

To: ALSC Board
From: Nina Lindsay
RE: Next Steps for Early Literacy

The ALSC Executive Committee reviewed the IMLS funded report [Bringing Literacy Home: An Evaluation of the Every Child Ready to Read Program](#) (2017) for discussion at our Fall Executive Committee meeting.

We noted in the findings an indication that ECRR is well-integrated into library practices, and serves as a foundation for many librarians' work with young children and families. ECRR provides a framework for current ALSC initiatives, such as the in-progress white paper on children's spaces, and the emergence of our Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media award. PLA's new Family Engagement initiative will build on ECRR, and its task force is well represented with members who are also active in ALSC.

Next Steps for Early Literacy

As we reviewed the report's recommendations and considered other current conversations regarding early literacy in general, we noted the following specific buckets where ALSC might be positioned to support or expand efforts, for the Board's exploration during our Strategic Review:

Training/Development

Within the report we noted two areas specifically in which ALSC might serve members through continuing education: 1) How to reach underserved families/caregivers in and outside the library; 2) Advocacy and outreach regarding early literacy

Advocacy

Association level advocacy regarding the library's role in early literacy, within the context of our strategic plan

Applying ECRR framework to ages 5-8

We recognize that "school readiness" work is on a continuum, with 3rd grade reading success as a marker, and that there are current efforts to align quality learning from preschool through the primary grades. ALSC could be positioned to expand information in this area.

Intersection with Media Mentorship

Caregivers are more and more actively looking on guidance for how to support their child's learning through digital media, and the ECRR report findings can inform our work in media mentorship.

ECRR Program Assessment

As we identify next steps for ALSC in early literacy during this discussion, we also ask the Board to evaluate and assess the ECRR program within ALSC's current portfolio.

ECRR is a mature initiative, cooperatively developed by PLA and ALSC since 2001. Given the evaluative report, the Board should discuss next strategies for ECRR (reviewing the assessment tool from *The Will to Govern Well*, p. 162-166, is suggested; board members should each have received a copy of this book earlier in 2017, in preparation for Board Orientation at Annual). Budget trends indicate recent diminishing revenues in the project, though the budget committee has not yet completed projection on future revenues. Additionally, there are many more initiatives utilizing ECRR concepts available in the early literacy space than when ECRR was released.

The PLA/ALSC memorandum of understanding for ECRR has expired. While the divisions continue to jointly manage the project, sharing revenues and expenses, staff and top leadership have begun to explore disengaging from our partnership in order to allow each organization the freedom to pursue related new initiatives, dissolving the PLA/ALSC joint ECRR Oversight Committee and further development of the toolkit. This direction would maintain ECRR as an existing product, while reinvesting staff and member resources in other new directions and working groups.