

Broadcast Note – spokesperson available to comment
Friday 30 April 2010

The Reading Agency responds to primary teachers' survey on children's literacy skills

Miranda McKearney, Director of the Reading Agency, today (30 April 2010) urged parents not to forget about the huge resource that is the public library.

Miranda said:

“It was dispiriting to read the results of this latest survey, and hear teachers' concerns that stories are not being told at home, as helping children discover a love of reading will not only enrich and enhance their future, but also boost their educational achievement.

“There is a wealth of free reading and support materials available from public libraries, and we want to encourage parents to reconnect with their local library and take advantage of these resources.

“We are also hoping that libraries, in a climate of impending budget cuts, will hold fast to creative reading activities and continue to come up with innovative ways to support parents – particularly those who feel nervous about reading with their children. Over the coming months we would like to see even more ideas put in place to inject new excitement into reading, by offering activities from children's reading groups to author events for young people.

“In addition, we know that families have all sorts of different time pressures, so it doesn't always have to be about the traditional bedtime story. For instance audio books are widely available in libraries, which help to develop a child's listening and concentration skills. You can read together as a family at any time of the day and in the 21st century the definition of reading is also broader than ever, meaning that a huge range of reading resources are also available online.”

The Reading Agency runs an annual Summer Reading Challenge. Last year 725,000 children, aged 4 to 12, took part. The theme of this year's Challenge is outer space. 'Space Hop 2010' will highlight books and reading via cosmic travel. The website (www.spacehop.org.uk), which will go live at the end of May 2010, supports children who take up the challenge with imaginative activities and games.

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For further information, please contact: Amy MacLaren or Rebecca Griffiths at Colman Getty on 020 7631 2666 (07980 843 088)
amy@colmangetty.co.uk / rebeccagriffiths@colmangetty.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

- Spokespeople from The Reading Agency available via Colman Getty

The Reading Agency is an independent charity with a mission to inspire more people to read more. The Reading Agency believes that reading changes lives, and is at the forefront of cutting-edge creative projects designed to encourage reading. It runs a number of high profile, national initiatives that reach out to and inspire readers of all kinds – children, teenagers, families, adult learners and general book lovers. It specialises in spreading reading by working with public libraries, and also teams up with prisons, publishers, unions, businesses, broadcasters, and others. It is supported by the Arts Council and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (www.readingagency.org.uk)

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