

For Immediate Release - October 31, 2012

Patrick-Murray Administration Proclaims November to be Family Literacy Month

MALDEN - The Patrick-Murray Administration has proclaimed November 2012 to be the Commonwealth's 16th annual Family Literacy Month in recognition of the pivotal role that parents and family members play in the educational success of their children.

In celebration of Family Literacy Month, communities across the state will host activities throughout November in support of literacy, lifelong learning, and family-well being. Education Secretary Paul Reville and Deputy Education Commissioner Alan Ingram will kick-off the activities by joining legislative leaders and local officials to visit the Intergenerational Literacy Program at the John Silber Early Learning Center in Chelsea on November 1. Commissioner of Early Education and Care (EEC) Sherri Killins will also participate in the Berkshire County's family literacy pajama night at the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield on November 2.

"We know that children who can read by third grade have a better chance to succeed in their adult lives," said Governor Deval Patrick. "Family engagement is a critical part of developing those literacy skills which is why we are committed to partnering with parents and families to provide the best chance for our children to succeed in the 21st century global economy."

"We need to encourage student learning experiences inside and outside of the classroom," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray, Chair of the Governor's Advisory Council on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). "By promoting family literacy, we are encouraging more families to dedicate time to help all children develop strong literacy skills today for future academic success."

The Patrick-Murray Administration is committed to providing students with high quality literacy opportunities starting in their earliest years. Last month, Governor Patrick signed H. 4243, "An Act Relative to Third Grade Reading Proficiency," to strengthen and streamline literacy initiatives in classrooms across the Commonwealth. The bill establishes an expert literacy panel that will make recommendations to the Departments of Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Higher Education on ways to better align and coordinate initiatives and improve the implementation of programs to get every child to reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

"Developing strong literacy skills is fundamental to student success, and a responsibility shared by families and educators," said Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education Mitchell Chester. "In Massachusetts, we are implementing new curriculum frameworks this year that will build on our record of excellence and help students develop literacy skills across all subjects."

In recognition of the foundational role that a love of reading plays in lifelong learning, EEC is also advancing the use of evidence-based early literacy strategies and practices across the state through support to local Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) networks to use practice models that are grounded in research. Scholastic Inc. trained the CFCE networks on their "Read and

Rise" curriculum, which incorporates family conversations and other adult-child interactive home-based activities to develop children's literacy. EEC also recently awarded grants to support a two-generation strategy of literacy development in adult learning centers across the state. This initiative will strengthen parents' ability to help their children develop early language and literacy skills.

"Supporting whole child development across language, cognitive, social/emotional and physical domains provides a solid foundation for children's literacy acquisition," said Department of Early Education and Care Commissioner Sherri Killins. "Parents are their child's first teacher and as such, communities have an important role to play in helping families to support their children's growth and learning, which is essential to building a strong citizenry and ensuring a prosperous future for our Commonwealth."

"Literacy starts at home, so we are happy to promote Family Literacy Month as one way to help reinforce lessons learned at school that will help students continue their learning," said Secretary Reville. "An excellent education requires excellent literacy skills and we are all committed to ensuring students have access to instruction that prepares them for success."

Family Literacy Month is sponsored by the Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (MFLC), a group comprised of state agencies, community organizations, parents, and providers to expand and strengthen family literacy and support. Among the activities taking place in November across Massachusetts are the following:

- **November 1 (Haverhill)** – Haverhill Public Library invites parents with children ages 2-5 to create their own personal ABC book with their child to take home and share together. Parents will also receive other suggestions on ways to incorporate letter recognition into their daily lives. The event will take place from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. To register, call 978-373-1586, ext. 626.
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- **November 2 (Pittsfield)** – Berkshire County will host a free family literacy pajama night in Pittsfield. The "WeeRead Pajama Party" will be held from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Berkshire Museum and will promote community and family engagement in early literacy development.
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- **November 3 (Cambridge)** – The 16th Annual Cambridge Family Literacy Fun Day will take place from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Cambridge City Hall for all Cambridge families with children in pre-K through grade 3. This free event will include children's activities, free books, Bonaparte the Magician, sing-a-longs, face painting and more.
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- **November 3 (Chelsea)** – "Chelsea Reads," the city's 7th Annual Family Literacy Day, will take place at the Chelsea Public Library from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Raising a Reader and the Chelsea/Revere Family and Community Network Program are partnering with the library to provide this free event for

toddlers and up. The event will include book-based activities, storytellers, face painting, and a disc jockey providing age appropriate music. Police Chief Brian Kyes, State Representative Eugene O'Flaherty, and others will read books to children. All children under 12 will receive a backpack containing several books (while supplies last).

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- **November 10 (Lawrence)** – Community Pathways Lawrence, a local partnership of community organizations, will conduct a Family Literacy Fun Day from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Lawrence Public Library. As a part of celebrating reading and literacy, several community leaders will participate in the day as celebrity readers. Every child will receive a free book. Refreshments will be provided, prizes will be given away, and there will be family friendly entertainment. Everyone is welcome to attend and no reservations are required. For more information or to ask questions, please contact Betsy Leeman, Director of the Asian Center of Merrimack Valley, Inc. at betsyleeman@asiancentermv.org or 978-683-7316.
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- **November 13 (Brockton)** – Brockton families are invited to attend a Family Literacy Celebration at 6:00 p.m. at the Brockton Public Schools Adult Learning Center at 211 Crescent Street. The Brockton Coordinated Family & Community Engagement, Brockton Public Schools Parent Academy, Community Connections of Brockton and the Brockton Public Schools Adult Learning Center are sponsoring an evening of entertainment by Pumpnickel Puppets. Young children and their parents will be provided a pizza dinner, a classic story-based puppet show, and the opportunity to interact with the puppets and the puppeteer. Each child will receive an age-appropriate book to take home. To register, please call 508-580-7491.
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- **November 17 (Somerville)** – The Somerville Early Childhood Literacy Fair will take place from 10 a.m. to noon at the Arthur D. Healey School. This free event is open to all Somerville families and will provide information about the numerous resources available to families with young children in Somerville. Children aged birth to six years old can enjoy a multitude of fun activities presented by early education providers and community agencies. Questions regarding the Literacy Fair can be directed to scpc@k12.somerville.ma.us.
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- **November 29 (Springfield)** – Springfield families with Pre-K to Grade 1 children are invited to participate in Bingo for Books from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Palmer Library at the Margaret C. Ellis School. Bingo winners will get the first chance to select a book to take home – but all children will receive a new book. Pizza will be provided from 4:30 – 5:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Nostin Houle at 413-787-7345.

For more information on family literacy and ways to promote family literacy, learning and involvement, visit the Department of Early Education and Care's webpage on Resources for Parent Engagement and Family Support at: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/parent-and-family-support/> or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/familylit/month/>.