

## **Abstract**

The Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) proposes a three year project (April 2015-March 2018) to improve the school readiness knowledge and skills of public library staff. The Kentucky Governor's Office for Early Childhood found that over half of Kentucky's first-time kindergartners lacked the foundational skills necessary to be successful in school. Children cared for in the home and children with disabilities were found to be even less prepared than children in childcare or typically developing children.

Kentucky public library staff recently demonstrated their commitment to school readiness by forming READiness Matters, Kentucky's Public Library School Readiness Task Force. While Kentucky's public library staff have shown enthusiasm about building school readiness skills in their communities, only 22% of libraries reported providing programming that focused on school readiness. School Ready Libraries is designed to provide public library staff with the training and support necessary to build effective, evidence-based school readiness programs.

**School Ready Libraries** will consist of:

- Three asynchronous online modules created in partnership with an early childhood expert from the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute. These modules will provide public library staff with a comprehensive introduction to the five domains of school readiness that is immediately relevant to a library setting.
- Eight regional face-to-face trainings with a nationally recognized expert on early literacy services in public libraries.
- Eight Library Link-Up live online training sessions to connect public libraries with state and community agencies serving children cared for in the home and children with disabilities and to share best practices. Library Link-Up sessions are hosted monthly by KDLA staff, and serve to promote best practices while developing connections among public library staff.
- Eight School Ready Activity Centers that will familiarize librarians, parents, and caregivers with simple play-based activities that build school readiness skills. These Centers will enable librarians put into practice the knowledge and skills they have gained through School Ready Libraries.
- Thirty-five School Ready Activity Kits will be created and incorporated into KDLA's circulating kit collection. Available to libraries statewide, these kits will provide public libraries with resources to support school readiness programs and services at the local level.
- Creation of the designation of "School Ready Library" that will highlight the role of the public library as a school readiness resource and partner.

School Ready Libraries would move beyond the traditional emphasis on early literacy to incorporate all five school readiness domains. This whole child approach would transform practice in Kentucky libraries. In addition, School Ready Libraries would create a comprehensive, sustainable model for the continuing education of children's library staff. Extending beyond a primarily face-to-face approach, School Ready Libraries' online modules would provide a foundation in school readiness. Face-to-face trainings would be used to launch a community of practice, which would be further developed through live online webinars. A comprehensive, multi-year approach to improving skills and knowledge on a single issue is new to KDLA. School Ready Libraries will transform the practice of delivering continuing education in Kentucky, and will lead to effective and evidence-based programs in public libraries that will improve school readiness in their communities.