

THE LAST WORD

Passing Early Literacy Skills on to Others

By Stephanie Bange

While working for the Redwood City (CA) Public Library in the 1980s, I became a new mother. I sang songs, chanted Mother Goose rhymes, and recited short poems to my daughter while changing her diaper, nursing and burping her, and waiting in line at the store, knowing these were keys to enjoying the rhythm and rhyme of words, to build vocabulary, and to begin her love of reading.

She was eight weeks old when I first read aloud to her with a book in my lap. We found this experience very satisfying, as she enjoyed our closeness and listened to the words. My husband and I read aloud to both of our daughters as part of our bedtime ritual for years. Needless to say, they loved this time.

ALSC members have a golden opportunity to role model early literacy and to give parents tools.

- ALA Publishing updated ALSC member Betsy Diamant-Cohen's *Mother Goose on the Loose (MGOL)* in 2019. *MGOL* incorporates research-based books, rhymes, fingerplays, flannelboard stories, music, dance, and child-parent interaction into dynamic programs that bring whole families into the library. <https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/mother-goose-loose-updated>.
- Many libraries currently offer Baby Storytimes and *MGOL* to model reading to young children.
- Find ALSC Quicklist Committee's 2023 Birth-Preschool Summer Reading Booklist here: <https://www.ala.org/alsc/sites/ala.org.alsc/files/content/compubs/booklists/summer/ALSC2023-summer-reading-BIRTH-PREK.pdf>.



Photo by Stephanie Bange

- In 2015, ALSC launched *Babies Need Words Every Day: Talk, Read, Sing, Play*, with shareable resources designed to bridge the 30 Million Word Gap by providing parents with proven ways to build their children's literacy skills. <http://www.ala.org/alsc/babiesneedwords>.
- PLA and ALSC updated *Every Child Ready to Read* materials in 2010: <http://everychildreadytoread.org/>.

It is rewarding to see both my daughters as mothers today—reading to their children to instill a love of reading in them. Imagine my joy when watching Loren Long read his book *Otis* (Philomel, 2009) to my seven-week-old grandson, Otis! &

Stephanie Bange is a longtime ALSC member and retired children's librarian from Ohio.

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at childrenandlibraries@gmail.com.