

The Children's Mercy Hospital

Early Literacy Program

Amount Requested: \$5,527

Contact: Cynthia Jacobsen
Director of Hearing and Speech Department
816-234-3677

Children's Mercy seeks funds of \$5,527 to support 21 children and families through the hospital's Early Literacy Program. The program targets children who are at least 4 years of age and not yet in first grade who would like a jump-start on reading. About half of these children experience difficulties with speech and language. These difficulties can be observed through poor phonological awareness and negatively impact children's literacy because of the strong relationship between speech and print.

The program teaches children to discriminate and produce rhyme, to segment sentences and syllables, to recognize initial consonants and to learn sound-letter correspondence for selected consonants and vowels and syllable deletion. The program has a parental component to help families reinforce their child's skill development.

The program is not covered by commercial insurance, causing hardship for many families. Funding support helps families who are unable to pay the full cost. Children benefiting from this support include Children's Mercy patients, as well as preschoolers in three Jewish schools. It addresses a fundamental need in the Jewish community by teaching children (and parents) essential skills for learning to read.