

# Books 4 Babies

Blue Mountains Library, in partnership with Megalong Books, the Friends of Blue Mountains Libraries and Blue Mountains District ANZAC Memorial Hospital will soon be launching a new program designed to promote literacy skills in children.

The program, known as *Books 4 Babies*, aims to provide parents of newborn children with the sort of resources that will support reading in the family home.

Blue Mountains Deputy Mayor Terri Hamilton said the program has one clear purpose - to encourage new parents to read to their young children early in life and often.

"As a result of the fundraising efforts of The Friends group and the partnership formed between Blue Mountains Libraries, Megalong Books and Blue Mountains Hospital, the *Books 4 Babies* scheme has been initiated to ensure the babies of the mountains are given the best start," Cr Hamilton said.

The scheme will provide each new mother at the Blue Mountains Hospital with a *Books 4 Babies* Resource kit which will contain a free board book plus a variety of materials and tips to help new parents learn the importance of reading to young children.

"Studies have shown us that the single most important activity for building the knowledge for eventual success in reading is sharing stories aloud with children," Cr Hamilton said.

The importance of reading to children from an early age has been encouraged through the Babytime sessions run by Blue Mountains Library. These engage parents and their babies through reading, rhymes, songs and finger play. It also allows parents to exchange information and has proven to be an invaluable tool for gaining support and encouragement for the hard work of parenting.

*Books 4 Babies* scheme is an extension of the Babytime sessions and a way of introducing literacy to babies and toddlers. With every reading of a nursery rhyme or singing of a lullaby, thousands of connections in the brain are formed and strengthened. It is hoped that by providing the *Books 4 Babies* Resource kit, new parents will be helped to foster a love of reading in their children.

*Books 4 Babies* Scheme will be launched at Blue Mountains Hospital maternity ward during Children's Book Week, where the first baby born on that day will receive the very first kit. Andrea Williams, General Manager at Blue Mountains Hospital is pleased that they can be involved with this innovative program.

There will be a follow up celebration at Katoomba Library on Wednesday 29 August with a special Babytime session.

For further information regarding the *Books 4 Babies* scheme or Babytime sessions please contact Blue Mountains City Library on 4723 5053.

