

## MICHIGAN READS! PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**Summary:** Michigan Reads! is an early literacy program designed to highlight the importance of reading and sharing books with children, especially toddlers through early elementary school age, which is a critical developmental time. Early literacy skills lay the foundation for reading and school success. Michigan Reads! also raises awareness of the intergenerational nature of literacy and engages the community of parents, caregivers, librarians and teachers to make fluent reading possible in all communities.

**Goal:** Research shows that children learn more from birth to age 5 than during any other time in life. Reading regularly to children during this early period ensures the development of appropriate levels of language acquisition, listening skills and reading readiness. Parents and caregivers play a critical role in introducing kids to the wonder and enchantment of reading. Children who are read to 30 minutes a day from birth to age 5 will build up 900 hours of literacy preparation while, just as importantly, strengthening relationships with the people who read to them. The Michigan Reads program hopes to encourage this for children across the state.

**Program:** Each year a book is selected based on literary merit, readability and appeal to children. The Library of Michigan designs and provides a kit to all schools with a K-2 classroom, public library, Head Starts and Great Start Readiness programs, and child care resource centers in the state.

Participant institutions and families are encouraged to read the Michigan Reads! title to their children and students in September and October. The Library of Michigan arranges for the author, and sometimes the illustrator, to present programs at selected libraries and schools across the state. Schools and libraries use the book and program materials to hold their own programs, providing a consistent literacy experience for children and families. Many participants continue to use the materials year round.

The program partnerships bring together child care providers, schools and libraries as well as groups such as the Lions Club. In 2014, the State Superintendent of Education also partnered with Michigan Reads! through the new Culture of Reading program.

For the 2015 program, the Library of Michigan has selected *Do Unto Otters* by Laurie Keller as the featured book. During the month of August, the Library will distribute nearly 5,600 reading kits. The author will visit schools and libraries throughout the state this fall. The Governor and the State Superintendent of Education are supportive of our goals and have read at program events in previous years.

**Materials:** The program kit contains research based, developmentally appropriate materials that are engaging for children. These materials were developed for teachers, librarians, caregivers and parents to use with the selected book to improve both the reading readiness and literacy skills of the children they work with and care for. The materials include:

- A hardcover copy of the book
- Poster
- Bookmarks for parents with family literacy tips
- Programming Guide developed especially for the selected book by a literacy specialist with emergent literacy information and resources, school and library programs, a parent guide section, additional age specific children's book lists and activities for each of the following age groups:
  - Infants (Birth through 12 months)
  - Toddlers (12 months through 36 months)
  - Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years)
  - School Age (5 years and older)

The Library of Michigan also has a program site ([www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan](http://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan)) with current and previous program materials and additional resources for teachers and parents.

**Promotions:** The Library of Michigan promoted the program to the public and to libraries and schools through a variety of venues and media.

**Outcomes:** The Library surveys all participant groups about the program and materials each year. Overall, the results show that the program produces many rewarding outcomes:

Kits reach nearly all children ages 3 to 4 who are eligible for either Great Start or Head Start programs and nearly all children in the state aged 5 to 7, regardless of income or geographic area. We estimate nearly 600,000 children participate.

Children and parents both are exposed to the program ideas through school programming and through public library programming, giving children multiple opportunities to learn literacy skills.

- 95% of recipients thought the materials were very good or good.
- 86% of the respondents said their programs were successful or very successful.
- Based on information from the participant surveys, the programming materials meet the educational needs of a range of ages.

One survey respondent this year commented "The selection of books have been excellent! Quality, interest, variety of text...all make for quality literature! Thank you for offering the literature to us! Thank you for helping us promote 'love for reading'!"

Please see Michigan Reads events and activities at [www.flickr.com/photos/michiganreads/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/michiganreads/).