



SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM OF NEW JERSEY  
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### **Announcing S.A.F.E. (Supportive Assistance For Education) Families**

#### **Background:**

In August, a temporary task force was formed to ask how SCLSNJ could best create an initiative that assists the school districts and educational partners we serve during their uncertain school-year opening. The goal was to develop a strategic Young Minds and Family Resources (YMFR) effort that strengthened the Core Service of promoting and supporting lifelong learning.

#### **Summary:**

S.A.F.E. Families was inspired by Governor Murphy's *Restart and Recovery: The Road Back* education report and community needs assessment. This statewide narrative addressed new issues facing students as they returned to schools in-person or remotely this fall. The Governor's report went on to provide educators and administrators with the information necessary to ensure that schools reopen safely and were prepared to accommodate students' unique needs during this unprecedented time. SCLSNJ wanted to help with these goals too.

#### **Goals Relative to Strategic Priorities and Core Services:**

Members of the S.A.F.E. Families temporary task force worked quickly to organize content for educators, students, and families focused on professional development webinars, programs and tutorials, Google Classroom help for parents, and online tutoring for students. As a more solid framework plan was developed, the task force reached out to include colleagues in Operations and Marketing and Public Relations to lend their expertise to the process. Additionally, a letter will be sent to all superintendents and principals in the school districts we serve informing them about S.A.F.E. Families in both English and Spanish copy.

#### **Impact:**

S.A.F.E. Families also addresses issues surrounding the digital divide. While the digital divide has been an emergent issue within library communities for decades, the public health situation has increased the impact of this fractionate. More than ever before, online schooling requires a high-speed Internet connection, which is not possible for many New Jersey students and families. S.A.F.E. Families works to help assist with this important concern by first bringing about an awareness of the road map to our educational partners.

We exceeded our goal of 80% of parents and caregivers reporting that they feel confident in practicing early literacy skills at home. Between January-March 2021 surveys reported:

- 93% of caregivers said they learned something they can share with their children
- 86% felt more confident helping their children learn
- 95% intend to spend more time interacting with their children
- 88% were more aware of resources and services provided by the library