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ABC 30&3: CREATING AN INTEREST IN READING IN HOMES WHERE THERE IS NO READING CULTURE

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Commencing in early 2009, ABC 30&3 is a family literacy program designed to target families where reading is not occurring in the home, or very little. Run in parent centres or environments where the target groups are already meeting, ABC 30&3 slots neatly into their regular program over a 5 week period. During this time, the facilitator (a Library staff member) works with both the parents and children, demonstrating effective ways of sharing books with children regardless of the reading abilities of the adults. A clear message about the importance of reading to children and providing books in the home is reinforced over the program. Additionally a range of books and other resources are given to the families to keep and take home each week. The program has been developed to improve school readiness in young children through supporting and up-skilling parents who have poor literacy skills and would otherwise appear unable to support their child's emerging literacy skills. To round out the program a visit to their closest library branch is organised to build sustainability around the supply of reading material and introduce families to the value of the public library service.

The title ABC 30&3 has been designed to reinforce the principles on which the program has been developed. In 2008 The Smith Family produced a report titled "Home-to-school transitions for financially disadvantaged children" in which numerous factors were tested to predict school readiness. One of the risks identified was that if a child was read to on fewer than 3 days per week and there were less than 30 children's books in the home there was a stronger risk for low language skills and school readiness in all groups whether there were levels of financial disadvantage or not. The program encourages the families to read together at least 3 times a week and to have a supply of books in the house.

The City of Salisbury is located in the northern Adelaide metropolitan area and its population of 117,300 is served by 5 public library branches. It has numerous suburbs with high levels of disadvantage and an increasing number of refugees and new arrivals are being settled in these suburbs. Whilst funding for the program is underwritten by the City of Salisbury as it costs approximately \$100 per participant, the value of the program has been recognised by groups such as Lutheran Community Care, The Salvation Army and the Wyatt Benevolent Institution Inc., through its Early Childhood Education Grants. These groups have contributed funds towards either running the programs in their centres with new arrival groups or to fund programs to financially disadvantaged members of the community.

We believe this program can be used to advocate on behalf of the community around children, early reading and a literate Australia and social inclusion and partnerships.