

Baby Steps to Literacy



Food For Thought

Description

Baby STEPS to Stronger Big Island Families, a council of early childhood educators, is committed to helping all keiki on Hawaii Island to be healthy, happy and to thrive by supporting families, strengthening practitioners, and engaging communities.

Purpose

The goal of “Food for Thought” is to get age-appropriate books into the hands of young children who might not otherwise have children’s books of their own in order to encourage the development of several important early literacy skills, such as the following:

1. Show an interest in books and reading.
2. Exhibit an awareness of how to hold books and how they “work”.
3. Develop a parent-child routine of daily shared book reading.
4. Expand vocabulary through an exposure to a variety of new words.
5. Develop an understanding that print has meaning.
6. Create the habit of borrowing books, caring for them and then returning them.

Rationale

The research on reading and writing is clear. Young children who show an interest in books and who are read to regularly by a caring adult acquire early literacy skills more easily, do better academically, stay in school longer and *that these advantages last a lifetime*.

Process

The distribution of books is facilitated by volunteers within the community. One new (unused) book is given to children under five years of age accompanying their parents in the food distribution line at facilities such as churches who give food to the needy. A short booklet “Help Me Learn Language” is included in the give-away and explains to parents the various ways they can support their child’s language development. The volunteers handing out the books are considerate of age, development and culture as parents bring their children through the line. The age and ethnicity of the children are logged and kept with the recording of the book level given and the frequency of visits.

Contact Information

For more information on Baby STEPS to Literacy, contact Angela Thomas at 887-1228.