



St. George Cathedral
"Evangelismos"
Springfield, MA

Boston Metropolis
Literacy Project



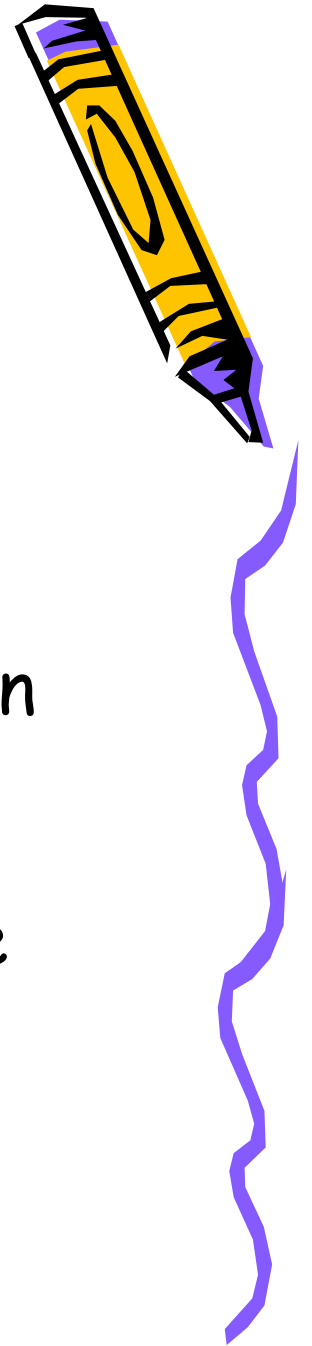
Why Literacy as a Project?

- By third grade, educators can predict which children will drop out
- Long term impact of dropping out to socioeconomic future on the individual and the city
- Springfield, MA is in Crisis with 58% overall drop out rate
- Correlation of reading and finishing high school



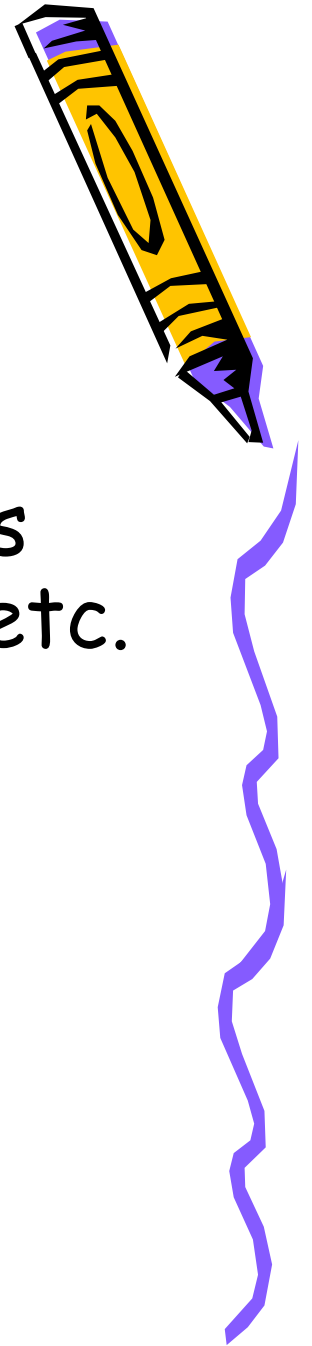
Why Literacy as a Project?

- Springfield, MA demographics
 - Cultures of immigrants - education hasn't been a focus
 - Highly Hispanic and African-American population
 - Children having children
 - Drop out rate is highest among these groups - 70%



Interaction with a Child's Environment

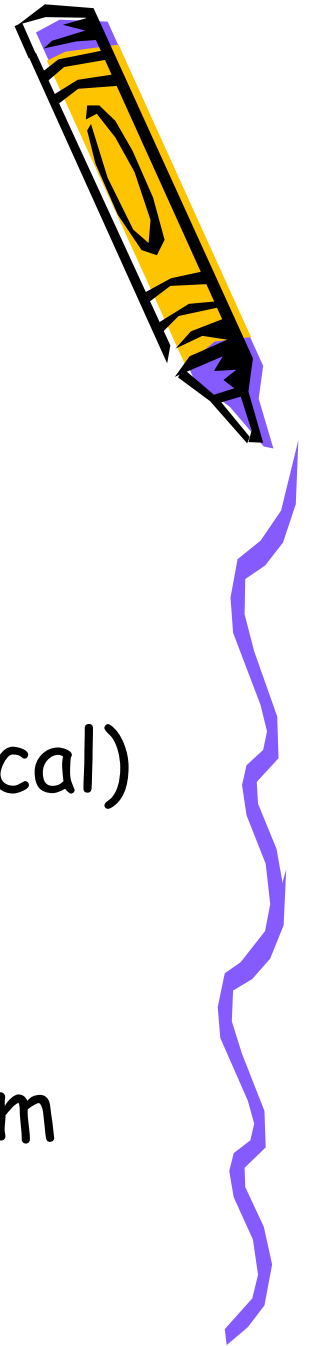
- Reading to children aged 0 - 5 stimulates their brain and develops neurons - words, colors, pictures, etc.
- More words that are heard, child develops larger vocabulary
- Larger vocabulary - more likely to become proficient reader



Getting Started

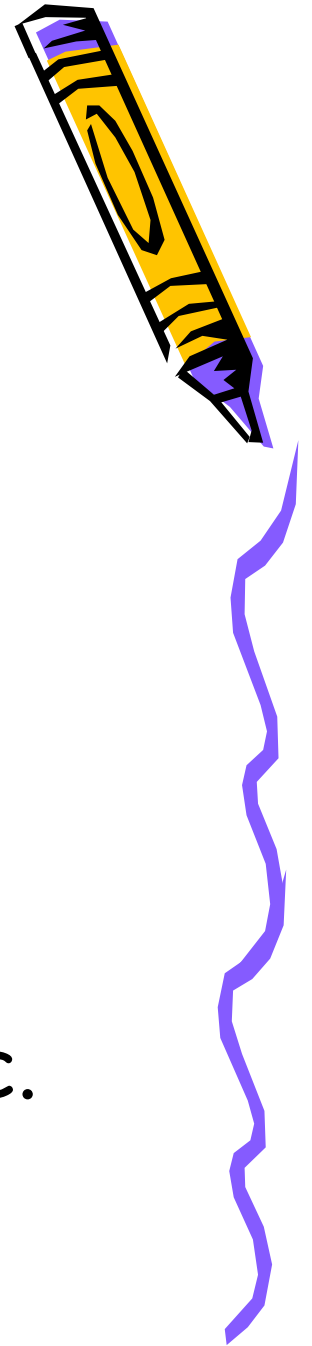
- Resources

- United Way
- Literacy Commission
- Harold Grinspoon Foundation (local)
- Imagination Library - www.imaginationlibrary.com
- First Books - www.firstbooks.com



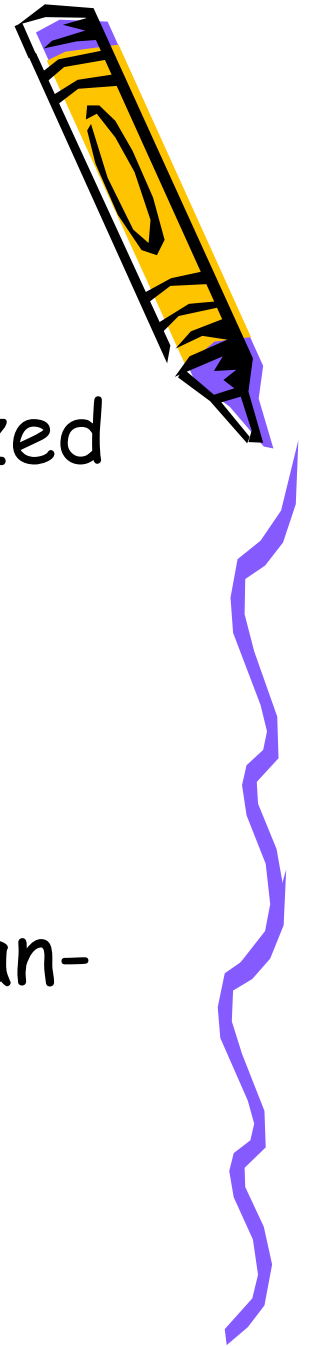
Getting Started

- Resources (continued)
 - Foundations in area
 - Company sponsors - high profile
 - Any media in community - newspapers, public TV, etc.
 - Your own parish - educators, etc.

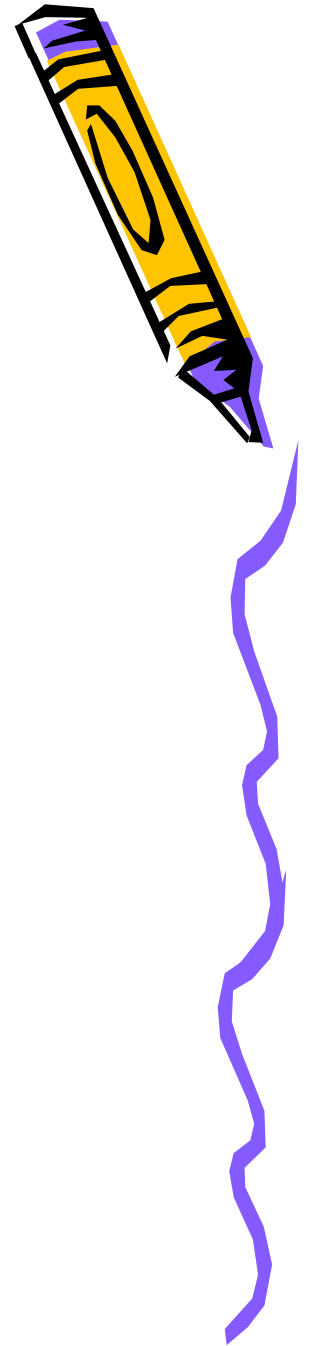


Making it Happen

- Adoption of neighborhood subsidized preschool - New North Citizen's Council Preschool
- 100 children year round
- Family income < \$29,000 annually
- Demographic - Hispanic and African-American



Making it Happen



Imagination Library

www.imaginationlibrary.com

- Children aged 0 - 5
- Age appropriate book mailed to child's home every month for one year
- Cost \$30/child - funded by Dolly Parton
- In cooperation with Penguin Publishing Company
- Classroom library (over 600 books)
55-60 books/box \$50/box plus shipping



Imagination Library

www.imaginationlibrary.com



- Books divided into 8 groups geared to each developmental stage of the child's brain spanning age 0 - 5
- First book - The Little Engine That Could
- Last book - Look out Kindergarten, Here I Come



Imagination Library

www.imaginationlibrary.com



- Registration at preschool
 - 2 volunteers/shift to meet with parents and encourage participation
 - 7:30 - 9 am and 3:30 - 5:30 pm were drop off and pick up times of children
 - 2 - 3 days/week for 3 weeks
 - Gave a "starter" book and book box



First Books

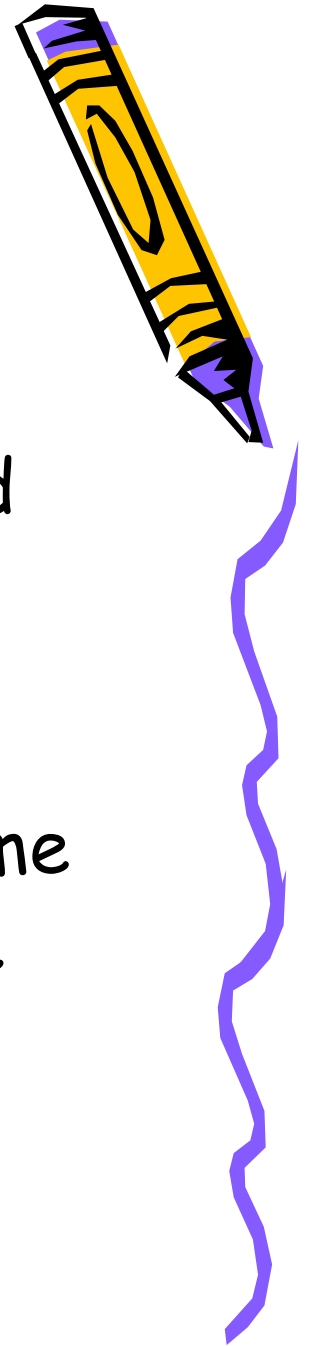
www.firstbooks.com

- Publisher runoffs
 - Website link sends you to title and age group
 - Cost 25 cents/book (includes shipping)
 - These used for "starter book"

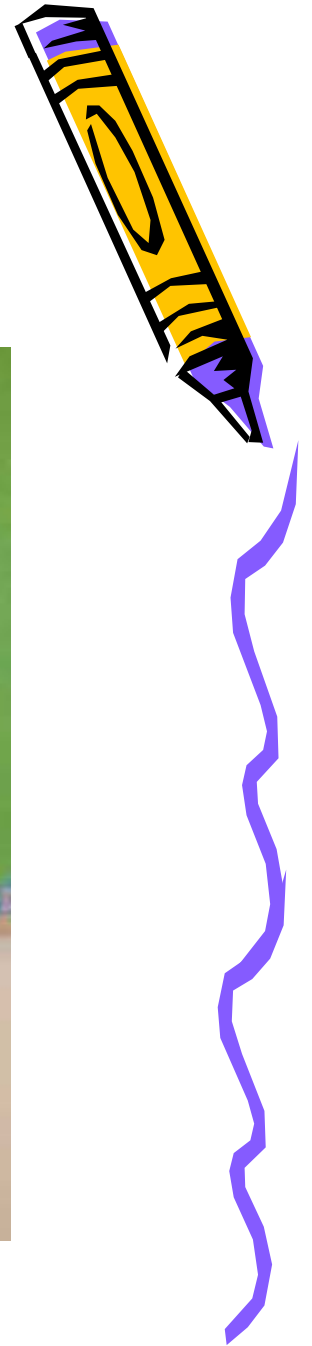


Book Box

- "Home" for books provides stability and possession for child
- Less expensive/more practical than bookends, bookshelves, etc.
- Tangible reminder of reading in the home
- Addresses the transience issue - phone number is printed on box so books are forwarded when a family moves



Book Box



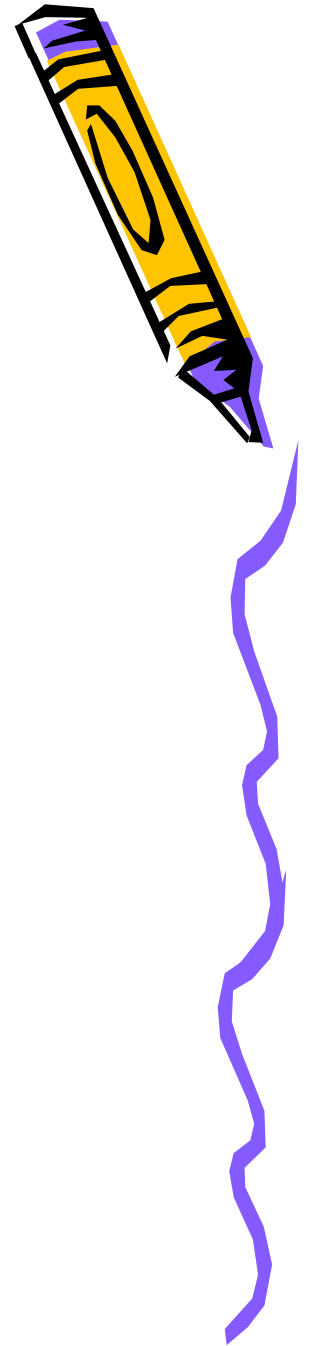
Funding

- Appeal to parishioners to sponsor a child
 - Weekly bulletin
 - Monthly newsletter
- Parishioners with children encouraged to have their children join Imagination Library program and sponsor a same-aged preschool child - bonus is children bonding in their love of books and reading
- Possible business sponsors

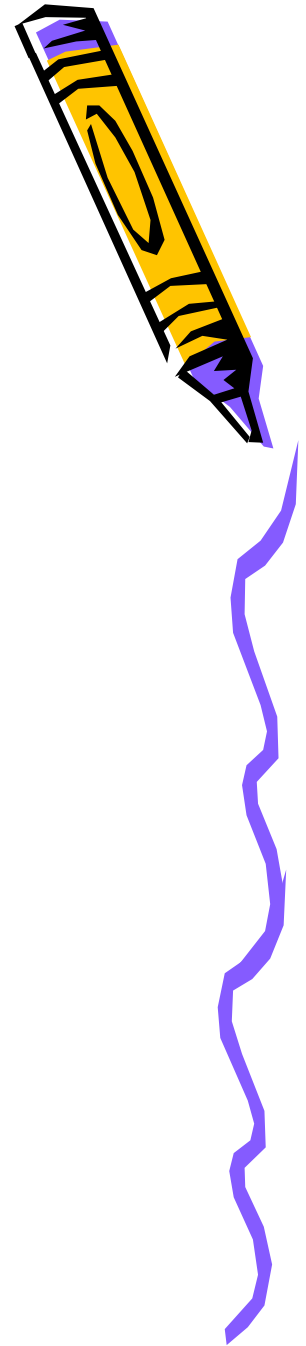


Monthly Reading

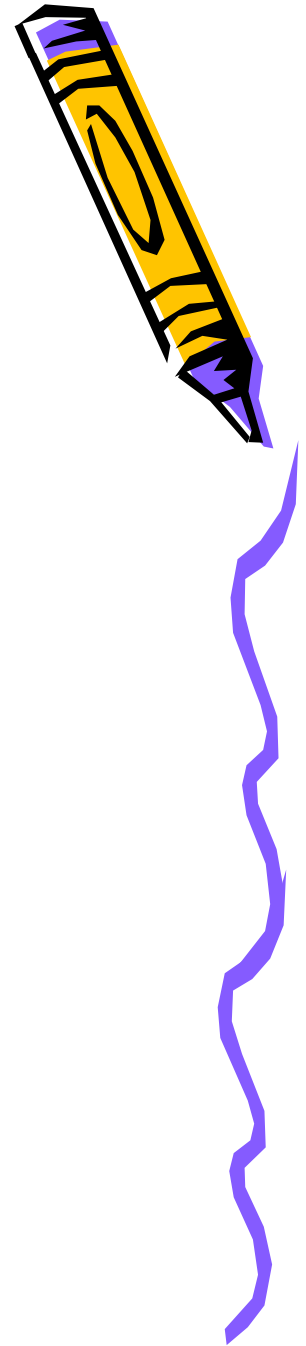
- Volunteer teams read 1 hour/class
- Reading mirror
 - Current book delivered
 - Current lesson i.e. dinosaurs
 - Seasonal theme i.e. Christmas



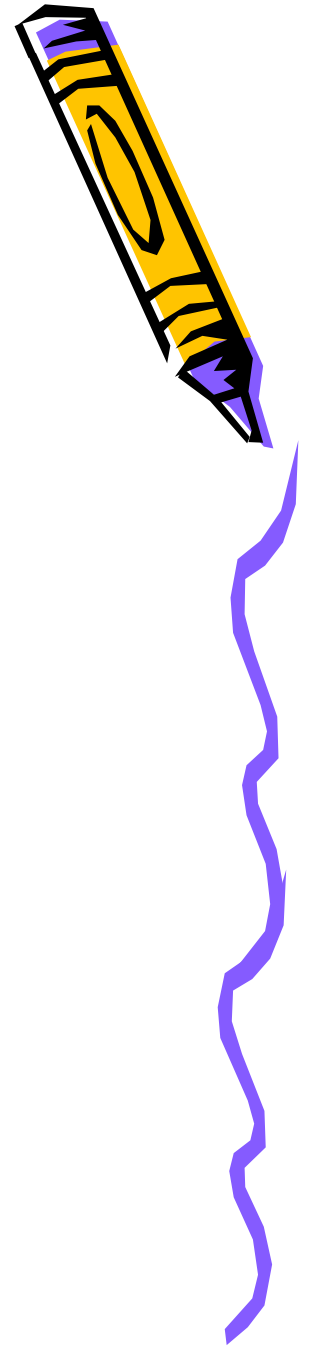
Monthly Reading



Monthly Reading

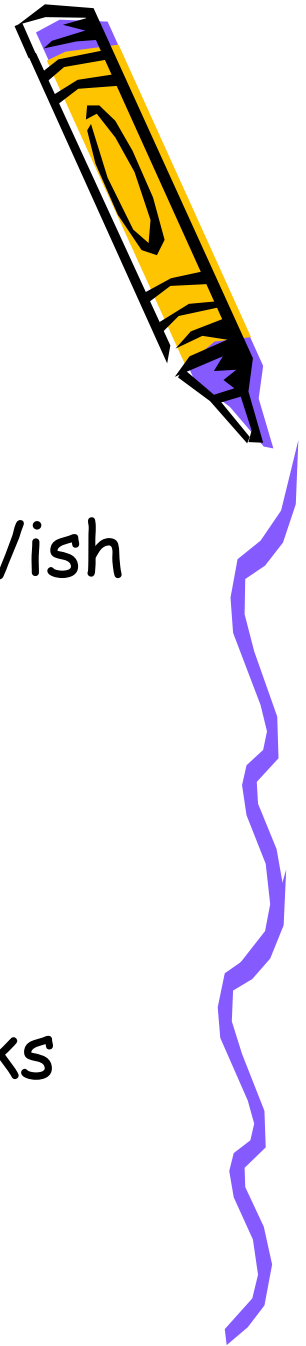


Monthly Reading



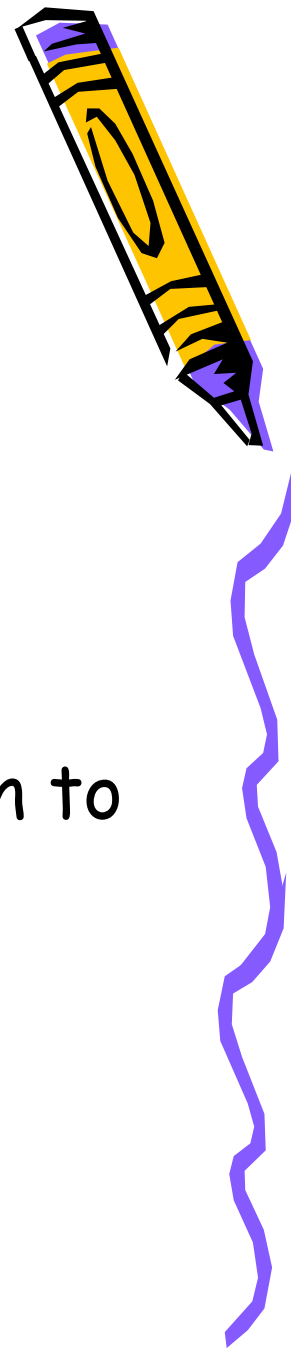
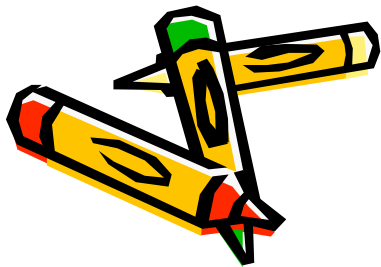
Special Events

- Teachers' Wish List
 - Christmas party attendees asked to provide either a book or item from Wish List in lieu of exchanging gifts
 - Sharing the Joy of Christmas event
- Sunday School Book Drive
 - Gently used books collected and distributed (5 enormous boxes)
 - Valentine's Day "I love you" with books and candy



Timelines

- Research - 4 months
 - Partners
 - Resources
- Registration - Imagination Library
 - 3 weeks at Preschool
 - 6-week turn around from registration to delivery of books
 - 9th of each month orders go to Penguin Publishing Company
- Total Program - 12 months



Possible Next Steps

- "Seeking Common Ground" Grant
 - Teacher Certifications
 - Bridging financial gap beyond tuition
 - Off site campus for classes at our Center
 - Act as mentors/support group
 - Parents
 - English as Second Language classes at our Center
 - Act as mentors/support group
- Community outreach to expand program
 - Adopt other preschools
 - Become speakers to other groups to join project

