

Working Group Final Report

Date: November 10, 2018

To: ALSC Board of Directors

From: Melissa Depper and Marisa Conner on behalf of the Early and Family Literacy working group

Subject: Final Report and Recommended Next Steps

Early and Family Literacy Working Group Charge:

That the Organization & Bylaws Committee should work with the ECRR Oversight Committee and the Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee to present two options for board consideration: one option will include an outline of the charges and tasks of a revised Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee *and* a newly formed Early and Family Literacy Committee, addressing task overlap, workload, and staff capacity. The second option will include an outline of the charge and tasks of a restructured Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee, which encompasses Early and Family Literacy in its charge. In either of these situations, the working group may need to reach out to other committees as needed (such as School-Age Programs and Service), if it decides to extend EL work to age 8.

Work Plan:

During the 2018 ALA Annual Conference, the ECRR Oversight Committee presented the ALSC Board with recommendations for ways to ensure continuity and development of ECRR practices. The ALSC Board discussed these recommendations, but a final decision was not reached during the conference. Instead, the directors continued their discussion via the ALSC Board listserv. Per these board conversations, the ALSC President requested that the Organization & Bylaws Committee co-chairs lead a working group to develop an outline of possible charges and tasks for two alternative committee configurations. Our unanimous recommendation, described in this final report, endorses a new Early and Family Literacy Committee and a revised Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee charge.

Summary of Findings:

In considering 1) a charge for a newly formed Early and Family Literacy (EFL) Committee with a revised Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee charge and 2) a solely expanded Early Childhood Programs and Services (ECPS) Committee, we addressed workload, overlap, and staff capacity for each option.

Regarding scope of workload and organizational support/capacity:

In thinking about the work necessary to “ensure continuity of and building on Every Child Ready to Read practices,” we developed the following early literacy responsibilities for both options:

To identify, synthesize, and disseminate current research findings relevant to early and family literacy issues from library schools, scholars of education, and other advocacy sources to libraries, childcare providers, and community agencies serving young children. To develop in-person and virtual training workshops about early and family literacy skills, practices, and research, and to update and develop ALSC resources with early and family literacy information. To collaborate with and advise related ALSC committees and groups, and library and education associations on early and family literacy issues and concerns. To serve as a resource about ECRR and the use of ECRR products available for purchase.

In the case of a newly formed Early and Family Literacy Committee (EFL), these responsibilities would serve as its charge. In addition, the charge of the Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee would remain the same (see primary ECPS charge below), with the omission of the following task: “To update and develop ALSC resources with early literacy information.” (Option 1)

If the board elects to expand the charge and duties of the ECPS committee, we recommend adding the core early literacy responsibilities (above) to a sub-committee (with a sub-committee chair) rather than to the committee as a whole (Option 2). The revised ECPS committee charge would read:

To identify and disseminate information on effective, cooperative, or innovative programs for young children to libraries, childcare providers, and community agencies serving young children (birth to 5). To develop training workshops on early childhood programs and services and present them at conferences and institutes and other institutions serving youth. To cooperate as appropriate with other ALSC committees and other associations working with the young child to initiate activities and projects. (Primary Committee Charge)

To support early literacy education, advocacy, programs, and services via a subcommittee that will: identify, synthesize, and disseminate current research findings relevant to early and family literacy issues from library schools, scholars of education, and other advocacy sources to libraries, childcare providers, and community agencies serving young children. To develop in-person and virtual training workshops about early and family literacy skills, practices, and research, and to update and develop ALSC resources with early and family literacy information. To collaborate with and advise related ALSC committees and groups, and library and education associations on early

and family literacy issues and concerns. To serve as a resource about ECRR and the use of ECRR products available for purchase.
(Subcommittee charge)

In either case, replacing the ECRR Oversight committee with an expanded ECPS or a new EFL committee, additional work may be required. Given the existing need, the scope of the tasks identified, and the number of chairs/members necessary to shoulder the load, housing early literacy within ECPS as a subcommittee does not guarantee a streamlined, more efficient workload for ALSC staff. Angela Hubbard notes via email: “Either instance will probably require a temporary spike in staff support to help establish the group, but I expect that to level off.”

The working group unanimously prefers and recommends a separate Early and Family Literacy Committee over a revised charge for the Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee with an Early and Family Literacy Subcommittee.

Regarding concerns about overlap of charges and responsibilities:

The charge of a new Early and Family Literacy committee would share broad themes and tasks with both the Early Childhood Programs and Services (ECPS) Committee and the School Age Programs and Service (SAPS) Committee, such as information exchange, professional development, and collaboration. However, we have constructed the charge of a new Early and Family Literacy Committee to carve out unique areas of responsibility, as highlighted in the next paragraph.

A new EFL committee would have a charge similar to the ECPS and SAPS committee to identify and disseminate information. While the primary focus of the ECPS and SAPS would continue to be to identify effective *programs, services, and strategies* across multiple domains relevant to early childhood (STEM, media mentorship, art, literature, etc.), the primary focus of the EFL would be to identify and synthesize *research* relevant to early literacy development.

All three committees would have a professional development charge to train and educate library workers; the ECPS and SAPS would continue to focus their training on best strategies and innovations for developing and presenting programs and services. The EFL would focus efforts on building knowledge about early literacy concepts, skills, and practices that can and should inform ECPS and SAPS programs and services.

All three committees would continue to have a collaboration charge; but the EFL would serve as a *flagship clearinghouse* for organizing and coordinating early literacy education and advocacy efforts both within and outside ALA, allowing ECPS and SAPS to concentrate on practical partnerships.

As mentioned previously, the ECPS committee currently has the charge “**to update and develop ALSC resources with early literacy information.**” Reassigning this charge to EFL would fit neatly within the proposed EFL directive to train and

educate regarding early literacy issues, and further clarify a specific early literacy role to the EFL while allowing ECPS more time and attention to support their broad charge.

We've included two charts in an addendum to this report; one that compares and contrasts charges of three committees should a separate EFL be approved, and one that, given these separate charges, shows how future projects of interest could be divided among the three committees; there need not be overlap of tasks going forward.

Regarding EFL Committee Composition

In order to insure collaboration and an exchange of information, and to address issues related to potential overlap, we recommend (in consultation with the SAPS committee) that one member of the stand-alone EFL committee be assigned a liaison role (see committee composition under **Recommendations** below). The liaison will serve as a contact with other groups working on early literacy within ALSC. While we feel that it is essential to launch the new committee as soon as possible, we also unanimously concur that, one-to-two years after it begins work, the committee consider a hybrid in-person and virtual configuration so as to guarantee diversity and inclusiveness.

Regarding a possible birth-through-8-years scope for an EFL Committee:

As the board previously noted in its discussions related to early literacy work, national education and advocacy organizations define the early childhood years as birth through age eight. In addition, the Public Library Association has identified "family engagement" as a growth area supporting all families, not just those with young children. ALSC could align with both efforts by giving the new EFL committee a scope of birth through age eight. In this way, ALSC and the EFL committee would be poised to coordinate with PLA Family Engagement efforts, as well as support both ECPS and SAPS in age-appropriate projects and initiatives. ALSC as a whole touches on children of all ages, so EFL will also be better prepared to support committees beyond ECPS and SAPS. We believe the recommended liaison member of EFL would be a vital link in this work.

Recommendations:

Based on our discussions, the working group is unanimous in supporting a separate Early and Family Literacy Committee.

Recommendation #1a: That ALSC create a new Early and Family Literacy Committee to replace the ECRR Oversight Committee, with the following charge and composition:

To identify, synthesize, and disseminate current research findings relevant to early and family literacy issues from library schools, scholars of education, and other advocacy sources to libraries, childcare providers, and community agencies serving young children (birth through age 8). To develop in-person and virtual training workshops about early

and family literacy skills, practices, and research, and to update and develop ALSC resources with early and family literacy information. To collaborate with and advise related ALSC committees and groups, and library and education associations on early and family literacy issues and concerns. To serve as a resource about ECRR and the use of ECRR products available for purchase.

The Early and Family Literacy Committee consists of nine members, including two co-chairs who are appointed in alternating years. Members are appointed from the ALSC membership at large, serving two-year terms and led by the committee co-chairs. Of the nine members, one is designated as a liaison to the Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee, the School Age Programs and Service Committee, and other ALSC groups working with young children.

The working group recommends that the Early and Family Literacy Committee consider virtual members after working for 1-2 years.

Recommendation #1b: That ALSC remove the following from the Early Childhood Programs and Service Committee charge to avoid overlap of responsibilities with the new Early and Family Literacy Committee: “To update and develop ALSC resources with early literacy information.”

Action to Be Taken: The working group asks that the ALSC Board adopt Recommendation #1a and #1b.

Thank you for your consideration.

List of the Working Group Members:

Marisa Conner, Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee Chair
Melissa Depper, Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee member
Kimberly Alberts, Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee Co-Chair
Stephanie C. Prato, Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee Co-Chair
Joanna Ward, Organization & Bylaws Committee Co-Chair
Julie Corsaro, Organization & Bylaws Committee Co-Chair

Addendum One:

The following chart shows the alignment in language and scope of the new EFL charge with the broad themes (sharing information, professional development, and collaboration) of the current Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee and the School Age Programs and Service Committee. Other ALSC committee charges (e.g. Partnerships, Children & Technology, Managing Children’s Services) were consulted; they include similar themes, but are not listed here. This chart also shows where the proposed EFL charges are designed to be distinct from existing committee charges in order to avoid overlap of tasks and responsibilities.

Key:

* ECPS charge unchanged with the exception of: moving one sentence about early literacy information to EFL; and, per request from ECPS, aligning language in the ECPS’s Charge with the language of the SAPS’s Committee Charge regarding producing and promoting materials supporting professional development for library staff and others.

** SAPS charge unchanged

*** This phrase moved unchanged from its current home in the ECPS charge to EFL

ECPS*	SAPS**	EFL
To identify and disseminate information on effective, cooperative, or innovative programs for young children to libraries, childcare providers, and community agencies serving young children (birth to 5)	To identify and disseminate information on engaging, cooperative or innovative programming for school-age children to libraries, schools, and community agencies serving youth	To identify, synthesize, and disseminate current research findings relevant to early and family literacy issues from library schools, scholars of education, and other advocacy sources to libraries, childcare providers, and community agencies serving young children (birth through 8)
To produce and promote materials supporting professional development for library staff and others serving young children (birth to 5)	To produce and promote materials supporting professional development for library staff and others working with school-age youth	To develop in-person and virtual training workshops on early and family literacy skills, practices, and research, and to update and develop ALSC resources with early literacy information***
To cooperate as appropriate with other ALSC committees and other associations working with the young child to initiate activities and projects	To collaborate appropriately with other ALSC committees and other associations working with the school age child to initiate activities and projects	To collaborate with and advise related ALSC committees and groups, and library and education associations on early and family literacy issues and concerns
		To serve as a resource about ECRR and the use of ECRR products available for purchase

Addendum Two:

The following chart provides a quick, fluid exploration of possible homes for future projects based on recommendations in the ECRR *Bringing Literacy Home* report, as well as areas identified by the ALSC Executive Committee to support or expand early literacy efforts. These would be, of course, *in addition* to current and ongoing ECPS/SAPS

initiatives. Again: this chart shows where projects of the proposed EFL committee will be distinct from existing committee work, avoiding overlap of tasks and responsibilities.

Key:

[BLH] = recommendation in Bringing Literacy Home report

[ALSCEC] = area of interest to ALSC Executive Committee

ECPS	SAPS	EFL
Identifying effective strategies by which libraries are adding early literacy content and practice opportunities to early childhood programs and services [BLH]	Identifying innovative methods for incorporating writing and pre-writing activities into school-age programs and services [BLH]	Providing additional training for librarians and staff in early literacy skills, practices, and development (possibly in conjunction with Managing Children’s Services) [BLH]
Identifying innovative methods for incorporating writing and pre-writing activities into early childhood programs and services [BLH]	Explore a framework to align literacy learning from birth through primary grades (possibly with PLA Family Engagement) [ALSCEC]	Training on incorporating research-based “learning through text” early literacy strategies into existing storytimes [BLH]
Applying ECRR report findings to ALSC work in media mentorship [ALSCEC]		Developing strategies (possibly in conjunction with LSUSC) to reach out to nontraditional and underserved families to engage them in early literacy activities [BLH]
		Identifying strategies for innovative early literacy messaging, in both format/media and content, to reach unique patron communities [BLH] [ALSCEC]
		Training library workers in advocacy and outreach regarding early literacy (possibly in conjunction with Advocacy) [ALSCEC]
		Association-level advocacy to

		external national organizations and policy makers regarding the library's role in early literacy (possibly in conjunction with Advocacy) [ALSCEC]
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