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Help us keep everyone at your site up-to-date. Please pass this along to fellow staff or post in the break area. Thanks!

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# Raising Readers Update

## The Bigger Picture

“My favorite part is seeing a child’s face light up when I give her a book.” This frequently heard refrain from staff at our sites expresses the satisfaction felt when giving books at well child visits. Behind the pleasure for both providers and kids lies another issue.

- One in five adults in Maine cannot read well enough to successfully function independently in his or her daily life.
- In terms of health care, people with low literacy levels have more doctor visits, enter hospitals more often--and stay longer.
- People with low literacy levels are much less likely to follow medication and self care instructions.

Primary health care providers can help to address this problem:

- Give parents of young children knowledge and tools to help their children become successful readers when they go to school.
- Offer guidance and support for sharing books with their children from infancy.
- Give selected books during each well child visit up to age 5. The book is from you!
- Refer adults who would like to improve their own reading skills to community adult education programs. The Adult Learning Opportunities Hotline number is 1-800-322-5455.



## Working Books into Well Child Visits

1. Give the child the book early in the visit. Often the child will spend some time looking through the book, giving you and the parent a chance to talk.
2. Inscribe the inside cover with the child’s name and yours.
3. Emphasize the importance of regular story time.
4. Compliment parents on their child’s interest and ability to physically handle books. Help them see that these are related to intellectual growth and language.
5. Suggest bedtime stories to deal with sleep issues.

