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First 5 invests \$10,000 into Growing Family Libraries

Reading, talking and playing with your children is key to school success.

Yet some 46 percent of families surveyed through the First 5 Family Survey, did not read to their children because they did not have books in their home.

That's why First 5 Madera County sponsors the annual "Growing Family Libraries" event in Madera, Chowchilla, Madera Ranchos and Oakhurst, which puts books in the hands of children and enhances early literacy experiences at home.

Each family participating in the "Growing Family Library" event took part in a 30-minute workshop that focused on developmentally appropriate literacy techniques.

In exchange for the parents' participation in the workshop, First 5 Madera County provided each family with a \$50 voucher to be spent toward books. The First 5 Family Resource Center contracted with Schwabe Books, a

book vendor, to supply books for the families to choose from after the workshop.

"'Growing Family Libraries' is a valuable event for my son and me because the books that he got are for his age and it will help him recognize the words and sound them out. This will help him get ready for kindergarten. We are happy and really enjoy reading to each other," said Nora Solis, a parent.

Regular book-sharing time provides a context for parents to introduce new words by labeling objects. It also provides for parent-child discussions about book content and allows the children to practice new words that express ideas.

Regular library visits and books in the home can raise children's interest in the written word. "With this small project, we invested \$10,000 into 148 homes serving 157 children 0-5 years of age

throughout the county. The training attended by the parents will have positive impacts throughout the child's lifetime," said Chinayera Black Hardaman, executive director.

Four tips when reading to your child:

- Introduce books to your child by explaining the front, back, spine, title, and author

- Engage your child when reading a book to them by asking them about the book

- Repeat/echo information back and forth with your child

- Read to your child a minimum of 30 minutes every day

To ensure that all families have an opportunity to grow their libraries, the First 5 Family Resource Center will also provide books to families that participate in weekly "Story Time" activities.

For more information about First 5 Madera County, please call 9559) 661-5155 or visit www.first5madera.net.

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