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## ***“Read, Baby, Read!” New Citywide Early Literacy Program Gives Babies a Head Start for Lifelong Success***



*City Librarian John F. Szabo launches Read, Baby, Read! at Central Library storytime.*

**LOS ANGELES** (June 18, 2018)—To help parents start their babies on the path to lifelong success, the Los Angeles Public Library today launched “Read, Baby, Read!, an initiative that provides new and expecting parents with everything they need to develop early literacy skills in their babies and toddlers.

The library has partnered with hospitals, health care providers, daycare centers and early childhood education centers to distribute Read, Baby, Read! kits containing baby’s first library card and a book, t-shirt, socks, blanket, diaper bag and brochure with early literacy tips to expecting parents and those with infants under one year old. Parents are encouraged to visit their local library to borrow books to read to their children, participate in baby story and play times, and learn about the many other free resources available to them.

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“It’s impossible to overstate the critical role that early literacy plays in the future success of a child, both in school and in life,” said City Librarian John F. Szabo. “That’s why we created Read, Baby, Read!—to help parents understand the essential role early reading plays in their child’s development and to give them the tools they need to develop in their babies a lifelong love of reading and the library.”

Studies published by the U.S. Department of Education have found that reading to babies will enhance their vocabularies and literacy skills, thereby improving their school readiness. Children who were read to at least three times a week by a family member were almost twice as likely to score in the top 25% in reading compared to children who were read to less than three times a week.

Read Baby, Read! includes all five of the key steps essential to early childhood development—talk, sing, read, write and play. The library offers opportunities to meet other parents and join a community of readers, and staff are available to help families read, learn and grow together.

“This program is so important because of its lasting implications. Studies continue to show that children who receive early education perform better in school, are more likely to go to college, and eventually are better prepared for the workforce,” said Szabo.

Read, Baby, Read! is generously funded by the Library Foundation of Los Angeles and their donors.

A recipient of the nation’s highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than 6 million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at [www.lapl.org](http://www.lapl.org), and more than 18,000 programs a year provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning.

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