

Instructions for a library orientation lesson:

Time: Around 2 hours

Goals:

- Sign each family member up for a library card
- Show the family how to use the library for free resources
- Check out a simple book that may help them learn English
- What to bring:
  - A government issued form of identification for each family member
  - An electric or water bill as proof of address
  - Money for bus (if applicable)
  - Your favorite book
  - Oxford Picture Dictionary

Before you go:

- Decide where the closest library is. Can you walk there or do you need to take the bus?
- If you want, go to the library on your own before you go with the family. Explain to the workers there what you will be doing and try to plan out your excursion to that specific library before you go.
- Think about how you want to plan the library and the post office together. Which makes most sense to go to first? How can you use each to reinforce the other?

Steps:

1. Arrive at least a half hour before you will leave to go to the library.
2. Sit with the family and explain what you will be doing that day. Tell and show them what they will be doing at the library. Show them a map that shows how to get to the nearest library. Do they walk or do you need to take the bus?
3. Before you leave, make sure that the adults of the family have their government issued ID, as well as a utility bill for proof of address. At least one of these is generally required to get a library card. The children don't need anything, just their parents.
4. Once you get to the library, first help the family get library cards. The children only need to be with their parents in order to get a library card.
5. Explain that they need this card to check out these items. Also, find out how long items may be checked out for and show this to the family. Using a calendar may be helpful here. Explain that there are fines if the items are returned after that date.
6. Go to a certain section as an example of the organization of the library and the concept of alphabetization. Make sure to reinforce this as you tour around in step 7.
7. Seek out an available employee and ask them to help you show the family around. Point out all the different things that can be checked out in a library, particularly where they can find easier books to help with English. While you are taking a tour, write down the names of a few of books to have the family find later.

8. Test the family on how well they understand the library. Give each family member the name of a book to find, as well as which section it is in. Help them out with finding it, and then have a different member put it back.
9. Have each family member find a book that they want to check out that will help them with their literacy. Go to check out, step back and let them check it out on their own. Make sure they receive a receipt that says when the items are due.
10. On the way home, discuss the trip. Why do they go to the library? What can they get there? What is the difference between borrowing and owning? When will they go back to return the items?

Tips:

- Help the family find a good place to keep all of their library cards. Have each person write their name on their card.
- Help them find the number to their local library so they can call if they have any questions.
- Bring your favorite book to talk about! This can be a good means of building a relationship with the family.
- Plan a visit with the family a few days before the items are due to help them to return the books.
- Have the family borrow only books the first time, as other items are often due at different times.
- Many Denver libraries offer help seeking jobs. This could be a great resource for the parents.
- Be sure to ask at the library about free events and classes, particularly for the children. This is a good way to get the family out of the house and help the kids make some friends in the area.