



2013/14 Statewide Initiative

GUIDELINES FOR ELF 2.0:

EARLY LEARNING WITH FAMILIES @ YOUR LIBRARY 2.0

USING CHILD DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE TO ENHANCE LIBRARY SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

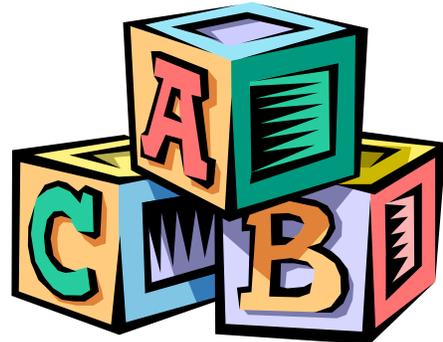
**Funding Source:
Library Services and Technology Act
California State Library**

Background

Public libraries are important community centers with the ability to reach families, caregivers, and childcare providers from all walks of life. Libraries serve their communities as resource centers and bridges – conveying important information, facilitating access to a wide array of resources and services, and helping families and the community get their needs met. Libraries also serve a vital role as community partners in the lifelong learning of their citizens. For these reasons, public libraries are uniquely positioned to provide supportive, family centered early learning environments and services that help our very youngest citizens, their families and subsequently our communities, reach their full potential.

Early Learning with Families 2.0 (ELF 2.0) is founded on the recognition that children’s development unfolds in stages that are highly impacted, especially during the first five years of life, by the kinds of environments and experiences to which young children are exposed. Furthermore, families are children’s first and most powerful teachers, dramatically influencing youngsters’ early experiences and settings. The family (parent or caregiver) is the constant in a child’s life. Research has shown that parent/family involvement in a child’s development is more important to that child’s eventual success than family income or education. When experiences and surroundings delight in inquiry, encourage discovery, invite play, and nurture parent/child bonds, they naturally lead to children’s development and learning.

The *Early Learning with Families 2.0* initiative builds on the earlier ELF initiative and is intended to further the evolution of library services to young children, their families and caregivers. The focus of this initiative is on providing library staff with opportunities for **professional development, partnership building and resource sharing**, including navigating new technologies. The professional development aspects of the initiative will focus primarily on offering library staff a foundational background in child development, so whatever particular resources or program



models a library chooses to offer will reflect the ages and stages of child development while also valuing family expertise and diversity. Through this initiative we hope libraries can continue to evolve as places where learning begins as a way of life – that lasts a lifetime!

ELF 2.0 Initiative Goals

- Increase number of families, young children (0-5), and childcare providers who actively utilize library services, with special emphasis on reaching high-need, at-risk populations.
- Increase parent and caregiver awareness regarding their critical role as an influencing agent in their children’s first five years of formative development.
- Increase parent and caregiver confidence and skills in supporting their children’s early development, learning and literacy skills.
- Increase community awareness of the library as an early learning resource.
- Enhance the lives of young children and increase their likelihood of eventual school success.

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Values

- All children are born wired ready to learn.
- Young children develop and learn best when their physical needs are met and they are safe and valued, feel psychologically secure, and have positive interactions with others. Nurturing human relationships are essential to their overall development and wellbeing.
- Children’s development unfolds along individual pathways that are often interrelated but uneven, with peaks and plateaus leading to new peaks. Not all children progress identically along these pathways. Every child is recognized as an individual with unique abilities, personality traits, learning styles, interests, needs, and ways of responding to the world.
- Play is valued as the primary medium for social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development in young children.
- Early environments matter – especially for language, reading and writing development, the foundations for which are laid during the first five years of life and are closely linked to a child’s earliest experiences with words, books and stories.
- Choice and flexibility are in abundance. Activities for young children are more process oriented than product oriented.
- Families are children’s first and most powerful teachers. Their strengths and resources, not their deficits, are highlighted. Their diversity and expertise are respected.
- Learning opportunities for parents and caregivers are varied and responsive to parent/caregiver needs.
- Collaboration with families and community partners is embraced and valued.
- Family and child empowerment is reflected in library policies, programs, partnerships and environments.
- Public libraries serve as community hubs – connecting people, organizations and resources. They can offer families access to a wealth of resources that support their children’s early learning and development.
- Public libraries are uniquely qualified to curate digital media and help parents and caregivers navigate new technologies.
- Children’s librarians and literacy services are especially skilled at introducing families and their children to the magic of the written word, the joys of storytelling, the wonder of books, and the value of language in nurturing young children’s development.

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Overview

1. Many aspects of this multi-year, statewide initiative will be available without application or cost to any interested California public library: 6 continuing education webinars, 3 regional networking meetings, a *Wise Use of Technology* online toolkit, a technology white paper, video short demonstrations, story time kits and other resource templates.
2. Given limited funding, however, two aspects of this initiative will require that libraries apply: the ELF 2.0 CLA Pre-Conference and the targeted mini-grants.
3. Guidelines for applying for the ELF 2.0 CLA Pre-Conference are below. Targeted mini-grant application form and guidelines will be available November 1, 2013. Eligible applicants will be California public libraries. Attendance at the ELF 2.0 CLA Pre-Conference is NOT a pre-requisite. Grant applications are due in December 2013 and awards will run January 1-June 30, 2014.
4. Libraries that are new to the concepts of early learning or who have staff that have little or no training in child development are the intended participants of the ELF 2.0 CLA Pre-Conference. However, all public libraries, including those who are already advanced early learning leaders, are invited to participate in all other aspects of this statewide initiative.
5. ELF 2.0 is intended to encourage library collaboration across service areas (Children's, Reference, Literacy, etc.) and between libraries while also fostering broad-based and diverse community partnerships.
6. ELF 2.0 is intended to guide the provision of library services, ensuring they are based on children's developmental stages, with respect for the role of parents and caregivers. All initiative participants are encouraged to integrate **ELF 2.0 Values** into their service plans and policies.



**APPLYING FOR THE ELF 2.0 CLA PRE-CONFERENCE
DEADLINE: AUGUST 21, 2013**

BEFORE YOU APPLY CONSIDER YOUR LIBRARY'S WILLINGNESS & ABILITY TO:

- Commit both staff time and funding toward the implementation or evolution of early learning, child development-based services and programming.
- Send a team of 2-3 people (an administrator and staff members) to the ELF 2.0 CLA Pre-Conference in Long Beach, November 1-3, 2013. See Pre-Conference Overview.
- Create an action plan that will address at least some aspect of the early learning ideas shared at the ELF 2.0 CLA Pre-Conference and implement at least some piece of that plan by June 30, 2014, with or without additional funding.
- Participate in 2-3 online surveys over the coming year that will seek input and feedback about this early learning initiative.

ELF 2.0 PRE-CONFERENCE APPLICATION PROCESS

- Eligible applicants are California public libraries.
- Complete and submit a competitive Training Application to attend the ELF 2.0 CLA Pre-Conference. Deadline: **Wednesday, August 21, 2013, 4:00 p.m.**
- Training applications will be reviewed and 30-50 public libraries (depending upon team size) will be selected. Libraries will be notified: **Wednesday, August 28, 2013**
- Applications will be scored and evaluated on clarity, completeness and ability to respond to the questions. Please keep responses brief and within the 2 page maximum, not including Certification page.

ELF 2.0 PRE-CONFERENCE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Email the completed application by **4:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 21, 2013** to both:

suzanne.flint@library.ca.gov and

cindy.mediavilla@library.ca.gov

Please reference ELF 2.0 CLA Pre-Conference Application in the subject line of your email.

You will also need to mail the signed certification page to:

Suzanne Flint

California State Library

Library Development Services Bureau

900 N Street, Suite 487, Sacramento, CA 95814

The certification page should be signed by your Library Director. Only the certification page needs to be mailed. The certification page, with original signature, will need to be received within 7 days of the emailed application.

ELF 2.0 STATEWIDE CONFERENCE CALL

Send an email to suzanne.flint@library.ca.gov if you would like to participate in a statewide conference call on Monday, July 29, 2013 from 12:00noon to 1:00 p.m. This conference call will provide an opportunity to answer any questions you might have about this ELF 2.0 CLA Pre-Conference Application as well as this statewide initiative in general.