## A Closer Look at Literacy Offerings

The literacy offerings category was initiated in 2013 to better record, validate, and highlight the many ways that Wisconsin public libraries are responding to literacy needs in their communities, year-round.
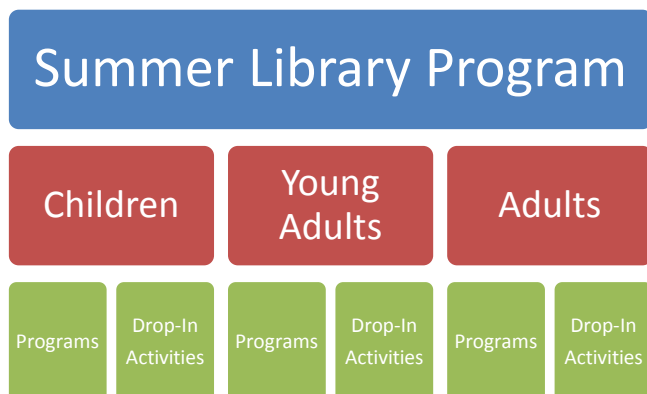
### What Is a Literacy Offering, Exactly?

This is how a literacy offering is defined on the on the annual report: a literacy offering is an umbrella event that includes programs and/or drop-in activities planned for a limited duration which specifically encourages individuals involved to read or build literacy skills in a focused way. Examples of these types of offerings include a summer library program, a winter break reading program, and an eight-week community read.

To help you understand what might count as a literacy offering in your library, focus on a literacy offering as an **umbrella** event. A literacy offering is a **set**, or **grouping**, of individual programs and/or drop-in activities. A literacy offering might be promoted with a banner or theme. A literacy offering might also be characterized as a festival or similar fixed grouping of events.

However, while it might seem that anything at the library could be considered a literacy offering, pay attention to the **duration** and **focus**. A literacy offering is an umbrella event that includes programs and/or drop-in activities planned for a *limited duration* which specifically encourages individuals involved to *read or build literacy skills in a focused way*. Literacy offerings are not ongoing; they are limited to a week/month/season. Literacy is generally defined as the ability to read, write, and communicate, though this might expand in relation to age (e.g. early literacy), topic (e.g. health literacy), or format (e.g. digital literacy).

Examples of literacy offerings include a summer library program, a winter break reading program, and an eight-week community read. All of these umbrella events would likely include programs and/or drop-in activities that would be readily identified as part of the larger event.

*Summer Library Program Literacy Offering Example*

*Eight-Week Community Read Literacy Offering Example*



Summer Library Program
- Children — Programs / Drop-In Activities
- Young Adults — Programs / Drop-In Activities
- Adults — Programs / Drop-In Activities

Community Read
- Young Adults — Book Discussion / Book Trailer Creation
- Adults — Book Discussion

**A Literacy Offering Scenario**

Pine Tree Public Library offered a "We Love Reading" program in February for all ages.    They used the "We Love Reading" theme in planning and marketing the programs and drop-in activities.  The Pine Tree Public Library youth librarian offered 4 storytime programs for children focusing on favorite picture books and offered 2 drop-in activities for children related to letter writing and post office imaginative play.  The Pine Tree Public Library adult services librarian offered 1 author reading and 1 book discussion.  A "Declaration to the Book I Love" mural drop-in activity was offered for all ages.  No programs or drop-in activities for which the primary audience was young adults were scheduled. All patrons were invited to keep track of the number of books they read throughout the month of February.  A running count of titles read was recorded on the "Fever for Reading" thermometer display near the circulation desk. The Pine Tree Public Library did not register patrons for the "We Love Reading" program but kept track of attendance and participation at each event.
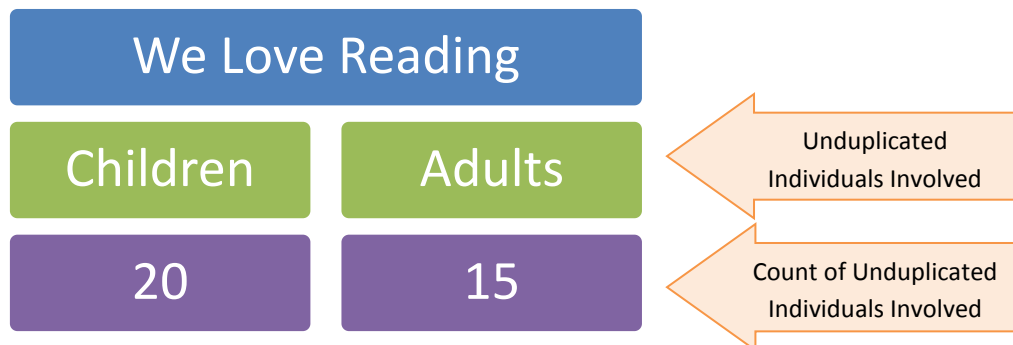
**Pine Tree Public Library
Pine Tree, WI**

**Breaking It Down**

Let's examine how the Pine Tree Public Library's "We Love Reading" event counts as a literacy offering. There is clearly a literacy focus and the event duration is limited to one month.  The "We Love Reading" theme is evident on all the individual events covered by the umbrella event.  Pine Tree Public Library should count "We Love Reading" as 1 literacy offering under "Other Literacy Offerings" since February is not a summer month.

We Love Reading ⬅ Other Literacy Offering

The number of unduplicated individuals involved would be recorded under "Other (all ages)" since the primary audience was all ages--not strictly children or young adults--and included adults and seniors.  Pine Tree Public Library would need to count the unduplicated individuals involved as those who registered or partook in the month-long umbrella offering, rather than the total attendance or participation in programs/drop-in activities related to the "We Love Reading" offering.   The youth librarian would count the 20 individual kids who were involved, even if some of the kids came to multiple events.  The adult services librarian would follow suit, with a count of 15 adults.  Pine Tree Public Library would count a total of 35 unduplicated individuals involved in the "We Love Reading" all ages literacy offering.
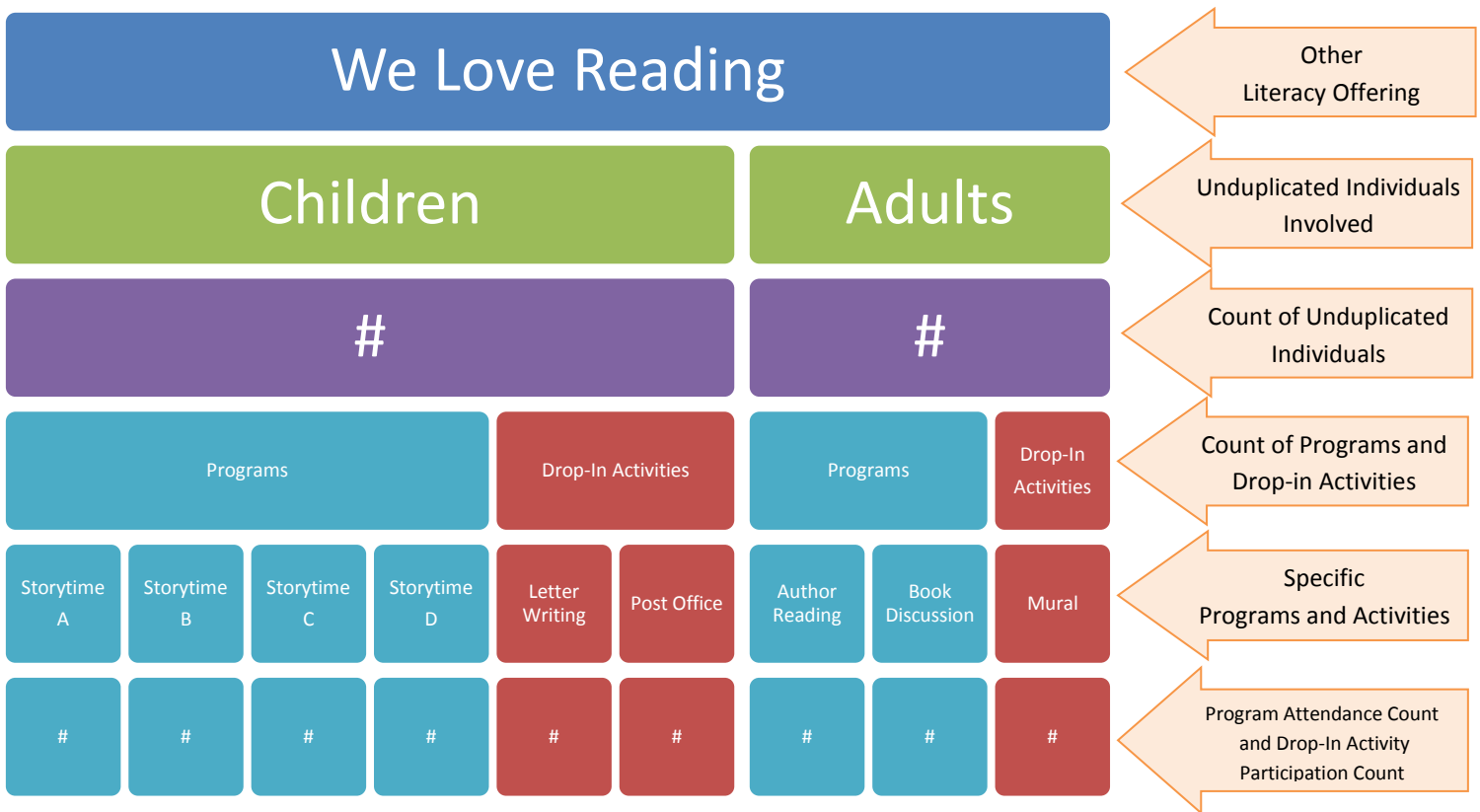
| We Love Reading | |
|---|---|
| Children | Adults |
| 20 | 15 |

⬅ Unduplicated Individuals Involved

⬅ Count of Unduplicated Individuals Involved

The program attendance and drop-in participation counts for the "We Love Reading" literacy offering will likely be higher than the number of individuals involved in the offering since it is likely that some patrons took part in more than one event.

The individual programs offered as part of the literacy offering would be counted under the programs and program attendance annual count section of the annual report. Pine Tree Public Library would count 4 programs for children [4 storytime programs focusing on favorite picture books] and 2 programs for other (all ages) [1 author reading and 1 book discussion].

The individual drop-in activities offered as part of the literacy offering would be counted under the drop-in activity and participation annual count section of the annual report. Pine Tree Public Library would count 2 drop-in activities for children [2 drop-in activities related to letter writing and post office imaginative play] and 1 drop-in activity for other (all ages) ["Declaration to the Book I Love" mural drop-in activity was offered for all ages].

| We Love Reading | | | | | | | | | Other Literacy Offering |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children | | | | | | Adults | | | Unduplicated Individuals Involved |
| # | | | | | | # | | | Count of Unduplicated Individuals |
| Programs | | | | Drop-In Activities | | Programs | | Drop-In Activities | Count of Programs and Drop-in Activities |
| Storytime A | Storytime B | Storytime C | Storytime D | Letter Writing | Post Office | Author Reading | Book Discussion | Mural | Specific Programs and Activities |
| # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | Program Attendance Count and Drop-In Activity Participation Count |

Check out the **Youth Services Annual Report Online Training Module** for sample ways to count, expanded definitions, and more examples:
https://media.dpi.wi.gov/pld/wisconsin-public-library-annual-report-youth-services/story.html