

# Toolkits: Free Resources that Are Easy to Use

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Librarians love toolkits! Easy-to-navigate, often with colorful titles or lists linked to other resources, toolkits are becoming more and more popular. Each year, the list of toolkits useful for librarians seems to grow. Although it was hard to pinpoint the best toolkits to feature in this column, the co-authors have chosen some to annotate and provide a list with more for you to explore at the end of the column.

## Reimagining School Readiness Toolkit

<https://bayareadiscoverymuseum.org/resources/educator-resources/library-toolkit>

The Bay Area Museum's Reimagining School Readiness Toolkit was developed as part of an IMLS grant. Designed to foster a growth mindset in parents as well as children, librarians around the country are being trained to use the toolkit, which contains a research overview, program planning and reflection sheets, case studies from libraries around the US, bookmarks, math activities, flyers in six languages, Family Conversation Starters posters, social media and text messages, a program survey, talking points for use between libraries and school districts, an activity database, and more.

## Interactive Literacy Activities Toolkit

[https://ed.psu.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/ILA%20ToolKit%20FINAL\\_3.pdf](https://ed.psu.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/ILA%20ToolKit%20FINAL_3.pdf)

Designed by The Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, the toolkit provides a brief overview of family literacy, paying special attention to interactive literacy activities (ILA) and their ability to help caregivers and their children learn together. Research on the benefits of ILA is shared and foundational early literacy concepts are defined. The steps for designing ILA are provided along with a template, additional resources, and example plans for in-person, hybrid, take-home, and remote options.

## Libraries Transform: Family Engagement Toolkit

<http://ilovelibraries.org/librariestransform/family-engagement-toolkit>

A joint venture between the Public Library Association (PLA) and the American Library Association (ALA)'s Libraries Transform campaign, this toolkit was designed to emphasize how libraries nurture family engagement by

- *Reaching out* to families
- *Raising up* family perspectives
- *Reinforcing* positive actions
- *Relating*, by providing opportunities for families to connect

- *Reimagining* ways to help children and families thrive. Key marketing messages and graphics are provided highlighting different aspects of family engagement (e.g., *Because Family Time Can Narrow the Achievement Gap, Because Community Support Helps Parents Thrive*) along with real examples from the Ideabook: Libraries for Families (<https://www.packard.org/insights/resource/ideabook-libraries-families/>).

## BUILDing Supportive Communities with Libraries, Museums, and Early Childhood Systems

[https://buildinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Build\\_IMLS\\_ToolkitWEB1.pdf](https://buildinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Build_IMLS_ToolkitWEB1.pdf)

A collaboration between the BUILD Initiative and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the guide unpacks how museums, libraries, and early childhood systems can strengthen outcomes for children and families. The document outlines a path for developing or enhancing partnerships and is broken down into three sections: Development of Relationships and Shared Interest; Understanding and Articulating Opportunities for Shared Benefit; Design, Implementation and Assessment of Strategies, and Action Plans. Each section includes discussion questions to help organizations find common ground (e.g., What do we already know about children and families that are not accessing our programs and services?), highlights tools and resources to move individual agencies and collaboratives forward (e.g., a community equity self-assessment), and shares snapshots of success stories from across the country (e.g., Pennsylvania's One Book, Every Young Child Program).

## Getting Started with Mindfulness: A Toolkit for Early Childhood Organizations

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2896-getting-started-with-mindfulness-a-toolkit-for-early-childhood-organizations>

Mindful practices are known to have a positive impact on individuals, relationships, and organizational climates. This Zero to Three publication elaborates on these benefits and provides a roadmap for bringing mindfulness into the work environment. The toolkit outlines six steps

- Start with Yourself
- Assess Interest
- Internal Champions
- Create Collective Intentions
- Implement Your Action Plan
- Adapt Your Plan

## Additional Toolkits of Interest

- AASL's Open Educational Resources (OER) Toolkit: [https://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/advocacy/tools/docs/OER%20Toolkit\\_191105.pdf](https://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/advocacy/tools/docs/OER%20Toolkit_191105.pdf)
- AASL's Toolkit for Promoting School Library Programs: [https://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/toolkits/promo/AASL\\_Toolkit\\_Promoting\\_SLP\\_033016.pdf](https://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/toolkits/promo/AASL_Toolkit_Promoting_SLP_033016.pdf)
- ALSC's Championing Children's Services Toolkit: <https://www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy/speak-out/alsc-championing-childrens-services-toolkit>
- Cultivating the Relationship-Driven Library: A Toolkit: <https://letsmovelibraries.org/toolkit/>
- James Heckman's 13% ROI Research Toolkit: <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/13-roi-toolbox/>
- Junior Maker Librarian Toolkit: [https://www.ala.org/alsc/sites/ala.org.alsc/files/content/Juniors%20Librarian%20Toolkit\\_September\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ala.org/alsc/sites/ala.org.alsc/files/content/Juniors%20Librarian%20Toolkit_September_FINAL.pdf)
- Maryland Family Engagement Toolkit: <https://marylandfamiliesengage.org/family-engagement-toolkit/>
- The Digital Librarian's Survival Toolkit: <http://www.bunheadwithducttape.com/the-digital-librarians-survival-toolkit.html>
- Pennsylvania's Strategic Storytelling Toolkit for Public Libraries: [https://www.powerlibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/PA\\_StorytellingTOOLKIT.pdf](https://www.powerlibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/PA_StorytellingTOOLKIT.pdf)

Every step is accompanied by goal supporting activities and resources, and example cases of how techniques were successfully implemented by others are also included.

## National Center on Improving Literacy: Implementation Toolkits

<https://improvingliteracy.org/kit>

The National Center on Improving Literacy offers several literacy foundations and advocacy toolkits: *Advocating for the Literacy Needs of Children, Alphabetic Principle and Phonics, Families and Schools Partnering for Children's Literacy Success, Fluency with Text, Learning About Your Child's Reading Development, Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, Remote Literacy Learning, Self-Advocacy, Supporting Students with Reading Needs, Supporting Your Child's Literacy Development, and Understanding Dyslexia*. Each toolkit is structured around a set of clearly defined learning objectives and includes a wide array of supplemental materials (e.g., videos, research briefs, infographics, teacher and parent resources, workshop guides).

## Multilingual Learning Toolkit

<https://www.multilingualllearningtoolkit.org/>

The resources and strategies provided for working with multilingual learners in PreK-3rd grade in this kit align with four guiding principles

- Young children can acquire and achieve proficiency in more than one language at the same time
- Bilingualism is a strength
- Family partnerships are powerful when two-way communication is used
- Multilingual children benefit from instruction in all of their languages.

User Guides help teachers, administrators/professional development providers, and teacher education faculty set learning priorities and navigate the website. An extensive resource library is provided with videos and documents supporting family engagement, social-emotional health and development, classroom environment, oral language and literacy development, bilingual classrooms, home language development, content learning, assessment, educator capacity, and beyond.

## The Basics Community Toolkit

<https://toolkit.thebasics.org/en/community-toolkit>

Inspired by the fact that 80% of brain growth happens in the first three years of life and skill gaps between socio-economic, racial, and ethnic groups become apparent during this period, this toolkit aims to give caregivers and parents tools to give children from every background a more equal start in life. The Basics are “five evidence-based parenting and caregiving principles that encompass much of what experts find is important for children from birth to age three.” Although similar to Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR)’s five practices, training for new caregivers can be offered in the context of these five basic principles:

- Maximize love, manage stress
- Talk, sing, and point
- Count, group, and compare
- Explore through movement and play
- Read and discuss stories.

The toolkit contains presentations, posters, implementation guides, handouts, videos, research, and evaluation.

## Cox Campus Educator’s Toolkit

<https://www.coxcampus.org/educators/>

Using a motto of “Literacy and Justice for All,” the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy in Atlanta developed Cox Campus with the belief that “Every child has the right to literacy—the gateway to deciding their own future and making the most difference in the lives of others.” Their Educator’s Toolkit consists of courses, downloadable resources, personalized learning plans, a pre-K roadmap to reading, a YouTube video library, and much more. The free courses are IACET accredited and give completion certificates with continuing education credit hours. Materials for educators focus on children from infancy to grade three and include resources about dual-language learners and trauma-informed practice. The Story Time section provides activities to go along with books such as *Julián Is a Mermaid* by Jessica Love and *Peter’s Chair* by Ezra Jack Keats. In addition to resources for educators, free resources are also provided to families. There is information about healthcare, discussions, a blog, and lists of Zoom events. This website is a gem because of the valuable lessons it offers as well as the wonderful resources it provides for our use with parents and childcare providers.

## Toolkit for Trainers

<https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/supercharged-storytimes/toolkit.html>

If you’ve read *Supercharged Storytimes: An Early Literacy Planning and Assessment Guide*, you’ll know it utilizes the VIEWS2 systematic study of storytimes to provide a number of ready-to-use planning tools to help librarians plan, present, reflect, and assess their storytimes. Particular attention is paid to self-reflection and peer-to-peer community learning; descriptions give examples of successful ways for storytime presenters to promote family engagement by connecting with parents and caregivers.

In addition to offering free webinars on *Supercharged Storytimes*, Webjunction also has free materials for instructors who will be leading trainings. Available to everyone, this toolkit includes an overview of the course, the syllabus, practitioner learning objectives, course materials and assignments, possible training schedule scenarios, slide decks, scripts, an outline of learning community content, handouts, relevant resources, and more, divided into the six modules. Even if you are not planning on becoming a trainer, this free site contains a plethora of information for anyone wanting to delve deeper into *Supercharged Storytimes* and the concepts behind it. &