



**Eastern District Innovative Grant Program
Fiscal Year 2005/2006
FRED Program Evaluation**

Door County Family Living Program received a grant from the Eastern District for the Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED) Program. The program was a collaborative effort with Sturgeon Bay Library and Passtimes Books to encourage early literacy and positive father-child interaction. The kick-off event on Saturday, June 3rd featured singer/songwriter Willie Sterba and the juggling talents of 4-H Arts and Communications Specialist, Tim Talen. Participants made juggling balls from balloons and bird seed and learned the basics of juggling. Willie led the group through a variety of songs. Kids were able to try their skills with different percussion instruments, marched and weaved their way around the room as a giant dinosaur. Fathers received information about the importance of reading to their child and tips on how to make their reading more exciting. Each family received a free copy of *My Dad* by Anthony Browne.

Fathers were asked to complete a participant survey which provided demographic information including age, ethnicity, educational level, household income, number and ages of children, as well as baseline information about reading habits with their children. Dads and kids were given calendars and stickers and asked to keep track of how often they read to their child for three weeks.

A closing event on June 24th featured origami frog races, *The Wide Mouthed Frog*, read by the children's librarian, a choice of several free books and snacks. Fathers were asked to complete a participant evaluation tracking changes in literacy behavior and comments about the program.

All participants rated the program as "very good" or "excellent." Surprisingly, all the dads indicated that because of the FRED program they read more with their children. Average time dads spent reading with their children during the three weeks was 368 minutes or 6.13 hours! Comments from dads include: "☺ Great Program!" "Great reminder about the importance of reading(especially by males) to their children." "We are very happy to be a part of the program! Thank you!"

Average number of children in participant families 2.125 (range 1 – 5 children per family). Average age of children participating 4.88 years, range 3 – 9 years, median age 6 years). Twelve percent of families had household income less than \$25,000, 37% had household income \$25,000 - \$50,000, and fifty percent had household incomes \$50,000 - \$75,000 per year. Eighty-seven percent indicated they used the public library.

At pre-test, fathers spent time doing fun and/or educational activities with their children an average of 5.75 times per week. Post-test, indicated an increase to 6.4 times per week. At pre-test fathers spent time reading or telling stories an average of 6.5 times per week. Post-test indicated an increase to 6.75 times per week.

Extra books purchased with grant money for the program will be used for FRED activities with male inmates at the Door County Jail.