

SUDS & STORIES

The research is clear: Parents of very young children who talk to, read and engage with them as often as possible help build literacy skills at an early age – an educational foundation that can give kids a jump-start on future academic success. Also certain: Parents of very young children usually have to do a lot of laundry. Low-income families tend to bring their kids with them to public laundromats.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Using a Spotlight Grant, Lodges can transform the local laundromat into a center for early childhood development and children's education. While guests do their laundry, children are safely engaged and entertained with supervised activities including music, reading, coloring, face painting and more.



STEP 1

Identify a Local Laundromat

Before planning an event, locate a local laundromat that is willing to partner with the Lodge. The business owner may want to contact the [LaundryCares Foundation](#) which frequently seeks out laundromats to host [free laundry day events](#) and provide literacy resources to underserved communities. To ensure attendance, Lodges should consider laundromats within walking distance for families with transportation restrictions and close to motels, low income housing, shelters or city transit stops. Additionally, ideal laundromats should have a sufficient number of working machines to handle the number of families that might attend.



STEP 2

Identify Families in Need

Examples of groups to target include schools with high percentages of low-income families, the YMCA, Boys and

Girls Club, Head Start, Big Brothers Big Sisters and more.



STEP 3

Determine Laundry Logistics

After securing a laundromat, determine the number of washers and dryers on site and the the average cost per load. You want to make sure you have all the funds you need to make this successful. The Lodge would also need to decide how long to hold an event (e.g. 2 hours), if it will limit the number of loads per family, and what supplies it will offer.



STEP 4

Make it Your Own

In order to qualify, the event must include a literacy component geared towards children. Some ideas include hosting a story time, providing free books to all children who attend, and other literacy-building activities.