

Auburn Ready to Learn Preschool Literacy Night Is April 29

All Auburn preschool children ages 3-5 and their families are invited to the NET Ready to Learn Preschool Literacy Night. This free public event begins at 6 p.m. Monday, April 29, at the Calvert Elementary School Gymnasium, 2103 O St., in Auburn.

Princess Presto and Super Why, two stars of the PBS children's series "Super Why!", will be on hand to play with children and pose for pictures. The characters are super readers who use books to help solve the problems preschoolers encounter and help home viewers learn.

Auburn Preschool Literacy Night will feature seven interactive educational stations that families will visit in sequence. Six of the stations will host a mobile app based on a PBS Kids series -- "Daniel Tiger"; "Super Why!"; "Dinosaur Train"; "Word World"; "Cat in the Hat" and "Sid the Science Kid." The seventh station, NET Transmedia Lab, will show parents how to use the apps for optimum learning and fun. Participants will receive codes to download for free certain PBS apps that usually have a cost.

Snacks and goodie bags will be available for participants. Parents are encouraged to bring their own cameras to photograph their children with the PBS characters. NET will videotape some of the activities for possible use in future NET Ready to Learn promotion spots.

The annual Auburn Preschool Literacy Night has been presented by the Auburn Preschool Advisory Committee and Auburn Public Schools. New this year is the participation of NET Learning Services and the Nebraska Department of Education/Office of Early Childhood who are working with Auburn on a Ready to Learn pilot initiative.

Ready to Learn is a coordinated learning experience that connects concepts learned in preschool, school, after school, summer programs and at home to strengthen children's math and literacy skills. Ready to Learn is a national partnership between the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Public Broadcasting System under the U.S. Department of Education Ready To Learn grant.

NET Learning Services and the State Department of Education/Office of Early Childhood/Head Start State Collaboration Office are partnering in piloting Ready to Learn in Nebraska. Auburn is the first community to participate.

Ready to Learn activities and media were created by children's media producers and technology developers to create high-quality, non-commercial, age-appropriate, educational content for 2-8 year olds that supports math and literacy learning across a range of technologies. The content builds on the appeal and impact of PBS Kids characters and stories across a variety of platforms such as interactive videos, games, TV programs, online and mobile apps. The activities are mapped to national and common core standards and have proven to be effective learning tools.

“We know that these types of activities can offset learning gaps, especially for at-risk children,” said Marthaelen Florence, director of NET Community Engagement and Educational Outreach. She is spearheading the project for NET Learning Services.

Amy Bornemeier, school readiness coordinator for the Department of Education, said that nationally, Ready to Learn has been shown to be an effective tool to support children and their families in preparing for school success.

“We are excited to see the results of communitywide implementation here in Auburn,” Bornemeier said.

Amy Kroll, special education director for District 29 Auburn Schools, said the city was excited to have been chosen for the first Ready to Learn project. Auburn has mounted a preschool literacy night for several years, but it’s been geared toward 4-year-olds. This event opens those activities to more children, she said.

Ready to Learn activities will continue in Auburn through 2015. This summer, a supported program will launch at Auburn Memorial Library, which will receive a Kindle, an Ipad, a PBS Kids reading rug and signage. Children and families can access Ready to Learn apps while at the library using the tablets.

NET Learning Services is a service of NET. For more information go to netnebraska.org.

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