

SUDS & STORIES

The research is clear: Parents of very young children who talk to, read to, 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. Parents of very young children usually have to do a lot of laundry, and families living in households below the poverty line may bring their kids with them to laundromats.



Arcadia, Fla.,
Lodge No. 1524

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 provides literacy resources to under-resourced communities. To ensure attendance, Lodges should consider laundromats within walking distance for families with transportation restrictions and close to motels, affordable housing, shelters or city transit stops.



STEP 2

Identify Your Participants

Identify families by working with the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Head Start, Big Brothers Big Sisters and other similar organizations.



STEP 3

Determine Laundry Logistics

After securing a laundromat, determine the number of washers and dryers on site and the average cost per load. Make sure you have all the funds you need to make this successful. The Lodge also needs to decide how long to hold the event (e.g. two 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 toward children. Some ideas include hosting a story time, providing free books to all children who attend, and other literacy-building activities.