



Family Fun Fest to promote learning and family engagement

A second city-wide free event focused on building early childhood vocabulary will be held in Louisville's Okolona neighborhood this fall. The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL), a national nonprofit that works to eradicate poverty through education solutions for families, will host the Say & Play with Words 'Family Fun Fest' on Saturday, September 28.

The Family Fun Fest will support learning through a variety of activities and booths scheduled for the free event, including dramatic play productions featuring local theatre groups, the Louisville Free Public Library Bookmobile, dental and health information, and fingerprinting sponsored by the Louisville Metro Police Department. Mascots from around the city, bounce houses, and food trucks will also be on-site. The event will be held at the Okolona Elementary School located at 7606 Preston Highway from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Say & Play with Words, which was implemented in Louisville by NCFL in October 2018, is a city-wide awareness campaign aimed at helping to close the word gap and give children needed support to be ready for kindergarten. The program equips parents with free vocabulary-building tips and activities—found on SayandPlayWithWords.org—to use at home or on the go; builds upon NCFL's existing Family Learning efforts underway in Louisville; and provides training for professionals working with children and families.

"Say & Play with Words encourages parents and caregivers to share new words with their children as they go through their everyday activities. It can be as simple as talking to your child at the grocery about all the colors they see in the fruit aisle, or playing a word rhyming game in the car. By highlighting Say & Play with Words, the Family Fun Fest will promote this vital resource in the community, while bringing families together for a day of fun," said Sharon Darling, president and founder, NCFL.

Development and outreach for Say & Play with Words Louisville is supported by Louisville Metro Government, Lift a Life Foundation, and Ready for K Alliance. The PNC Foundation is supporting the initiative's development, outreach, and implementation at existing NCFL Family Learning sites. In addition to hosting the Family Fun Fest, Say & Play with Words is participating in at least one family engagement event per month throughout the city.

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Founded in Louisville, NCFL has broken generational cycles of poverty through family literacy programs across the U.S. for the past 30 years. A pioneer in family literacy, NCFL's model programs have improved academic outcomes for children and fostered economic self-sufficiency in adults. Currently, NCFL is working with 330 partner sites in more than 150 communities in 39 states. Louisville has eight partner sites, the most for one city.