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## New Report Highlights Roles of Libraries and Museums in Preparing Young Children for Success

WASHINGTON, DC - Libraries and museums are powerful, but often overlooked, resources in our nation's effort to turn around a crisis in early learning, exposing children to reading and learning experiences in the critical early years and keeping them learning through the summer months, according to a report issued today by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

The report, [Growing Young Minds: How Museums and Libraries Create Lifelong Learners](#), documents dozens of examples and 10 key ways libraries and museums are supporting young children. It provides a clear call to policy makers, schools, funders, and parents to make full use of these vital, existing community resources.

"We have to do everything we can to give all our children opportunities to get off to a strong start, and community institutions play a critical role. For parents and families, libraries and museums are a go-to resource that supports them as their child's first teacher," said Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education. "Public and school libraries as well as all kinds of museums, science centers, and zoos are trusted, welcoming places where children can make discoveries, deepen interests, and connect their natural curiosity to the wider world - developing the skills they need for a lifetime of learning."

As the nation commits to early learning as a priority essential to our economic and civic future, the report provides case studies and research documenting that libraries and museums are part of the solution.

"We know that we won't close achievement gaps, reduce dropout rates, or compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy until more of our children are reading proficiently by the end of third grade," said Ralph Smith, managing director of the GLR Campaign and a senior vice president at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. "But right now, more than 80 percent of students from low-income families don't

achieve that critical milestone. Libraries and museums are playing a vital role in reaching families and children with support that can help turn around this deeply troubling trend."

To support that goal, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) issued \$2.5 million in grants last year to institutions seeking to improve early literacy. IMLS has committed another \$2.5 million for 2013.

"With built infrastructure in nearly every community, we must fully leverage the capacity of libraries and museums to provide opportunities for high-quality early learning," said IMLS Director Susan H. Hildreth. Museum and library professionals are adept at providing hands-on experiential learning; I urge the early childhood development community to reach out to libraries and museums and make full use of their trusted place in communities, their partnership capacity, and their skills and talents."

To see the report and the executive summary, [click here](#).

#### About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

#### About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort by foundations, nonprofit partners, states and communities across the nation to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. The GLR Campaign focuses on the most important predictor of school success and high school graduation: grade-level reading by the end of third grade. [For more information, visit www.gradelevelreading.net](#).