

# ORGANIZING FOR LITERACY: How Public Media Stations are Raising Readers in Their Communities

A Case Study Report to  
the *Ready to Learn* Initiative



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# Executive Summary

## Context for the Study

Since 1994 *Ready to Learn* has been the primary source of funding for early childhood television programming and related outreach activities by local public television stations across the United States. In the past five years alone, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), and the U.S. Department of Education have together invested \$123 million in television production, the development of interactive content, learning resources, community engagement models, and research—an investment aimed at improving literacy outcomes for low-income children aged two through eight.

Beginning in 2005, the U.S. Department of Education held separate competitions for *Ready to Learn* programming and outreach, initiating a new model for the conduct of educational outreach. This shift was partly a response to program evaluation findings indicating that these activities, supported by a single award, had limited impact on school readiness and partly a reflection of the priorities of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and a new consensus about the fundamental skills children must develop to learn how to read (National Reading Panel, 2000). The shift also reflected a sense among national and local outreach leaders that the ubiquity of new media and challenges facing low-income communities demanded new approaches to outreach. The 2005 Request for Proposals for station-based outreach activities called for activities to be carried out in high-need communities through collaborative partnerships between local public media stations and local educational agencies, early childhood development programs, public libraries, faith-based groups, and other community-based organizations.

CPB engaged both PBS and the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to assist with the national *Ready to Learn* outreach initiative. They selected 20 markets in which public television station leaders agreed to serve as community engagement innovation sites in partnership with the national *Ready to Learn* collaborative, including the U.S. Department of Education. Though the makeup of target neighborhoods and communities varied, the families served through the stations' outreach efforts shared a common set of challenges that put their children at risk for falling behind their more advantaged peers with respect to literacy development. A key motivation for selecting these stations and neighborhoods was the recognition that to address these challenges, literacy initiatives would need to go deep into communities.

The collective vision of this national-local model was to bring evidence-based literacy content to disadvantaged children where they are—at home and in school—through community-based organizations. The model built on an existing infrastructure that connects local stations to CPB and PBS. In the new model, CPB and PBS developed core content, educational resources, outreach programming models, promotional models, broad strategies for engagement, and research. Stations then matched these resources to identified local needs and engaged local community partners to expand and deepen their reach into the targeted neighborhoods.

The target markets were selected in two cohorts of 10 stations<sup>1</sup> each (one in 2007, another in 2008), based on these stations' demonstrated experience providing educational services to low-income families. Stations and national *Ready to Learn* partners jointly developed five-year action plans that described how stations would engage families and educators in improving literacy outcomes in neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income two- to eight-year-olds. While each plan was unique, all incorporated learning experiences drawn from a lineup of newly produced television series on children's literacy and spin-off multimedia content for websites, iPhones, whiteboards, and other media. Stations and their partners were able to select and localize activities, such as a weeklong summer camp designed as an offshoot of *Super WHY!*, or the eight-week Reading Buddy program based on *Martha Speaks*, or afterschool activities supporting *The Electric Company*.

Local station plans also included engaging families and educators in a combination of regional teacher education and parent training sessions, along with nationally provided professional development via online courses from PBS TeacherLine. The professional development for educators was designed to help them learn how to integrate public media resources into their literacy instruction; the training for parents and other caretakers was designed to help them play a greater role in supporting their children's learning through an anytime-is-learning-time approach to everyday experiences.

Additionally, stations committed to airing a series of pro-literacy messages for parents and community members as part of the PBS KIDS Raising Readers campaign. They also collaborated with local electronic and print media outlets to further disseminate these messages or to produce original television and radio announcements and feature stories. This type of social marketing activity formed a major part of both local stations' plans and the overall effort to increase community awareness of the critical role that families play in their children's learning.

## EDC and SRI's Case Study Research

As part of our summative evaluation of the *Ready to Learn* initiative, Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), and SRI International (SRI) conducted case studies to investigate how stations developed educational outreach for high-need children and families. We selected stations that, on the basis of nominations from CPB, PBS, and others familiar with station outreach efforts, represented best practices. Findings

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout, "station" refers to both individual public media stations and statewide networks.

from successful sites can help policymakers both understand the potential of this new strategy and identify possible roles for stations and persistent challenges they are likely to face in implementing this type of educational outreach. Below are the major findings from the comparative case analysis, which focuses not on the literacy levels participants achieved (these are the subject of other *Ready-to-Learn*-sponsored studies) but rather on the stations' strategies for promoting a sustained, communitywide effort to improve literacy among low-income children. The report also lists the strengths of public media stations as early childhood and literacy partners and the challenges they may encounter conducting future state or federal educational improvement projects.

### Results: Stations' Responses to the New Outreach Model

In responding to the call to transform outreach, stations confronted a common set of opportunities and challenges. First, they had to shift away from offering direct services targeting particular interactions with books and media between adults and children toward pursuing an ecology of learning supports through local partnerships that help build literacy. Second, stations had to switch from focusing on the community overall to targeting specific neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income two- to eight-year-olds and then customizing nationally developed materials and models to their particular needs.

#### From Conducting Onetime Literacy Workshops to Cultivating a Community Learning Ecology

- Case study stations recast onetime workshops and events, once the mainstay of *Ready to Learn* activities, as entry points for deeper, more sustained engagement. In this new national-local arrangement, national partners provided different types of research-based materials and stations worked with their local partners to determine how best to use them.
- Stations aimed to improve the ecology of learning supports for literacy by expanding and deepening associations with local service providers into full-fledged partnerships addressing identified community needs.
- In joining other coalitions and networks, stations extended their reach and credibility as literacy partners in their communities though focused, ongoing involvement.
- Stations increased their presence at community events, allowing them to become sensitive to local concerns and integrated into larger community improvement efforts.

## From Workshop Attendees to Target Zip Codes: Serving New Audiences

- Stations partnered with organizations to meet parents and caregivers in familiar settings.
- Despite barriers, stations collaborated with local public and charter schools in their efforts to support literacy learning. Local stations tended to be more effective at delivering content and services when they worked in strategic partnerships with schools and other local organizations.
- Stations expanded upon the innovative social marketing techniques developed by AIR, tailoring messages for local mainstream media to deliver to parents in the community who might not know how best to support children's literacy learning.
- When they were engaged over time, station staff members were able to support the integration of public media resources into formal and informal learning environments.

## Community Engagement Challenges for Stations

- Station outreach staff found it difficult to serve parents unaccustomed to seeing themselves as an important resource for their children's language and literacy learning.
- Despite efforts to provide materials, especially parent materials, in Spanish, stations grappled with the problem of serving communities where English was not the principal language.
- Stations were hampered by the persistent lack of technology infrastructure in many underserved communities.

## Conclusions

- The new approach to outreach emphasized in *Ready to Learn* funding gave stations opportunities to expand offerings to existing partners and to collaborate with new partners with existing ties to hard-to-reach populations.
- Stations built credibility among their target populations by developing partnerships with organizations that provide essential social services to low-income communities.
- Partnerships with local organizations helped stations ensure that the *Ready to Learn* content traveled the last mile to the children who were most likely to benefit from it.

- The range of user-ready materials developed through the national campaign was a great improvement over the previous onetime workshop model, as stations were able to customize materials more effectively to a wider variety of community needs.
- The new strategy of targeting high-need neighborhoods helped to focus and deepen the scope of stations' educational outreach efforts.
- Though some stations had formed strong relationships with schools in their target communities, most of the stations had greater success building relationships with local service organizations than school districts.
- Although stations participated in large-scale evaluations of the Ready to Learn resources, they did not have the resources or capacity to evaluate the impact of their own outreach efforts on the local community.

### Recommendations for CPB, PBS, and the U.S. Department of Education

- Continue to value community partnerships. Public media resources have the greatest impact when stations collaborate with educational and social service providers already established in their communities.
- Grant future outreach awards to stations to promote deep community engagement based on consideration of their prior experience with outreach and existing partnerships. Stations with limited prior experience in these areas could be matched with mentor stations that have a track record in creating and maintaining community partnerships.
- Encourage stations to partner with local researchers or a network of researchers supported directly by CPB and PBS, because it is unrealistic to expect them to develop the capacity to evaluate their own educational outreach work.
- Encourage *Ready to Learn*, in its next phase, to borrow heavily from lessons learned from the current round of community partnerships and to use emerging media to strengthen communications and distribution of resources.
- Generate compelling descriptions of effective community partnership models and disseminate them to stations through video and Web 2.0 networks.
- Recognize that sustained professional development is a difficult goal that is likely to require resources from within formal educational environments, for example, local schools of education, school districts, and accrediting bodies such as Child Care Resource and Referral networks.

- Recognize that, though outreach is essential for all populations, on-the-ground outreach efforts are particularly important for reaching target populations that lack access to the Internet.
- Recognize that stations' relationships with partners depend, in part, on their ability to deliver consistent services over many years. Allow stations to continue to build and nurture these relationships as a necessary precondition for improving literacy outcomes for children.
- Encourage stations to share strategies directly with one another and with other institutions pursuing complementary goals. Despite the decentralized nature of the current infrastructure, there are promising precedents for collaboration across the system. CPB, PBS, and the U.S. Department of Education have the power to convene and promote dissemination in a way that individual stations may not be able to do.

### Recommendations for Stations

- Learn from the experience of other stations and share these lessons with other stations less experienced in carrying out educational outreach activities.
- Accept what public media organizations do well, and acknowledge instances in which local direct-service providers are in a better position to act. Make strategic decisions about when the station is best placed to provide a service and when supporting other service providers would have a larger impact.
- Meet parents and other caregivers where they gather within the community (health clinics, daycare centers, schools, places of work, social service agencies, neighborhood shopping centers, markets). Likewise, summer camps, afterschool programs, and other community programs are excellent places to reach children.
- Recognize the importance of ongoing contact with partners and consistency in the delivery of services over the long term.



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# Context of the Study

In conceptualizing the *Ready to Learn* initiative in spring 2006, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) described a Literacy 360 approach to developing skills that a recent panel of experts concluded are essential to teach reading (National Reading Panel, 2000). If young children from traditionally underserved communities were to succeed in school, these institutions argued in their submission to the U.S. Department of Education, it was not enough to produce high-quality, research-based broadcast and digital programming; it was just as important to help all the adults responsible for them understand how to use these materials to support literacy development. In other words, if two- to eight-year-olds in low-income families were to grow and learn as well as their peers in more advantaged homes, not only would they need to be surrounded by opportunities to make use of educational television programs, online games, and hands-on learning activities, but the adults in their lives would have to be prepared to play an essential part in their learning. The pair of grants the federal government awarded CPB and PBS—one for programming, the other for outreach—acknowledged the need for not only developing educational resources but also supporting families, caregivers, and teachers in using them effectively.

CPB and PBS defined an outreach plan based on a national vision and rich menu of public media resources, but with local implementation. The effort came to be known as PBS KIDS Raising Readers. By design, this initiative's outreach efforts were intended to encourage stations to engage deeply with community partners in order to match nationally developed content and materials to local needs.<sup>2</sup> CPB selected and provided support to 20 public media stations as they undertook educational outreach activities, allowing individual stations to determine the best ways to reach the low-income children and families within the target zip codes in their broadcast markets. To identify the strengths and challenges of the more promising local outreach models, CPB commissioned Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) and SRI International (SRI), the *Ready to Learn* initiative's summative evaluators, to conduct a set of community partnership case studies. This report is the result of those case studies.

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2 See Appendix A for CPB's and PBS's document, "Building a Nation of Readers: The Remarkable Impact of the Federal *Ready to Learn* Program," for their reflections on the national significance of *Ready to Learn*.

## Station Outreach in the Context of *Ready to Learn*

Even though educational outreach has received renewed attention in the current phase of *Ready to Learn*, using outreach to expand the influence of public media programming is not a new strategy. Station education departments have traditionally expended considerable time and resources in extending their message directly into the community. Although educational outreach by individual public media stations has always been an important component of the *Ready to Learn* initiative, the definition of the term has evolved during its three funding cycles (1994–99, 2000–04, and 2005–10). Literacy and family literacy workshops were a primary mode of outreach in the first two *Ready to Learn* grant cycles. One popular workshop approach was modeled after the View-Read-Do Learning Triangle. However, past evaluation studies on the impact of these workshops found that although they succeeded in changing parents' behavior, they did not improve literacy outcomes for children (Boller, et al., 2004). Also, because these workshops were often onetime training or awareness-raising events, they offered limited opportunities to build sustained relationships between stations and caregivers or between stations and community organizations that had ongoing relationships with those caregivers. Parents and educators simply took what they could from a workshop—knowledge and/or materials—but had few opportunities for follow-up or a deepening of their learning.

In response to these findings, and in line with increasing recognition of the importance of a broad, networked ecology of supports for children's literacy (see literature review below), the U.S. Department of Education recommended that CPB encourage innovation in educational outreach as part of the current *Ready to Learn* funding cycle. Consequently, the 20 stations that received outreach funds from CPB shifted their efforts to focus on developing longer-term partnerships with local organizations to build a neighborhoodwide or communitywide approach to promoting literacy. CPB required each station to create an outreach action plan defining its particular strategic approach to community engagement. These plans were developed in close collaboration with CPB and PBS, as well as with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), which would support stations in implementing the first ambitious social marketing campaigns in public media linked to data on assets and needs in target neighborhoods. Each plan included the partners with whom the station planned to collaborate; the PBS KIDS Raising Readers materials they intended to use in their outreach efforts; the station's general approach to marketing and public relations, as related to its early learning educational goals; and the outreach leadership team.

Beyond responding to CPB's call for new models of outreach, stations created action plans that reflected the broader public media and economic environment of recent years. It was not uncommon for stations to encounter staff turnover or reductions,

especially within their education departments, during the initiative. Stations also had to grapple with an increasing reliance on soft money, which sometimes placed a priority on literacy, but often did not. Finally, stations were witnessing a movement away from the traditional model of broadcast programming toward a new model of content delivery using multiple media and platforms. All of these factors created not only the potential to support and extend stations' outreach efforts but also new challenges.

## Features Common to Stations' Plans: Key Elements of the Model

Key elements of the new model, evident in all the stations' plans, are described below.

### **Directing and Using the Existing National-Local Infrastructure**

Public media has a network infrastructure connecting stations to a national hub. CPB and PBS direct the development of media content, educational resources, promotional messages, models for community engagement, and impact research; local stations work to identify local needs, convene and engage community partners, and implement programs that they believe match the critical needs of low-income children in their targeted neighborhoods.

### **Employment of Research-based Strategies for Literacy Promotion**

Two bodies of research informed outreach activities. Consensus reports on the key skills necessary for reading and literacy development, such as that of the National Reading Panel (2000), informed the content design. Research on community engagement and the importance of surrounding students with literacy, as reviewed below, informed CPB and PBS's strategies and models for station outreach.

### **Use of Data on Neighborhoods to Inform Social Marketing Strategies**

All station plans required the stations to work in collaboration with AIR staff to implement social marketing strategies targeting low-income neighborhoods in that station's market. Social marketing refers to strategic communication initiatives that promote awareness and behavioral change to target groups to advance a social good (Andreasen, 1995; McKenzie-Mohr, 2000). In *Ready to Learn*, that social good is the promotion of literacy. AIR first employed the PRIZM® clustering approach (Weiss, 1998) to characterize neighborhoods on the basis of community needs and assets and then used these clusters, and the data collected from focus groups with residents, to guide the development of targeted, literacy-focused messages for stations to use in outreach efforts to community members.

## Promotion of Strategic Partnerships and Deep, Sustained Engagement

All the stations' plans promoted a partnership, rather than a solitary approach to implementing outreach. The partnerships were strategic, in that they were focused on organizations, coalitions, and individuals who not only had access to community residents but also had a deep understanding of their needs and strengths. The focus was on promoting deep engagement over time, not onetime workshops or events. When station plans called for special events, they were intended to be part of a broader program or sequence of activities designed to support literacy development.

## Outreach Materials and Resources

In addition to developing and distributing children's television programming to support literacy development, *Ready to Learn* also worked to create and provide a rich complement of interactive content and outreach tools and materials. To extend the impact of Ready to Learn projects and outreach efforts within the 20 target markets, PBS and individual producers developed and incubated a broad range of resources and hands-on materials for distribution and use. Some of these were piloted in individual communities before being widely distributed. In all but a few cases, local stations were expected to implement all of the resources made available to them as part of the larger initiative. The case studies revealed that stations made deliberate choices about the relevance of materials to the needs of local partners and families.

**Table 1. Materials and resources available to Ready to Learn stations**

NAME/PRODUCER	DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS AND RESOURCES
<i>Super WHY!</i> Summer Reading Camps Producer: Out of the Blue	A five-day reading camp where children engage with <i>Super WHY!</i> media, combined with games and activities that improve early decoding skills.
<i>Martha Speaks</i> Reading Buddies Producer: WGBH	An eight-week-long program that pairs kindergarten students with older students to learn new vocabulary words, play word games, watch episodes of <i>Martha Speaks</i> , read books together, and write about their experience.
<i>The Electric Company</i> Outreach Kit, Vols. 1 and 2 Producer: Sesame Workshop	Available for teachers to use as supplementary classroom materials and for afterschool programming, the kit provides a DVD with episode content, a CD with downloadable activity sheets, and a printed guide with instructions and games.
<i>The Electric Company</i> Circuit Tour Producer: Sesame Workshop	A community engagement event featuring hands-on literacy activities and an interactive <i>Electric Company</i> stage show.

NAME/PRODUCER	DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS AND RESOURCES
<p>Online Professional Development Courses</p> <p>Producer: PBS TeacherLine</p>	<p>PBS TeacherLine is an online professional development series of courses helping preschool and early elementary caregivers and teachers integrate engaging media into their literacy curricula for children ages 2–8. The specific courses offered as part of the Ready to Learn grant included Course 1: Raising Readers: Preparing Preschoolers for Success, Course 2: Raising Readers: Ready to Read and Write with Digital Media, and Course 3: Raising Readers: Ready to Spark Word Power!</p>
<p>PBS KIDS Island and The Great Word Quest</p> <p>Producer: PBS</p>	<p>PBS KIDS Island is a website of reading games featuring PBS KIDS characters for children ages 2–5, which tracks their progress through early literacy skills. The Great Word Quest, a literacy activity website for 6–to–8-year-olds, features games from <i>The Electric Company</i>, <i>Martha Speaks</i>, and <i>WordGirl</i>.</p>
<p>PBS KIDS Raising Readers Library Corner</p> <p>Producer: PBS</p>	<p>A kit of materials featuring the PBS KIDS characters designed to create and customize a unique space in a library where children can participate in librarian-led or self-directed literacy activities, play reading games online, or watch related educational video materials on a DVD.</p>
<p><i>Raising Readers with PBS KIDS</i> DVD</p> <p>Producer: PBS</p>	<p>A DVD featuring episodes of <i>Sesame Street</i> and <i>Between the Lions</i>, plus a literacy message for parents.</p>
<p><i>Watch. Learn. Read.</i> DVD</p> <p>Producer: PBS</p>	<p>A DVD featuring episodes and extra clips from <i>Super WHY!</i> and <i>Word World</i>, featuring introductions by PBS KIDS host Miss Rosa.</p>
<p><i>Really, Really Fun Pages</i> Activity Book</p> <p>Producer: PBS</p>	<p>Features literacy activities (in English) for children, with instructions for parents in English and Spanish.</p>
<p><i>Fun Games to Help Your Child Learn to Read</i></p> <p>Producer: PBS</p>	<p>Literacy tip sheets in English and Spanish, featuring fun, educational activities for parents and kids to do together.</p>
<p><i>Supermarket Explorer</i> Grocery Store Game</p> <p>Producer: PBS</p>	<p>This game involves parents and kids in activities designed to strengthen children’s skills with letters and words while shopping at the grocery store.</p>
<p><i>Word World</i> Zoo Game</p> <p>Producer: Word World LLC</p>	<p>A day of literacy activities at the zoo, featuring characters from the animated series, <i>Word World</i>.</p>

NAME/PRODUCER	DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS AND RESOURCES
PBS KIDS GO! Writers Contest Producer: PBS	An annual competition that encourages children in grades K–3 to write and illustrate stories and submit them to their local PBS station. Local winners are entered into the national level of the contest where a renowned panel of judges identifies the national winners.
“Fun on the Run” Activity Booklets Producer: PBS	Literacy and health resource for low-income families, featuring characters from <i>Sesame Street</i> , <i>Super WHY!</i> , <i>Martha Speaks</i> , <i>Between the Lions</i> , and <i>WordWorld</i> , incorporating important health messages and engaging games designed to increase reading skills.
Literacy Van Wrap Producer: PBS	Creates a branded mobile literacy van featuring colorful PBS KIDS characters.
Literacy Web Page Producer: PBS	Web page templates that can be co-branded and adapted for local stations.
Media Campaign Materials Producer: PBS	Two local print ads featuring PBS KIDS host Miss Rosa Two direct-mail postcards featuring “Anytime is Learning Time” messaging Two TV and radio spots featuring PBS KIDS host Miss Rosa and Martha of <i>Martha Speaks</i>
Promo Spots Producer: PBS	Eleven 30-second promotional spots are available for station use: “Written Impossible”; “Jest Side Story”; “Super Grover”; “Casablanca”; “Chalk Drawing”; “Grocery List”; “Rhyme Time”; “Miss Rosa and Martha” (English version); “Miss Rosa and Martha” (Spanish version); “PBS KIDS Island” (Parent version); “PBS KIDS Island” (Kids version)
Reading Activity Calendar Producer: PBS	PBS KIDS Island online module that features fun and educational reading activities for each day of the year.
Sizzle Reels Producer: PBS	Four proof-of-performance reels that showcase the impact of the PBS KIDS Raising Readers Initiative: 2- or 4-minute versions of local impact reel; <i>Super WHY!</i> Reading Camps reel; PBS KIDS Raising Readers project report reel.
<i>Super WHY!</i> Learning Adventures Toolkit Producer: PBS Distribution	Designed to easily work in classrooms, libraries, and after-school programs, DVD features music, an episode of the <i>Super WHY!</i> television series, games and activities, and guidelines for instructors to lead five days of fun and learning for kids.
Word of the Day Producer: PBS	PBS KIDS Island online module featuring children’s vocabulary words and their definitions.



## Community Partnerships for Improving Literacy: A Review of the Research

Support for the national approach comes from research on literacy development, particularly studies that emphasizes the importance of designing integrated, coordinated social contexts in which to foster children's development (Epstein, 1995). This coordination is important, because development takes place within a broad network of interrelated settings (Barron, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). By working collaboratively, people acting within the three critical spheres of influence for student success—schools, families, and communities—can provide the supports needed to promote positive development and keep students from falling behind. In particular, literacy development depends on an ecology of learning supports, which relies heavily on cultural norms in addition to formal teacher education. Indeed, differences in available supports between low-income and more advantaged children help account for large disparities in literacy skills (Neuman & Celano, 2001).

Most approaches to building ecologies of support for children's learning have focused on efforts by schools to expand parent and community involvement. A substantial body of research has shown that increased parental involvement in education leads to higher student achievement (Epstein, 1991; Fehrmann, Keith, & Reimers, 1987; Henderson, Sussman, & Thomas, 1998; Majoribanks, 1979; Muller & Kerbow, 1993). One challenge, though, is that certain types of families—specifically those with less formal education and lower incomes—are less likely than parents of middle-class students to be engaged in their children's education (Lareau, 1987; Muller & Kerbow, 1993). School outreach programs that directly address the barriers low-income families face can successfully increase the involvement of these parents and communities in school life (Clark, 1983; Hoover-Demsey & Sandler, 1997; Sheldon, 2003). Those programs that encourage parents to see themselves as capable of playing a positive role in their children's education have succeeded in increasing parent involvement (Balli, Wedman, & Demo, 1998; Dauber & Epstein, 1993).

In recent years, researchers have looked at partnerships for literacy and school readiness centered on communitywide change efforts. The most widely known of these initiatives is the Harlem Children's Zone (Tough, 2008), which is the model for President Obama's Promise Neighborhoods Initiative. The Harlem Children's Zone is based on the goal of changing the odds, rather than merely helping some students to beat the odds (HCZ Project Model). The program provides comprehensive supports, at scale, for all parents and children within a 100-block radius in upper Manhattan. A recent study found that students at the charter middle school, Promise Academy, performed better than similar students elsewhere (Dobbie & Fryer, 2009). Another large-scale initiative, aimed specifically at improving and coordinating access to high-quality preschools among low-income children in Pittsburgh, has been successful in improving reading skills and kindergarten readiness for children who participated in the program (Bagnato, Salaway, & Suen, 2009).



A principal goal of PBS KIDS Raising Readers was to encourage stations to deepen and extend their educational outreach work by enacting innovative literacy outreach models. The idea that public media stations could be leaders in forming community partnerships to support literacy is relatively new and not well researched. Past outreach efforts within *Ready to Learn* highlight the success that stations have had in building partnerships to support their literacy development efforts (Vogel & Dadgar, 2005). In addition, research has shown a modest link between participation in *Ready to Learn* workshops and parents' self-reported literacy behaviors with their children (Johnson et al., 2003). At the same time, there was no evidence of a link between workshop participation and improved literacy levels of students (Boller, et al., 2004). A key lesson drawn from state early childhood learning support systems (e.g., Coffman, Wright, & Bruner, 2006) is that resources such as those provided by *Ready to Learn* outreach awards can stimulate communities to develop innovative strategies that go beyond solutions envisioned by individual partners in the past.

# Research Approach

In fall 2009 and winter 2010, EDC and SRI conducted case studies of six of the 20 stations' activities to examine the implementation of their plans. For our research, we intentionally selected these six stations from among the cohort of outreach stations, based on the breadth of their partnership activities and nominations from CPB, PBS, AIR, and producers. Choosing sites with a broad range of activities enabled us to illuminate the potential of the new approach to outreach, as well as to observe the challenges that stations just beginning their efforts to implement the new approach can expect.

In conducting these case studies with the six selected stations, we examined the strategies stations pursued, the methods they used to evaluate their activities, and the ways in which they managed the challenges and opportunities they faced in designing and implementing early literacy development activities for their particular target audiences.

This set of case studies contrasts with our recently completed experimental study (Penuel, Pasnik, et al., 2009) in two key ways. First, in our experimental study, volunteer sites were randomly assigned to either a treatment (literacy) condition or a comparison condition. In the case studies, we deliberately included sites that were likely to be more successful in order to analyze the potential of the new, partnership-based outreach approaches to improve the reach of *Ready to Learn* messages and materials.

Second, our experimental study examined literacy outcomes. Case studies instead focused on the capacity of partnerships formed by stations to promote literacy development in target neighborhoods. By capacity, we mean the activities stations undertook to promote a sustained, communitywide focus on improving literacy supported by *Ready to Learn* materials and activities. Our analysis focused not on documented outcomes but rather on the potential for achieving positive results, given the nature and strength of focus of outreach efforts on literacy.

Findings from these case studies can help to guide future educational outreach efforts, help funders better understand the challenges public media stations face, and provide advice and support to bolster the outreach efforts of stations with less experience that offer these types of services.

# Study Description

In conducting this study with six stations carefully selected for the purpose, we examined the educational outreach successes stations achieved, the strategies they developed to meet their outreach goals, and the challenges they encountered in attempting to support early literacy development in their target audiences.

## Research Questions

We asked the following questions:

- What strategies are stations using to establish long-term, sustainable early literacy outreach efforts in the communities they serve?
- How have stations designed their outreach activities to meet the needs of educators, caregivers, and children in specific communities or geographic areas?
- How are stations helping local educators and caregivers use *Ready to Learn* materials effectively to support literacy development?
- What challenges have stations faced in designing, implementing, and evaluating their educational outreach activities?

## Topics of the Study

To answer our research questions in a comprehensive way, we explored seven discrete topics that are related to different aspects of those questions.

- **Alignment of educational outreach activities to stations' overall goals and mission.** We examined how *Ready to Learn* fit within each station's vision and structure and how station personnel and community partners viewed *Ready to Learn* activities.
- **Evidence of a strong focus on early literacy learning.** We examined the extent to which stations' educational outreach activities emphasized young children's early literacy learning, as opposed to professional development for high school teachers or content areas like health or science.
- **Partnerships stations developed and maintained.** We examined the purpose and quality of collaborations that stations formed to advance their goals for educational outreach.

- **Materials the station distributed or developed.** We examined the materials stations distributed, adapted, and created for particular audiences and the suitability of nationally produced materials for the perceived needs of stations' target communities.
- **Identifying and engaging new and often hard-to-reach populations.** We examined how stations identified and attempted to engage early childhood teachers, parents, and underserved children who typically are not part of a station's audience.
- **Professional development for educators.** We examined stations' in-person and online offerings, designed to help childcare providers and early childhood educators learn more about how to support early literacy development, as well as use *Ready to Learn* materials in their settings.
- **Reaching parents and caregivers.** We examined stations' approaches to reaching children's primary caregivers (parents, grandparents, and other guardians) with messages about how they could support their children's language and literacy development.

These topics provided a framework that we used to structure data collection protocols and organize and analyze evidence.

## Stations Selected for the Case Studies

We worked in close consultation with CPB leaders and staff to review each of the twenty *Ready to Learn* initiative's outreach stations, and we discussed the merits of including each in this set of case studies. At CPB's suggestion, we also met with colleagues at PBS and AIR, the organization overseeing other aspects of the initiative's outreach efforts. Following these consultations, we selected the six stations we considered likely to yield the most useful findings to CPB and the U. S. Department of Education as they consider how best to build on the *Ready to Learn* initiative. After CPB approved the final list, we conducted intensive site visits at the following six stations:

- Iowa Public Television (IPTV), headquartered in Johnson, Iowa, is a state licensee with a broadcast area that includes the whole state, plus parts of surrounding states. At the time of our study, IPTV's director of educational telecommunications and Pre-K–12 coordinator directed educational outreach activities for the network, and oversaw a small team that works primarily on outreach initiatives.
- Located in Toledo, Ohio, WGTE is a community licensee that serves audiences in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. At the time of our study, outreach activities at the station were directed by the early education and outreach director and the director of marketing, with support from other departments, including Broadcast Services.

- WHUT is a university licensee located on the Howard University campus in Washington, D.C. Its signal reaches the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. At the time of our study, WHUT’s outreach activities were carried out by the station’s education coordinator, with support from the station’s administrative director and general manager.
- WNET, the public broadcast station in Buffalo, New York, is a community licensee with a broadcast area that includes western New York, southern Ontario, and northwestern Pennsylvania. At the time of our study, WNET had three staff members focused on education and outreach: the director of education and outreach, the education and outreach associate director, and an education outreach associate.
- Located at Florida State University in Tallahassee, WFSU is a university licensee that reaches the Florida panhandle and southwest Georgia. At the time of our study, WFSU had two outreach staff members: a director of educational outreach and an educational outreach coordinator. The promotion director also provided outreach assistance.
- Situated on the campus of Southern Illinois University, WSIU is a university licensee with stations that serve southern Illinois and parts of four surrounding states. At the time of our study, WSIU’s field representative for outreach was responsible for educational outreach.

All but one of these stations have a long history of offering educational outreach in their communities; as such, the findings regarding their successes are not likely to generalize to stations embarking on educational outreach activities for the first time. The case studies are better understood as revealing the challenges and opportunities stations face as they gain experience using new models of outreach, as well as the strategies these stations have developed to form successful partnerships that support the development of early literacy skills among young children in low-income neighborhoods.

## Sources of Data and Analysis

Our data sources for the case studies included station action plans, interviews, observations, and station materials and artifacts.

- **Action plans.** When we began planning the case studies, we obtained station action plans, developed with CPB, for all 20 *Ready to Learn* stations. We then created a comparison table across sites to help with site selection. We consulted these plans again prior to site visits in order to learn about each station and tailor interviews to the specific stations.
- **Interview protocols.** The interview protocols included questions on each of the study topics. We then reordered the questions to flow logically in an interview.<sup>3</sup> We aligned interview questions with a debriefing form that we could complete after each site

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3 Complete interview guides appear in appendices B–F of this report.

visit, so before visiting a site we could see the mapping from topic to interview to debriefing form. We developed five versions of the interview guide targeted at the different categories of informants who might be interviewed: station leaders, station education leaders, policymakers and funders, direct-service providers, and content producers. The considerable overlap across protocols in topics and, in some cases, specific questions enabled triangulation among different stakeholders in partnerships (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). At the same time, some questions were specific to the roles people play and the knowledge they could be expected to provide, given their position within the station or expertise as a partner.

- **Observation protocol.** We designed a semi-structured observation protocol to use at station events.<sup>4</sup> The protocol provided a structure for gathering basic logistical data, such as who attended, where the event took place, and what the environment looked like. We also recorded program-related information about the event, such as the literacy topics addressed, media used, and instructional strategies employed. The protocol provided space to take detailed, open-ended field notes at station events, which allowed us to capture what happened moment by moment and annotate the details with our observations and reflections. The last section of the protocol included questions for the activity organizers and participants to debrief them and elicit their interpretations of the activities.
- **Station-generated materials.** We collected and catalogued artifacts stations developed independently of those PBS and producers had created and disseminated. Station materials included print materials used in programming and promotion, media adapted from programs such as *The Electric Company*, and background materials stations assembled specifically for the research team.

Across the six sites, we conducted 58 interviews<sup>5</sup>, observed three separate outreach activities, and collected 34 artifacts. In arranging visits, we requested interviews with all relevant station staff members and community partners involved in educational outreach. Some stations made all interview arrangements for the researchers; others provided contact information so that researchers could approach informants directly. In the case of smaller stations with few community partners, we conducted fewer interviews. Larger stations tended to have more staff to interview and more community partners.

We completed structured debriefing forms<sup>6</sup> after each site visit, observation, and phone interview. Debriefing forms allowed site visitors to pull the most relevant information from each interview or observation and to organize the material by theme or topic. Using the debriefing forms as a guide, we completed matrices that linked study topics with specific pieces of evidence to illustrate how consistent station activities were with those topics. We then determined which research

4 The observation protocol appears in appendix G of this report.

5 Interviewees were promised that their interviews would remain confidential, so the evaluators have kept the interviews private. All individuals quoted and named in this report were allowed to review the statements and granted approval for their use.

6 The debriefing form appears in appendix H of this report.

questions the different pieces of evidence addressed. This process allowed us to answer the research questions from multiple perspectives. For example, we could address the first research question—what strategies stations are using to establish a long-term, sustainable approach to early literacy—by examining their partnership activities, their professional development activities, and how their outreach approach aligns with the station’s overall goals and mission. This multifaceted approach to data analysis allowed us to demonstrate the complexity of what stations are trying to accomplish in their *Ready to Learn* outreach efforts.

## Intended Uses of the Report

This report differs in nature and function from our earlier national efficacy study of *Ready to Learn*. It is not an impact study and therefore cannot assess the effect of stations’ outreach activities on children’s language or literacy development. It was not appropriate to conduct a controlled impact study across communities for three reasons. First, while each station had access to a core collection of outreach tools and materials, and most stations used most or all of them, the depth, scope, and intensity of outreach efforts varied greatly by station, and stations used different strategies and provided different combinations of materials and services within their communities. Second, there was no comparison group of stations, nor any opportunity to collect pre and post data on their educational outreach activities. Though stations did participate in larger studies measuring the impact of the national initiative on children’s literacy development in the target markets, that impact is not the focus of this report.

Rather, this report focuses on implementation, not impact. It illustrates the strategies stations used, the opportunities and challenges they encountered, and how they adapted to these conditions in their efforts to engage in early literacy outreach in very different communities. The report focuses on explaining outreach processes, not simply describing them, and the reasons some strategies were more successful and others less so can serve as a useful starting point for planning outreach activities at stations in other communities. The comparative case study design also presents evidence that can help provide a context for the successes of particular sites included in the case studies, so that other stations may understand the active ingredients of successful educational outreach and work to create similar conditions in their communities.

CPB, PBS, and the U.S. Department of Education can use the report’s findings and recommendations to guide future educational outreach efforts. For example, funding agencies may elect to create additional requirements related to the creation or maintenance of partnerships, or the collection of implementation and impact data. The report may also help funders of this work better understand the landscape in which stations operate and allow them to provide guidance that would bolster the outreach efforts of stations with less experience in providing these types of services.



# Findings

## From Onetime Workshops to Cultivating a Community Learning Ecology

Educational outreach shifted during the current *Ready to Learn* grant. Earlier efforts focused on delivering single workshops to parents, caregivers, and early educators that featured a literacy method of View-Do-Read together. The current outreach initiative encouraged the cultivation of a broader ecology of learning supports to help low-income children develop the literacy skills needed to succeed in school. Ecologies of learning supports include the network of resources, activities, and guides available to young people across settings in their neighborhoods that can foster their development as readers and writers (Neuman & Celano, 2001). Station outreach activities aligned with the Literacy 360 vision for the *Ready to Learn* initiative by attempting to cultivate or improve the ecology of supports in low-income neighborhoods.

### Creating full-scale partnerships with local service providers

Prior relationships with local providers were an important resource to many stations as they worked to improve the ecology of learning supports available to low-income children. Case study stations, for the most part, started out with partnerships created during earlier *Ready to Learn* grants. Stations leveraged these relationships to transform legacy activities and build more extensive partnerships with providers that focused on improving literacy resources for their target neighborhoods.

The trajectory of WSIU in Carbondale, Illinois, illustrates how prior relationships were key in helping stations make this shift to an ecological approach. As part of its first *Ready to Learn* award, WSIU had formed a tie with the local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network, which became a critical connection for its transformation from a literacy provider for parents and kids to a provider for educating providers. As part of its first *Ready to Learn* award, station staff led workshops for parents and occasionally a childcare provider. Providers using this model typically could not earn continuing education credits for participation, nor were learning opportunities provided by community college certification programs for educators integrated into it. With the help of CCR&R, WSIU was able to integrate provider education more fully into the systems of professional development available for local educators. This integration increased the station's ability to attract providers to its offerings. Station



staff members credited their relationship with CCR&R for helping them connect with many other organizations serving low-income children, including Head Start. Being aligned with CCR&R gave the station credibility with organizations seeking assurances that WSIU offered high-quality materials and services.

New *Ready to Learn* materials helped increase the trust local organizations placed in the station to provide resources and reinforced the idea that public media materials are of high quality. WGTE in Toledo, for example, had developed a partnership with the East Toledo Family Center, a neighborhood service provider, as part of an earlier *Ready to Learn* award. The center's womb-to-tomb services included *Help Me Grow*, a home visit program to support healthy development and parent education, as well as before- and afterschool programs. As part of the current *Ready to Learn* award, the East Toledo Family Center hosted a *Super WHY!* Summer Reading Camp for children in its Head Start-sponsored preschool program; it also offered *The Electric Company* outreach kit in its before- and afterschool programming. Likewise, the station strengthened its relationship with a local elementary school by providing the *Martha Speaks* Reading Buddies program, a new structure for supporting literacy development. Individual relationships with educators, formed through *Ready to Learn* workshops under previous awards, also proved essential building blocks in stations' efforts to build deeper, longer-term relationships, especially with schools. Past ties to teachers were important, for example at WFSU in Tallahassee, in facilitating the development of a partnership between the station, Florida A&M University, and a local elementary school. A local Florida A&M professor had been interested in having his students work with elementary-age students to use the PBS KIDS Island website. Aware that teachers had many other responsibilities in the classroom, he thought that having college students support elementary students in using the site would be a good way to facilitate access to new learning opportunities. Initially, the principal did not return several calls that station outreach staff made to the school, so the station outreach manager proposed a meeting with the professor in the school's parking lot at the end of the school day.

The principal was open to the idea of having university students help out in the classroom but wanted to check with one of her teachers, who would have to host the students. Serendipitously, that teacher passed by, saw the station outreach coordinator with the principal, and said hello, as she knew her from earlier involvement in a WFSU educational outreach activity. The teacher embraced the idea proposed by the professor, and as a result, in fall 2010, 25 university student volunteers were slated to go into the six kindergarten classrooms two at a time for 30-minute sessions to help students play games on PBS KIDS Island. In reflecting on why this interaction was successful, the station outreach manager said the key had been showing up, even though the school had not been responsive to phone calls, and laying the groundwork to develop relationships with individual teachers over time. The anticipated in-class engagement in the fall appeared to be the result of a brief, informal negotiation between the principal and the station representative, but as is often the case with trust-based relationships, it was really years in the making.

Evidence suggesting that stations with few prior relationships found it difficult to gain traction in communities underscores the importance of those relationships in helping stations get a running start in transforming their outreach activities. Stations that were new to community outreach altogether, or had limited connections to institutions that provided literacy services, were still struggling to form bonds with partners they were just getting to know at the time of our visits. Trust had not yet been built, and partners did not view stations' offerings as readily relevant and useful to their endeavors. Thus, as the examples above illustrate, although stations needed to change the previous grants' literacy workshop model, the relationships formed by that model's activities offered a basis for partnership development that was critical to the success of the revamped outreach activities.

### **Expanding reach by joining forces with existing literacy networks**

In most communities the PBS station is one of many different organizations that promote literacy among low-income children. Early childhood centers, schools, and community-based programs for children are key providers, as are networks and coalitions of these organizations. By joining forces with coalitions and networks that already had established track records as service providers, stations increased their reach into their target communities and enhanced their credibility with community members.

Some stations also found that becoming part of coalitions and networks served the larger purposes of *Ready to Learn*. In Buffalo, for example, WNED is part of the Read to Succeed Buffalo Coalition, the Child Care Resource Network, and EPIC (Every Person Influences Children). As a result, the station did not have to search for an audience or for sites to implement programming. Instead, station staff worked through their network partners to identify and recruit participants for activities. The station's partners said they perceived value in the professional development and educational resources the station offered them, value that derived in part from their view of the station as a true partner in their own efforts to promote children's development.

Similarly, IPTV used its participation in two networks to extend its reach in the community, align with the goals of broader initiatives, and increase its legitimacy as a source of literacy education materials. The station's relationship with the leader of Storm Lake's Reading First initiative, which serves as a literacy hub for the town, helped connect IPTV to literacy-focused organizations and to less obvious partners such as health clinics and workplaces, where together they implemented a multipronged outreach strategy. In addition, the station's involvement with a network

of partners from Iowa's multiagency Professional Development Consultation Project helped IPTV align its work with state standards and statewide professional development initiatives. This move gave the station a crucial advantage in recruiting participants to the station's own activities targeting early childhood and elementary educators.

In some instances, rather than bringing their own goals to coalitions, stations developed their goals in consultation with their partners. For example, WNED, which is part of a broader literacy network of some 75 organizations, aligned its literacy goals with those of the coalition. In this community the station's involvement with Read to Succeed Buffalo defined its literacy goals for children and brought major partners into closer contact. At WSIU, station staff said they took on activities and projects only when their network partners were at the table, invested in the goals, and contributing to the effort; they saw this orientation as critical to successful and sustained work in their communities and refrained from what staff termed "Lone Ranger" efforts altogether.

In several communities stations took lead roles within coalitions, providing services under their auspices. In Tallahassee, for example, the WFSU station outreach manager sat on the board of the Early Learning Coalition, a contracted partner with Florida's Office of Early Learning within its Agency for Workforce Innovation. The coalition operated a parent liaison program whereby parent mentors visited homes in the target neighborhoods to promote learning and healthy child development. The station organized what has become an annual conference for these liaisons and local home-based care providers. Interest has grown over the three years WFSU has put on the conference, and about 200 providers attended the most recent conference in December 2009. In addition, the station provided professional development to early childhood education providers focused on *Ready to Learn* content from Sesame Workshop and worked with the coalition to provide the PBS TeacherLine literacy program to a number of providers who took the program online.

Another station, WGTE, has played a key part in a coalition comprising professional development providers for early childhood education centers, operating within the Ohio *Ready to Learn* network. This membership and certification of WGTE's trainers and materials underscored the credibility of the station's offerings and helped build and strengthen relationships with other providers. Ohio's Department of Jobs and Family Service selected a group of public media organizations led by WGTE to provide professional development for family childcare providers. As the network lead, WGTE develops and trains professional development trainers at the state's other public media stations and thus has statewide reach. The station's director of early learning and outreach completed the apparently arduous process of getting herself and the station's Pre-K staff registered and approved as professional development providers for Ohio's Step Up to Quality program. As a consequence, WGTE's professional development activities now satisfy requirements for family-

based providers who want to bolster their credentials and earn higher rankings for their preschools.

Stations' growing involvement in networks and coalitions was a direct consequence of the shift in CPB's priorities toward developing an ecological approach to support for language and literacy learning. Although some stations, such as WFSU and WGTE, were already key players in coalitions prior to the latest round of *Ready to Learn* support, staff at these stations used the shift in focus to move more forcefully in this direction, focusing their efforts on these coalitions and networks and thus extending their reach into communities. The payoff was evident not only in these terms, but also in aligning the stations' effort with those of the larger community, a key condition for systemic educational change (Spillane & Jennings, 1997).

### **Building trust in target communities by understanding local needs and making long-term commitments**

For the new outreach model to be effective, station outreach staff had to have a deep understanding of local needs and build trusting relationships with community stakeholders. A number of outreach staff at the stations in the case study had already established strong community connections by participating regularly in neighborhood meetings and events. They also understood the importance of making long-term commitments to their partner organizations.

Even when community meetings have no immediate connection to a station's outreach goals, attending them helps keep outreach staff informed about a wide range of local issues, from health to education to needed social services. Participation allows community members to become familiar with the station and builds trust in its knowledge of community concerns and commitment to help. The WFSU station outreach manager commented:

*If you're going to be in outreach, then one of the things that you have to commit yourself to is attending a lot of community meetings. You have to sit on those different organizations to start knowing the players in the community who do what, so that you're a recognized face. It's sort of like being a reporter, but I don't report anything, I'm just collecting information and becoming a familiar face out there, so that when I want to then say, "We have this initiative—can I get it into your place," they know who I am. . . . Being out there is a critical part of the job.*

Being present in this way enabled staff to gain a deeper understanding of community needs in a manner that helped them develop better instincts about how best to target literacy messages to their communities. For example, WFSU learned which commercial radio stations and programs the parents they sought to serve listened to, and the staff produced radio spots to air on these stations when parents were likely to be listening. WGTE's outreach staff understood that members of many low-income communities harbor high levels of distrust as a consequence of decades of short-term investments and what residents view as broken promises. The WFSU outreach manager stressed that the current *Ready to Learn* focus reflected her commitment to the community in the long term. All the partners we spoke to agreed, commenting that this station outreach manager was, in one interviewee's words, "the real deal," genuinely interested in and concerned about the community, and there to help improve it. As a consequence, *Ready to Learn* began to change the way the community now perceives the station; in particular, *Ready to Learn* is becoming more trusted as an educational resource and a source of learning opportunities.

At the same time stations were aware that *Ready to Learn* funds are awarded for five years; as a result, station staff who were sensitive to the need to follow through on commitments in order to maintain the community's trust were reluctant to take on activities that would not be sustainable beyond the life of the award. For example, WSIU's outreach efforts led local schools to express a clear demand for the Martha Speaks Reading Buddy program. Before beginning any new programming with new audiences or partners, the station staff wanted to make sure it had the capacity to do the hard work of supporting them in the long term. Station staff consistently expressed unwillingness to risk failing to deliver on a promise or maintain a program, as such failure would diminish their credibility and chip away at the community trust and goodwill they had been seeking to cultivate. WSIU has since had some success in securing outside funds to sustain the Martha Speaks Reading Buddy program in their community.

These efforts speak to both the power and the fragility of recent *Ready to Learn* efforts to promote enrichment of local learning ecologies through sustained outreach. On the one hand, participating in community events helps win trust and credibility and improves station staff's understanding of community needs and concerns. On the other hand, the fact that federal funding lasts just five years means that participation in such efforts might cease at the end of that time, especially if station staff are laid off as a result. For this reason, station staff have been actively seeking funding for projects from local grants and foundations. They worry that if *Ready to Learn* funding does not continue, their success is likely to be limited to the short term unless they can secure local funding.



## Using workshops and events as entry points for sustained engagement

The new outreach model called for stations to shift their focus away from onetime workshops and events. However, special events involving characters and material from the new lineup of early literacy programs continued to play a role in the PBS KIDS Raising Readers initiative. Rather than being an end in themselves, these new events served as entry points for establishing lasting relationships with adults and children in the target communities.

An education staffer at WFSU described the shift in focus as gratifying for all involved. It enabled her to deepen her relationships with teachers in the community:

*But once those paths were laid open to us with schools that were willing to be partners . . . then I would go in and work with the teachers, and the students, too. There had always been isolated classrooms and afterschool programs that we would take a program into. It was kind of canned. But in this way, with Martha Speaks Reading Buddies, and the Super WHY! summer camps, it was a real opportunity to go in depth. It wasn't a flash in the pan. It was, "Let's go in for all week, every day" or, in the case of Martha Speaks, every week for eight weeks. So we felt like we had a chance to get to know some of the students, and certainly get to have a much stronger rapport with teachers. This has been very gratifying. And I think for the teachers as well, to have some stronger ties.*

Another example of how stations' view of onetime events changed is illustrated in Toledo's approach to its partnership with a local minor league baseball team. In 2007, WGTE's first year with the current *Ready to Learn* award, the station bused families to a Toledo Mud Hens game, offering free tickets to the game, a picnic, literacy activities, and the lure of the first pitch being thrown by Whyatt, the lead character of *Super WHY!* By the beginning of year two, however, station leadership realized that, rather than onetime events, *Ready to Learn* needed community-level relationships and marketing to reach the target audience and keep the message focused on literacy. To kick off the local PBS KIDS Raising Readers initiative, WGTE enlisted its partner, hip-hop radio station The Juice, to hold a live remote at the site of one of its community partners. While families lined up to take pictures with Elmo, station and partner staff talked one on one to parents about *Ready to Learn*, giving them DVDs and materials with instructions in English and Spanish to take home. The station outreach manager reported:

*The first year we facilitated a large event at the Mud Hens. Did that get across the literacy message? Not directly. It did give families a sense that WGTE is fun, trustworthy, and worth coming back for more.*

In contrast, the second-year event provided a better platform for the station to introduce itself to families, making literacy more central to its face-to-face efforts. The station's community partner subsequently offered the *Super WHY!!* Summer Reading Camp and *The Electric Company* outreach kit, and continued participation in the First Book program with the station and United Way. Station staff recognized that the kickoff event was merely a starting point to be supported by longer-term *Ready to Learn* activities well after it was over.

In some cases, individuals with connections to a station helped push it to develop relationships allowing for more sustained engagement with *Ready to Learn* messages. For example, IPTV worked with the state to modify parent book clubs, originally funded under the previous *Ready to Learn* award, to include more sessions and to connect many more parents with new *Ready to Learn* materials and resources than it had reached under the earlier award. The station was able to make this transformation in part because a former station staff member had become the coordinator for Iowa's Head Start program within the state Department of Education. He had suggested that IPTV transform a set of onetime book clubs intended to promote the View-Read-Do Learning Triangle into an eight-meeting, multiple-visit format. He offered to integrate the model into Head Start programming, enabling the station to expand its reach to support running 75 different *Ready to Learn* book clubs throughout the state at any given time. To motivate parent participation in these clubs, IPTV paid for books for each participant, as staff recognized the importance of providing books to families that often did not have home libraries. To further enable participation, some local book clubs also provided additional supports to families, such as daycare and snacks for children, attendance incentives like diapers, and door prizes for completed homework assignments.

Under previous *Ready to Learn* grants, stations used onetime events as the principal strategy for influencing the ways in which parents and caregivers supported their children's literacy development. In the latest outreach cycle, these events became occasions to generate interest among partners and community members in station activities or services, or for station staff to gather useful information about the communities they were serving. In other places these events evolved into longer, richer engagements in which families and stations worked together over months, rather than for a few hours on a Saturday afternoon. This recasting of events proved critical, allowing stations to reframe them as opportunities to initiate a fuller set of experiences that aim to improve the ecology of supports for young children's literacy development. Events remained important in bringing parents and caregivers into contact with messages and partners, providing a setting for informal partnership development, and generating excitement in the community about *Ready to Learn*. But now they did much more than deliver a single service to an individual or group; they helped build momentum for a broader, communitywide effort to promote literacy.

## From Workshop Attendees to Target Zip Codes: Serving New Audiences

Station goals about whom to serve with educational outreach shifted significantly during the current grant cycle. In past *Ready to Learn* outreach efforts, stations served parents and caregivers who made their way to onetime workshops. Under the current grant, stations expanded the variety of activities and strategies they used to place resources and materials directly in the hands of parents, caregivers, and other providers in targeted zip codes. The current grant also required stations to focus these efforts within specific zip codes that corresponded to traditionally underserved neighborhoods. Stations were to work with AIR to customize messages based on its social marketing research for those neighborhoods. Families in these zip codes were positively predisposed to media but were often unfamiliar with the local station or with public broadcasting generally. To serve these new audiences, stations had to stretch to find out more about them and how to access them, often forming unorthodox partnerships and providing novel services to reach new audiences.

### Reaching parents and caregivers in familiar settings

Because stations had to find ways to reach parents and caregivers in target communities, they often worked with and through organizations already established in a given neighborhood. Many of these organizations had a broad social service orientation, rather than a literacy focus, but case study stations did form and foster partnerships with literacy-focused organizations or coalitions when possible. However, an important finding was that stations achieved tangible results when they partnered with organizations for which literacy was not a core mission.

Because stations had to establish credibility and connection as a precondition for providing literacy resources and materials, they typically gained credibility with families in target communities by affiliating with partners who were already perceived as trusted insiders. For example, WGTE's staff learned that families in the target communities had concerns about basic necessities like food and shelter, so literacy messages would be more accepted in conjunction with the social services that many of these families were already accessing. When they received their *Ready to Learn* funds, WGTE's director of outreach reached out to Toledo's Adelante Latino Family Resource Center, which she knew was already an integral part of the community. The organization provides social services to immigrant and low-income families, including family visits and afterschool and preschool programs; it also offers a range of additional services, such as childcare and supervision for mothers while they are at the center taking other classes or participating in support groups.



Although Adelante's main focus is social services, its staff were able to work with the station to run a First Book program and a *Super WHY!* camp. WGTE provided professional development for Adelante's staff for First Book and facilitated the *Super WHY!* camp by team-teaching with Adelante's early childhood education providers. Interviewees from Adelante expressed great appreciation for WGTE's professional development, staff, and materials and reported that the parents and children they served benefited as well. By joining forces with an organization that the community associated more with their food pantry or services for victims of domestic violence, the station was effective in reaching families and at the same time increasing the capacity of a partner organization to support the early literacy development of children in the community.

Likewise, IPTV collaborated with the Storm Lake Reading First initiative and formed an important partnership with the head of the Family Support to Experience Parenting Success (STEPS) program. Operated out of the Buena Vista County Health Department's public health clinic, Family STEPS provides home visits to parents of children from birth to age five. Family STEPS service providers make one-hour visits to 70 families and focus on educating parents and keeping children safe by providing information on child development, parenting skills, and ways to access other resources in the county. Despite her organization's focus on child safety and health, the head of the Family STEPS program said she jumped at the opportunity to partner with IPTV. "I felt it was so needed," she said. As part of the partnership, the organization and station worked together to set up a PBS KIDS Raising Readers corner at the immunization clinic. The station provided books, pamphlets for parents in multiple languages, educational toys, and coloring sheets for children, along with a television that played IPTV programming. The Family STEPS leader described the setting:

*It's so nice to see—it gives me goose bumps. . . . When the parent is filling out the form, the child runs over to the [PBS KIDS] Raising Readers center and brings a book to show to the parent. Before you know it, the bonding and learning starts. It's fantastic. I just can't say enough about it—it's just moving.*

Despite the nontraditional nature of the partnership, all concerned described the collaboration as a big success due to their leaders' shared vision of what it takes to help young children learn and a do-whatever-it-takes approach to helping families. Both Family STEPS and IPTV staff viewed parents as having a critical role to play in their children's early literacy development and believed that providing them with simple, easy-to-use ideas and tools could make a real difference to the children's futures.

As a consequence of their partnerships, case study stations were able to provide a range of services to families in communities where the station had not been present in a deep or sustained way before the current *Ready to Learn* outreach project. Stations gained access and credibility by partnering with trusted community agencies, even if these agencies had no prior experience or expertise in delivering literacy-related services. These collaborations helped community partners build capacity, turned them

into stronger resources in the local learning ecology, and allowed stations to make contact with new audiences that would otherwise have been difficult or impossible to reach.

### **Collaborating with schools to support formal literacy learning**

Schools and school districts are committed to the goal of helping parents and caregivers support the development of children's literacy skills, making them natural partners for stations under the current *Ready to Learn* outreach project. Because many schools in the *Ready to Learn* target communities adopted highly structured curricula under the pressure of No Child Left Behind, there was little room for supplementary activities such as those that *Ready to Learn* might provide. However, a number of case study stations formed strong partnerships with local public schools, including charter schools, by learning about the different schools' particular needs and selecting specific programs to address those needs. The high quality of materials provided through PBS KIDS Raising Readers, along with the fully designed and packaged nature of programs like *Martha Speaks Reading Buddies*, helped stations overcome common difficulties and make inroads into working with schools and formal educators.

Despite difficulties establishing credibility and overcoming bias against using media in classrooms, case study stations identified individual schools as excellent potential partners for their work. The general manager of WHUT described how the station initially identified the Washington, D.C., public school district as a key partner but had to change its plans once it became clear that partnering with the system would not work:

*We talked with the public schools when we began to identify partner schools, but we work primarily with charter schools because the D.C. public school system has a very defined curriculum. Adherence to this curriculum rules out time for Ready to Learn products within the school day. This has been a real problem, so we have not been able to inject Ready to Learn products within the school day. There has been an openness, an interest in afterschool programs, but with many of the D.C. public schools in our zip codes, either there are no afterschool programs, or the afterschool programs that exist have a curriculum as well. So we have not found a hospitable atmosphere yet for Ready to Learn products. With the charter schools, however, they have been very, very receptive, and so charter schools are our partners for that reason.*

Schools *do* share the goal of promoting literacy learning, so stations that were able to overcome initial barriers found a strong match between *Ready to Learn* programs and materials and the needs of teachers and other school educators. As they were with community partners, stations were selective about what materials and services they suggested to schools. Many conversations between the station and the school were required to determine which materials might best meet the school's specific needs. WHUT's outreach coordinator described how product identification worked with the station's charter school partners:

*In talking with these individual schools, we work to identify the issues they're facing. And that's when we then look to bring in the appropriate Ready to Learn products, whether it's The Electric Company or Martha Speaks or Super WHY!—or all the others. Literacy is obviously a major, major issue.*

The materials and services made available under the current project have done more to open doors and foster partnerships in which schools were amenable to working together. WGTE's director of K–12 outreach described how the new *Ready to Learn* approach, encouraging stations to match materials to partner and target population needs, helped improve the efficacy of educational outreach:

*[PBS KIDS]Raising Readers has gotten us into doors that we weren't necessarily in before. It's taught us a lot in education, just in education in general truly how best to approach these community partners and how we can be better listeners and understand what the needs are. It's not about force fitting a program. We don't want to shove anything down anybody's throat. It's teaching us how to be a true community partner, which is listening first, and you listen a lot and you listen throughout and try and figure out, I think, the best way to support what's already happening.*

Programs and materials provided under the current grant are highly valued not only because they are seen as aligned with the school's needs but also because educators believe they are of high quality and easy to use. The principal of the Walbridge Elementary School in Toledo described how the *Martha Speaks* Reading Buddies program, which paired kindergartners and fourth graders, worked for the students at her school:

*They had a story. They had the activities and a group activity. And it was fantastic. Again, great children's literature. The kindergartners got to take books home and ended up with eight or nine more books in their personal libraries. And the mentoring was pretty amazing too, because that fourth grader, regardless of their success in fourth grade, felt successful working with a kindergarten student. And that kindergarten student had someone every*

*week that came down just for them. And there was just such a happy, active buzz. You know, you'd walk through there and it was, you know, loud, it was controlled chaos. It was like what you'd want to hear in a classroom, you know? So the programs have just been fantastic.*

Case study stations viewed partnerships with schools as highly desirable, but at the same time they encountered barriers to forming such partnerships. One source of difficulty in working with schools was a strong bias against using television and other media in schools, especially preschools. The main challenge for stations was overcoming the general perception among early childhood education and school communities that television is not educationally valuable. As a leader of the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services explained: “The hardest thing is that it’s TV, early childhood education people believe TV is bad, there’s nothing very meaningful to it.”

Stations generally found it easier to collaborate with teachers and principals at individual neighborhood and charter schools, rather than with school systems as a whole. The new approach to educational outreach and the materials it provided, being classroom-ready for teachers, facilitated their work with these individuals and schools, because educators could readily see how they could help students meet literacy goals core to the schools’ missions.

### **Using social marketing techniques to deliver literacy messages**

As part of PBS KIDS Raising Readers’ new outreach approach, CPB engaged a media placement organization with experience in nonprofit client messaging, and PBS created specific promotions for use on commercial radio, cable television, and streaming online on partner websites. Stations that received the grants committed to airing these messages and placing them with other media outlets. Several case study stations successfully used local commercial radio to reach parents and caregivers in the communities where they live. Stations also produced their own promotions to help make families aware of upcoming *Ready to Learn* events and to bring them into contact with messages supporting literacy learning. This approach proved to be highly effective in reaching families through a trusted medium that was already a regular part of their lives.

WFSU used radio spots to communicate literacy messages directly to parents and to overcome what they identified as significant obstacles: low parent involvement (including capability of involvement) and high levels of community distrust. A staff member completed an assessment focusing on different ways to overcome these obstacles. Her analysis showed that although few community members watched PBS, many listened to the radio.

A staff member from WFSU said:

*We had to figure out how could we get to the parents. So I thought, well, I know they listen to radio all the time, because . . . those are the families that are calling in and doing those talk shows at night . . . those young families are the ones that have two or three children. And so I thought, what we could do is we could use radio to reach the parents. . . . You have to do what they do, because that's the only way you can reach them. They watch TV, and they listen to radio, because most of them are working all the time.*

Adding to the power of the commercial radio approach was the fact that the station relied on student voices from the local schools in recording the spots. This decision built excitement and buzz, so that more parents and their children listened for the spots on the radio. A station representative explained:

*The children that I used in the promos were at [local] schools and they told all of their other friends at their schools. So the children themselves said, "You need to listen to me on the radio, I'm going to be on the radio." I had the station give me the times that they would be running and I even told the families, "This is what time your kids will be on," so they told all their friends.*

Commercial media buys took place in all 20 markets, and some stations used these buys to create ongoing partnerships. WGTE turned their buy into an ongoing collaboration with a radio station popular in the urban zip code they targeted. The commercial radio station saw such a strong match between its audience and the messages and resources offered by WGTE that managers proactively worked to continue and deepen the collaboration. The radio station donated additional airtime and arranged to broadcast live from *Ready to Learn* outreach events. The station marketing director explained:

*[We] identified The Juice, a local hip-hop station, as a partner. They are wonderful to work with. They have been fabulous through this whole project. They've given us things even after our buys, extras, and they came to us and said, "What do you have going on?" They weren't asking about what we could pay for, but wanted to promote things like The Electric Company because it fits their audience. They are constantly saying, "It helps our audience with the education that we need to provide to lower-income families."*



Using commercial radio and airing messages on stations already popular with the parents that case study stations were trying to reach proved an innovative and effective approach for reaching new audiences in neighborhoods that were not necessarily connected to public media or traditional outreach channels. Significantly, although PBS planned to broadcast messages on commercial radio, it did not foresee some of the barriers at least one local station encountered in securing the necessary rights to do so; as a consequence, that station had to devise messages it could distribute to such stations. Thus, one area in which future campaigns could work more collaboratively with stations is to anticipate rights and other issues that arise when distributing radio or television spots for commercial broadcast aimed at parents.

## Using National Resources to Meet Local Needs

Under previous *Ready to Learn* projects, the initiative's prescribed literacy workshop model was systematically enacted by over 100 participating stations across the country. Through this one model, stations sought to exert a positive influence on the ways in which parents and caregivers support the literacy development of children in their care. Under the current project, the initiative opted for a new outreach strategy, the PBS KIDS Raising Readers campaign, in which stations selected materials and services from multiple producers and then collaborated with local partners to make these resources widely available in selected low-income communities. In this new arrangement, local stations played a critical role by placing *Ready to Learn* products and messages with the organizations best positioned to use them with parents and caregivers.

### Selecting specific resources to support individual communities

One consequence of aligning with trusted service providers and networks of service providers was that stations developed a sense of what particular partners needed to advance their literacy work with parents, caregivers, and teachers. The fact that stations could choose from so many different services and materials meant that stations could now match materials to a wide variety of needs, as opposed to being restricted to a uniform approach.

WFSU's director of educational outreach described how this pairing of national materials and local knowledge worked in one case:

*PBS is a brand that many people know. But I think we help; we're that final mile of connecting it for people. . . . So we're the [ones] linking them to those resources. I'm the local person who says, "This will help you" . . . I think that that is a critical role that the station can play.*

A staff member at WSIU echoed this sentiment, describing the complementary roles that the national entities and local stations play together:

*That's the unique model that we have with Ready to Learn, where you have the support and the direction from the U.S. Department of Education and CPB. They understand at the national level what the imperatives are, what gaps exist, and why we must do this work. And then locally we can take that and adapt it and modify it and tune it to what we know will work well within our communities.*

In some cases this arrangement enabled stations to offer their partners real alternatives to providing more school-day-type activities to students during out-of-school time. This was true for case study stations that partnered with libraries and afterschool programs. For example, the afterschool coordinator at Tallahassee's Oakridge Elementary School noted that she had told the teachers who work in her afterschool program that more school was not good for students. Unfortunately, she did not have an alternative for them. When she learned about *The Electric Company* afterschool program at a WFSU professional development session, she said this was the perfect solution for her dilemma.

*It helps our teachers because it's just right there. They already have a lot going on, a lot of stresses, a lot of requirements . . . it's very hard honestly for teachers to teach differently after school. They just want to teach. They'll keep teaching because that's just what they've been doing. So I'm always trying to drill, "Okay, this is not school; it's afterschool, so don't do that." But, it's one thing to say, "Don't do that" and it's another thing to say, "Do this instead." So The Electric Company has been my thing to say, "Do this instead."*

Through conversations with the assistant director of programs and operations for Boys and Girls Club Buffalo (BGCB), leaders from WNED recommended that BGCB consider using *The Electric Company* outreach kit for its multisite afterschool program. The BGCB viewed the *Ready to Learn* material as a good fit for the program and asked WNED to provide professional development to aid implementation. Subsequently, 10 site coordinators were trained in how to deliver *The Electric Company* material effectively. BGCB staff members were enthusiastic about WNED's willingness to provide materials and furnish professional development and as-needed support. BGCB valued its relationship with WNED highly and saw the station as a resource, especially for this kind of professional development, which they reported was difficult to obtain on its nonprofit budget. WNED and BGCB have what each organization describes as a symbiotic relationship: WNED provides BGCB with educational materials and professional development, while BGCB reaches WNED's target audience by using *The Electric Company* in its youth programming. In other instances, the fact that some materials did not need augmentation was a selling point for case study stations.

WNED reported that the materials were the main selling point for another of their providers. While the station tends to package materials with professional development to meet partners' needs, the quality of materials was also important. WGTE partners, community service organizations and educators alike, described how much they appreciated the fact that PBS outreach materials were attractive, of high quality, and often ready to be used immediately. Delivering materials without additional professional development was possible because stations could select from a wide variety of materials and because they were careful about the recommendations they made to partners.

To the extent that the PBS KIDS Raising Readers campaign was successful, stations were able to connect national developers of content and frontline organizations that provide services in target communities. The variety of *Ready to Learn* materials and services available to stations helped ensure that they were able to make apt suggestions about which ones might best benefit partners and end users in very different communities around the country.

## Future Considerations

While the current PBS KIDS Raising Readers approach worked well, according to case study stations and their partners, it also brought persistent challenges clearly into focus. Despite the best efforts of stations and partners, case study stations were challenged when attempting to serve parents who, research indicates (AIR, 2007), do not see themselves as playing an active role in supporting their children's learning. Another challenge stations identified was attempting to serve communities where adults speak English as a second or third language, or not at all. Finally, stations found it difficult to provide programs in rural areas that continue to struggle with an antiquated information and communication technology infrastructure.

### Reaching high-need families

Low parent participation and involvement were major challenges for case study stations, which reported having difficulties getting parents to attend *Ready to Learn* events. Stations attributed the lack of parent participation and involvement to a number of factors and emphasized that many of these parents work multiple jobs to make ends meet. Research conducted by AIR also indicated that parents in the Ready to Learn target communities do not believe that they have an important role to play in supporting their children's learning (American Institutes for Research, 2007).



As mentioned above, before the current *Ready to Learn* initiative began, CPB commissioned researchers at AIR to conduct research that would provide them with information about the communities they would be targeting in the grant. Along with many other research activities, AIR conducted focus groups and interviews with parents in the *Ready to Learn* target communities to understand how they support their children's education and literacy development. The researchers found that, "[a]lthough all parents recognized the value of education, it did not seem to be one of the top issues on their mind. Most participants saw their role in their children's education as being a motivator and first teacher, but few parents were typically involved in their children's schooling beyond overseeing the completion of homework." (*Focus Groups with Ready to Learn Families*, p.2)

When asked specifically about reading to their children, the researchers found that "[the majority [of parents] said that they read to their children once or twice a week. Some reported that their children read to them. Some said that they try to make reading a regular activity during the week. They mentioned that they try to read to their children every other day or that they try to read a certain number of books (between three and five) a week. Some parents also mentioned that they read only if their children bring them a book and request it." (*Focus Groups with Ready to Learn Families*, p. 18)

Station staff reported encountering similar attitudes among the parents in the communities they were serving under the grant. WHUT's station manager explained that in her target communities:

*I think that there's a cultural sense that the school is responsible, that you send them to school, and it's the school's job to educate them, and so parents feel it's not their part of the job. Some have said, "I'm working to pay to clothe them, feed them, and get them there. And it's the school's job to educate them and keep them safe during the school day. I'm picking back up my part of the job when they come home to me. But you're asking me now to do more, and I'm already overburdened."*

WGTE's marketing director described this same attitude as the biggest challenge she and her colleagues face doing educational outreach. She gave a lot of credit to the messages in PBS KIDS Raising Readers that have helped overcome this challenge somewhat, but noted that the activities in the messages are ones most readily undertaken by middle-class parents:

*Those are simple messages that [parents] say to themselves. "Wait a minute. That's teaching my child to read?" It's the simple things that many people automatically do, but not necessarily our RTL families.*

AIR researchers found that awareness of messages increased over time, and that parents who were aware of the messages were more likely to engage in literacy activities with their kids than those who were not aware of the messages (Heil et al., 2009).

### **Supporting non-English-speaking families, as most materials were available only in English**

Case study stations reported that it was challenging to provide materials and direct services to communities in which significant numbers of residents did not speak English, or for whom English was a second or third language. While many *Ready to Learn* materials (especially for parents) were translated into Spanish, most materials intended for children were available only in English. The fact that immigrants in some of the communities targeted by stations spoke neither English nor Spanish made it especially challenging to communicate with families.

In Iowa many families in the target communities had been recruited from around the world to work in the meat-packing plants of Storm Lake and Perry. Like other case study stations, IPTV did its best to translate materials, at least into Spanish, but in the past they had found this a difficult task. During the current *Ready to Learn* project, IPTV enlisted partners to translate materials. An IPTV staff member explained, “What I’ve done most recently is I get it as close as I can and I send it to the community, and I look for those community partners [like Buena Vista University] to help us with that.” As these examples show, IPTV and other stations have limited capacity for undertaking efforts to translate materials on their own.

### **Serving communities with poor technology infrastructure**

Despite the fact that many Americans enjoy access to relatively fast and reliable Internet connections, underserved communities—urban and rural alike—continue to lag in the availability of broadband Internet access, and sometimes in television and radio broadcast services as well (Raine, 2010). For these communities, the “digital divide” remains a fact of life. The two case study stations that served rural audiences identified these communities as challenging to serve because of their lack of infrastructure.

WGTE and WSIU described rural families as being spread thin over a large geographic area, often far from stations and community hubs such as schools or libraries. A station representative from WSIU explained:

*We're in a very rural area. There are no big towns. St. Louis is the closest metropolitan city and it's 100 miles away. Children here are really isolated, oftentimes. They live on the farm or they live in the woods. Then some of the counties in our service region have the highest levels of poverty in the state of Illinois, especially Alexander County, with more than 60 percent of children living at or below the poverty line.*

Although WGTE is located in the city of Toledo, the station also targeted the rural community of Holland, Ohio, for *Ready to Learn* outreach. Nevertheless, successful partnership formation in Holland continued to elude the station. A station representative from WGTE put it this way:

*We wanted to try something different and that one's been harder to crack. It's been much harder to crack. It's different for us, and it's different for them. I think they're going to have a harder time opening up.*

Traveling to central locations where station events took place was a substantial challenge in rural areas. Parents were often constrained by travel time and other factors, such as the cost of gas for long trips. Often those families lacked reliable television and radio reception for learning about outreach events, making direct contact with rural families difficult and also diminishing the families' connections with other sources of information or community involvement that might expose them to station outreach materials. Stations such as WSIU in rural Illinois deployed vans outfitted with multimedia equipment to provide services to these hard-to-reach community members, but communicating information about where these vans would be located and the times and dates they would be available still proved challenging.

Making matters worse, families in these communities often did not have Internet access at home and were seldom able to travel to where they could use public access computers located in town community centers or libraries. Rural schools, afterschool centers, and libraries frequently had limited or unreliable access to the Internet. Children in these communities found themselves in multiple settings where they never engaged in activities that included Internet or computer use.

## Most stations are unable to evaluate the impact of their educational outreach efforts

Stations participated in national efforts to evaluate the effects of specific outreach products, such as the *SuperWhy!* Summer Reading Camps. At the same time, case study stations had neither the internal capacity to conduct systematic evaluations of their educational outreach activities nor the resources needed to hire outside evaluators. As a result, most stations relied on the informal observations and impressions of staff members and partners for feedback they could then use to better match materials to community needs.

One notable exception to this finding was IPTV, where leaders viewed *Ready to Learn* and other national projects as pilots that staff used to assess the potential of a particular program or service. If a program showed promise, IPTV would seek funding from outside agencies to continue the *Ready to Learn* program beyond the life of the award and scale it up. IPTV used this strategy when it adapted the previous *Ready to Learn* View-Read-Do workshop model into an ongoing series of book clubs: Parents participated in eight sessions, during which they were provided with books and a chance to practice reading aloud to their children. Likewise, station leaders described how they planned to meet with 15 early childhood educator trainers to solicit input on which of the resources from the PBS KIDS Raising Readers online courses that it helped develop could be scaled up, which course components could be included in the state Department of Education's Every Child Reads teacher education offerings, and how the course could be made sustainable statewide.

# Conclusions

This set of case studies investigated how six stations designed and implemented their PBS KIDS Raising Readers educational outreach plans. The challenge for each station was to develop strong and sustainable partnerships that would help improve early literacy for children aged two to eight who were at most risk of falling behind in their language and literacy learning. Stations in the case study sample were responsive to this new approach to outreach activities and took advantage of the opportunities it offered them. The seeds of the new approach existed prior to the current round of funding, in the form of relationships stations had with a wide range of educational and social service organizations in the communities in their broadcast areas. But PBS KIDS Raising Readers gave stations the opportunity to pursue a strategy of sustained community engagement, expand what they could offer existing partners, and seek out new partners with ties to hard-to-reach populations.

## Stations Gained the Trust of People Serving and Living in Targeted Neighborhoods

The case studies helped illuminate some key ways in which strong and sustainable partnerships could serve the larger goal of cultivating an ecology of literacy supports in high-need communities. First, we found that the stations that succeeded in developing partnerships with organizations providing essential social services to low-income families were able to gain the trust of people serving and living in those neighborhoods. Educators often speak dismissively of one-time workshop approaches to teachers' professional development, just as social service providers reject superficial drop-ins with families. To build the kind of trust that makes lasting partnerships work as the stations envisioned, however, takes time and dedication on the part of committed staff. Members of underserved communities, and staff at the organizations that serve them, may distrust outside organizations that bring in new programs but do not demonstrate a long-term commitment or willingness to learn about the actual needs of the community. The stations that were most successful in reaching their target populations had staff members who focused on developing an understanding of the partners and communities so that they could tailor materials and messages to their needs.

## Station Activities Were Critical in Connecting Resources to Children and Their Adult Guides

Another reason strong partnerships are essential to achieving the larger literacy goals of the initiative is that they help stations ensure that the *Ready to Learn* content travels the last mile to the children who are most likely to benefit from it. Working closely with partners, the stations in these case studies found many ways to get the *Ready to Learn* materials into the hands of parents, children, early childhood educators, librarians, and afterschool program coordinators. These kinds

of connections proved essential, especially because many of the families in the target communities were not regular PBS viewers and did not have reliable access to the digital technologies that would allow them to use these resources online. Station partners were able to help station staff identify many opportunities for providing relevant materials to community members.

### The Products Developed by PBS and CPB to Support Stations Were Critical to Their Success

The range of user-ready materials developed through the national campaign proved an important asset for stations' activities and a great improvement over the single View-Read-Do model, in that stations were able to match materials more precisely to meet a wider variety of needs. While recipients perceived all of the materials as high in quality and valued them for their relevance and practicality, the variation in their format and intended audience gave them a pliability that allowed stations to be specific rather than remaining generic. Also, the stations' freedom to select appropriate materials was complemented by their capacity to supplement them with professional development or coaching services.

### The Focus on Target Neighborhoods Provided a Useful Focus for Organizing Deeper, Sustained Engagement with Communities

The focus on target neighborhoods provided a useful boundary for defining the scope and limits of what stations intended to do. Unencumbered by the requirement to serve all families with children aged two to eight—a task that would have been as daunting as it was unrealistic, given limited resources and time—stations were able to hone in on communities with specific characteristics. This narrowing of focus, though challenging in light of the needs of those target neighborhoods, clarified who potential partners would be and what approaches might offer the greatest promise.

In sum, the station outreach strategies documented in this report represent a different, more comprehensive approach to outreach than that promoted by previous *Ready to Learn* funding cycles. Stations actively engaged in organizing or supporting community efforts to promote literacy, not just providing services to parents, caregivers, and teachers. It will likely take time for such efforts to improve language and literacy outcomes for young children; developing relationships, building trust, and providing valuable resources are first and necessary steps toward this end. Stations will need additional support from educational partners in their communities, particularly early childhood centers and elementary schools, if their efforts are to succeed. In addition, they will need continued support from national, state, and/or local funders to sustain their outreach strategies, and additional support to help them evaluate their efforts.



# Recommendations

In considering how to use the next wave of *Ready to Learn* resources to invest meaningfully in the communities most in need, we suggest the U.S. Department of Education, CPB, and local public media stations consider the following recommendations.

- Continue to value community partnerships. Public media resources have the greatest impact when stations collaborate with educational and social service providers already established in their communities.
- Grant future outreach awards to stations to promote deep community engagement based on consideration of their prior experience with outreach and existing partnerships. Stations with limited prior experience in these areas could be matched with mentor stations that have a track record in creating and maintaining community partnerships.
- Encourage stations to partner with local researchers or a network of researchers supported directly by CPB and PBS to evaluate their educational outreach work.
- Encourage *Ready to Learn*, in its next phase, to borrow heavily from lessons learned from the current round of community partnerships and to use emerging media to strengthen communications and distribution of resources.
- Generate compelling descriptions of effective community partnership models and disseminate them to stations through video and Web 2.0 networks.
- Recognize that sustained professional development is a difficult goal that is likely to require resources from within formal educational environments, for example, local schools of education, school districts, and accrediting bodies such as Child Care and Resource and Referral networks.
- Recognize that on-the-ground outreach efforts will continue to be essential in order to reach certain target populations that lack access to the Internet.
- Recognize that stations' relationships with partners depend, in part, on their ability to deliver consistent services over many years. Allow stations to continue to build and nurture these relationships as a necessary precondition for improving literacy outcomes for children.



- Encourage stations to share strategies directly with one another and with other institutions pursuing complementary goals. Despite the decentralized nature of the current infrastructure, there are promising precedents for collaboration across the system. CPB, PBS, and the U.S. Department of Education have the power to convene and promote dissemination in a way that individual stations may not be able to do.

## Recommendations for Stations

- Learn from the experience of other stations and share these lessons with other stations that are less experienced in carrying out educational outreach activities.
- Accept what public media organizations do well, and acknowledge instances in which local direct-service providers are in a better position to act. Make strategic decisions about when the station is best placed to provide a service and when supporting other service providers would have a larger impact.
- Meet parents and other caregivers where they gather within the community (health clinics, daycare centers, schools, places of work, social service agencies, neighborhood shopping centers, markets). Likewise, summer camps, afterschool programs, and other community programs are excellent places to reach children.
- Recognize the importance of ongoing contact with partners and consistency in the delivery of services over the long term.

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# Appendices

Appendix A: Building a Nation of Readers: The Remarkable Impact of the Federal *Ready to Learn* Program

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# Appendix A



## **BUILDING A NATION OF READERS:**

### **The Remarkable Impact of the Federal *Ready To Learn* Program**

In 2005, the U.S. Department of Education challenged PBS, CPB, producers, local stations and other partners to take their children’s programming to a whole new level, both on TV and beyond broadcast, to develop groundbreaking content for TV, Web sites, DVDs, computer games, books, magazines, and community outreach programs, and grounding all of that work in the research-based recommendations of the National Reading Panel.

#### **Through public media, here’s what *Ready to Learn* has accomplished in just 5 years:**

- **We’ve created great new shows**—including *Martha Speaks*, *Super WHY!*, *The Electric Company*, and *Word World*—each one carefully designed to reflect the latest research on how best to help children ages 2-8, especially from low-income families, to develop a strong foundation in critical reading skills. Our shows are every bit as fun and appealing as commercial programs, but our only bottom line is kids’ learning.
- **We’ve expanded across all new media.** Using our content as the basis for online literacy games, online professional development, interactive whiteboard activities, broadband video, E-books, and even iPhone applications that encourage kids to practice and reinforce key skills, anywhere and anytime.
- **We’ve reached the neediest kids.** According to Nielsen ratings and other market research, PBS shows and the *PBS Kids Island* Web site are especially popular among young children from low-income families. That means that we’re reaching *millions* of needy kids every day with powerful educational content that they wouldn’t be getting otherwise.
- **We’ve strengthened our local partnerships.** Across the country, local PBS stations have teamed up with schools, libraries, churches, and other community organizations to provide families with high-quality literacy materials, send kids to reading-intensive summer camps, and train daycare staff and early childhood educators in effective ways to build literacy skills.
- **We’ve sponsored groundbreaking research.** Because an unprecedented 25% of its funds have gone into research and evaluation, RTL has quickly come to rank among the largest and most productive research efforts in the history of media and early literacy. Already, it has generated dozens of well-received scientific studies, reports, journal articles, and more, and it has greatly expanded what’s known about educational media and literacy development in young children.
- **We’ve seen stunning results.** After five years of research and evaluations, we’ve got proof that our content has a profound impact on learning. And, frankly, the results are stronger than anything experts have ever seen in early childhood education. **For kids ages 2-8, viewing PBS shows is linked to significant gains in word recognition, phonological awareness, vocabulary, verbal expressiveness, and overall school readiness.** Results from our most recent studies are the most exciting of all, suggesting that **the benefits of watching are so profound as to set low-income children on course to close the achievement gap.**

# Appendix B

Date:	Lead Interviewer:
Station:	Interviewee Name:
City:	Title of Interviewee:
Names/roles of others present, if any:	Role of Interviewee:
Artifacts collected:	

## Station Leader Protocol

*This protocol is appropriate to use with station leaders who are knowledgeable about Ready to Learn activities and who work at the local PBS affiliate.*

### Introductory Script

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. My name is [NAME], and I'll be talking with you today about your station's activities that are part of *Ready to Learn*. I work for EDC/SRI and we are the summative evaluators for the *Ready to Learn Initiative*. As part of the evaluation, we are conducting case studies of 6 stations' partnership and outreach efforts for *Ready to Learn*. The purpose of this interview is to learn specifics about your station's educational outreach efforts that are related to *Ready to Learn*. This interview will take between 1 and 1 ½ hours, depending on the breadth of your station's educational activities.

Everything you tell us today will be confidential. To protect your privacy, we won't connect your name with anything that you say. At any time during our conversation, please feel free to interrupt me if you have any questions or if you rather not answer any specific question. You can also stop the interview at any time for any reason.

Please remember we want to know what you think and feel and that there are no right or wrong answers.

Is it OK if I audiotape this interview today? We review our audiotapes to check what we've heard, as we write up our reports.

We'll be sure to send a report of our results to you at the end of the study.



### **Origins and Nature of Involvement in Ready to Learn**

I'd like to begin by asking you some questions about how your role at the station and about you came to be involved in Ready to Learn.

1. How long have you been with the station?
2. What are the major responsibilities of your current position?
3. What is your role with respect to *Ready to Learn*?
4. How did you first come to be involved in *Ready to Learn*?

### **Station Role in Community and Station Organization**

5. What are the station's goals and objectives with regard to *Ready to Learn* and early literacy? How has your mission changed, if at all, in the past 5 years?
6. How do educational outreach activities align with the station's goals?
7. How does the station decide which outreach activities to engage in or create? What drives the creation of specific outreach activities?
8. How, if at all, has *Ready to Learn* influenced the station's goals?
9. What challenges, if any, has the station faced when aligning outreach with its goals and objectives?
10. What funding sources support your educational outreach work?
11. How, if at all, has the level of spending changed since in the past 5 years? If so, what were the reasons for the change?
12. How, if at all, has *Ready to Learn*'s focus on early literacy been a challenge for the station?
13. What other people at the station have responsibility for educational services and outreach? What other resources are dedicated to education and outreach?
14. How do leaders at the station promote and represent education and outreach activities to external audiences, such as funders and community partners?

### **The Key Partners and their Relationships to One Another**

15. What organizational partners to the station help to deliver materials, programming, or professional development for *Ready to Learn* in your community? *Probe for how long each partnership has been in existence.*
16. What are some of the core activities the station has undertaken to *create* partnerships? With whom/what organizations? *Probe for different types of organizations, to make sure we get the full range:*

- a. Entities whose primary mission is to provide direct services to children and their families (schools, ECEs, libraries, higher ed.)
- b. Entities that set priorities/regulations and fund others to provide services to children and their families
- c. Entities that increase the capacity of educators to provide services to children and their families
- d. Entities that produce resources that can be used by others to provide services to children and their families
- e. Entities that provide direct services or materials to children.

17. How and why did these partnerships form? If there are many, ask instead: Please tell us a bit more about the formation of 1 or 2 of your key partnerships, beginning (if you know) with the earliest stages of the partnership. *Use the following as probes as necessary: What motivated the partnership to get started? Why did both parties think it was good choice (i.e., how is the partnership mutually beneficial? Did the station have to do some work to convince the partner to participate? If so, what was critical to the partner deciding to participate? How did the partners go about defining how they would work together? What relation does the partnership have to the mission of the participating organization? What might make the partnership dissolve?*

18. Describe the major challenges your station faced in creating, expanding and sustaining partnerships with organizations for *Ready to Learn*. What have been your station's major successes in overcoming them? *Probe for a detailed story.*

19. How do the partnerships extend the reach of the station into the target communities?

20. Did these partnerships exist prior to the current *Ready to Learn* initiative, and do you expect they will last beyond it? Why or why not?

## Audiences

Next we'd like to ask you some questions about the key audiences for *Ready to Learn* activities.

21. What audiences do you try to reach?

- a. Children directly
- b. Families
- c. Other hard to reach populations (ie: ELL, Urban, Rural, ethnic minority, grandparent, etc, please list)
- d. Educators

*[for remaining questions be sure to cover each of the target audiences identified in response to question 1]*

22. How/in what ways do your RTL activities attempt to reach these audiences? Probe for use of technologies and new media to reach audiences. Ask about how strategies support early literacy. Make sure to identify who provides the services and how each partner contributes. Probe specifically to see if researchers and/or producers help at all.
23. How does your station staff find out about what your audiences' needs are and how well the station's outreach efforts are working to meet those needs. "Working" can be defined broadly, and in the station's terms for success.
24. Are there any strategies for reaching these audiences you considered but didn't select? If so, why did you select the strategies you did over these others?
25. What kind of measures, if any, do you use to keep track of success?
26. Describe what the station sees as the major challenges in serving these audiences, and the major successes of the station in serving them. Probe for the match between the needs and materials offered through Ready to Learn.
27. Will these target audience remain a focus beyond the reach of the RTL project?
28. Are there other important things we should know about how you support children, educators, or families?

## **Materials**

Now I'd like to move on to a few questions about the materials you are disseminating as part of Ready to Learn.

29. Has your station developed materials or repurposed materials for your target audience?
30. By what means do these materials reach your audience? (type of delivery, such as event or workshop, and who does delivery?)
31. What Ready to Learn materials (if any) does your station disseminate directly? Probe for materials disseminated to children; parents/families; educators; day care providers.
32. How, if at all, do you know when materials get into the hands of people you target, and if the materials are being used and valued? If they are making a difference?
33. Describe what the station sees as the major goals you have for matching materials and services to support early literacy learning.
34. Describe what the station sees as the major challenges you have for matching materials and services to support early literacy learning and what successes the station has had in overcoming them.
35. Have you made use of any new media/technology in the development or dissemination of materials?
36. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your *Ready to Learn* activities?

# Appendix C

Date:	Lead Interviewer:
Station:	Interviewee Name:
City:	Title of Interviewee:
Names/roles of others present, if any:	Role of Interviewee:
Artifacts collected:	

## Station Education Leader Protocol

*This protocol is appropriate to use with education leaders and education staff who are knowledgeable about Ready to Learn activities and who work at the local PBS affiliate.*

### Introductory Script

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. My name is [NAME], and I'll be talking with you today about your station's activities that are part of *Ready to Learn*. I work for EDC/SRI and we are the summative evaluators for the *Ready to Learn Initiative*. As part of the evaluation, we are conducting case studies of 6 stations' partnership and outreach efforts for *Ready to Learn*. The purpose of this interview is to learn specifics about your station's educational outreach efforts that are related to *Ready to Learn*. This interview will take between 1 and 1 ½ hours, depending on the breadth of your station's educational activities.

Everything you tell us today will be confidential. To protect your privacy, we won't connect your name with anything that you say. At any time during our conversation, please feel free to interrupt me if you have any questions or if you rather not answer any specific question. You can also stop the interview at any time for any reason.

Please remember we want to know what you think and feel and that there are no right or wrong answers.

Is it OK if I audiotape this interview today? We review our audiotapes to check what we've heard, as we write up our reports.

We'll be sure to send a report of our results to you at the end of the study.

### **Origins and Nature of Involvement in Ready to Learn**

I'd like to begin by asking you some questions about how your role at the station and about you came to be involved in Ready to Learn.

1. How long have you been with the station?
2. What are the major responsibilities of your current position?
3. What is your role with respect to *Ready to Learn*?
4. How did you first come to be involved in *Ready to Learn*?

### **Station Role in Community and Station Organization**

5. How would you describe the neighborhood(s) in your community where you target *Ready to Learn* activities?
6. Within the neighborhood(s), who are the primary targets of your outreach activity? How does this audience differ (if at all) from your primary broadcast audience? What are your primary sources of information regarding community needs and interests? *Use the answer to this question to determine which sections of the protocol to use for the remainder of the interview.*
7. What kinds of educational services or programming do people in the community associate with the station?
8. What other people at the station have responsibility for educational services and outreach? What other resources are dedicated to education and outreach?
9. How are outreach and educational services viewed within the station? *Probe for how central these are to the station's mission and goals.*
10. How do leaders at the station promote and represent education and outreach activities to external audiences, such as funders and community partners?

### **The Key Partners and their Relationships to One Another**

11. What organizational partners to the station help to deliver materials, programming, or professional development for *Ready to Learn* in your community?
12. How and why did these partnerships form?
13. Describe the major challenges your station faced in creating, expanding and sustaining partnerships with organizations for *Ready to Learn*. What have been your station's major successes in overcoming them? *Probe for a detailed story.*
14. Did these partnerships exist prior to the current *Ready to Learn* initiative, and do you expect they will last beyond it? Why or why not?

## Materials and Services for Families

Next we'd like to ask you some questions about your station's efforts to help families engage children and support their literacy development. *If the activities do not focus on materials or services for families, skip this section.*

15. What do you think parent or guardians' biggest concerns are about early literacy? *Probe for source of information about concerns and needs.*
16. What barriers do parents in your target neighborhood(s) face when getting their children ready to read?
17. What activities has your station planned for parents and guardians as part of *Ready to Learn*? What are the goals for those activities? *If other organizations are involved, probe for their roles.*
18. What are the main messages communicated in these activities? What media or technology do you use to reach parents and guardians?
19. What materials for parents do you distribute as part of these activities? What organization is responsible for distribution? *Collect materials as part of the interviews. If not clear, ask who produced materials, and if any were adapted.*
20. How well do materials provided by CPB or producers match the needs and interests of your families?
21. What have been the greatest challenges in helping families? Are there any stories that illustrate the station's success in addressing those challenges? *Probe for what kinds of feedback are the sources of their ideas.*

## Materials and Services for Children

Next we'd like to ask you some questions about the *Ready to Learn* materials and services your station provides directly to children and how they are matched to their learning needs. *If the activities do not focus on materials or services for young children, skip this section.*

22. What do you think the biggest needs are for children in your target neighborhood(s) with respect to early literacy development? *Probe for source of information about children's needs.*
23. What activities has your station planned for young children as part of *Ready to Learn*? What are the goals for those activities? *If other organizations are involved, probe for their roles.*
24. What materials for young children do you distribute as part of these activities? *Collect materials as part of the interviews. If not clear, ask who produced materials, and if any were adapted.*
25. What is the content focus for these materials? What media or technology do you use to reach or engage young children?



26. How well do materials provided by CPB or producers match the needs and interests of the children you serve?
27. What have been the greatest challenges in helping young children? Are there any stories that illustrate the station's success in addressing those challenges? *Probe for what kinds of feedback are the sources of their ideas.*

### **Professional Development for Teachers and ECE Instructors**

Next we'd like to ask you some questions about the *Ready to Learn* materials and services your station provides to educators such as teachers or early childhood educators. *If the activities do not focus on materials or services for educators, skip this section.*

28. What do you think educators in your target neighborhood(s) biggest needs are with respect to preparing young children for school success or developing their literacy skills? *Probe for source of information about educators' needs.*
29. What activities has your station planned for educators as part of *Ready to Learn*? What are the goals for those activities? *If other organizations are involved, probe for their roles.*
30. If professional development is provided, what is the content focus of the professional development? Through what media are professional development activities offered?
31. What materials for educators do you do you distribute as part of these activities? *Collect materials as part of the interviews. If not clear, ask who produced materials, and if any were adapted.*
32. How well do materials provided by CPB or producers match the needs and interests of the educators you serve?
33. What have been the greatest challenges in helping educators? Are there any stories that illustrate the station's success in addressing those challenges? *Probe for what kinds of feedback are the sources of their ideas.*
34. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your *Ready to Learn* activities?

# Appendix D

Date:	Lead Interviewer:
Station:	Interviewee Name:
City:	Title of Interviewee:
Names/roles of others present, if any:	Role of Interviewee:
Artifacts collected:	

## Direct Service Provider Protocol

*This protocol is appropriate to use with schools, early childhood education centers, libraries, and institutions of higher education.*

### Introductory Script

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. My name is [NAME], and I'll be talking with you today about your local public television station's activities that are part of *Ready to Learn*. I work for EDC/SRI and we are the summative evaluators for the *Ready to Learn Initiative*. As part of the evaluation, we are conducting case studies of 6 stations' partnership and outreach efforts for *Ready to Learn*. The purpose of this interview is to learn specifics about your organization's educational efforts that are related to *Ready to Learn*. This interview will take about one hour.

Everything you tell us today will be confidential. To protect your privacy, we won't connect your name with anything that you say. At any time during our conversation, please feel free to interrupt me if you have any questions or if you rather not answer any specific question. You can also stop the interview at any time for any reason.

Please remember we want to know what you think and feel and that there are no right or wrong answers.

Is it OK if I audiotape this interview today? We review our audiotapes to check what we've heard, as we write up our reports.

We'll be sure to send a report of our results to you at the end of the study.

### Origins and Nature of Involvement in Ready to Learn

I'd like to begin by asking you some questions about your organization, your role in

it, and about how you came to be involved in your local public television station's *Ready to Learn* activities.

1. Please tell me a little bit of your organization. *Probe for general information about the organization's history and mission.*
2. What groups of people do you serve? *Probe for age and backgrounds of children served, characteristics of families.*
3. What does your organization do to address the educational needs of those you serve? *Probe for what other organizations in the community also serve the target population for services and their needs.*
4. How long have you been with this organization?
5. What are the major responsibilities of your current position?
6. What is your role with respect to *Ready to Learn*?
7. How did you first come to be involved in *Ready to Learn*?

#### **Station Role in Community and Station Organization**

8. How would you describe the neighborhood(s) in your community where *Ready to Learn* activities take place?
9. Within the neighborhood(s), what are some of the primary educational needs of the young children (aged 2-8) who live there? *Probe for source of information about needs.*
10. To your knowledge, how does the local PBS station help to address these needs? How, if at all, does the station support your organization's efforts to meet these needs?

#### **The Key Partners and their Relationships to One Another**

The next few questions pertain to partnerships in general and to your partnership with your local PBS station.

11. What are some of the goals your organization has in forming partnerships? *Probe for goals for promoting literacy and serving young children aged 2-8.*
12. What are the organizations that are current partners with yours, and for how long have they been partners? *Probe for media, schools, public service agencies, higher education, nonprofits, etc.*
13. Did your organization collaborate with the station prior to your joint work for *Ready to Learn*? *If yes, use the following probes as necessary: When and how did the partnership begin? What partnership activities did your organization participate in with the station prior to RTL? Was anyone at your organization*

*involved in preparing the action plans for CPB, either in formulating the plan or commenting on it?*

14. Please tell us a bit more about the formation of your partnership with your local PBS station, beginning (if you know) with the earliest stages of the partnership. *Use the following as probes as necessary: What motivated the partnership to get started? What relation does the partnership have to your mission? Why did both parties think it was good choice (i.e., how is the partnership mutually beneficial)? Did the station have to convince your organization to participate? If so, what was critical to you deciding to participate? How did the partners go about defining how they would work together? If your organization collaborated with the station before RTL, how has your organization's relationship with the station changed as a result of RTL?*
15. Describe the major challenges your organization faced in creating, expanding and sustaining your partnership with the station. What have been your organization's major successes in overcoming them?
16. What are your expectations for your organization's partnership with the station after the conclusion of Ready to Learn?

### **Materials and Services for Families**

Next we'd like to ask you some questions about your efforts to help families engage children and support their literacy development that are part of *Ready to Learn*. *If the activities do not focus on materials or services for families, skip this section.*

17. What do you think parent or guardians' biggest concerns are about early literacy? *Probe for source of knowledge about parents' needs.*
18. What barriers do parents in targeted neighborhoods face when getting their children ready to read?
19. What activities are planned for parents and guardians as part of *Ready to Learn*? What are the goals for those activities? *If other organizations are involved, probe for their roles.*
20. What are the main messages communicated in these activities? What media or technology do you use to reach parents and guardians?
21. What materials for parents are distributed as part of these activities? What organization(s) is/are responsible for distribution? *Collect materials as part of the interviews. If not clear, ask who produced materials, and if any were adapted.*
22. What have been the greatest challenges in helping families? Are there any stories that illustrate the station's success in addressing those challenges? *Probe for what kinds of feedback are the sources of their ideas.*

## Materials and Services for Children

Next we'd like to ask you some questions about the *Ready to Learn* materials and services provided directly to children as part of *Ready to Learn* and how they are matched to their learning needs. *If the activities do not focus on materials or services for young children, skip this section.*

23. What do you think students' biggest needs are with respect to early literacy development? *Probe for source of knowledge about students' needs.*
24. What activities are planned for young children as part of *Ready to Learn*? What are the goals for those activities? *If other organizations are involved, probe for their roles.*
25. What materials for parents are distributed as part of these activities? What organization(s) is/are responsible for distribution? *Collect materials as part of the interviews. If not clear, ask who produced materials, and if any were adapted.*
26. What is the content focus for these materials? What media or technology do you use to reach or engage young children?
27. How well do materials provided by CPB or producers match the needs and interests of the children you serve?
28. What have been the greatest challenges in helping young children? Are there any stories that illustrate the station's success in addressing those challenges? *Probe for what kinds of feedback are the sources of their ideas.*
29. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your *Ready to Learn* activities?

# Appendix E

Date:	Lead Interviewer:
Station:	Interviewee Name:
City:	Title of Interviewee:
Names/roles of others present, if any:	Role of Interviewee:
Artifacts collected:	

## Content Producer Protocol

*This protocol is appropriate to use with any organization representative who produces digital or print content for the Ready to Learn activities. Television producers, as well as local curriculum developers or marketing/communications agencies, could respond to questions in this protocol.*

### Introductory Script

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. My name is [NAME], and I'll be talking with you today about [LIST STATION CALL LETTERS] activities that are part of *Ready to Learn*. I work for EDC/SRI and we are the summative evaluators for the *Ready to Learn Initiative*. As part of the evaluation, we are conducting case studies of 6 stations' partnership and outreach efforts for *Ready to Learn*. The purpose of this interview is to learn specifics about your connection to [LIST STATION CALL LETTERS] educational outreach efforts that are related to *Ready to Learn*. This interview will take about one hour.

Everything you tell us today will be confidential. To protect your privacy, we won't connect your name with anything that you say. At any time during our conversation, please feel free to interrupt me if you have any questions or if you rather not answer any specific question. You can also stop the interview at any time for any reason.

Please remember we want to know what you think and feel and that there are no right or wrong answers.

Is it OK if I audiotape this interview today? We review our audiotapes to check what we've heard, as we write up our reports.

We'll be sure to send a report of our results to you at the end of the study.



## Origins and Nature of Involvement in Ready to Learn

We'd like to begin by asking you some general questions about your work and the products you develop.

1. Please tell me a little bit about your [organization/department/company].  
*Probe for general information about organization's history and mission.*
2. For what groups of people do you develop [programming/products]? *Probe for whether target audiences include children, parents, educators, and/or hard to reach populations.*
3. What kinds of programming or products do you make? What is the aim of that programming/those products?
4. Describe your role in your organization. *Probe as necessary for: How long have you worked at your organization and in what capacity? Does your affiliation with your organization pre-date its Ready to Learn [development/ production/ programming] activities?*

## Station Role in Community and Station Organization

5. How would you describe the neighborhood(s) in your community where *Ready to Learn* activities are targeted?
6. What are some of the literacy needs of children in these neighborhoods?  
*Probe for sources of information about children's needs.*
7. How has your organization learned about children's needs in these neighborhoods? What kind of needs assessment or market surveys did you do in advance of developing your [programming for/products]?
8. What types of market requirement documents (MRDs) or product requirements documents (PRDs) did you develop for *Ready to Learn*, if any? What are critical elements included in these?
9. How does your organization match [products/programming] to learning needs of kids?
10. Describe what your organization does to provide [programming/products] for the local PBS station's target audience or communities for *Ready to Learn* in order to meet those needs. *Probe as necessary for: How, if at all, are these materials tailored to the needs of the community? Developed as "local" materials for use in that community only?*
11. How, if at all, does input from the local PBS station affect your decisions about programming/production at this point?
12. Is any development of programming/products supported by the local station in any way, either through direct funding or in-kind donations?
13. Describe the formal or informal ways to find out how well your [products/programming] are working once they're launched or distributed in this

community. “Working” can be defined broadly, in your terms, your clients’ terms, or your audience’s terms for success.

### **The Key Partners and their Relationships to One Another**

The next few questions pertain to partnerships in general and to your partnership with your local PBS station.

14. What are some of the goals your organization has in forming partnerships?  
*Probe for goals for promoting literacy and serving young children aged 2-8.*
15. What are the organizations that are current partners with yours, and for how long have they been partners? *Probe for media, schools, public service agencies, higher education, nonprofits, etc.*
16. Did your organization collaborate with the station prior to your joint work for *Ready to Learn*? *If yes, use the following probes as necessary: When and how did the partnership begin? What partnership activities did your organization participate in with the station prior to RTL? Was anyone at your organization involved in preparing the action plans for CPB, either in formulating the plan or commenting on it?*
17. Please tell us a bit more about the formation of your partnership with your local PBS station, beginning (if you know) with the earliest stages of the partnership. *Use the following as probes as necessary: What motivated the partnership to get started? What relation does the partnership have to your mission? Why did both parties think it was good choice (i.e., how is the partnership mutually beneficial)? Did the station have to convince your organization to participate? If so, what was critical to you deciding to participate? How did the partners go about defining how they would work together? If your organization collaborated with the station before RTL, how has your organization’s relationship with the station changed as a result of RTL?*
18. Describe the major challenges your organization faced in creating, expanding and sustaining your partnership with the station. What have been your organization’s major successes in overcoming them?
19. What are your expectations for your organization’s partnership with the station after the conclusion of *Ready to Learn*?
20. Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about your *Ready to Learn* activities?

# Appendix F

Date:	Lead Interviewer:
Station:	Interviewee Name:
City:	Title of Interviewee:
Names/roles of others present, if any:	Role of Interviewee:
Artifacts collected:	

## Polymaker and Funding Agency Protocol

*This protocol is appropriate to use with staff in policymaking bodies (e.g., professional organizations, local government agencies) or funding agencies that affect Ready to Learn activities.*

### Introductory Script

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. My name is [NAME], and I'll be talking with you today about your local PBS station's activities that are part of *Ready to Learn*. *Ready to Learn* is a grant that helps fund local education and outreach activities related to PBS programming that targets children, their caregivers, and their teachers. I work for EDC/SRI and we are the summative evaluators for the *Ready to Learn Initiative*. As part of the evaluation, we are conducting case studies of 6 stations' partnership and outreach efforts for *Ready to Learn*. The purpose of this interview is to learn specifics about the policy and funding context of community efforts to promote literacy that may be aligned to the goals of *Ready to Learn*. This interview will take about one hour.

Everything you tell us today will be confidential. To protect your privacy, we won't connect your name with anything that you say. At any time during our conversation, please feel free to interrupt me if you have any questions or if you rather not answer any specific question. You can also stop the interview at any time for any reason.

Please remember we want to know what you think and feel and that there are no right or wrong answers.

Is it OK if I audiotape this interview today? We review our audiotapes to check what we've heard, as we write up our reports.

We'll be sure to send a report of our results to you at the end of the study.

## Origins and Nature of Involvement in Ready to Learn

I'd like to begin by asking you some questions about how your organization, your role in it, and (if appropriate) about you came to be involved in Ready to Learn.

1. What is your agency's/organization's mission with respect to promoting literacy development or school readiness among young children aged 2-8?
2. Within this community, how many other agencies or organizations have a similar mission?
3. What policies or programs does your organization create or support to achieve that mission?
4. For funders: What guidance do you provide to programs you fund? Do you require them to form partnerships? If so, what kinds of partnerships do you require? How do you evaluate those programs?
5. How long have you been with this organization/agency?
6. What are the major responsibilities of your current position relative to promoting literacy development?
7. Could you describe the relationship between your organization and the local public television station with respect to its education and outreach activities?  
*Probe for any origin story related to first contacts. Find out if the agency provides funding or regulates the educational activities of the station.*

## Organization/Agency Role in Community and Station Organization

8. How would you describe the neighborhood(s) in your community where your local PBS station targets *Ready to Learn* activities? *You may have to provide the name of the neighborhood.*
9. What do you see as the biggest obstacles to promoting literacy development in this age group in low-income neighborhoods in your area? How are the programs you fund or policies you set tackling these? Are there notable successes? Difficulties that you've not yet been able to devise strategies to overcome?
10. For funders that support the station: What do you see as the station's contribution to your mission regarding promoting literacy or school readiness? How has their approach to tackling the obstacles you mentioned earlier been different from or similar to how other programs you fund?
11. What kind of information have station staff shared with you about what they see as the challenges and successes of their work?
12. For funding agencies that support the station: What is your expectation regarding program sustainability, once the current funding has ended? How would you describe the station's approach to sustaining its activities? What are likely to be its biggest challenges in sustainability?

# Appendix G

## RTL Case Studies Observation Protocol

Date:	Observer(s):
Sponsoring Station:	Name of Event:
Location:	Purpose:

### About the Participants

Total # of Participants:	Observer:
# of parents:	# of educators (indicate type, e.g., preschool teachers):
# of children: (Indicate age range):	# of others (describe):
Ethnicity:	Gender:

### About the Producers/Station

Station reps:	Length of event:
Community partners:	Materials distributed:
Language(s) of content delivery:	Artifacts collected:

### Description (or diagram) of Setting

#### Brief Description of Event/Activity

- A. PBS content:
- B. Literacy topics or skills addressed:
- C. Format/type of event:
- D. Instructional strategies:
- E. Media/Technology use:
- F. Materials in use:
- G. Languages spoken (by either leaders or participants):

### **Detailed Description and Reflection of Event**

*Provide a “running record” of the event (unrestricted length). As much as possible, use active voice and make the agents of action clear. Quote participants directly, as feasible. Describe not only the formal activities going on, but also how the audience responds and interacts with the station or PBS staff. Use the reflective notes column for any impressions or interpretations you have of what you have recorded in the descriptive column. “Time stamp” each new episode of activity in a new row and be sure to align your reflective notes with the description. Pay attention to particular behaviors, words, or symbols that have traction in an activity.*

<b>Time</b>	<b>Descriptive Notes</b>	<b>Reflective Notes</b>

### **Questions for Event Leaders**

1. Could you tell me about how this event came to be part of your outreach activities?
2. Who was the target audience for the event? How successful was it, in your view, in reaching that audience?
3. What is the main message you hoped to convey with this event?
4. What is your content focus during this event?
5. What materials are distributed to the audience?
6. Is this event part of a series or broader effort?
7. How well did you feel it went, overall? [Anything you’d like to change for next time?]
8. Is there anything else you’d like to tell me about the event?

### **Questions for Audience Members**

1. What brought you out to this event today? How did you hear about it?
2. What do you think the main message of the event was? What did you think about that message?
3. What did you learn from the event? Did you expect to learn this or did you expect something else?
4. Which other events by [station] have you gone to? Would you go to another event?
5. What did you like about the event? What didn’t you like?
6. Is there anything else you’d like to tell me about your experience here today?

# Appendix H

## RTL Case Studies Debriefing Form

STATION NAME

CITY, STATE

**Note:** The best way to tell these to document information is to stick as closely to the words you've heard, behaviors you've observed, and materials you've read, with as much concrete detail as possible. When you add your interpretation, it's good to note it as such, e.g., "Person X's hesitance in talking about Y gave me the impression that...."

### SUMMARY INFORMATION

#### Site Visitors

Enter the names of the site visitors here

#### Dates of Contacts with Site

Indicate when contacts with sites were made where information in this form was obtained; indicate mode (site visit, telephone call, email, etc.)

#### Abstract for the Case

In one paragraph, describe the most important characteristics of the case. This paragraph would likely include the activities, challenges, and successes that were most salient and important to the participants interviewed and the focus of the materials you collected. The conjectures might guide this description, but do not be limited by them. If there was little consistency in what you observed and heard, then note this.

#### Origin Story for the Station WRT Ready to Learn

Beginnings matter, and provide clues as to what motivated people at the station to become active within RTL. The origin story for these stations is likely to predate the current RTL grant. Be sure to include station actors and their roles, their motives, and key early events and connections to people, in the origin story.



## **A Story That Tells It Best**

To make the abstract more concrete, and as an entry point for the case, select from the interview data a story that best represents what this case is all about. The best story may be how respect to how those involved defined, struggled with, and overcame a particular challenge. The challenge and goals could be anything; the main point is that the story should illustrate how the station has approached its partnership activities related to RTL. Remember the reporters' questions (who, what, when, where, why, and how), and use active voice here. Using active voice will help you to develop a keen sense of who the key agents really are.

## **CONTEXT FOR THE CASE**

### **Community Description**

Provide a brief portrait of the community you visited. Where do people work and play? What are the important institutions (e.g., schools, churches, local businesses) that influence or shape policies and programs related to literacy?

How do local community members think about the boundaries of different neighborhoods, and what descriptions do they give for them? What are the important cultural communities people mention? What do people say about literacy practices in their own or other people's communities?

### **Station Role in Community and Organization**

Describe the role or identity the station has within the community. What has it been? How is that identity changing? In response to what, or driven by what goals? What is the role of RTL in shaping the station's identity, either as how it sees itself or how the community sees it?

Describe also the alignment of RTL goals to the station's mission, internal organization of the station, keeping the focus on staff who are responsible for outreach but situating them within the formal and informal organization of the station.

### **The Key Partners and their Relationships to One Another**

Describe the key partners, the types of people/institutions they are, and their roles. This can be in bullet form. In addition, if partners have relationships with one

another, that would be useful to know. State the degree to which the station is a “hub” for literacy initiatives in the community; if not, is there another entity that is?

### **THEME: Helping parents, grandparents, other family members or guardians engage children and grow in their support of early learning**

Describe in 1-2 sentences what the station does to help parents, grandparents, other family members or guardians engage children and grow in their support for early learning.

#### **The Big Issues and How The Station Is Tackling Them**

Describe what the station sees as the major challenges in helping caregivers, what it is doing to address them, and the major successes of the station in overcoming them.

In addition, describe what the station sees as the major challenges in serving parents and the major successes of the station in serving parents. (Do not discuss educators here, unless some play a hybrid role.)

#### **Station Staff’s Construction of the Audience for Materials and Services**

Describe how station staff think about the audience for materials and/or services and how they will be received.

#### **Strategies for Reaching Parents**

Describe the strategies used to reach parents.

#### **Ties/Relationships to Local Parent Organizations**

Describe the nature, depth, and longevity of relationships to parent organizations of any kind.

#### **Ways the Station Learns About Parent/Guardian Needs and Success of Efforts**

Describe any formal or informal ways that station staff find out about what parent/guardian needs are and how well the station’s outreach efforts are working. “Working” can be defined broadly, and in the station’s terms for success.

Include in this description any ways the station learns about how materials are received, or what parents do with materials they receive.

### **Perceptions of Parents' View of their Role in Literacy Development**

Describe perceptions of the station staff or any other partners about the role that they believe parents believe they should play in children's learning, as well as parents' attitudes toward expected roles or roles encouraged within outreach efforts.

### **Other Information Related to Helping Parents**

Describe any other efforts related to helping parents that were salient to one or more people interviewed in the case study, and why they were salient for them.

### **THEME: Professional development of teachers and ECE instructors**

Describe in 1-2 sentences what the station does that they would consider professional development for teachers and ECE instructors.

### **The Big Issues and How The Station Is Tackling Them**

Describe what the station sees as the major challenges in professional development, what it is doing to address them, and the major successes of the station in overcoming them.

### **ECE Providers in the Area**

Describe the major types (for urban areas) and specific (for rural areas) ECE providers in the area, what each type/provider does, and the nature and depth station staff's knowledge of those activities, relative to other people interviewed who work in educational institutions.

### **PD Available to Educators Teaching Kids 2-8**

Describe the kinds of professional development resources (providers, organizations, content) available in the community and the nature and depth of station staff's knowledge of these resources, relative to other people interviewed who work in educational institutions.

### **Diversity of Media Employed to Reach Educators in Different Settings**

Describe the media employed to reach educators. Identify whether different types of educators (e.g., elementary school teachers versus early childhood educators) are approached using different media.

### **Station's Capacity for Leading Professional Development**

Describe the station's capacity to lead professional development. "Capacity" here

refers to experience of staff in leading PD in early literacy, infrastructure for supporting and/or hosting teachers to participate, relationships with educational institutions that enable them to free up time of educators to participate, etc.

### **Station's Relationships to Providers of Professional Development**

Describe any relationships to professional development providers and the role they play in RTL.

### **Station's "Pitches" to Educators to Participate**

Describe what stations do to frame the benefits of professional development for particular audiences (Head Start, home-based stations, etc.).

### **Other Information Related to Professional Development**

Describe any other efforts related to professional development that were salient to one or more people interviewed in the case study, and why they were salient for them.

**THEME: Materials and services are well matched to the learning needs of kids (second language learners and others) to enhance the potential to support early literacy learning.**

Describe in 1-2 sentences what the station does to match materials to learning needs of kids.

### **The Big Issues How The Station Is Tackling Them**

Describe what the station sees as the major challenges in professional development, what it is doing to address them, and the major successes of the station in overcoming them.

### **Partnerships with Organizations that Serve the Target Community**

Describe the station's partnerships with organizations that serve the target community. Indicate the role the organizations play in RTL, including what information they provide about learners' needs.

### **Ways the Station Learns About Children's Needs and Success of Efforts**

Describe any formal or informal ways that station staff find out about what children's needs are and how well the station's outreach efforts are working. "Working" can be defined broadly, and in the station's terms for success.

Include in this description any ways the station learns about how materials/digital content are received, or how children engage with materials/digital content.

### **Ways the Station Distributes, Supplements, Augments, or Adapts Materials**

Describe any ways that the station distributes supplements, augments, or adapts materials to suit the perceived needs of the target population.

### **Starting Points for Matching Materials and Children's Needs**

Identify how the station typically begins the process of matching materials and children's needs. Stations may start with materials, then identify partners or people to target whose needs match the goals of the materials. Or, stations may have a relationship with a particular community, and identify or develop materials to meet them. There may be yet other ways stations begin the process of matching materials to needs.

### **Other Information Related to Matching Materials and Children's Needs**

Describe any other efforts related to matching materials and children's needs that were salient to one or more people interviewed in the case study, and why they were salient for them.

### **THEME: Creating strong partnerships**

Describe in 1-2 sentences what the station does to create strong partnerships. Present the station's definition of what a "strong" partnership for literacy is.

### **The Big Issues How The Station Is Tackling Them**

Describe what the station sees as the major challenges in creating and sustaining strong partnerships, what it is doing to address them, and the major successes of the station in overcoming them.

### **Range of Partnerships**

Describe the range of the organizations with which the station has partners, using one of the broad categories identified in case study planning:

- Entities whose primary mission is to provide direct services to children and their families (schools, ECEs, libraries, higher ed.,
- Entities that set priorities/regulations and fund others to provide services to children and their families.

- Entities that increase the capacity of educators to provide services to children and their families.
- Entities that produce resources that can be used by others to provide services to children and their families.

Describe the formation of 1-2 partnerships. What motivated the partnership to get started? Why did both parties think it was a good one? How did the partners go about defining how they would work together? What relation does the partnership have to the mission of the participating organization? What might make the partnership dissolve?

### **How Stations Leveraged Existing Partnerships for RTL Work**

Describe any partnerships prior to the grant that were incorporated into the grant, or transformed by being included in the work.

### **How Stations Plan to Sustain Partnerships**

Describe whether/how stations plan to sustain partnerships after the grant.

### **Stations' Social Capital**

Describe how stations increase their own capacity by accessing other organizations' skills to accomplish their own goals. Describe also how partners affect (if at all) the credibility and reputation of the station within the community or for specific audiences.

### **Mutuality of the Partnerships**

Describe what each partner brings to major partnerships; describe any "imbalanced" partnerships with respect to what one party brings that is particularly of value for literacy outreach.

### **Other Information Related to Partnerships**

Describe any other efforts related to partnerships that were salient to one or more people interviewed in the case study, and why they were salient for them.

### **THEME: Alignment of station goals and objectives to educational outreach activities that enhance early learning**

Describe in 1-2 sentences what the station does to align goals and objectives with educational outreach activities.

### **The Big Issues How The Station Is Tackling Them**

Describe what the station sees as the major challenges in aligning station goals and objectives with outreach activities, what it is doing to address them, and the major successes of the station in overcoming them.

### **Resources (Including Time) Dedicated to Educational Outreach**

Describe the resources, including staff time (e.g., FTEs, consultants) dedicated to outreach.

### **Authority of People Responsible for Station Outreach**

Describe the extent to which staff that are responsible for educational outreach are in positions of authority or leadership and/or are in constant communication with other station leaders.

### **Public Presentations of the Outreach Work**

Describe what the station management does to publicize the outreach work.

### **Other Information Related to Alignment of Objectives and Activities**

Describe any other efforts related to alignment that were salient to one or more people interviewed in the case study, and why they were salient for them.

**THEME: Focus on early learning is in harmony with the broader spectrum of education audiences. Stations consider the nature, duration, and intensity of activities needed to promote early literacy.**

Describe in 1-2 sentences what the station does to focus its efforts on literacy for low-income children.

### **The Big Issues How The Station Is Tackling Them**

Describe what the station sees as the major challenges in creating and maintaining a focus on literacy, what it is doing to address them, and the major successes of the station in overcoming them.

### **Station's View of Who To Target**

When stations consider their literacy activities, who do they think about? Do they consider only the children alone, or do they also consider the wider environment of people, relationships, and materials that contributes to learning?



### **Partnerships with People and Organizations that Create Conditions for Learning to Occur**

Describe any partnerships with organizations that provide resources needed so that learning can occur, but that might go beyond literacy (e.g., providing meals, social services).

### **Sources of and Processes for Monitoring Progress toward Educational Goals**

Describe any sources and processes (e.g., formal evaluation) the station uses to monitor progress toward its educational goals.

### **Depth and Duration of Offerings**

How long are relationships with participants in PD, caregiver workshops, and other offerings, including any offered directly to children. For shorter engagements or one-time events, describe their purpose and function.

### **Media and Formats for Supporting Learning**

Describe the media and formats the station uses for reaching different audiences, whether children or adults, to teach literacy skills.

### **Constraints (access, geography) on Use and Appeal of Different Media to Particular Communities**

Certain communities may have limited access to technology, or their geography is such that few services are accessible to them. In this section, describe any constraints on the ways that communities can and should be reached. In addition, discuss the converse: do some media appeal to particular communities?

### **Other Information Focus on Literacy**

Describe any other efforts related to the station's focus on literacy that were salient to one or more people interviewed in the case study, and why they were salient for them.

### **THEME: Reaching hard-to-reach or new populations (lower income, speakers of other languages, ethnic minorities, rural dwellers, inner city residents, among others)**

Describe in 1-2 sentences what the station does to reach hard-to-reach or new populations.

### **The Big Issues How The Station Is Tackling Them**

Describe what the station sees as the major challenges in reaching new populations, what it is doing to address them, and the major successes of the station in overcoming them.

### **Engagement/Contact with Participants in Targeted Communities**

Describe any contact and engagement the station has with new, targeted communities, including how differentiated the staff's image of the community is (e.g., do staff see internal diversity of the community?). Describe what knowledge the station has of the targeted communities, and how it goes about gathering that knowledge and updating it. Describe who at the station has deep knowledge of the targeted community (do, for instance, advertising/PR people have that knowledge, if they are helping with RTL?). Describe any existing information sources the station uses to learn about the community.

### **Stations' Understanding of "Difference"**

Difference can be understood by station staff in different ways. Do, for example, staff distinguish between linguistic and cultural differences? Between language needs and literacy needs among adult immigrants? In this section, describe the differences to which station staff attend in designing and implementing outreach to hard-to-reach or new populations.

### **Other Information on Reaching Hard-to-Reach or New Populations**

Describe any other efforts related to the station's efforts to reach those who are hard to reach or "new" populations that were salient to one or more people interviewed in the case study, and why they were salient for them.

### **Theme: New media technologies are used to improve early learning**

Describe in 1-2 sentences what the station does to employ new media. New media include: cell phones, netbooks, audio, video chat (e.g.: gmail video, etc), networking stations, online courses, ebooks, satellite radio, podcasting. Lending library of archived shows.

### **The Big Issues How The Station Is Tackling Them**

Describe what the station sees as the major challenges in reaching new populations, what it is doing to address them, and the major successes of the station in overcoming them.

**Range of New Media Employed**

Describe the full range of media employed to support RTL outreach activities, including the motivation for each. Describe the expected benefits of using each new media tool, whatever they may be, for users.

**Knowledge of Access and Support Needs for New Media**

Describe what the station knows about its target audience's capacity to support new media. Describe what it does to support and increase community access to new media.

**Other Information on New Media**

Describe any other efforts related to new media that were salient to one or more people interviewed in the case study, and why they were salient for them.

**Knowledge of Access and Support Needs for New Media**

Describe what the station knows about its target audience's capacity to support new media. Describe what it does to support and increase community access to new media.

**Other Information on New Media**

Describe any other efforts related to new media that were salient to one or more people interviewed in the case study, and why they were salient for them.