

Acting Out at the Library

**Lisa Claybrooks
Louisville Free Public Library**

Are you frustrated with the turn-out of family events at your library? Do you still have relatively poor attendance even though you advertise food and a performer? Well why not invite parents to see their child perform at the library. "Acting Out at the Library" is a program that involved preschoolers performing stories at the library. It brought out not only parents, but also grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins for a very special evening.

Acting Out at the Library

- I. Goal - Bring at-risk families into the library for a positive, memorable experience.
- II. Idea - Have the children act out stories. Parents love to see their children perform.
- III. Preparation
 - A. Collaborating with the School
 - i. Travel time for parents
 - ii. Travel arrangements for families
 - iii. Bedtime for children
 - B. Incentive for Teaching Staff
 - i. Competition between classrooms
 - ii. Prizes – benefit individuals, not their classrooms
 - C. Inform Parents
 - i. Initial notice
 - ii. Invitation
 - iii. Reminder
 - D. Book Selection
 - i. Number of characters
 - ii. Many opportunities for children to speak or move
 - iii. Props that work well for the age group of the children
 - E. Costumes and Props
 - i. Keep simple
 - ii. No cost
- IV. Practice
 - A. Classroom
 - i. Explanation of Project – teachers and students
 - ii. Expectations of Teachers
 - a. Read and practice
 - b. Talk up the performance with students and parents
 - B. On stage
 - i. Lessen stage fright
 - ii. Use props
- V. Performance
 - A. Staff Needed
 - i. Set –up / Clean-Up
 - ii. Welcome table
 - iii. Buffet meal – replenish
 - iv. Greeters / Servers / Crowd control
 - v. Family reading area
 - vi. Performance
- VI. Response from Participants
 - A. Families
 - B. Teachers
- VII. Budget
 - A. Food, drinks and supplies
 - B. Giveaway books for kids to own
 - C. School bus for class visits
 - D. Prizes - for the competition and door prize