

First 5 provides literacy workshop and book fair

Participating families receive \$50 worth of children's books

More than 50 children and parents attended the "Growing Families Libraries" program at the Oakhurst office of First 5 Madera County last Saturday. The program consisted of a literacy workshop and book fair.

Karen Weaver, family advocacy facilitator at the Oakhurst office, presented tips for parents to help increase their children's interest in reading and told parents that "reading, talking and playing with your child is the key to school success."

Reading tips for pre-schoolers

★Let your child choose his favorite book and read it and re-read it with joy.

★Choose books which rhyme and that repeat phrases and that have a predictable story line.

★Ask your child to look at the book cover and pictures. Ask him what he thinks the story might be about.

★As you read to your child, ask what he thinks might happen next in the story.

Weaver aid that by following these simple steps, your child will develop an interest in literacy, letter and word knowledge and will improve their conversational language.

After the workshop, families with children age 0-5 were presented with a \$50 voucher to use to select from more than 10,000 books at the book fair. The books were delivered to Oakhurst by Schwabbe Books of Simi Valley. Age appropriate books were available ranging in price from \$3 to \$5.

The same program was offered last Thursday for 20 families in Madera Ranchos, Friday for 50 families in Chowchilla and Saturday morning in Madera for 100 families.

Celisse Ceja, of Yosemite Lakes Park, attended the event with her two daughters, Priya, 5, and Maya, 4.

"The workshop was very informative providing great techniques to expand the children's vocabulary and in keeping them interested in reading," Ceja said.

Amy Barber of Coarsegold brought her three children, Aaron, 7, Julie, 4 and Joshua, 1.

"It's delightful to have this available in our community," Barber said. "Pre-schoolers in the area can still get an enriched learning environment thanks to First 5."

First 5 Oakhurst is currently offering three free classes.

★"Little Tikes," Mondays, 9 a.m.: A play group for one and two years olds to play and learn socialization skills.

★"Alphabet Soup," Tuesdays, 9:30 and 11 a.m.: A story time geared towards learning the alphabet supported by fun activities.

★"Little Explorers," Thursdays, 9:30 and 11 a.m.: A variety of activities allow children to explore science, math and art.

Advance sign-up for classes is required.

First 5 Oakhurst is located adjacent to the Sierra Star office at 49169 Crane Valley Road (426).

Details: Karen Weaver, (559) 664-4198, kweaver@first5madera.net.

— Staff report



BRIAN WILKINSON/SIERRA STAR

ABOVE: Celisse Ceja, helps her daughters, Maya, 4, and Priya, 5, select books at the First 5 Oakhurst's "Growing Family Libraries" event March 23. BELOW: Julie Barber, 4, appears pleased with the free books she was allowed to pick at the March 23 First 5 Oakhurst book fair.



BRIAN WILKINSON/SIERRA STAR

Karen Weaver, First 5 Oakhurst family advocacy facilitator, reads a book to children who attended the "Growing Family Libraries" event.

