



EARLY LITERACY A FOCUS FOR MACQUARIE REGIONAL LIBRARY

Macquarie Regional Library is committed to boosting early literacy in the local community following a report from *The Insight Centre for NSW Public Libraries* that ranks NSW sixth of all states and territories for mean reading performance. This places NSW behind both national and OECD benchmarks.

“The report is very concerning that children in NSW have declining literacy and child development outcomes,” Macquarie Regional Library Manager, Kathryn McAllister.

“Your local library is a great place to start to help encourage early literacy skills and a love of reading. Libraries are local, accessible and free. Libraries offer a welcoming environment for all families and Macquarie Regional Library have a large range of resources for children from books through to educational boxes.”

Macquarie Regional Library have a number of programs designed specifically for children including the 1000 Books Before School Program for children aged 0 – 5 years as well as Storytime, Rhyme Time

and Wiggle and Rhyme. These sessions are free to the community and filled with stories, rhymes and activity fun.

“The 1000 Books Before School Program encourages sharing books with your child and building their literacy skills before school. We welcome families to come along to their local library and join the program to introduce your child to the wonderful world of books.”

Library literacy activities are multi-generational and help to address the literacy gap by supporting the critical relationships between children and parents or caregivers.

“Public libraries are particularly important as they offer a number of early literacy programs and support children may not be enrolled in formal education or childcare,” Mrs McAllister said.

Local Dubbo resident Melissa Dunkerley signed up her six month old son Theodore (Teddy) to the 1000 Books Before School Program this year.

“We joined the program because it is a great way to keep track of reading, and stay motivated to read. It's a wonderful reminder to keep reading and spend that quality time together, sharing reading and quiet time,” Ms Dunkerley said.

“We love the program. We like that it is broken up into achievable goals, each reading log is 50 books with incentives awarded after each log so it's easy to progress through the program.”

Local residents can become a member of the Macquarie Regional Library free of charge and access early literacy programs, books and

resources. Simple visit the Dubbo or Wellington branch or www.mrl.nsw.gov.au.

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