

Pennsylvania Public Libraries Cruise into Kindergarten Philosophy

The Cruise into Kindergarten initiative is designed to assist public libraries in strengthening their capacity to provide high quality, effective early learning programs, resources and services. Public libraries are community institutions for life-long learning and will build on that reputation by becoming destinations for families with young children and early childhood educators.

Children's development in the years between birth and Kindergarten is impacted greatly by loving relationships, stimulating environments and engaging experiences. Libraries can encourage families to build stronger relationships by acknowledging and supporting families as a child's first teacher. Libraries can provide families with a place to socialize, play, read and find support that will bolster their role in creating the foundations for life-long learning and success. Early childhood teachers can find resources and take part in professional development opportunities that will allow them to build content-rich learning programs for their students.

Cruise into Kindergarten will provide professional development, electronic resources and materials for librarians and educators. The Cruise into Kindergarten website also will be a platform for sharing success stories about innovative programs that encourage children to engage, discover and find delight every day.

Cruise into Kindergarten is a voluntary program and member libraries agree the following principles are key to building the next generation:

- All children are unique individuals
- Babies, toddlers and children are warmly welcomed and can discover and enjoy materials and programs at the library
- Children need opportunities to engage in a variety of play experiences
- Families are a child's first and most important teacher and their strengths, diversity and expertise are respected and celebrated
- The library is the community destination for young children and their adults
- Families and early childhood practitioners are encouraged to attend library programs with their children
- Libraries have a role to play in the early childhood community
- Library programs should be interactive, participatory and FUN