literacy skills they need to be successful. Recent Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) testing found that more than 43 percent of fourth graders earned unsatisfactory scores in reading. Additional research indicates that children who cannot read proficiently by fourth grade are more likely to do poorly in school and to end up dropping out of high school than students who are proficient readers at that level.

The focus of MSU Extension’s Early Childhood Literacy Target Program is to increase:

- » Parents’ and other caregivers’ awareness of the importance of literacy skills and their understanding of activities that can enhance this critical skill.
- » The amount of time that parents and caregivers read to their children.
- » The number of low-income children who have access to quality children’s books.
- » The amount of time that children spend in activities that help to increase their literacy levels.
- » The amount of time that children spend reading each week.

To reach these outcomes, the Early Childhood Literacy Target Program focuses on two projects. The first is educating parents and other care-giving adults about the importance of and ways to help children develop literacy skills through the A-B-Cs of Early Literacy. The second is getting books into the hands of children across the state.



Mission

Michigan State University helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.

Contact Us

MSU Extension
108 Agriculture Hall
East Lansing, MI
48824-1039

(517) 355-2308
www.msue.msu.edu



Early childhood literacy efforts focus on the ultimate goal of increasing the number of third graders reading at proficient levels. To do this, efforts need to be started in early childhood. As part of this program, nearly 200,000 books have been distributed to children aged 0 to 8 across Michigan.

- » Books and literacy materials were distributed in 43 counties.
- » More than 10,000 children received books through summer programs sponsored by MSUE 4-H programs to help decrease the amount of learning lost over the summer.

- » Llama Llama Red Pajamas story time and reading activities were sponsored by MSU Extension at 39 sites on October 6, 2011, as part of the Jumpstart Read for the Record Day.

Additionally, 3,410 caregivers and parents of 9,312 children have received education and training in how they can help children gain literacy skills of lifelong importance. Evaluation results show:

- » Just under 100 percent of participants said they gained new knowledge.
- » More than 90 percent of participants said they would use at least some of the new techniques for helping children learn literacy skills.
- » Almost 100 percent said they would read to their children more often.

Early childhood literacy efforts continue to be a focus for MSU Extension across the state.