

Volunteer Opportunities in Family Literacy Programs

Instruction

Parents who enroll in family literacy programs are diverse, and their goals may range from learning to read to preparing to take the GED to improving their English skills. Sometimes, there are just not enough instructors to meet everybody's needs. [Contact a family literacy program in your area](#) to discuss these and other opportunities.

You can:

- Teach job interview skills (appropriate dress, practice interviews)
- Teach computer skills to adults and children
- Help students improve literacy skills one-on-one
- Tutor students in preparation for the GED
- Teach parenting skills to young or new parents
- Teach home skills like cooking or sewing
- Read to children and play with them

Awareness

Raising awareness about family literacy and making the connection between your community and the families in need are important steps to ensuring success.

You can:

- Volunteer to be a guest speaker in your community on behalf of family literacy programs
- Volunteer to speak to family literacy students about your career or a particular area of interest
- Help coordinate and invite speakers to your local program

Mentoring

Families who enroll in family literacy programs are working towards significant changes in their lives, and will look to their community for positive reinforcement and successful role models. They need ongoing emotional support as they journey towards self-sufficiency.

You can:

- Offer to be a mentor to families
- Volunteer to take an adult student to lunch
- Look for ways to bring fathers to family literacy programs, to help them see how important they are in their children's lives
- Become a male role model for young men and boys

Program Support

Family literacy programs are often under-staffed and under-funded. There are many "non-financial" ways you can support your local program.

You can:

- Provide childcare for parents while they attend classes
- Provide transportation to the family literacy program
- Record books or donate audio-recorded books
- Donate your company's goods or services as incentives for students
- Donate new books to the program
- Become a "foster grandparent" to a child

Professional Development

Family literacy instructors can't be all things to all people at all times, and can frequently use the professional know-how of people in the community to augment instruction. This gives the students a more rounded experience.

You can:

- Volunteer to take part in a Health Advisory Committee
(doctors, nurses and others in the healthcare profession can volunteer to make presentations on topics that are specific to students' needs)
- Become a part of a Resource Pool
(let your local program know what special skills you have and that you'd be available for trainings or presentations)
- Present life skills workshops related to your profession
(for example, realtors [how to buy a house]; bankers [how to set up a family budget])
- Provide professional advice and support to instructors
(for example, psychology, medical, speech pathology, dental)