Introduction to TALK

An IMLS National Leadership Project

What is TALK?

TALK: Text and Learn for Kindergarten is an early literacy text messaging service developed by 5 libraries in Washtenaw County

Sends developmentally appropriate texts to parents with children 5 and under with activity suggestions and library information they can use to help prepare their little one for school success

How TALK works

Tue, May 4, 4:15 PM

PLAY: Practice math while coloring! Ask your tot to sort the crayons as you name colors. Then line them up from lightest to darkest within the color groups.

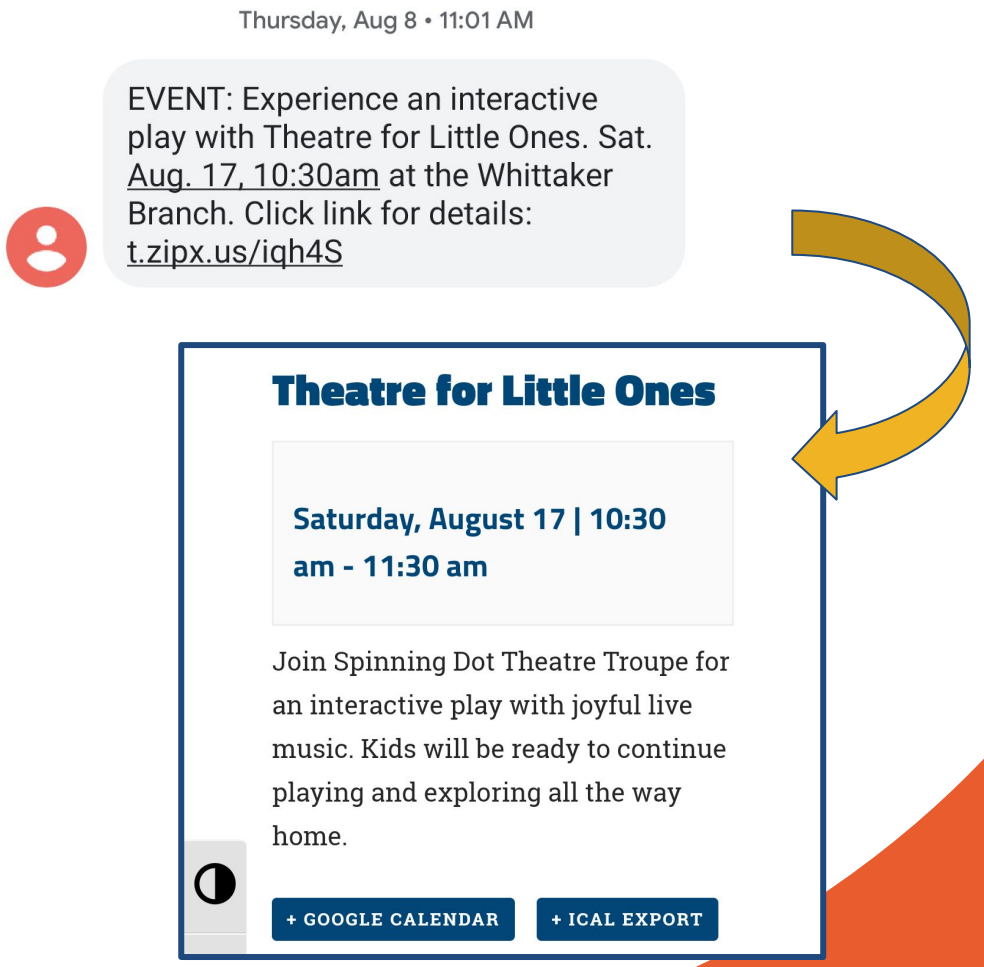
BIRTH AGE 6

Messages include...

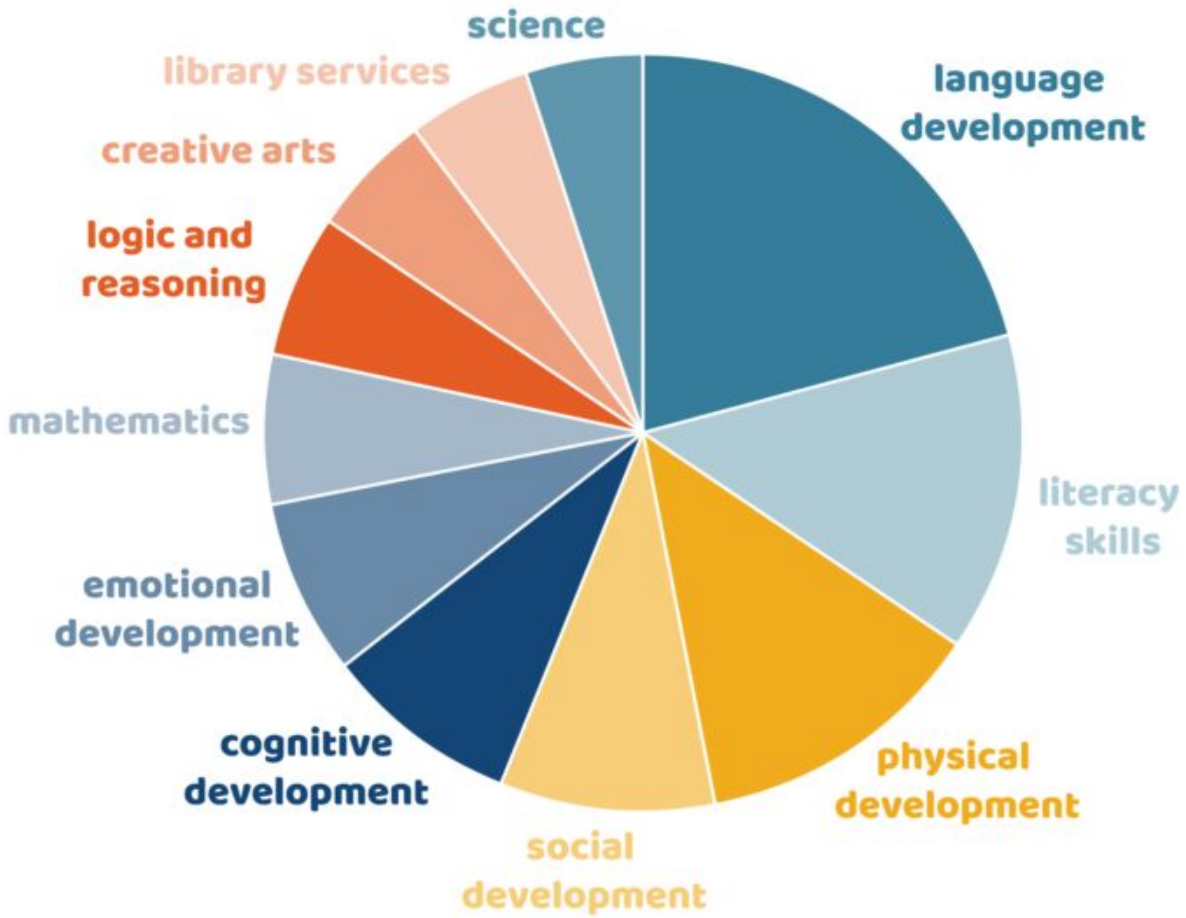
ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Tailored to a child's development level
- Only require materials available in most homes
- Often can be done during everyday routines
- Thoroughly reviewed by parents and community experts
- Links to videos, book lists, and songs on the TALK website

LIBRARY NOTIFICATIONS



Messages go beyond early literacy to build all types of school readiness skills



Who can use TALK?

Any parent or caregiver in Michigan can sign up to receive messages.

Any public library in Michigan can sign up to offer the service to parents in their community.

MIDWEST COLLABORATIVE *for* LIBRARY SERVICES

YPSILANTI DISTRICT LIBRARY

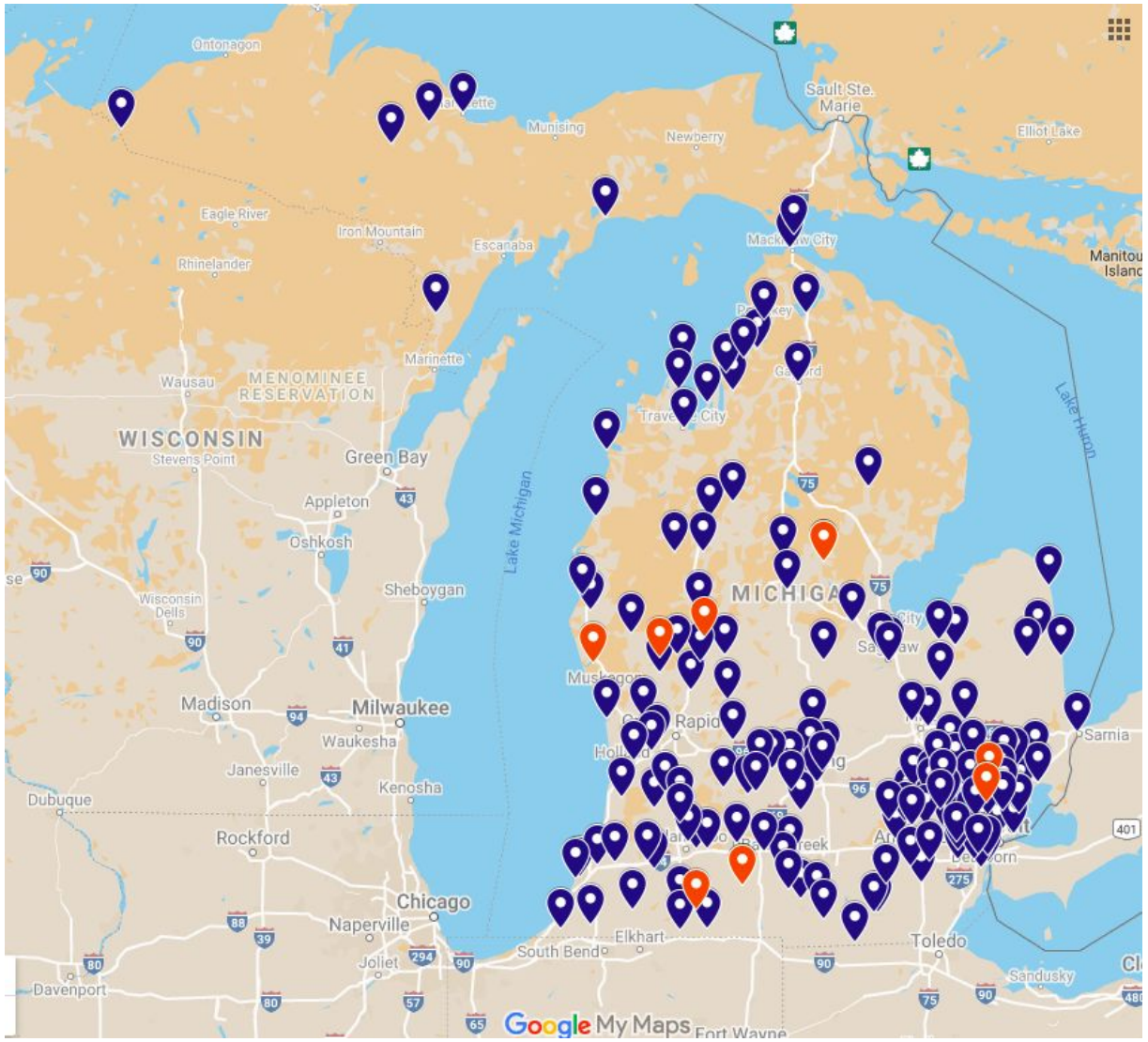
HIGHSCOPE®

LIBRARY MICHIGA

Unique features of TALK

- Posters that advertise the service have activity suggestions that can be used in specific sites
- Based on Every Child Ready to Read--a library storytime curriculum
- Allows libraries to send 2 messages/month to let parents know about library programs and services
- Helps libraries partner with all types of community partners--including schools

TALK libraries in Michigan



Promotional and partnership toolkits for libraries

- English and Spanish
- Social media posts
- Promotional materials in multiple formats
- QR code designs
- Tips and resources to build community partnerships around early literacy

TALK AS A LIBRARY PROMOTIONAL TOOL

- A library resource for patrons
- Community connections with other agencies (schools, hospitals, etc)
- Community service
- Easy for patrons to use
- Use it to promote your library programs

Promoting TALK to your patrons - QR Codes

- **Make stickers:** Share them w/ community partners, stick them in books you're donating, let staff have fun with them!
- **Laminate QR codes:** Stick them in play kits or other items that circulate
- **Put them in little free libraries**
- Add the code regularly to library newsletters, signage, or monitor displays

Promoting TALK to your patrons - Flyers

- Posters and flyers work well as evergreen materials in your library
- These are promotional tools to share and display at other community organizations to spread the library brand
- Promote along side your 1000 books before kindergarten to bolster both!

Promoting TALK to your patrons - Social Media

Use graphics from the kit to promote on your social media feeds

INCLUDE: Sample texts, and you can even ask folks to share pictures (if they're comfortable) of the activities they're doing.

Promoting TALK to your patrons - Newsletters

Include links/QR codes regularly in your newsletters and emails.

INCLUDE: Sample activity/text

SCHOOLS

STRIVING FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION

A return to in-person learning this fall has inspired Lincoln Community Schools and Ypsilanti Community Schools to focus their efforts on district-wide equity initiatives. Both school districts are working to incorporate more social justice and social-emotional learning topics into their curricula to inspire and assist students during this unprecedented time.

YCS is helping students create home libraries they can see themselves in, thanks to a Literacy Excellence Accelerates Performance (LEAP) grant from the United States Department of Education. This grant provides funding for diverse books that students get to keep, enhanced media centers, support for afterschool clubs and the Grizzly Learning Camp, and classroom-based coaching support.

At Lincoln, teachers and administrators are working to create welcoming environments for everyone. Through a grant to LCS, the Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) has started an 18-month-long professional development series, "Beyond Equity: Creating 'Social Justice Leaders for Change' in Michigan Schools." For this series, LCS teachers and administrators will take a course on social justice and education, participate in a district assessment, and develop a plan to support diversity, equity, and inclusion. After this plan is implemented, the district and MASA will assess the results.

Accessibility and early literacy are also key parts of the focus on equity. Groups from both districts are meeting regularly to discuss strategies for improving literacy, and at LCS early literacy coaching is available for teachers. Through classroom observation and collaboration, coaches will work with teachers to develop early literacy skills in their students. Coaches may also co-teach or provide resources to students and teachers.

Not only is early literacy a key skill, but biliteracy is a focus of the school districts as well. Seven accomplished YCS students—Jessica Bukasa, Angie Nicole Hernandez-Euceda, Elliott Lucas Henderson, Mariela Esmeralda Pacay-Hernandez, Fanta Kaba, Jose Alberto Medina Ramirez, and Issa Kalilou Yattassaye—were recently awarded the Seal of Biliteracy by the Michigan Department of Education. This is the first time any YCS student has received this award, which recognizes high school graduates who have displayed proficiency in one or more languages other than English.

In tandem with these equity initiatives, the need for social-emotional learning has never been clearer. Both YCS and LCS have made efforts to incorporate this into their curricula. At YCS, part of the LEAP grant will go toward professional development and social-emotional lessons in the classroom. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has also issued a grant to LCS that provides professional development sessions about the five social-emotional learning competencies.

To ensure that social-emotional learning is integrated into the curriculum for students K–12, two lesson planning resources will be used—Second Step for elementary and middle school students and TRAILS for high school students. Students will take an assessment before and after these lessons, and mental health resources will be available.

FROM THE SCHOOL CALENDARS:

December 10
Early release for LCS

December 20–31
Holiday Break for LCS and YCS

January 3
Classes resume for LCS and YCS

January 17
No school, Martin Luther King Jr. Day for LCS and YCS

January 19–21
Half day for LCS HS and MS students (Exams)

January 24
No school.
Teacher Records Day for LCS

February 09
Count Day for YCS

February 11
Early release for LCS

February 18
Early release for YCS

February 21
Midwinter Break/Presidents Day for YCS and LCS

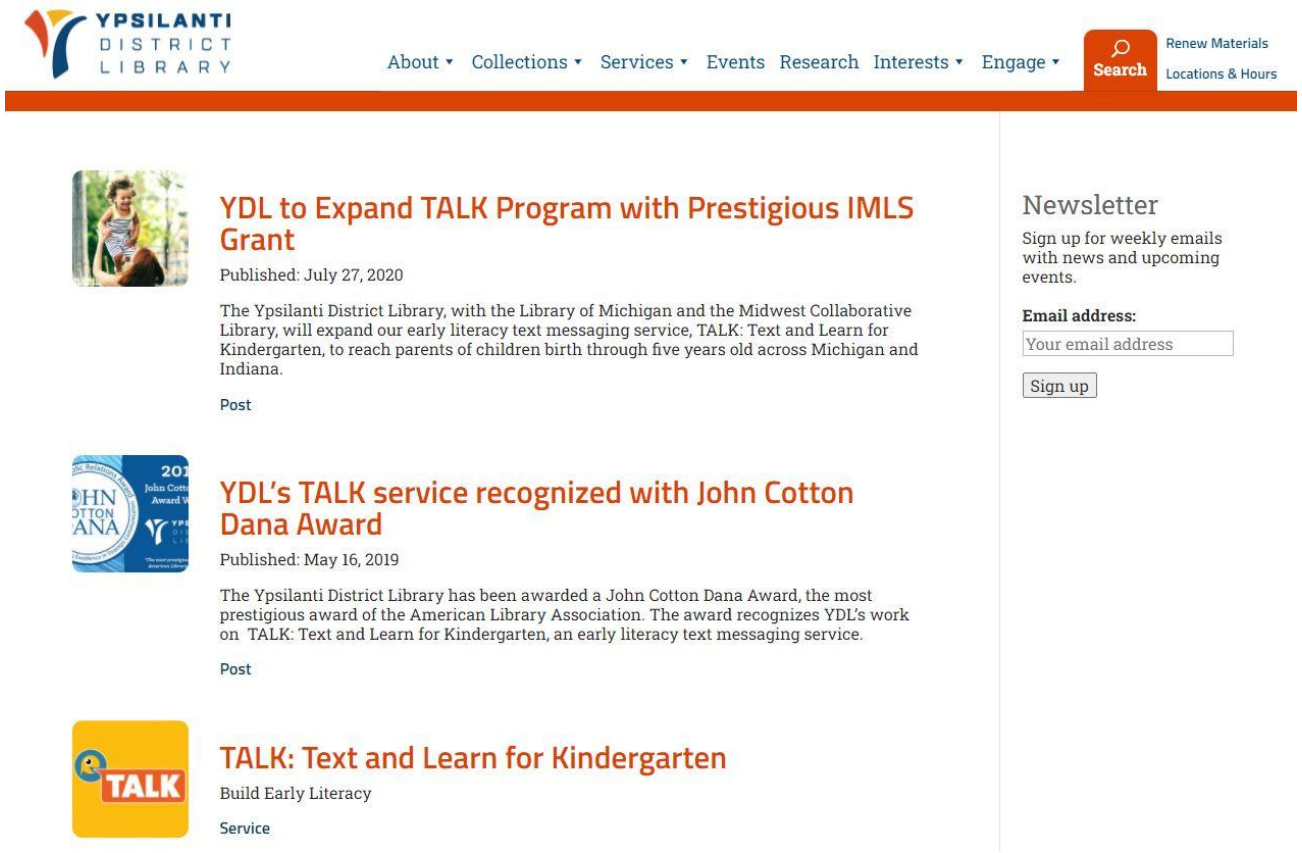
CELEBRATE LITERACY WITH THE FAMILY LEARNING INSTITUTE

Join the Family Learning Institute at **YDL-Whittaker** on December 9 at 7pm for their first annual Book and Poetry Reading Night. This event will feature Ypsilanti Mayor Lois Richardson, a youth poetry slam, and read alouds by University of Michigan athletes.

"We are all aware how difficult the pandemic has been on our kids—and reading development has certainly been a challenge," said Collyer Smith, Engaged Community Member with The Family Learning Institute. "Mayor Richardson will spark enthusiasm as she shares her passion reading her favorite book. In addition, young Poetry Slam artists will perform, as well as a very special video done by the University of Michigan Cheerleaders, to support our kids in becoming excited, and motivated, to seek out books that will inspire them."

Book and Poetry Reading Night is free, and families will receive a grab bag of food and a free book to take home.

TEXT AND LEARN FOR KINDERGARTEN

Promoting TALK to your patrons - Website

- Add it to a banner on your home page or elsewhere on your library website
- Feature regular blog posts w/ literacy tips that promote the service