



KIDS FIRST *Child Care Resource Center*

July 10, 2009

Raising a Reader - Jayne Poss
0849 Mountain Laurel Drive
Aspen, CO 81611

To Whom It May Concern,

I am delighted to support the continuation and growth of the Raising a Reader program in our community. Raising a Reader encompasses 10 communities, in 86 classrooms – a total of over 1,500 children!

The diverse population in the Roaring Fork Valley, including Pitkin, Garfield, and Western Eagle Counties, consists of a range of families with young children. Many of these families may not be able to provide their children with early learning experiences, specifically literacy experiences, which are crucial to later school success. Parents are often unaware of the importance of talking to and reading to young children, and how important this is to early brain development. This lack of knowledge, training, and resources often results in families who may not own books, and others who do that may not take the time to read to their children.

Implementation of the Raising a Reader program locally has allowed us to support a large number of at-risk families and their children. As you know, such programs serve as a preventative measure, a proactive step that makes such a difference for a child and in terms of later reactive measures, such as intervention and special services, is truly cost effective and a wise investment for our community. I am so pleased that efforts and funding has continued to provide this simple, yet extraordinary program.

Kids First is a childcare resource and referral center serving Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin Counties. We are funded in Pitkin County by the .45% sales tax in the City of Aspen. Through this funding we offer grants to early childhood education programs; consumer education and childcare referrals to families; quality incentives to childcare staff; financial aid to families who qualify for assistance; and public awareness regarding the value of the early years of children's lives. Our goal is to promote quality, affordable early childhood care and education programs, and to provide access to childcare information and resources.

For this third year, Kids First is proud to help support Raising a Reader in Pitkin County Preschool classrooms, in addition to funding and programming that we provide directly. This is an exciting partnership for us; we feel that Raising a Reader is a great fit in our efforts to improve quality for all children in childcare programs!

Sincerely,

Shirley Ritter
Director

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