

2006 Kansas Reads to Preschoolers Project Selects Book

by Vikki Jo Stewart, Special Projects Director

"Taking time to read to our kids is one of the best things we can do to help stimulate their interest and creativity," said Governor Kathleen Sebelius, "I'm honored to once again serve as chair of this endeavor encouraging more adults to read to children."

Governor Kathleen Sebelius, Honorary Chair, and Christie Pearson Brandau, State Librarian of Kansas, announced the book chosen for the "2006 Kansas Reads to Preschoolers" one book, one state project: *Bunny Cakes* by Rosemary Wells.

In *Bunny Cakes*, Wells, a highly acclaimed author/illustrator of over 60 books in the past thirty years, tells the adventure of Max and his bossy sister, Ruby, as they each make a cake for their Grandma's birthday. Max makes an earthworm cake for Grandma's birthday and wants to help his sister Ruby make her angel surprise cake for Grandma. Max's "help" results in many spilled ingredients and Ruby sends Max to the store for replacements. At the store, the grocer can't read all the items on the shopping list until Max solves the problem by drawing pictures.

"2006 Kansas Reads to Preschoolers" is an intergenerational project of the State Library of Kansas and was launched last year to highlight the importance of reading to children. The goal of the project is that every Kansas child, from birth to age five, is read to during National Children's Book Week, November 13-20, 2006.

The book for the project is carefully chosen by the following children's librarians from across the state: Holly Mathes, Selection Committee Chair, Grant County Public Library, Ulysses; Tabitha Hogan, Winfield Public Library; Amy Bayes, Newton Public Library; Madella Williams and Judy Cole, Finney County Library, Garden City; Betty Jean Neal, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library; and Christine Haines, Johnson County Library. Hundreds of books are read and vetted to ensure that the chosen book meets the criteria for the Kansas Reads to Preschoolers project.

During the project in 2005, over 20,000 children were read to by parents, grandparents, children's librarians, Mayors, elected State Representatives, middle and high school students, Friends of Libraries and library trustees, as well as early childhood leaders and workers and many, many others!

A child develops language skills long before being able to speak and develops literacy skills long before being able to read. Early childhood experts tell us that children develop much of their capacity to learn in the first three years. Reading to babies, toddlers and preschoolers can have an incredible impact on their short and long-term reading capacity. It is no exaggeration to say that

how well children learn to read affects directly not only how successful they are in school, but how well they do throughout their lives.

Tammie Benham, Early Childhood Resource Center Coordinator, KITS, The University of Kansas, chairs the Web Committee and David Hanson, Kansas City Kansas Public Library and Kate Capps, Johnson County Public Library, Indian Creek Branch, co-chair the Public Relations Committee with Linda Childress, Kansas Association of Child Care and Resource and Referral Agencies (KACCRRA).

Check the Kansas Reads to Preschoolers website at www.kansasreadstokids.org. For more information about this project please contact Vikki Jo Stewart, Special Projects Director for the State Library, 620/331-8218 or vikki@kslib.info.