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| ACF<br>Administration for Children and<br>Families | U.S. DEPARTMENT<br>OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES   |                            |
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**INFORMATION MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies; Tribal Head Start and Tribal CCDF Agencies; Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Administrators

**FROM:** Joint memorandum from the Deputy Assistant Secretary and Inter-Departmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development, the Office of Head Start, and the Office of Child Care

**SUBJECT:** Head Start, Child Care, and Public Libraries: Partnerships to Support Young Children and Their Families

**INFORMATION:**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this Information Memorandum is to provide Head Start programs and CCDF grantees with information about a partnership between the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)/Office of Head Start, ACF/Office of Child Care, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) encouraging collaboration between early childhood programs and public libraries to help meet the educational needs of young children and their families.

Public libraries provide centers for learning in nearly every community in the United States, and it is important for children and families to learn about and recognize public libraries as a valuable resource. Libraries offer rich learning environments for children and their families and caregivers.

Specially designed spaces accommodate diverse collections including books, multi-media (DVDs, CDs), developmental and instructional materials, and computers with high speed internet access and online resources (databases, websites). Knowledgeable staff provide events and programs specifically designed for babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and their family members.

**Libraries as Partners**

It is important for early childhood programs to know that public libraries have developed a variety of early learning strategies building on current scientific evidence about brain development, early childhood development, and school readiness. Services for young children and their families are designed with the recognition that the library may be the primary place in a community where parents and early educators have access to specialized materials and programs.

In addition to direct services, public librarians create strong partnerships with community organizations to reach the children most at risk. Public libraries offer critical intergenerational and interagency programs, with the intent to educate not only children but their parents and caregivers as well.

Head Start and libraries have interacted since Head Start began in 1965, though much of the early relationship was between individual staff at the local level. From 1992 to 1997, the Library Head Start Partnership was administered after an interagency agreement was signed between the Center for the Book and the Head Start Bureau that set out to formalize these early relationships and elevate partnership. This agreement highlighted additional strategies on how libraries and early childhood programs could work together. Two areas of consideration that remain relevant today are:

- Early childhood programs can utilize local librarians as consultants on such topics as extending lesson plans; aligning books with specific topics; providing material resources like puppets, music, and props; and providing ideas on expanding literacy throughout early childhood classrooms; and
- Libraries offer multi-generational programming and support literacy in the home. Libraries are a resource for families, providing programs and services for young children, parents, and caregivers. They invite parents to join their children in activities and can provide information on childrearing and ways to promote literacy in the home. Libraries also carry resources for people who are preparing to take the GED. Libraries provide help with employment searches and have tools such as computers and copiers that can benefit adult learners.

We encourage early care and education programs to connect with the public library in your community to learn more ways to partner and enhance the work that each of you do. Please reference the attached resources to learn ways that other libraries and early childhood programs have partnered, and cultivate ideas based on the unique needs of your community and population.

### **Resources**

Accompanying this Information Memorandum are key resources that include a handout and links to useful websites.

The first resource is A Sampling of Public Libraries & Various Possible Benefits to Early Childhood Programs and the Children & Families They Serve. It includes examples of programs and services within libraries of all sizes based upon the needs of their own unique community. The end of this document also includes a sampling of both local and national websites sponsored by libraries and links to research articles.

### **The Institute of Museum and Library Services**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the primary source of Federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. IMLS encourages partnerships among libraries and community organizations, and it supports a wide range of early learning activities that engage children as well as their parents and caregivers. Visit the IMLS website at [www.ims.gov](http://www.ims.gov) for more information.

### **State Library Administrative Agency**

Each State has identified a State Library Administrative Agency that is responsible for assessing library services and developing a five-year plan. Federal funds are allocated to each State Library Administrative Agency through the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The Museum and Library Services Act encourages State Library Administrative Agencies, where appropriate, to develop plans that coordinate resources, programs, and activities. Head Start

programs and CCDF grantees can get contact information for their State Library Administrative Agency at <http://www.ims.gov/programs/libraries.shtm>.

**Nearest Public Library**

The Institute of Museum and Library Services provides a search tool to locate public libraries in your area. You can enter your city and State (or zip code), and the tool will provide the address and phone number for local libraries. The tool is available at <http://harvester.census.gov/ims/search/index.asp>.

Please direct any questions on this Information Memorandum to:

Kiersten Beigel  
Family and Community Partnerships Specialist  
Office of Head Start  
(202) 260-4869

Carolyn Dean  
Special Assistant to the Director  
Office of Child Care  
(202) 260-4985

Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families.

/Linda K. Smith/

Linda K. Smith  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
and Inter-Departmental Liaison  
for Early Childhood Development

/Yvette Sanchez Fuentes/

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes  
Director  
Office of Head Start

/Shannon L. Rudisill/

Shannon L. Rudisill  
Director  
Office of Child Care