Early Literacy Center Introduces Second Series of Little Books for Early Readers

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Early Literacy Center Introduces Second Series of Little Books for Early Readers

ORONO, Maine -- Maine themes abound in the second series of Little Books for Early Readers produced by the Center for Early Literacy at the University of Maine's College of Education. Lobster, potatoes, blueberries, and the sea are among the subjects of the 30 small books, written by Maine teachers and featuring photos of Maine youngsters at school, at home, and at play, as well as photos and stories about animals and other activities children enjoy. The new series was introduced June 24 at the statewide Early Literacy Conference held at UMaine.

The books are meeting a need for texts that provide adequate meaning and structure for inexperienced readers. The first series, now in its third printing, has been purchased by teachers around the country who want to provide ample opportunity for children to practice early reading skills. After expenses, proceeds from sale of the books go to an endowment and will be used to encourage and help support early literacy initiatives and projects in Maine schools.

Crafted to help four-to-six-year-olds grasp the earliest concepts of reading, the Little Books contain heavy picture clues and repetitive use of key words. Complete sentence and story structure provide meaningful reading experiences to help guide young children to independent reading. The books come in three levels, varying slightly in sentence structure and introducing concepts such as a return sweep (going back to the left side of the page to continue a sentence). Spacing between words is precise and just the right size for little fingers to follow.

"Learning to read is a complex task, requiring synchronized cognitive, perceptual and motor skills as young children recognize and practice using syntactical, structural and visual information, explains Paula Moore, director of the Center for Early Literacy. The goal is to keep the process as simple and relevant as possible allowing young readers to focus on organizing and understanding all the pieces of information and how they fit together, she says.

"Little Books for Early Readers" and more information about the project are available from the UMaine Center for Early Literacy (207) 581-2438. The cost of a set of 30 Little Books is $37.50, plus $2 for postage and handling.

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