



MEMORANDUM

JEB BUSH
GOVERNOR

TO: AAA Executive Directors **NOTICE: 040204-1-I-OVCS**
Intergenerational Program Directors

FROM: Terry White
Secretary

DATE: April 1, 2004

SUBJECT: Notice of Instruction: Intergenerational Connections and Family
Literacy

TERRY F. WHITE
SECRETARY

The purpose of this notice is to initiate volunteer recruitment and outreach activities associated with family literacy and Intergenerational Connections. Many of you have identified literacy as a major barrier to providing services for selected communities within your areas. In response, the Department is pleased to announce its commitment and support of the Florida Adult Literacy Coalition as a means of promoting communication and outreach for family literacy.

Family literacy refers to a continuum of programs that addresses the intergenerational nature of literacy. Family members in 50% of all Florida households with incomes below poverty level cannot read on an 8th grade level. The Department recognizes if parents cannot read they face economic hardship. Their families suffer, often encountering barriers to jobs, healthcare, and cultural enrichment; meanwhile, the cycle of illiteracy continues. How does this effect Florida's elder population?

- § There is a strong relationship between low literacy and low income. Populations most likely to meet eligibility requirements for social service programs are least likely to have access to the necessary information.
- § Approximately 1.5 million of Florida's residents speak little or no English, making it difficult to access information that can assist them in everyday survival skills, such as obtaining a driver's license, filling out a tax return, or knowing where to locate specific social services and recreational opportunities.
- § Data shows the risk of hospitalization is increased in persons with low literacy, and that hospitalization linked to limited literacy skills may be costing as much as \$8-\$15 billion a year.
- § Much of the educational material to inform patients is written at the 10th grade level, and will not be understood by up to 45% of America's population.
- § Many low literate people are unable to read instructions on medication bottles, and thereby cannot administer them properly to themselves or their children.

4040 ESPLANADE WAY
TALLAHASSEE
FLORIDA, 32399-7000

phone 850.414.2000

fax 850.414.2004

TDD 850.414.2001

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us>

The Department recognizes the aging network's unique ability to develop effective collaborations in support of elders and proposes mobilizing that ability in support of family literacy. Area Agencies on Aging can play an important role in reaching out to help strengthen Florida's families through:

Outreach, Recruitment and Referral:

- § Promoting local literacy programs, recommending participants, recruiting literacy volunteers, and training home visitors and caseworkers to assist with referrals.
- § When serving *English as a Second Language* individuals consider using "Promotoras" (home visits by volunteers from the community who have close working relationships with professionals in the field) as a recruitment tool.
- § Placing literacy flyers with your local service providers, program partners, etc.
- § Book drives are a crucial component to family literacy programs, and your community partners can organize highly successful drives.

To help you get started this notice will be followed by a Family Literacy packet containing information on statistics, local coordinators, programs and services. I encourage you to contact Nicole Hargraves at (850) 414-2341 and specify how you will incorporate outreach and referral services to local family literacy programs.

In closing, I would like to personally thank you for all you do to identify barriers to services for elders, their families and caregivers. Family caregivers are a critical component of Florida's long-term care system. By educating children, young adults, grandparents raising grandchildren and caregivers we can improve their access to information and services and therefore affect the health and quality of life of elder Floridians.