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## Conference to Examine the Latest K-5 Literacy Instruction, Research Maine-Based Little Books Series Hitting Worldwide Market

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# COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

*Selected News Releases*

## **Conference to Examine the Latest K-5 Literacy Instruction, Research Maine-Based Little Books Series Hitting Worldwide Market**

ORONO, Maine -- More than 370 educators will gather at the University of Maine Aug. 7-8 to examine the latest research and teaching techniques and to share information about how best to get youngsters off to a strong start in reading and writing. The 2000 Seamless Transitions K-5 Literacy Conference brings together all the educators involved in a child's early and primary learning experiences - Reading Recovery, special education and classroom teachers - to emphasize the importance of providing consistency and a team approach in expectations and instruction.

Sponsored by the Center for Early Literacy at the UMaine College of Education and Human Development, in collaboration with the Maine Department of Education's Center for Inquiry on Literacy, the conference will feature state and national literacy experts presenting topics ranging from laying the foundation for learning letters and words to creating independent writers.

Conference participants will also hear the official announcement of an agreement with a major publishing firm that will expand the availability of the popular Little Books for Early Readers series, written by Maine educators, to a worldwide market.

The joint announcement by the Center for Early Literacy, which created and produces the series, and Educators Publishing Services, Inc. of Cambridge, Mass., will take place Monday, Aug. 7. EPS publisher John C. Hall, II and UMaine Professor Rosemary Bamford, Little Books coordinator, will announce the new marketing and distributing plans during a reception featuring exhibits of instructional texts and children's books by half a dozen publishing houses and book signings by several Maine educator/authors. Authors of some of the Little Books will also be present.

The four series of Little Books feature photos of real Maine children engaged in activities from playing in the snow to feeding chickens and are carefully crafted to engage and help four-to-six-year-olds grasp and practice the earliest concepts of reading.

The first set was produced in 1995, with the goal to provide a variety of low-costs books for research-based teaching and practicing of early reading skills.

The agreement gives EPS worldwide marketing and distribution rights to the series for two years, including promotion through its catalogs, website, direct mail programs, independent representative network and its extensive exhibit schedule. The Center for Early Literacy remains the owner, copyright holder and manufacturer of the series, and uses revenue above expenses to initiate and support early literacy efforts in Maine.

For nearly 50 years, EPS ([www.epsbooks.com](http://www.epsbooks.com)) has published materials to help students from kindergarten through adulthood learn to read, write and spell. Today, the company publishes nearly 2,000 books and workbooks, from beginning reading and elementary math to SAT-preparation.

EPS materials are used by millions of classroom, home school and special education students and educators worldwide.

With the expanded distribution of Little Books for Early Readers, EPS and the Center for Early Literacy are helping to meet the growing need for texts that provide adequate meaning and structure to inexperienced readers, while teaching words and initial letter-sound associations.

"The Little Books series are wonderful little readers that appeal to a wide range of clients," says Hall. "They are a great compliment to our product line."

The expertise and resources of EPS provides the type and extent of targeted marketing that neither the Center nor the UMaine Book Store could handle, says Bamford. "The agreement with EPS will allow us to reach a much larger audience."

The Little Books will still be available for walk-in sales at the Book Store on the Orono campus.

**Media note:** The announcement of the distribution agreement with Educational Publishing Service is scheduled for 3:30 p.m., Monday, Aug. 7, in Wells Conference Center, as part of the book exhibit and reception for conference participants. The media contact for EPS is Nick Gaehde, vice president of sales and marketing, (617) 547-6706, ext. 175, e-mail: Nickg@epsbooks.com.

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