

*Assessment and Evaluation Strategies in Family Literacy
Program Development*

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**Prepared for
The National Literacy Secretariat of Canada and the
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How to Use This Guide

This guide is the result of the shared experiences over a two year period of four community based literacy programs which implemented and reviewed a variety of assessment procedures for family literacy evaluation. It is intended for:

- literacy practitioners who wish to integrate assessment activities more holistically into the family literacy activities of their programs
- literacy program coordinators and other professionals who want to develop practical procedures for making evaluation a routine and meaningful part of family literacy program development.

In Ontario, family literacy programs are varied and multifaceted, reflecting the diversity of many communities and cultures across the province. To reflect this diversity, the evaluation strategies presented in this guide were field tested in four distinct program types and have proven to be effective across different kinds of family literacy program.

An initial skimming of the text will reveal samples of different measures and strategies. It would be a mistake to use the guide merely as a means of collecting assessment measures. We hope that we have provided a framework by which practitioners may be more selective about the assessment strategies they adopt, in order to make the most of the time and resources available in their busy work lives.

The guide has been organized into six sections. The first three sections present the rationale for special consideration given to evaluation in family literacy, along with suggestions for getting started. Because we firmly believe that assessment must be grounded in meaningful literacy beaming activity, sections four and five contain practitioner based family literacy program activities linked to specific assessment strategies. Finally, sample techniques for practitioner recording and reporting, along with selected instruments, have been presented in the last section and in the Appendices.

Introduction

I think Charlie is slowly beginning to grasp the colour concept, but with some difficulty. We did the leaf print activity with sponge and paint at home and she enjoyed it. When we sorted the laundry together, we worked on colours and she is getting it.

I wonder how I can handle Amy's (2.5 yrs. old) attitude. If I say no, don't touch, she has to do it, always with a smirk on her face. Sometimes it makes me so mad I scream at her to stop, and she looks at me like I'm crazy. Sometimes I think this will never end. It really wears me down, and I wonder how much patience I'll have.

(Mothers describing some observations of their children. Both attend family literacy programs.)

When literacy programs focus on adults as parents or include parents and children together, new dimensions and opportunities for literacy learning are introduced. The images above, of parents reflecting on parenting and playing with their children, learning and teaching together, are familiar ones for family literacy practitioners. At the same time, evaluating success in such programs becomes more complex.

How do parent and child interact in literacy experiences that involve teaching and learning from each other? How may family literacy programs document the accomplishments and perspectives of both parents and children who engage in literacy activities together? What is a program's impact on literacy in the home? What is the impact of family literacy involvement on adult literacy development? These are some of the evaluation questions which family literacy practitioners ask and for which the present guide offers some solutions.

Field Tested Evaluation Process

This guide was the result of consultation over a two year period with four volunteer literacy programs in Ontario, which sought to develop practical alternative strategies to assess success in implementing family literacy initiatives. Taking the lead from practitioners who had different perspectives on evaluation, project consultants first sought to learn about each program's operations and practitioner goals for evaluation. It was the intention to develop a process for evaluation based on existing program practices, in the context of practitioner decision making.

When people begin to collaborate and genuinely share in problem solving, ideas blend together so that chosen solutions are more than any one idea and represent an intermingling or pooling of perspectives and suggestions. This guide represents ideas and suggestions which were useful in the context of four programs which participated and which fit into their current practices. Since no program had incorporated procedures for standardized assessments of learner literacy performance, this particular evaluation strategy was not considered for this project and no discussion of standardized literacy assessment measures has been included in this guide.

The wide variety of family literacy program types in Ontario reflects the multicultural and geographic diversity of its many communities. In consultation, we sought to work with practitioners from different program types in order to identify evaluation strategies which would be widely applicable. The participating programs included a rural library outreach program, a community based after school homework program, an ABE program for parents with limited English, and a school based program which offered parent and child together literacy activities as follows:

The Book Bag Club

Described as a library of books and tapes, delivered to members of the "club" in their homes by volunteers, a major objective of this library program was to make reading material accessible, in a non-threatening way, to families at home. Once contact was made, another objective was to assist families to develop activities and resources that further children's literacy development. Staff included a coordinator and four book bag volunteers. Evaluation consultation was primarily undertaken with the coordinator and visits to book bag staff.

The ABE Program

Located in a housing project comprising predominantly new Canadians, this community centre program included five components: 1) homework program, 2) adult literacy, 3) adult ESL, 4) child care program, and 5) read-to-your child program. For the purposes of this project, the focus of evaluation was the adult literacy class which integrated read-to-your child and the child care aspects of the program. The class operated four mornings a week. Consultation was with the adult literacy teacher.

The School-Based Family Literacy Program

The components of the program included: 1) a child care program, 2) adult education, 3) a reading and parent program, 4) parent and child time, and 5) lifeskills and vocational counselling. The reading and parent program (RAPP) and parent and child time (PACT), both designed for parents and their preschoolers and meeting once a week, were the focus of the evaluation project. Consultation was with the coordinator who also taught the RAPP and PACT programs.

The After-School Program

Serving three First Nation communities since 1987, three after school programs assisted students with academic subjects, while integrating concepts of the Ojibhway culture, and provide parent-child reading circles. The homework programs operated daily, at lunch time, after school, and in the evenings. Staff consisted of a coordinator and three program teachers. Consultation took place with the coordinator and one homework teacher from one of the community centres.

Guiding Principles for Family Literacy Evaluation

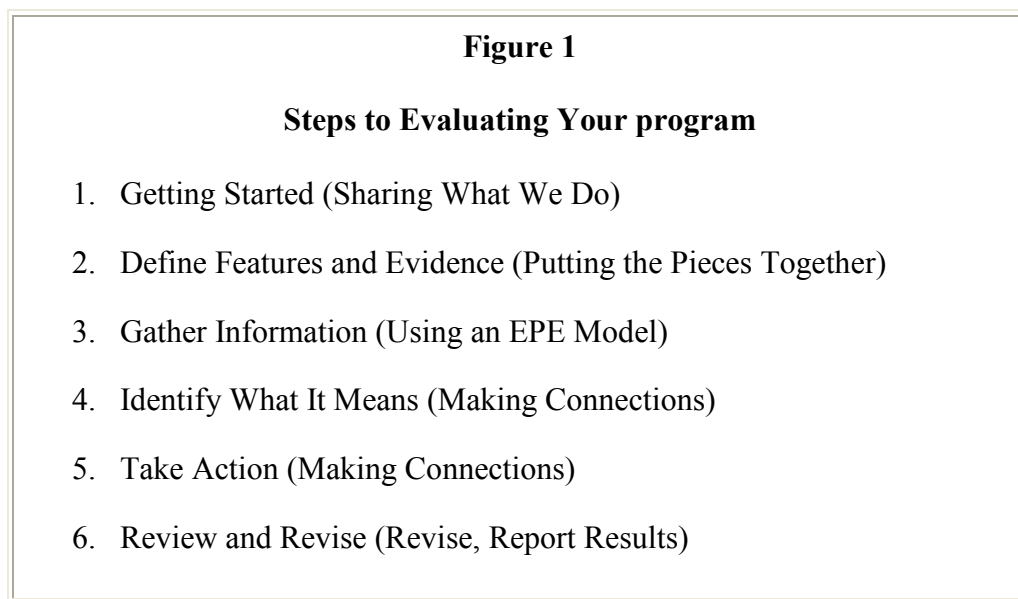
Family literacy has proven to be an effective instructional approach for adult literacy programs, because it builds on the knowledge parents have acquired and uses their strong motivation for family development to make meaningful connections to literacy learning. Family literacy programs are varied in location, target population, range of literacy goals, and instructional activities. This complexity has made it difficult to offer a concise definition of family literacy. Nevertheless, standards for family literacy programs have been offered (International Reading Association, 1994) and will be introduced in Section One.

Because family literacy is understood as an interactive, culturally responsive process, evaluation should reflect this complex dynamic and functional process. Five evaluation principles have been identified (Holt, 1994 and Lytle & Wolfe, 1989) which guided our consultation with family literacy programs in developing the present resource guide:

1. Evaluation formats should be aligned with specific family learning goals. The nature of a program's literacy experiences should direct assessment. Pick, choose, adapt, adopt ways which provide information that fits the kinds of family literacy experiences offered.
2. Consider the diverse purposes of evaluation in terms of the audiences for such information: Parents, children, literacy practitioners, funding agencies.
3. No single measure can adequately evaluate the complex literacy interactions in family literacy.
4. Evaluation decisions should be shared and undertaken collaboratively with learners to enhance their own involvement in literacy learning. Strategies which have been successful include: interviews, goal setting and monitoring, family portfolios and observation of family participation.
5. Evaluation procedures should incorporate practitioner informal observations and intuitions about learner literacy accomplishments as these observations are accurate and effective in improving program service.

These principles have been incorporated in an understanding of evaluation as a problem solving or decision making process. This problem solving model has been elaborated in a **Guide to the Evaluation of Literacy Programs in Ontario** (Ontario Adjustment and Training Board, 1995). The OTAB guide offers specific direction in conducting evaluation procedures for a wide range of literacy programs. In conducting family literacy evaluation, we found it useful to incorporate the general six-step problem solving model used by Ontario literacy practitioners within the family literacy evaluation process presented in this resource.

The similarity between the general six step problem solving model and the family literacy evaluation process to be presented is illustrated by comparing the evaluation phases identified for both. In *Figure 1* the steps involved in family literacy evaluation are identified in parentheses under the steps outlined for general problem solving in literacy program evaluation.



It is agreed that evaluation should begin with Step 1, with each step following in order. Nevertheless, the steps are inter-related, because in what questions and issues to address, it is necessary to think ahead to include planning for what the findings may mean for your program and what action you are prepared to take.

Sometimes it is necessary to work backwards as well. For example, it is common to go back and rethink what information you will *really need* and what your major priorities are. Or as you get more specific in your plan, you may realize that you should involve people you did not identify at first.

As the circular nature of the above diagram suggests, evaluation of your program and use of the standards is not a **one-time event**. Improving the quality of literacy programs should be ongoing. Think of evaluation as a tool which enables you to step back every so often in order to think about the impact of what you are doing (OTAB, 1995, p. 6).

Clarifying Terms

Throughout this Guide a number of terms have been used which relate to the approaches to family literacy evaluation used throughout this guide.

Alternative Assessment refers to assessment procedures and techniques that aim to measure the different ways literacy is used and how it develops in contexts which match actual personal, social and workplace uses. An equivalent term is **authentic** assessment. Examples of alternative assessment include surveys, observation checklists, interviews, conferencing, logs, and performance/writing folders.

Assessment refers to the application of specific tools or techniques to obtain information about program objectives and/or track learner progress.

Evaluation is the problem solving process of analyzing and integrating assessment information at different periods of time in order to set and refine program objectives, document learner progress, and determine the overall effectiveness of the program. It is understood that the aims and objectives of program evaluation will vary, depending on the stage of a program's development. Thus, Weiss and Jacobs (1988) have identified five levels of program evaluation with related effective strategies for conducting evaluation as follows:

Level 1 Needs Assessment - to document need for services. (pre-implementation of program)
Strategies: define target population, describe services offered.

Level 2 Program Documentation - to determine who is receiving services and what services are provided. Strategies: numbers served, what services used.

Level 3 Program Clarification - to improve services to participants. Strategies: determine participant satisfaction.

Level 4 Progress Toward Objectives - to determine the nature of participant progress.
Strategies: document participant progress.

Level 5 Program Impact - to determine long-term effects of program participation. Strategies: document participant progress, community perceptions over an extended period of time.

Family Literacy - The International Reading Association has offered the following ideas towards a definition of family literacy (IRA, 1994):

- Family literacy encompasses the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community.
- Family literacy occurs naturally during the routines of daily living and helps adults and children get things done.
- Examples of family literacy might include using drawings or writings to share ideas, composing notes or letters to communicate messages, keeping records, making lists, reading and following directions, or sharing stories and ideas through conversation, reading, and writing.
- Family literacy may be initiated purposefully by a parent, or may occur spontaneously as parents and children go about the business of their daily lives.
- Family literacy activities may also reflect the ethnic, racial, or cultural heritage of the families involved.
- Family literacy activities may be initiated by outside institutions or agencies. These activities are often intended to support the acquisition and development of school-like literacy behaviours of parent, children, and families.
- Family literacy activities initiated by outside agencies may include family storybook reading, completing homework assignments, or writing essays or reports.
- Intergenerational literacy initiatives are specifically designed to improve the literacy development of both adults and children. These programs view parents and children as co-learners, and are generally characterized by planned and systematic instruction for both. Instruction may occur when parents and children work in either collaborative or parallel settings. The instruction for adults is intended to improve their literacy skills and at the same time teach them how to work with their children to aid their development.

Portfolio Assessment - Assessment that places emphasis on the process of learning, learner effort, student reflection on what is learned and how it is learned. It includes logs, journals, collections of learner work, together with learner-practitioner conferences for reflection and evaluation.

OTAB Literacy Core Quality Standards - The Ontario Training and Adjustment Board has identified program standards for adult literacy based on 18 core program components as follows:

1. Program Mission
2. Community Focus
3. Commitment to Learners
4. Learner Commitment to Program
5. Respect for Learners
6. Learner Centred Approaches
7. Access and Equity
8. Learning Assessment
9. Instruction Time
10. Ration of Learners to Instructors
11. Learning Materials
12. Practitioner Training
13. Outreach
14. Support Services
15. Organization Links
16. Program Accountability
17. Administrative Accountability
18. Program Evaluation

Section One

Sharing What We Do

All too often evaluation consists of a kit or set of guidelines handed out to practitioners, for their consideration in individual practice. When program staff meet, evaluation issues are frequently at the heart of many concerns about program. Yet it is probably the case that practitioner questions about outreach, program participation, or staff training are not understood as evaluation questions. As well, little time is set aside for staff to bring questions, ideas, and concerns about how to evaluate, why evaluate this way or that, or to review the different ways other colleagues are using assessment.

There is a tendency to see evaluation as an external process which is done to or for a program in order to provide a picture of its effectiveness. This perspective is akin to seeing evaluation as research which uses precise measuring instruments developed by experts in order to provide longitudinal information about changes in literacy. Seen from this big picture view of evaluation, accomplished with sophisticated techniques, day-to-day observations about learners and programs may not qualify as real evaluation.

This notion of evaluation seems to contribute to a devaluing of practitioner/learner judgment and observation, making these judgments appear as an unreliable basis for assessing family literacy. Indeed, many practitioners are reluctant to offer their observations as valid information about family literacy development. While some practitioner hesitation is related to the desire to be objective in making judgments based on learner behaviour rather than informal opinion, some practitioner reluctance is also tied to a sense of inadequacy about evaluation expertise.

Nevertheless, because effective program evaluation must rely on practitioner/learner observation of literacy development, practitioners must develop confidence in their observations, along with willingness to construct ways to record such observations in a systematic fashion. It is by building on routine observations that a picture of program effectiveness emerges. Over time, an accumulation of observations adds up to provide answers to more complex questions about program effects on family literacy use, school achievement of children, vocational and occupational development.

Thus, a key issue in developing a framework for program evaluation is practitioner confidence about participating in the evaluation process. Based on our project experiences, practitioners develop confidence, skills, and goals for evaluation, when they come together on a regular basis to share questions about their programs. In this way they are able to develop ideas and plans for evaluation that are based on personal, informed experience, tailored to their specific needs.

The Collaborative Planning Process

While pressures on practitioner time are considerable and increasing, if evaluation is to become useful in program decision making, evaluation must become a priority in terms of staff planning time. For collaboration and practitioner confidence to develop, time must be devoted to nurture them. This requires a commitment to identifying program staff who will take responsibility for putting evaluation on the agenda and scheduling time for staff and learners to meet on a regular basis.

When practitioners work alone or in pairs, it is necessary to develop links with peers through literacy networks. Literacy networks should be aware of this need for collaboration in evaluation so that time may be allocated specifically for evaluation purposes during which different perspectives and ideas from other practitioners may be shared.

The purpose of making evaluation a scheduled priority in the form of designated evaluation meetings is to focus concerns and collaborative problem solving on pinpointing areas of program effectiveness, reviewing current practices and setting new goals based on chosen instructional approaches. In this way future agendas for evaluation can be developed cooperatively and responsibility for gathering information becomes a shared task.

The **Guide to the Evaluation of Literacy Programs in Ontario** (OTAB, 1995) is an excellent reference for an overview of the evaluation process by which to structure agendas for different evaluation meetings and when the focus is on family literacy, it should be used as a companion resource for literacy practitioners using this guide. Nevertheless, in considering family literacy evaluation, time should be devoted at the start of the evaluation process to reflecting on and sharing what family literacy means to each practitioner and what constitutes a family literacy initiative within the context of individual programs. Because family literacy is such a complex idea, it is easy to become vague about where family literacy is occurring and how to keep track of it in your program.

It is essential for literacy programs to go back to the beginning and review what constitutes practitioner concepts of family literacy. It's all too easy to lose sight of the family literacy focus, as programs struggle to accommodate the varied demands of stakeholders who support the program. At the same time, because family literacy is a relatively new approach to literacy intervention, it is common for practitioners to have misconceptions about what constitutes family literacy. For the purposes of our evaluation project criteria for good practice in family literacy programming included addressing literacy needs by drawing on the family experiences of adult learners.

While the literacy programs in Ontario are encouraged to use the 18 core program standards (previously mentioned in the Clarifying Terms section) as the basis for initial discussions on where to begin thinking about evaluation, we suggest that family literacy practitioners begin their sessions with discussion of standards for family literacy, based on the policy statement of the Commission on Family Literacy (International Reading Association, 1994). Using the family literacy discussion guide described in the next section, at least 14 of the 18 OTAB program standards can be identified in this initial stage of the evaluation process.

The IRA statement of characteristics of successful family literacy programs brings criteria for effective family literacy programs into sharper focus, by identifying those aspects which represent strengths in or obstacles to achieving success.

During our project, a family literacy discussion guide was developed for initial discussion with four participating projects, and practitioners were encouraged to use the guide in pairs for part of the time to facilitate familiarity with other programs. Based on its success, we recommend adapting the following guide for your own initial discussions. It was our experience that using the guide will engage practitioners for at least two sessions lasting about two hours each.

Managing the Family Literacy Evaluation Process Discussion Guide For Getting Started

The following discussion questions have been developed to facilitate initial reflection on the family literacy aspects of your program in light of characteristics of successful family literacy programs identified by the International Reading Association.

- "Successful family literacy programs build upon literacy behaviours already present in families. Although these behaviours may be different from conventional school-like literacy, all families use literacy in the routine of their daily lives. These behaviours should be identified, acknowledged, respected, preserved, and developed within family literacy programs." (OTAB Program Standards 1, 5, 6)
- **Successful family literacy programs respect and understand the diversity of the families they serve.** (OTAB Program Standards 2, 5)
- **Successful family literacy programs do not try to 'correct' or 'fix' the family. Rather, they view intervention as a supplement to the interactions that already exist.** (OTAB Program Standard 6)

"How does your program mission statement reflect this philosophy?"

"How does your program respect and support the diverse families you serve?"

"How does your program identify and develop literacy strengths in families?"

"What are some of the concerns or challenges related to implementing these goals?"

"Successful family literacy programs are held in accessible locations that are nonthreatening and friendly. Available transportation, child care, and refreshments at meetings contribute to creating a supportive climate." (OTAB Program Standard 7)

What steps have you taken to ensure that your program is accessible? What are the challenges to maintaining a supportive, inviting climate for family participants?

"A successful family literacy program may work with parents and children together or separately, helping families share in their learning experiences." (OTAB Program Standards 3,9)

How does your program accommodate some or all of these types of programming for family literacy?

How many program hours per week (on average) are devoted to these aspects of family literacy? Review your program timetable to clarify your family literacy contact time.

Are these hours adequate or would families like the opportunity for more program involvement?

What would you like to continue - stop - start in reflecting on the different ways you bring families together for literacy development?

"Successful family literacy programs bring parents together in support groups to share experiences and learn from one another." (OTAB Program Standards 4, 6)

What are the options for parent support groups in your program?

How would you summarize the types of experiences which parents have wanted to share in and learn from in your program?

How do you document the learning which occurs in these parent support groups? What would you like to "continue - stop - start" in the area of parent support groups?

"Successful family literacy programs seek to improve both the quality and the range of parent-child interactions in reading and writing." (OTAB Program Standards 4, 6, 8)

How does your program focus family interest on parent-child interactions in reading and writing?

How do parents/caregivers express individual learning goals which focus on parent-child interactions in reading and writing?

How do you track/document learner participation and progress in developing such parent-child interactions?

"Successful family literacy programs follow sound educational practices appropriate for the literacy development of adults and children. Varied strategies for literacy learning are used." (OTAB Program Standards 6, 8, 10)

How do you ensure that program activities support learner participation in literacy development?

What documented learning plans reflect a focus on parent-child development and parent-child interaction in reading/writing?

What kind of initial assessment does the program use to determine family learning needs?

How does the program adjust to the changing goals and needs of caregivers and children over the course of the program?

"Successful family literacy programs provide parents with ideas and materials for literacy activities in the home."(OTAB Program Standards 6, 11, 16)

What materials has your program found to be effective for literacy activities at home? Are they readily available for participants?

How do family participants choose the materials they use?

How do the materials reflect participant culture, lives, and needs?

How do you monitor parent/child progress throughout the program?

"Successful family literacy programs encourage parent input into the academic development of their children." (OTAB Program Standards 6, 16)

What activities in your program promote parent involvement in the academic development of their children?

What would you like to continue - stop - start about parental inclusion in this aspect of your family literacy program?

How do parents evaluate the program? (parent evaluations of their own and their children's literacy progress)

"Successful family literacy programs are collaborative efforts that combine the strengths of many agencies." (OTAB Program Standards 2, 14)

How does your program collaborate with other community agencies? What are the benefits of this collaboration?

What are some of the current needs for interagency cooperation and for family support services?

Section Two

Putting the Pieces Together

Bear in mind that evaluation is a problem solving process best undertaken with the adage, "Two heads are better than one." The initial stage of the evaluation process involves sorting through what is working and what is not - always a confusing and frustrating task when you are on your own. So keep meeting and don't give up!! The **OTAB Evaluation Guide** (OTAB, 1995) refers to this phase as, "defining the evidence for your program and gathering information. Actually, this is the time when you need to be able to share individual concerns in an atmosphere of positive support for ideas, where all can feel their efforts and suggestions are valued, as they try new approaches or make some tentative changes.

Although programs develop a variety of strategies to document how well learner outcomes are met, these strategies may be carried out in a hit or miss fashion, with assessment techniques which do not adequately reflect a focus on **family**, but rather focus on the individual adult or child learner. Therefore, after initial planning discussions, you will be able to clarify that certain instructional activities and related learning outcomes give a program its distinctive family literacy look and should be identified as program objectives which reflect **essential features** of a family literacy program.

At this point you will be better able to describe family literacy activities and identify related family literacy outcomes. For our participants, family literacy objectives identified as priorities to be reviewed for continued effectiveness included the following:

- increase family involvement with young children in everyday literacy activities such as shopping, bathing, eating, etc.
- increase parent-child reading at home
- increase parent familiarity with a range of play and writing activities related to reading children's books
- use family experiences as the scaffold to develop English literacy skills of ESL parents
- increase parent involvement in children's after school tutoring/homework activities
- increase self-esteem of parent and child by increasing confidence in parent-child interaction through family literacy experiences.

With objectives such as these, your evaluation group (team or cooperative) will be in a position to begin the next series of problem solving steps to help you organize a large portion of evaluation activities.

Revisit current assessment tools with a critical "family" eye

After laying out all current assessment techniques in use which relate to family literacy, it is necessary to review them and analyze individual items with a critical family literacy perspective, asking an essential question:

While family literacy program objectives aim to increase parent-child literacy skills and involvement for home literacy activities, are information gathering techniques specifically designed to obtain information on how parent and child families make use of the program?

With this critical review question in mind, identify where your current assessment techniques can be clearer in focusing on parent and child. What items need to be reworked or added? For example, a current intake form may be revised to ensure that families can participate in more contact with the program. Routine contacts with families may be documented with a little adjustment to regular progress recording notes already made by a practitioner. We have also found that making the recording of family contact more explicit, serves as a prompt initiating contact with families, while families have been alerted to the possibility of increased interaction with the program.

Use An EPE Framework To Review Your Current Assessment Approaches

Although evaluation is an ongoing process over the course of a program, it is useful to think of assessment in terms of collecting information during three time periods:

- **Entry** - When participants first enter the program it is important to obtain baseline information from learners. This information establishes a comparison point from which some judgments of later progress will be made. Select those measures that will provide a profile of literacy needs and interests at enrolment, along with other dimensions of family literacy, by which participation in the program may be later evaluated. Appendices I contains samples of such measures which were found useful by programs participating in this project.
- **Progress Monitoring** - When the program is under way, select measures which will link various program activities with family literacy objectives. Monitoring may occur quite early in the program as participants engage in reading circles, start journal writing, or play with their children in circle time. Some progress monitoring strategies may include observational checklists which remain the same and are used periodically to track progress. On the other hand, some strategies will change throughout learner participation and include a variety of performance samples such as letters, recipes, journals, etc.

- **Exit** - As the program draws to a close, select measures that will enable you to compare learner progress from entry and obtain participant feedback about the program. It is usual to readminister some measures which had been given at entry, unless the program is of short duration. As well, this is the time to summarize learner progress and participation by sorting through records you have made along the way to note the different dimensions of learner progress and to evaluate how well the program meet their needs. A later section on summary recording will offer some suggestions for staying on top of the job of keeping track of learner progress.

An EPE context provides a scheme for identifying three important periods of time in which information should be gathered. In considering the variety of program types whose average duration for participants may range from six weeks to three years, an EPE timeline must be flexible to accommodate these differences.

Thus, for a program which retains learners for more than one year, assessment following an EPE timeline is usual on an annual basis, where some assessments will be revisited with learners in subsequent years. On the other hand, briefer programs, of a few months or less, will tend to focus on entry and exit assessment techniques, while using minimally intrusive progress monitoring strategies such as attendance, number of books or materials signed out.

The range of alternative assessment approaches which may be used is dependent on the needs of the individual program and the creative efficiency which literacy practitioners use in order to maximize time spent with learners. We found that practitioners are expert at gathering information and converting this to a numerical form with information such as enrolment and attendance, books, and materials used. This kind of information fits very well into an EPE scheme, where such information is gathered throughout participation and is summarized.

More difficult to document are the qualitative aspects of a family literacy program such as parent satisfaction with program, parenting confidence, literacy development through family activity, parent goals for home literacy, and parent-child shared reading. An EPE scheme also includes alternate strategies to capture some of these factors by which program effectiveness is judged.

Our project focused on these qualitative aspects family literacy evaluation in working with programs and found that programs were well able to use a variety of strategies including observation, interviews, and performance samples or portfolios. Interpreting qualitative information will be further discussed in Section Three.

Figure 2 summarizes a wide range of assessment options from different program types, which may be used across the three phases of assessment. Decide where your current assessment techniques would be placed in an EPE scheme. You should be able to first categorize assessment tools into the three EPE piles in order to begin an analysis of what is working and not working for you in each of these three evaluation time frames.

FIGURE 2
OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES-EPE MODEL

Entry	Progress/Monitoring	Exit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enrolment interview</i> • <i>Child development screening</i> • <i>Adult literacy screening</i> • <i>Parent-child reading inventory child emergent reading check</i> 	<p><u>Caregiver</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parent reading log</i> • <i>Parent journal and</i> • <i>Home literacy checklist</i> • <i>Goal plans</i> • <i>Rating of parent-child conversation language, play, etc.</i> <p><u>Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Observation/checklist of child learning</i> • <i>Observation/checklist - learning profiles</i> • <i>Observation/checklist of parent-child conversation</i> • <i>Portfolio conference notes</i> • <i>Attendance</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Exit interview</i> • <i>Child screening</i> • <i>Adult literacy screening</i> • <i>Parent reading inventory</i>

Section Three

Using the EPE Model to Establish Assessment Routines

Start With Questions and Identified Objectives

Questions that commonly arise as evaluation teams start thinking about how to systematically gather information tailored to the needs of their family literacy programs have included:

- How to learn about current family literacy practices, when families first enter a program? What literacy experiences and beliefs do families bring to our programs?
- How to develop adequate home-program communication when the family literacy program has targeted the child as its primary client?
- How to engage adults in ABE programs in literacy activities which build on their roles as parents or caregivers?
- How to help adult learners bring centre-based family literacy learning into the home?

These questions are related to the following program objectives commonly accepted as starting points for instruction/learning in programs, as previously mentioned as International Reading Association standards for family literacy:

- to increase family involvement with young children in everyday literacy activities such as shopping, bathing, eating, etc.
- to increase parent-child reading at home
- to increase parent familiarity with a range of play and writing activities related to reading children's books
- to use family experiences as the scaffold to develop English literacy skills of ESL parents
- to increase parent involvement in children's after school tutoring/homework activities of children
- to increase self-esteem of parent and child by increasing confidence in parent-child interaction through family literacy experiences.

In essence, at the same time that we begin to ask questions about how to document an aspect of our family literacy program, we must be prepared to inquire about the program activity itself and the ways in which we engage our learners in the family contexts of literacy learning. What questions and objectives would you select in reviewing your assessment strategies within an EPE scheme for your own family literacy initiative?

For example, suppose you review a progress monitoring strategy which counts the number of books signed out to a family for a program which includes objectives for parent-child home reading. How do you know what parent-child home reading has actually occurred? Are you satisfied with the level of parent involvement in the book drop-off program? Are you able to keep track of questions posed by families? To answer these questions which relate to family literacy interaction within a program, practitioners may wish to supplement the book count strategy with another approach which can document how families **use** the books.

Review current evaluation routines from an EPE perspective to design or adapt program activities and procedures for collecting information.

The family literacy evaluation process is more than simply adding a parent survey to obtain an estimate of family satisfaction with the program. We should also be prepared to ask about and show the ways we directly communicate with those caregivers and involve them in program activities over the course of the program. We should be able to identify program activities which explicitly link literacy learning to family literacy in the home. When the program targets adults only, evaluation strategies should obtain an estimate of the effectiveness of using "family focus" strategies in fostering adult literacy.

Using a problem solving approach in family literacy evaluation means asking hard questions about what we are doing in our programs on a day to day basis and opening our practices to scrutiny within our evaluation teams. We know that family literacy represents a different approach to literacy practice and a different mindset in thinking of the literacy learner as a caregiver first and of how to include parent and child together as learners. As practitioners interested in family literacy, we know that we are on new ground when we aim to redefine program literacy experiences for families rather than individual learners.

Therefore, using an evaluation framework, whether an EPE model or a six step problem solving model, not only requires identifying a set of intake, tracking, and exit measures to document participation or satisfaction, it also requires that family literacy practitioners identify specific program activities which demonstrate that learners engage in literacy experiences as families.

In the actual meetings of the evaluation team, once you begin sorting through how you currently use assessment measures, discussions will bounce back and forth between developing a measure itself and critical reflection on the particular instructional/learning activity that relates to it. It will not be possible to separate these two aspects. For this reason, "gathering information" and "identifying what it means" stages of evaluation are critical times in which the team is very important.

Asking critical questions about how well a program activity is meeting expectations for family literacy involvement can challenge the limits of current practice. Individual members need to be able to encourage each other and offer different ideas on how to introduce and develop family focused program activities to ensure that a family literacy focus is maintained on a routine basis.

Compare currently used instruments with the samples presented in this resource guide.

This activity will help you to sort out important assessment times and objectives for your individual family literacy initiative and suggest ideas on how to adapt various approaches to your individual program needs.

First, identify whether measures, such as a parent reading inventory, selected at entry should reappear at exit. Such measures are usually related to core objectives of a program, for which the program judges that the time and effort to gather this information will add significantly in evaluating program effectiveness.

Next, review individual assessment strategies selected at entry, progress monitoring, and exit, in order to decide if they can be coded numerically to more clearly summarize changes before and after participation in program. Practitioners are usually able to rely on their experience in describing different levels of expected learner participation or expected performance across defined dimensions of literacy activities.

For example, such levels might consist of numerical codes based on judgements of participation (frequently/1, sometimes/2, not at all/3) or performance (mastery/1, developing/2, needs assistance/3). Some examples of such coded measures have been included in the Appendices. Can some measures you currently use at entry, progress monitoring, and exit be adapted so a numerical code may be developed for easier recording for later report writing about program effectiveness?

Because the literacy contexts for family interaction are multidimensional and complex, assessment strategies in family literacy programs will need to take into account the many ways in which families use literacy as well as the literacy development of child and/or parent participants. Staff and parent observational recording, parent feedback through interview or survey, as well as performance samples represent the variety in assessment techniques that can capture the more complex aspects of how parents and children develop literacy together.

Three appendices at the end of this guide contain samples of some assessment tools which were field tested over two years and are the result of team discussions and the kind of critical reflection, shared brainstorming, and constructive problem solving that is described above. It is important to be selective in choosing from the array presented. Select the minimum you need in order to get the job done. It can be very frustrating for learners to engage in redundant activities for assessment purposes, while, at the same time, it can be overwhelming for practitioners to have duplication in observation, interview, or survey information which then has to be

summarized. You are encouraged to revise and adapt these instruments to meet individual program needs.

The Appendices have been laid out in the EPE format with the first set of assessment samples designated as intake or entry procedures and instruments, the second and third sets representing progress monitoring and exit or follow up instruments respectively.

The area of Progress Monitoring has been given special attention in the next sections of this guide, in order to further illustrate the critical reflective aspects of evaluation in instructional or program activity and family literacy learning.

It should be noted that discussion of evaluation strategies centres on programs which offer a variety of learner centred literacy approaches, of which family literacy may be but one component. These eclectic family literacy program models most typically represent the way family literacy has been incorporated into community based literacy programs across Canada.

It is beyond the scope of this Guide to include the type of full day, year long family literacy program typically found in some model programs (Seaman, Popp, & Darling, 1991). While our project did not include an example of this kind of program, the school based program which participated contained a parent and child together component. Therefore, evaluation strategies relevant for centre based parent-child and child literacy activities have been field tested and are included in this guide.

Section Four: Making Connections

Family Literacy Instructional-Assessment Links in ABE Programs

Adult Basic Education programs, including programs for ESL learners, have found that introducing a family literacy focus offers adult learners opportunities to practice and share literacy skills with their families and bring real family issues into the classroom. For many adult literacy practitioners, the family literacy curriculum for ABE is an emerging one, as practitioners and learners explore how to make family concerns a basis for literacy learning. Once curriculum topics have been clarified and family literacy activities have been specified, assessment strategies can be more easily implemented.

Collaborative Curriculum Planning

In our project the ABE instructors identified several family topics which adult learners were interested pursuing with their families. In these ABE classes most learners were identified as new Canadians, at a basic level of English literacy. While the classes had a mixed age range from young adult to senior citizens, all were involved in caring for children of various ages, although several students in each class had no children of their own.

At the outset of the project, ABE practitioners identified as a major concern the fact that learners who are new Canadians come into programs with expectations that literacy learning should consist mainly of traditional grammar and spelling exercises. Because many of these students have had little experience with sharing or collaboration with other learners in the classroom, they initially find the family literacy approach unfamiliar and are reluctant to participate in informal activities which make literacy connections to daily living. Thus, learners initially may identify literacy tasks such as worksheet based writing, reading, or speaking activities the real coursework. On the other hand, activities such as informal discussions, planning for social events, or preparing to conduct an activity which would be shared by the class were incidental, low priority learning activities.

In introducing the notion of family topics and assignments which would be implemented and tried with one's family, practitioners initially anticipated that some learners would be reluctant to participate, viewing these activities as distractions from a core curriculum. It was necessary for practitioners to demonstrate that family topics could involve learners in a variety of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities at high levels of literacy skill, while offering immediate opportunities to use those skills and see the benefits directly within their families.

From this perspective, it might appear that there was little collaboration with learners in curriculum planning, as it might be assumed that practitioners set the agenda for what was to be considered. Nevertheless, this was not the case. Practitioners were positively assertive about expressing that by pursuing a family focus learners would experience many benefits, including that of integrating their literacy learning more fully into daily life. Nevertheless, goals and aims for a family focus were presented in an open-ended, problem solving manner, inviting student views about alternatives, limitations for families, and suggestions. Hence, while the practitioners always had a structure for implementing each topic, the process was a collaborative one throughout. This was evident at the close of this project, when learners had identified family gardening as another topic they wanted to pursue.

Practitioners were able to help learners confidently use their everyday experiences and family life as a basis for literacy learning by planning family activities which included the full range of literacy learning activities. Each topic lent itself to a variety of listening, speaking, writing, and reading activities which were creatively integrated into the family topics by both practitioners and learners.

The following section will summarize goals, family literacy activities, and assessment techniques that were developed for seven family topics. Each topic extended over a minimum two week period, while others such as the folktales and book making units extended over a six to ten week period. At the end of each unit summary, examples of alternative assessment techniques have been included. These monitoring strategies employed conferencing, interviews, self and group evaluation, based on the use of portfolios. Examples of materials used to maintain a portfolio format have been included as part of Appendix Two.

Parents and Children Using the Library

This topic was introduced with an invitation to borrow from an in-class library of children's books and with discussion of adult recollections of childhood stories read or told. Visiting resource staff from the local library helped parents gain more confidence about visiting the library. Parents had the opportunity to receive library cards in the ABE class and they made plans with each other to make a library visit.

Goals

- introduce adult learners to the local library
- familiarize students with computers and material available for loan
- encourage parents to take books out for the rest of the family
- encourage parents to participate in library programs - storytimes, crafts, workshops
- encourage parents to borrow books from the class library and read them at home
- become more involved in shared reading at home

Implementation

- Watch a "Read to Me" video about parent-child shared reading, followed by discussion.
- Read and discuss "Eleven Ways to Help Your Children Become Better Readers".
- Local librarian visits the class to discuss how to join the library and participate in programs. S/he brings a variety of books, children's books, videos, taped books, and shows a video of reading in the family.
- Arrange a class trip to local library, to join, explore, and take out books for home reading.
- A children's librarian visits, with parents invited to bring their young children for a special storytime session.
- Provide a lending library in class every Thursday.

Evaluation

- journal writing with suggested topics related to theme
- reading record kept, including parent and child's opinion of the book
- book reports - one book per week to be reported in a variety of ways
- parents attend one program at the library and write about the experience
- class feedback questionnaire at end of unit

Practitioners were inventive suggesting daily journal writing ideas which related to the topics covered. Thus, with the library topic, learners might write about: something enjoyable in reading with a child, a visit to the library, childhood recollections of reading or hearing stories told, reminiscences of school, etc.

A BOOK I HAVE READ THIS WEEK

TITLE: _____

AUTHOR:

FICTION OR NONFICTION: _____

TYPE OF BOOK:

THEME OR STORY:

GOOD POINTS:

BAD POINTS:

WHERE DID YOU READ THIS BOOK?

WHO DID YOU SHARE THE BOOK WITH?

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THIS BOOK (1 TO 10)?

ASSIGNMENT: A Library Program

Library:

Program: _____

Date: _____

What did you enjoy about this program at the library?

What did your child enjoy about this program?

What is one story that you remember from a storytime program visit?

Story Title: _____

One thing I remember: _____

What books did you take out for yourself or your child?

Title: _____

Title: _____

Would you go to the storytime with your child on a regular basis?

Yes/No

Why?

PARENT READERS PROGRAM

READING RECORD



NAME: _____

TITLE OF BOOKS READ

YOUR CHILD'S COMMENTS OR REACTION

1.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Folktales and Storytelling

This topic was quite popular, because the classes consisted of learners from several countries, all whom had a store of cherished folktales to recall from childhood. As caregivers began to relate the contexts in which they learned folktales of their homelands, many noted difficulties in sharing this heritage with their children who now had different experiences as Canadians with little understanding of their parents' native traditions. The folktales or storytelling topic became a vehicle for learners to reacquaint family members with stories from their homeland and invite them to participate.

Again, this topic lends itself a range of speaking, listening, writing and reading activities. As a result of this topic, one group created a class book of folktales called *Stories That We Have Brought With Us*. Two of these stories have been included at the end of the folktales unit summary.

Goals

- recognize the importance of heritage and transmit it to children
- tell favorite stories in class and take home stories to share with families
- develop oral histories
- write their own stories in correct English in book form

Implementation

- Include a unit on folktales and modern fables with listening exercises, reading circles, discussion, and related activities.
- Read and tell stories in a small group. Follow up by inviting the daycare children to be audience.
- Write favourite folktales or fables from childhood.
- Practice reading out loud, polish pronunciation, and tape stories. Invite a guest storyteller. Have a reciprocal session where learners also share their stories.

Evaluation

- Journal writing - feelings about the unit as it goes along
- all to write and tape a story
- questionnaire to take home - to be filled out by family members, after shared hearing or reading
- class evaluation of the unit

Home Questionnaire – Folktales

Name of Storyteller: _____

Date: _____

Audience at Home: _____

1. Did _____ read or tell his/her story to you?

2. Have you heard this story before? When and where?

3. Did you like the story? Why?

4. Do you think that _____ enjoyed sharing the story with you? Why?

5. Do you want to hear more stories that come from you country or the country of your parents?

(THANKS FOR ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS!)

Folktales and Storytelling

Individual Evaluation

Storytelling

1. Did you enjoy the session on listening to stories? Yes/No
Why?

2. What was your favourite story?

3. Did the Storyteller's stories remind you of folktales from your own country? Yes/No
Which story is like your own Folktale?

4. Was it difficult to follow the stories? Yes/No
Why?

5. What did your child like about the stories?

6. What did you tell your family about the morning with the Storyteller?

7. Do you tell stories of your own to your children at home?
Which stories?

Sample ABE - PROGRESS UPDATE Folktales Unit

_____ (Date)

Areas of Learning	Topics Covered	Learner's Progress
<u>Listening and Speaking</u>	Radio News	Identifies names and stories in the news.
	Current Events	Always offers an opinion - is confident.
	Story Teller Visit	Speaking more in class - enjoyed and understood the stories.
<u>Writing</u>	Journal	.
<u>Spelling</u>	Folk Tales	not done yet
	Using the Dictionary	Could use it more often
<u>Reading</u>	Alphabetical Order	No problem.
	Modern Fables	Has some difficulty with vocabulary but understands.
	Class Library	Borrows for her children.
<u>Organization</u>	Portfolio	Starting to use it.
	Attendance	Very Good.
	Participation	Always joins in.
<u>Special Notes</u>		
Joanne, I'm so pleased that you have joined our class.		
*N.B.: This is a short list of items used to not progress. You may extend the list to include a variety of subtopics under the five major literacy headings.		

A Human Is More Intelligent

By Kanha (Laos)

(My favourite story is from my country Laos when I was a child I heard this story. It is about a human who is more intelligent than an animal.)

Once long ago, a human went to a farm to look at the cows. After he saw a tiger walk from the forest and it came to see him. The tiger asked the man, "Show me how intelligent you are!" The human answered the tiger, "My intelligence is at home now if you want to see it. But I will catch you first."

The tiger said, "Why?" and the human said, "Because I am scared that you will eat my cows." Then the tiger said, "Ok, you try to catch me!"

So, the human caught the tiger and tied him to a tree and said to the tiger, "Here is my intelligence that you wanted to see!"



Laugh With Us

By Veronica (Jamaica)

Once upon a time a lkkle man
was speeding pon a country road
De car get outta control an
roll over five time an slam
into a tree.

A passerby rushover to de
crash car an see de driva
crawling out

You mus did drunk
de passerby ask
you a fool or wha?
De shaken driver retort
Of course mi drunk
What yu tink me is?
A stunt driver?



Parent - Child Biography ("Mom and Me")

Because ABE classes contain a variety of family configurations, with learners ranging from single young adults to grandparents, this topic should be introduced with an open-ended discussion of how learners can get children or others in their families to write something which can be a memento. For young single adults, this topic can be extended to include their parents, siblings, or friends. In this latter group, the process and activities of interviewing another person of their choice is the same as it was for the parent or grandparent-child relationship.

Goals

- create a parent-child made book
- encourage parent-child discussion about writing

Implementation

- Prepare an individual question sheet for parent and child (caregiver, friend) interview, based on group discussion of topics, questions of interest.
- Interview a child (or person) of choice.
- After the interview, the adult writes the story (child may illustrate).
- Parent and child do artwork together for the cover.

Evaluation

- parent journal to describe impressions of working with child (or person of choice)
- booklets on display for dayare

MOM

My Mom's name is: _____

She is from _____ and speaks to me in _____ and _____

Important people in her life are _____

Her best friend is _____

Our favourite time together is _____

Our favourite storytime book is _____

Our favourite game is _____

Her favourite T.V. show is _____

Her most delicious food is _____

Sometimes she misses _____

She loves to be my mother because _____

AND ME

My name is: _____

I am _____ years old.

In my family there are _____.

My best friend is _____.

My favourite time with my Mom is _____.

My favourite book is _____.

I love to play _____.

My favourite T.V. show is _____.

My favourite food is _____.

I love my Mother because _____.

Cooking With Kids

This topic proved to be a favourite with ABE classes. It was an excellent opportunity to integrate math related skills (measurement, fractions, and money related arithmetic for preparing the recipe, etc.) into language literacy instructional aims. Learners opted to do cooking as a group on a biweekly basis; everyone decided on a recipe to be tried and they shared bringing in ingredients. Favourite native recipes, as well as things like pizza, were made from scratch, with discussions of what were most economical ways of making items. After in-class testing, learners had to try them at home and report on how successfully these recipes were received.

Goals

- involve other members of the family in cooking
- introduce new vocabulary for creating nutritious and economical meals
- use literacy and numeracy skills in cooking
- identify ways parents can teach their children during shared cooking

Implementation

- Bring in cookbooks to be used with children.
- Decide on recipes to be tried.
- Study cooking methods and ingredients.
- Classroom cooking every second Thursday.
- Class recipe book of favourite recipes.

Evaluation

- learners must try recipes with their families
- questionnaire sent home to family to evaluate success of two meals
- conference with individual students about collected recipes in student portfolio
- learners will select on favourite recipe for class collection

Parents As People - Self Esteem

This topic was devoted to women's issues, for which a resource person from the local women's crisis centre agreed to conduct five sessions on current information for women to develop an awareness of rights and the services available. Other resource staff from health and/or social service centres have also been helpful and effective in conducting such sessions.

While these workshops for women in the class are in session, there is often an excellent opportunity to conference with male learners individually or to work with them in small groups.

Goals

- increase the self confidence of women in the class
- increase women's awareness of rights and services as Canadian citizens
- develop communication with other women in the group

Implementation

- Visit from coordinator of a women's centre for five sessions about health issues, wife abuse, women and drugs, legal issues, relaxation and self esteem.

Evaluation

- Journal writing - weekly, after the workshop
- individual questionnaire at the end of the five week session

Places to Visit With Your Children - Our City

This topic involving other family members, based on a group planned outing during each term, was an excellent opportunity to get to know others in the class and to provide new family learning experiences based on knowledge of the community. This topic was introduced from the perspective of parents as teachers and parents using the resources in the community to help the child to learn. For young adult learners without children, the parenting outcomes associated with the visit (in one case, a visit to the Museum of Man in Ottawa) continued to be relevant, while grandparents used the unit as a way to relate to their grandchildren.

Part of this unit was about considering the role of children's play in learning along with the role of parents in providing a variety play experiences for their children. Thus, introductory discussion included recall and comparison of play activities in one's native land and in Canada, together with the sharing demonstrations of games and toys from one's native lands and in Canada, together with the sharing demonstrations of games and toys from one's native land. As in previous units, this topic lent itself to a variety of integrated literacy learning such as reading maps and timetables, brochures, and so on.

Goals

- recognize kinds of parent-child play in native country
- increase parent awareness of interesting family outings
- develop new topics for family discussion based on visits

Implementation

- Learners show or tell about a game or toy from their native countries.
- Have a discussion of various possible visits, such as play parks, free city programs, recreational sites, etc.
- View a collection of books, maps, video of things to in (Ottawa).
- Make lists of phone numbers and schedules.
- Go on a field trip to the Museum of Civilization with caregivers and children.

Evaluation

- learner file on places to visit
- written questionnaire on games and toys in native country
- learner teaches small group a game from their native land
- journal writing

**Sample Group Evaluation
Post Special Event**

POST UNIT

Trip, Guest Speaker, Special Event:

Date: _____

Adult's feedback:

What did you like?

What didn't you like?

Children's feedback:

What did she/he like?

What didn't she/he like?

Should we do this again? Why or why not?

On a scale of 1 to 10, I would rate this:

Writing Books for Children

This topic was both challenging and rewarding for learners. It allowed them to combine their motivation to foster the literacy development of their children with the opportunity to explore different kinds of children's literature. This unit aimed to create a climate which enabled learners to call on personal experience and creativity in writing for children. At first parents were somewhat daunted by the prospect of writing a book. However, after engaging in the initial writer's struggle to find a theme that was personally meaningful, learners became keen to see and share their final products.

Conferencing was a key element of the instructional approach used in this unit, with some students requiring more frequent conferences than others. Nevertheless, practitioners introduced learners to the process of prewriting (thinking), making drafts, making quick notes (for character, plot), and proofreading. After the unit summary for this topic, additional discussion on conferencing and portfolio use will follow.

Goals

- identify different kinds of children's literature based on shared reading in class (rhyming books, fables, fairytales, concept books, etc.) use the creative writing process in selecting a topic of interest to one's children
- develop a storyline
- edit preliminary drafts of the story
- write a dedication page
- share illustrating the book with children engage in shared reading of story with children appreciate that writing is a creative process involving initial uncertainty followed by satisfaction through persistence

Implementation

- Have shared read alouds and reading circles to identify distinctive features of different kinds of children's literature.
- Use a **Think Sheet** to jot down ideas for creating a story (See below). Write a first draft alone or with assistance to put ideas together without attention to grammar or spelling.
- Edit a first draft to refine ideas and develop a storyline, using a **CPS** chart (See below).
- Proofread for spelling, capitals, and grammar.
- Share storybooks in class for practice reading.
- Celebrate with an Authors' Day and invite others to the class for readings.
- Invite learners to contribute a copy of their books to the class library.

Evaluation

- Portfolio contents:
 - think sheets
 - drafts (Including proofreading)
 - CPS sheet
 - conferencing notes
 - final storybook

Think Sheet

What to Write About for My Child?

Something from my childhood?

Funny?

Sad?

A lesson to learn?

A pretty picture?

Something my child likes a lot?

1.

2.

Something about my family?

1.

2.

Something else?

C P S Chart

Use different words to tell about:

- what the people in your story are like (character),
- what is happening (plot),
- where the story is (setting).

Character	Plot	Setting
strong bragging shy	ran away finds the gold chases the lion	in a dark forest at the bottom of the sea on a cold mountain

Here are some words to think about. Add more words of your own to this list.

Make sentences for your chart. (The shy boy ran away to the dark forest.)

The texts of three stories follow, as examples of the writing parents accomplished for their children. In addition to shared reading with their children, parents and children continued to work together in illustrating the final books.

The Children's Dinosaur Adventure

By Werkineshe

Werkineshe has three children and appeared very quiet with limited English, having finished up to the intermediate grades of school in Eritrea. Because her youngest son loved dinosaurs, she wanted to write a fantasy story about dinosaurs. Conferencing in which practitioner acted as scribe was important in the beginning to help Werkineshe focus all of her concentration on developing her ideas and storyline. Once she had the main elements of her story, she was able to use conferencing to develop more description.

Once upon a time there was a dinosaur and his name was Spike. He lived in Australia and he was nice and big. He had a long neck and tail. On his tail were many bumps. All the children loved Spike. They could climb on his back and he could give them all a ride.

One day Spike planned to take the children on a very special journey. First they had to cross a river. The children were safe on spike's back and tail. Gently they bounced across the waves. When they reached the shore, Spike let all the children play in the sand. They made houses and little roads and were laughing.

All at once the children jumped on the little spikes on Spike's back and went on their way. Where do we go now? Spike Just smiled and walked and walked. Soon it began to get dark and all the children became very quiet. Spike was taking them into a cave.

The cave was his home and he had something special to show them. He had a baby sister dinosaur resting in her egg. What a surprise for the children! We thought all dinosaurs were big, but this one is tiny!

Growing Up In Ethiopia by Johanis

Johanis, from Ethiopia, has four children ranging in age from newborn to age seven. It was recalled that "his eyes lit up," when he heard of the possibility of writing a storybook for his children. Written and oral English were weak, his early schooling interrupted by necessity to work on the family farm. In conferencing with Johanis in the beginning, the practitioner took the role of scribe, so that he could concentrate on developing his ideas without being stopped by attention to the written word. He started off with the intention at writing a story about a zoo, although he had never been to one. Through discussion, Johanis began to focus on the important experience of growing up on a farm. He finally settled on a funny childhood experience in which a cow ate his long scarf. When his proofread draft was complete, Johanis used the computer for the first time to produce a final draft.

Growing Up In Ethiopia by Johanis

A long time ago, I was a little boy growing up in the countryside of Tigray in Ethiopia. My father or your grandfather had a farm with many animals. He raised cows, goats and sheep. For our food we grew corn, teff sorghum, and wheat for ourselves and to sell in the city, Wukero. We lived very well and were very happy. Sometimes we didn't get enough rain and there was drought. Then we would sell some of our animals and then we could buy our food. My mother, or your grandmother was named Alganesh and she cooked lots of good food and my favourite meal was engera and chicken sauce. She would gather the milk from the cows and goats to make butter and cheese.

My brothers and I would play karisa which is like hockey only we play it in the field not on ice.

One day I remember very well it was July in winter I was looking after my father's cows. I could see the ripe fruit growing in the liham tree. It looked so delicious and was a lovely purple colour. I couldn't climb up the tree with my netsala because it would get caught in the branches and I might fall down. So I left my netsala on the ground under the tree where it would be safe. Up the tree I climbed and moving from branch to branch, I picked up the ripe, juicy, sweet liham. At last my stomach was full and it was time to climb down and take care of my cows.

When I reached the ground, I couldn't see my netsala! Where could it have gone? All around I searched and searched with my eyes. Suddenly I saw a tiny piece of cloth in one of my cow's mouth. Could it be my beautiful netsala? Fear filled me and I started to cry. Not far away, your grandfather was ploughing the field with oxen. He heard my crying and called me, "gegreyohanis! What happened?" "Oh father, my netsala had been eaten by our cow," I sobbed. My father became very angry and he punished me. I never forgot that day in all my life.

Now we are a family here in Canada. Someday I hope we will go back to visit Ethiopia, a place of special memories for me. Perhaps we can visit my mother, your grandmother, or your great grandmother and also your mother's father, your grandfather your other family someday.

The King of the Forest by Zeinab

Zeinab, a pharmacist from Somalia, has three children with one son who is slightly deaf. She appeared well able to express herself in class and worked on her own, often developing her ideas at home. Zeinab was keen to write a story for her son so that it would inspire him to be brave. Her tale of a lion also portrayed a different image from the stereotyped notion of the ferocious lion.

This story is going to take place in east Africa in the country of Somalia. This is where I was born and there are many good memories.

In Somalia there are many, different wild animals who live in the forest. There are tigers, leopards, elephants, hyena, foxes, rhinoceroses, crocodiles, and hippopotamuses, and many more. But the king of the forest is the lion. All the people and all of the other animals are afraid of the lion. His power, kindness, courage and intelligence has won the respect of everyone.

The female lion, or lioness, is aggressive and never lets go of animals or people once she has attacked. If she finds them, she will try to eat them and feed her cubs. In our language we call her, Qalanjo, which means "she is beautiful." When she is not hungry, she likes to rest and sleep under tall, leafy trees or else small, fruit trees called "gop" trees. When she gives birth she takes care of her cubs and she doesn't allow anyone to come near them. Always she looks carefully around to protect her family. She is a good mother.

The lion family always has one who is the head. That one must be the strongest of all of them and he will be the leader until he gets older. Sometimes another comes and they will fight each other. The one who wins will be the leader of the family. The one who loses can't stay in the family but will walk beside the others and still be part of them. When the family finishes hunting and eating and everyone is feeling full, then after they like to drink water in the river and bathe.

Sometimes the lion who was the leader and lost his position of power, no longer wants to remain with the family. then he lives alone by himself. For humans, this can be quite dangerous. Since he lost his place in the family, he holds much anger and is very aggressive towards others.

Although the lion can sometimes be frightening to us, he has many good qualities that we can learn. We too can learn to be kind and full of courage in our like. We can respect this "king of the forest."

Using Portfolios

Current interest in portfolio assessment and its widespread use (Farr and Tone, 1994) is based on the capability of this approach to engage learners in self evaluation and personal literacy goal setting. When learners' literacy activity is varied, with opportunity for learner choice of activity, evaluation will not be limited to teacher-determined, narrow criteria of what are correct or incorrect responses. With portfolio approaches instructor and learner are better able to focus on learner thinking, communicating purposes for meaningful literacy activity in a context which values learner judgment.

In our ABE class settings, learners were encouraged to maintain portfolios where they were able to store their work as they continued to develop ideas or revise earlier drafts. Portfolios are suitable for reading, listening, and speaking activities, as well as a wide range of writing samples. Thus, portfolios may contain records of books read, audiotapes, as well as drawings, photos, and so on.

A key to successful maintenance of portfolios is conducting regular individual conferences with students. This is most critical in the early months when portfolios have first been introduced. During these conferences the literacy practitioner guides the learner to self reflection and critical thinking about literacy activities through questioning.

Farr and Tone (1994) have suggested that use of a schematic (see Figure 3) can assist learners to use questioning during conferencing so that they may later use a similar format for self questioning during personal portfolio review. Practitioners might first introduce the idea with a group discussion on how to use self questions during reading and writing so that this can become a habit later on.

It is a good idea to model how you use self questioning when reading and writing. Students appreciate personal experiences on the everyday difficulties in making sense of what we read and write. We found that this discussion engaged learners to make up their own self questions which were meaningful, and the class usually enjoys creating a visual cue to accompany each of the key questions. Later conference notes using these visual cues will also prompt student self questioning during conferencing.

Figure 3
Thinking about Reading and Writing


1.
What do I want to learn from reading?
What do I want to say in writing?

My Purpose 


2.
What do I already know?

My Experience 

3.
Do I take time to think about my own
ideas and take notes?

Record my ideas 

4.
Do I think about what is coming next?
Do the ideas make sense to me?

Check on my understanding 


5.
Do I picture what is happening?

My ideas 

6.
Do I go back and reread if things don't
make sense?
Do I make changes?

Check it, change it 

7.
Do I ask for help?
Do I talk about my reading or writing
with others?

Share ideas with others 

It should be possible to conduct individual conferences on a monthly basis during the first three months, while also asking learners to engage in personal portfolio reflection. Both learner and practitioner discuss the learner's current strengths and what should be worked on, inserting conference notes in the portfolio. These conference sessions may be conducted within fifteen minutes or so, after some practice. It is well worth taking extra time in the beginning to introduce the portfolio idea and establish learner routines for storing materials, regular learner reviews, and practitioner-learner conferences. We have included some sample discussion topics which will assist learners to understand how to use portfolios.

How may learners keep track of all the work they do in class?

- Using a folder or portfolio helps to keep track of work, to see where progress has been made, and to clarify goals for learning. How to set up a portfolio folder'? (See Appendix 2 for a sample portfolio format recommended by the Ottawa Board of Education.)

What goes into the portfolio?

- Work, both finished and still in progress, may go into the folder including: activity sheets used for family reading and parenting; all notes/drafts for planning; parent-child reading log; completed assignments. Anything that learners are interested in goes into the portfolio.
- Learners may wish to collect: favorite poems, songs, letters, a list of interesting children's books, copies of brochures or maps, interesting thoughts to remember, personal notes on parenting, letters for children or from children, recipes.

What happens in a conference?

- Learners may use conference time to review their own portfolios. As it gets bigger, they will probably want to remove some items. Advise them to keep those things that show how they have changed and what they are working on.
- Conferencing helps in planning how to do assignments and to show the different things that learners are learning. One can see how much progress is made using some portfolio tracking sheets and questions. Every month or so, learners should complete a **Thinking About My Portfolio** note to be discussed during conference time.

Thinking about my Portfolio

Name: _____ Date: _____

What have you included in the folder this month?
(How is it different or the same from last month?)

What are the things that you are most enjoying working on this month?
Why?

What are some things that you would like help with at this time?

What does your portfolio suggest about how you are learning?

listening

Speaking

Reading

Writing

Section Five: Making Connections

Family Literacy Instructional - Assessment Links in Programs Which Include Children

Programs such as homework initiatives, library outreach programs which make books available to children in their homes, and drop-in centres which provide early childhood experiences for young children often identify as program priorities direct literacy service to the child as well as service to their caregivers. This service to parents is understood by practitioners as one of offering literacy support to the family by providing beaming experiences for children and parents together. The role of the parent is often taken to be one of supporting in a general way the program's goals for the child's literacy development. Nevertheless more direct literacy development for parents is possible.

In such programs there is a tendency to limit the amount of parental outreach or expectation for more direct parent involvement in literacy, as practitioner attention is drawn to developing child centred program activities. As practitioners, we may hope that centre-based activities will have spin-off effects at home, with parents and children using the literacy activities which they have seen modeled in the child-centred literacy program. However, it is more likely that we will have few contacts with caregivers, few expectations for specific parent participation in program activities, and limited ways of encouraging activities which families may engage in at the centre or at home.

Thinking about evaluation in programs which include children allows us to reconsider how we may extend program activities to foster direct parental participation and thereby achieve the following family literacy objectives (International Reading Association, 1994):

- to increase family involvement with young children in everyday literacy activities such as shopping, bathing, eating, etc.
- to increase parent-child reading at home
- to increase parent familiarity with a range of play and writing activities related to reading children's books.

Our family literacy team found that an effective way to connect program activity with assessment was the use of a **WRAP (Writing, Reading, and Parents)** kit in home based library and after school programs for kindergarten and grade one children.

Developing WRAP Kits for Family Use

Once our programs determined through evaluation discussions that they needed more direct involvement of parents in reading activities already established through after school tutoring or home visits with bookbags for children to use, a take-home kit idea seemed well suited to making new reading materials accessible for home use to encouraging parent interaction with their young children.

The introduction of kits into homes significantly changed the nature of communication between participating parents and practitioners. Parents became more involved in reading and playing with their children and children were quite willing to try the activities. Parents engaged in more interaction with practitioners, discussing observations of their shared reading experiences and their children's reactions.

While the kits provided structured opportunities for book related literacy interactions at home, parents also took an authoritative, active role in their children's activity, based on their confidence in the knowledge they had about their children and interest in their children's learning. It appeared that the kits changed the way the parent related to the practitioner, enabling parents to call on their natural expertise about their children. Parent input was increasingly recognized and incorporated in routine literacy activities, as parents made suggestions and asked questions about their their children's learning.

In constructing the kits, it became a simple matter to include a feedback sheet for parents, to provide additional opportunities for dialogue with practitioners and to keep track of how families used the kits. When parents understood that their opinion about the kits was valued, they were able share insights about their children's progress and literacy needs.

Nine kits were developed, each based on a children's book, incorporating a theme to extend parent-child play based interaction. We found it very helpful to call on the assistance of early childhood educators who were able to identify developmentally appropriate activities for parent-child play suggestions and to create theme related activities for the following children's literature:

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See by Bill Martin Jr./Eric Carle

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Thomas' Snowsuit by Robert Munsch

Red Is Best by Kathy Stinson

Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown

My Kokum Called Today by Iris Loewen

Amikoose (Little Beaver) by Ferguson Plain

A Pocket for Corduroy by D. Freeman

A Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats

Kit development consumes considerable time and some expense. Two educators who developed materials for this project will make kits available to practitioners who are interested in purchasing them. Contact:

Ellen Williams and Deanne Bertrand
P O. Box 98
Almonte, Ontario Canada KOA IAO
Tel.:(613) 256-4449

In addition to a book, each kit consisted of a manila type folder with inside pockets containing:

- Tape of the story and a theme related song
- Song sheet for the taped song
- Art activity (includes powdered paint, clay, cutouts, recipes, etc. as needed for the activity)
- Matching, sequencing games
- Finger plays
- A feedback sheet to be completed by caregiver

The following materials are an example of kit contents for the book, **A Snowy Day** by Ezra Jack Keats.

Sometimes | Not at all

Colouring

Drawing

Cut and Paste

Matching Games for Size, Shapes, Colours

Guessing games to names things like animals, places, parts of the body

Suggestions for playing with things in the home (pots, cooking, laundry, water)

**This week my child's favourite activity was _____
because _____**

I got my own ideas for playing with my child. The activity was not in the kit, but here is what we did.

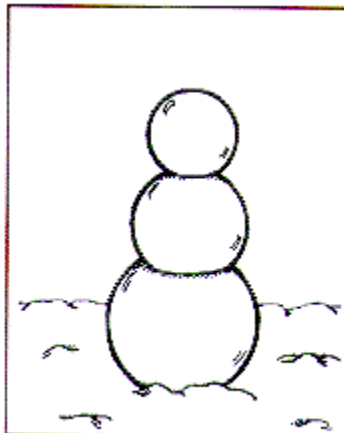
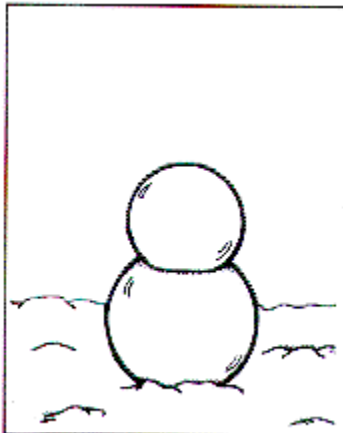
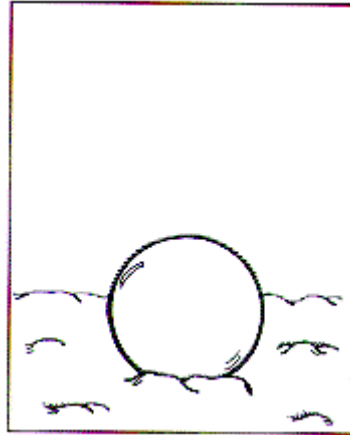
**We _____
_____**

Signature

WRAP Kit Activity for a Snowy Night

Build a Snowman

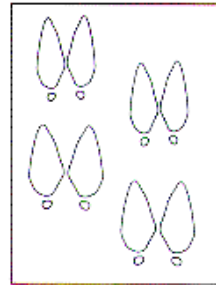
Have your child place the 4 cards in the order, from left to right, to tell a story. This is sometimes difficult for young children. You can help by "acting out" the pictures. Have your child find the correct picture for each action.



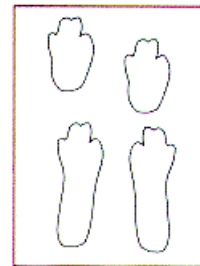
WRAP Kit Activity for a Snowy Night

Animal Footprints

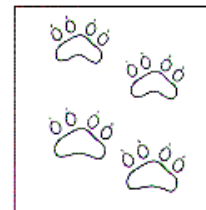
Play "match the footprint" by placing the picture of the animal beside its footprint



Squirrel

A box containing a silhouette of a squirrel on the right and four small, hand-shaped prints on the left. The prints have five distinct fingers.

Fox

A box containing a silhouette of a fox on the left and four paw prints on the right. Each paw print has four distinct toes.

Rabbit

A box containing a silhouette of a rabbit on the left and four prints on the right. The top two prints are small and hand-shaped with five fingers. The bottom two prints are larger and more elongated with five fingers.

Deer

A box containing a silhouette of a deer on the right and six teardrop-shaped prints on the left. The prints are arranged in two columns of three.



Chubby Little Snowman - Fingerplay

A chubby little snowman had a carrot nose.

Form snowman with right fist.

Along came a bunny, and what do you suppose?

Hold two middle fingers of left hand down with thumb to form bunny. Let him hop toward snowman.

That hungry little bunny, looking for his lunch,

Ate that snowman's carrot nose, nibble, nibble, crunch!

Bunny grabs snowman's nose and nibbles.



Art Activity

Materials:

- Powdered paint
- Dish detergent
- long strip of paper

You may want to do this activity right before bath time!

On a cookie sheet or pie plate, mix the powdered paint with water and a little dish detergent to form a thin paste. Have your child step in the paint with bare feet and then walk down the long strip of paper to make a line of footprints. When the paint is dry, tape the strip to the wall or even the ceiling.

Linking Kit Activity and Assessment to Decisions About Practitioner Training

It is certainly not appropriate to simply send a kit home with a child, followed by a phone call or note encouraging parents to try it. Many caregivers need some direction and support, which can best be offered during face to face communication. Such contact goes a long way to develop parental confidence in and understanding of how to use literacy based play activities with young children.

There should be clear communication about the who, why, what, and when of the feedback sheet accompanying the kit. Parents respond positively when they know that their ideas and opinions about kit use are important to help the program develop. Details about how to fill out the feedback form and when and how kits are to be returned, are all important preliminary details that can be clarified.

For some parents, previewing the child's book with another person is an important first step in increasing confidence and enthusiasm about using kit materials. Consequently, it was decided that in order for the kits to be maximally effective, preparation sessions with parents were necessary, either through home visits or arranged visits to centres.

In thinking about how to introduce the kit activity, our team found that related practitioner training issues emerged. Literacy practitioners want suggestions on how to communicate positively with parents in such face to face meetings, suggestions on how to adopt an instructional role which is nonthreatening, and activities that will guide parents to participate in kit reading activities with their children. It was necessary to take additional steps to adequately prepare practitioners for parent meetings on how to use the kits. Consequently, we prepared an agenda and scripted discussion topics to assist practitioners structure initial and follow up conversations with parents. This resource is found at the end of this chapter.

Before leaving the issue of practitioner training, it should be noted that once parents begin using interactive literacy materials with their children, they often become more interested in wanting to know what else they can do at home with their children. Once parents become involved, practitioners may find that parents have raised expectations for what the program can offer and will want to further involve practitioners in literacy interactions. Thus, a subtle shift will have occurred toward resetting goals and objectives and requiring additional practitioner skills, based on this increased parent involvement. Programs should anticipate that such changes for parent involvement will make increased demands on practitioner expertise so specific training needs should be addressed to assure that practitioners are ready to improve the program.

On the other hand, the WRAP feedback sheet also provides practitioners with specific information on the level of use by a family. What happens when feedback indicates that kit reading is not done at all, or done infrequently? Practitioners may be reluctant to

address these aspects of progress monitoring for fear of disrupting positive relationships with learners. Here again, these issues of practitioner training should be addressed within programs with supportive and constructive direction for practitioners. Workshops which role play interactions between parent and practitioner and demonstrate the effectiveness of practitioner modeling are useful to generate practitioner discussion of solutions to questions concerning the unresponsive parent. This practitioner follow-up is necessary if the evaluation activities which have been adopted are to continue to be used to make meaningful changes in family literacy experiences.

A strongly recommended resource for communicating with parents on a range of parent-child issues is the Canadian text, **You Make A Difference** (Manolson, Ward, and Dodington, 1995), written for parents in plain English, with appealing graphics. It was useful to use this text's section on shared reading, as it helped practitioners develop greater familiarity with simple descriptions of parent-child reading experiences which could be shared at parent sessions.

Practitioners found the following format useful for introducing the kits, because it provided some structured suggestions for topics to be included in sessions and helped them to rehearse their own explanations of why the kit approach can be so valuable for parents of young children.

GUIDELINES FOR INTRODUCING WRAP KITS

Before You Meet the Parent (or Group of Parents)

1. Gather your own ideas about reading with children. Why is it valuable for parents to read with their young children? Read over the section of You Make A Difference on shared reading to see how others explain the importance of parent - child shared reading. Write down 2 or 3 of your own reasons so you can talk about it with parents.
2. Check over the kits to make sure that each one is complete. Make a master copy of any consumable item (cut-outs, task sheets) so you can refill the kits before sending them on to the next person.

At the First Meeting with the Parent/s

There are 3 topics to cover in this first meeting which could last about 15 - 20 minutes: (1) Reading with children is important, (2) How to use the kit. (3) Tips for parent reading with children.

The following topics include some suggestions for what to discuss in the first meeting.

1. Reading with Children is Important.

Sharing storybooks with young children is one of the best gifts a parent can give. It gives families a chance to be together, it gives children memories of family togetherness. Here are some pictures of different families sharing storybooks. A picture says a thousand words. What do you notice about these pictures?.... I am pleased to be able bring you these WRAP kits so you can share storybooks with.. (child's name).. at home.

(To the parent) "Why do you think it is important for parents to read at home with their children?"... "Yes, reading together brings families closer together, the young child learns to love reading, they learn to think and talk about the stories."

2. Using the Kit

"This kit has an interesting book for reading with your child and some activities for playing with your child. There are lots of things in a book to interest a child. Make sure you stop and talk about the book."

"You don't have to read right through. Read as much as you want, as long as _____ is interested. Even a few minutes is fine, just looking at the pictures together."

"Let's take a look at this book." (Go through some of the pages together. Be enthusiastic about the pictures, or the way the story rhymes or uses a repeating story line.)

"There's a tape here too. You both could listen to the tape together, instead of reading. Would you do that?"

"You will be able to use the kit for 1 week. I hope that you will be able to find time to read each day and also try some of the games with your child." (Show each item in the kit. Point out how the parent playing with the child teaches colour names, shapes, drawing, etc.)

"Next week (or in 2 weeks)... (state the arrangement for face-to-face return of the kit so you can give the parents the next kit and find out how they are doing to try to encourage participation.)"

"Please fill out the parent survey, when you have finished the kit. Your ideas and comments will help me find out how the kits are working, so that we can improve the kits for future use."

3. Tips for Shared Reading

- Help the parent or group of parents plan for home reading in order to make it a successful experience. Talk to them about the specifics of how, when, and where they will read with their children during the week. Focus on the chance for quiet time together. Let the parent suggest some times she or he thinks would be best.
- Recommend that parent show enthusiasm for the book and make the child feel that this is a special time for the two of them to be together. Read parts of the book yourself with the parent to show your own enthusiasm and to model how such techniques as changing voice or inflection can develop child interest.
- Go through parts of the book with parents, noting how parents can draw the child's attention to pictures in the book in order to engage the child in talking about what s/he sees and in guessing what s/he thinks the book is about and what will happen next.

Follow Up Meetings

The kits should be returned to you in person. You will pick up the parent feedback sheet and you will have a chance to chat with the parent, to find out how they are progressing and to help with any problems or questions that might arise.

Look over *You Make A Difference* again, even read it with the parents. The book offers suggestions on how to relax in shared story reading and how to maintain the child's interest. It also offers tips on playing with your child, which is useful if parents have questions about trying the WRAP activities.

The emphasis should be on using the storybook and the other WRAP activities as a time for pleasant conversation. Encourage the parent not to give up, if the child is squirmy. Suggest to keep the reading time or the play time short, but keep at it. You are an important person to listen to the caregiver, encourage him or her, and recognize the important job that this person is doing as a parent.

Section Six

Reporting on Progress, Drawing Conclusions

In examining assessment tools in the Appendices, together with the feedback sheet used with WRAP kits, learner unit assignments and portfolios from ABE classes, it can be seen that a variety of alternative assessment strategies are available to practitioners over the course of a program, including:

- Interviews
- Ratings based on observations
- Surveys
- Learner work samples
- Program records (such as enrolment figures, attendance)

Recording routines need to be introduced in order to summarize information in a manageable fashion. Some common sense rules are excellent guides for establishing recording routines.

Don't Put It Off - Do Summary Recording Periodically

After learners enroll, you will be able to obtain some initial background and baseline information; take time to summarize this information for the entire learner group. For family literacy programs, entry information about transportation and health needs, as well as past and current school experiences of parents and children provide a valuable baseline by which to later judge how well the program was able to accommodate learners in view of these needs. Summarizing this information helps to provide a profile of families at the time of enrolment.

Figure 4 is a sample summary recording sheet containing background data which have been considered useful for later reporting. Figure 4 shows that it helps to develop shorthand ways to code the different responses that families give. In this way, trends in family needs or experiences can be noted at a glance so that decisions about program changes can be made early, depending on the makeup of the group. Use Figure 4 as a general example and customize it to your own needs.

Figure 5 is a sample summary recording sheet for a parent reading inventory (*Appendix 1, page 97*) which was used by a variety of family literacy projects. The Parent Reading Inventory appears at entry as part of an initial parent survey and is used again by itself at the end of the program or in later follow up. On inspecting the inventory in Appendix 1, note that the inventory contains a mix of responses - some fill-in the blanks for opinions and some ratings from 1 to 4. The Figure 5 summary sheet has selected those items which are ratings, while the free comments may be used for later reference at your choice to give general impressions or to illustrate an example in report writing. Again, this is a general format. Please customize to meet your needs.

Don't Procrastinate - Maintain Summary Recording Routines

While ABE practitioners and others may use a portfolio approach for conferencing and learner self evaluation together with other more traditional procedures for recording assignment accomplishment, other programs may rely on observation to evaluate the level of learner participation. Examination of assessment strategies for caregiver and child observation on pages 105-106 in Progress Monitor Appendix 2 shows that observations may be coded in a numerical fashion for summary purposes. Thus, a rating of 1 to 3 was assigned to three levels of participation in parent-child reading activities. Such observer ratings may be recorded and summarized on a monthly basis using a format suggested in Figure 7.

Obtain Learner Permission to Share Information

You probably have an interest in promoting your program for the purposes of developing additional funding sources or to create greater community awareness of what your program does. Learners may be willing to share in this enterprise by showing their accomplishments or the family activities of the program. In such cases, it is recommended that you draft a letter of permission for release of information (see sample in Figure 6), requesting that you be allowed to use certain information for stated limited purposes. Early discussion of how this type of information will be used can enable learners to take ownership of the program, by being involved in selecting what the program may share with others.

Figure 4
Sample Summary Sheet
Entry Interview-Family

Family Participant s	Child/Parent DOB	Sex of ADULT Participant s	# of children in Family	Transportation	Enrolment Reasons	# Yrs. School Attended	Enrolment Date			
							School Dropout Reasons	Child Health	Other Prog. Attended	Parent Work Experience
Family 1										
Family 2										
Family 3		M/F		1 - Need	1 - Get credits		1 - Must work	1 - No prob. noted/immun compl.		
Family 4				2 - No public access	2 - Learn. exp. for child		2 - Pregnant	2 - No prob./incomp immun		
Family 5				3 - No problem	3 - ESL		3 - Disliked School	3 - Health prob. ident.		
Family 6					4 - Specific interest in _____		4 - School failure			
...							5 - Other			
Total (Examples)	Average / Range	What % M, F?	Average / Range	What % 1, 2, 3	What % 1, 2, 3	Average / Range	What %	What %		

N.B. The codes seen here for transportation, enrolment, etc. have developed based on our unique program experiences. Adopt your own to fit your information needs.

Figure 5
Sample Summary Sheet-Initial Parent Reading Survey

Date _____

Parent/Child	ITEMS*				BELIEFS**								
	2	3	4	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
TOTALS ***													
1					A	A	A	1					
2					D	D	D	2					
3								3					
4													

* Items scored 1, 2, 3, 4 from the Reading Survey

** Relief items scored A/D = Agree/Disagree

*** What % of 1, 2, 3s for each of the items?

What % of A, D for each item?

Figure 6
Sample Permission Letter

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We would like to share information about this project with other interested teachers and literacy groups. We need your permission to explain how the program works and show the materials and activities that are used on a weekly basis. Most important, we would like to show the work and beaming that you do together with other parents and children.

The information would be put together as a written report, available to other educational programs. No personal information about you or your child will be included in this report. You would select samples of work from your portfolio, Journals, class projects that you would be willing to share. All mention of names, personal information, names of school or board will be left out. Also, some photos which show how classes are run over the course of the project would be included only with your permission.

Your participation is voluntary and you and your son/daughter may withdraw at any time. Please sign the attached consent form if you agree to share information about you and your child's participation in the _____ program.

If you have any questions concerning this project, please call me at _____.

Sincerely,

Program Co-ordinator

Please read the release consent form on the next page.

I, _____ hereby give consent to release information about myself and my child (e.g.: class notes, journals, photos) to _____ for the purpose of sharig information about the _____ Program. It is my understanding that all references to names and personal information will be omitted.

Date

Signature

Witness

Program Name and Address

Preparing for Report Writing

Summarizing information from interviews is an unstructured activity which can be quite intimidating at first, but this information contributes to a vivid impression of how a program operates. Holt (1995) recommends that the evaluation team all take turns sharing the job in first reviewing entry-exit learner interviews or open ended written surveys to glean general impressions in this review.

Next, follow two steps. First, each member should identify or create a set of topics which seem to represent learner areas of interest/concern about the program or their progress. With consensus on the set of topics, the next step is to write a summary based on the topics, using selected descriptive statements which the learners offered in their interviews. Include the team's conclusions about trends or patterns. When this qualitative information is supplemented by summary information (checklists, portfolio based progress notes, observations) and analyzed across the EPE time frame, changes in participation, literacy activity, and achievement levels can be noted and included for program summary reporting.

Figure 7
Sample Summary Sheet-Program Participation

Date _____

Participants	Attendance * (Period from _____ to _____)			Parent Involvement * Taken from the Field Observation			Child Involvement * Taken from the Field Observation Sheet			Engages in Home Family Reading	Positive Parenting
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3		
										* Based on Parent Report	1 = Needs assistance
											2 = Developing
											3 = Frequent
										1 = Little or none	
										2 = Some	* Based on Practitioner Observation
										3 = Frequently	
Total An Example	1 = 40% of learners 2 = 40 % of learners 3 = 20% of learners			70% of learners	15%	15%	48%	22%	30%	What % 1, 2, 3	What % 1, 2, 3

* Attendance score: 1 = less than 50 % of the time
 2 = 50% to 75%
 3 = more than 75%

Concluding Remarks

There is a continuing intergenerational pattern in low literacy. Family literacy programs have emerged as one of the most effective intervention approaches for developing literacy levels in either parents or children. Recent surveys (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1993, Statistics Canada, 1995) have indicated a positive relationship between parent education level and individual literacy.

In addition, data from the National Center for Children in Poverty (1992) indicate that parents who have not graduated high school are twice as likely to live in poverty as those whose parents graduate. At the same time, children from low income families are significantly likely to encounter school difficulties throughout their school careers, culminating in a drop out rate twice that of middle income families.

Family literacy intervention has become a compelling approach, because it is based on the view that literacy development occurs in a family context throughout the life span. Parents who have negative literacy experiences themselves and who encounter continued economic stresses will have difficulty in supporting their children's literacy learning and communicating positive attitudes about literacy or schooling.

Recently, analysis of data from programs developed by the National Center for Family Literacy (Philliber, Spillman, and King, 1996) has noted that program retention rates of family literacy programs were higher than for other adult basic education programs. Thus while adults tended to have better attendance rates in family literacy programs, on average, adult reading achievement increased one grade level. This gain was twice that of reading gains achieved by a comparison group of adult basic education programs. At the same time, children in family literacy programs made greater gains across several dimensions of language, reasoning, and social relations than did children in comparable child focused programs which did not include family literacy.

From the standpoint of this evaluation guide, the Philliber et al. study just cited illustrates the importance of developing ongoing assessment strategies in order to continue to make the case for family literacy's effectiveness. The family literacy programs on which this research was conducted all had incorporated similar assessment instruments and used them consistently over several years. Thus, it was possible to ask questions about family literacy effectiveness in general. The National Center for Family Literacy was able to go beyond the level of the individual program to call upon outside assistance in pooling assessment information from each program and present "hard data" on effectiveness of family literacy.

Family literacy intervention continues to be a developing approach within adult literacy practice in Canada. Nevertheless, it has shown promise in being able to actively engage adults in the literacy development of their children and, in so doing, has added significant literacy experiences to adult lives. As patterns of parent-child literacy based interaction become more elaborate, parent self esteem and confidence also develop. Fingeret and Danin (1991) have noted that the literacy link to self esteem should be considered as a major factor in determining the effectiveness of literacy programs in retaining learners and accounting for literacy gains. The assessment strategies and materials in this guide have been provided to help programs establish procedures which will enhance literacy practice based on learner self esteem, at the same time that such programs attempt to measure it.

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Appendix 1

Sample Entry - Intake Forms

Sample Form -- Learner Information

Name:

Telephone:

Address:

Education

1. Last grade attended _____
Where? _____ When? _____
2. Last English class (ABE, ESL) attended _____
Where? _____ When? _____
3. What days are best for you to attend?
 Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday
Do you plan to attend on all of these days?
 Yes No

Children -- Families

1. Do you have any children of pre-school age?
 Yes No
2. Do you need day care to attend this class?
 Yes No
3. Do you have children attending the Homework program?
 Yes No

Goals

1. Why are you returning to school?

2. What would you like to work on?

- ESL -- (reading, writing, pronunciation)
 - citizenship -- becoming a Canadian citizen
 - Education of your family
 - registration
 - talking to teacher/principal
 - notes to teacher
 - visiting child's classes
 - volunteering in school (field trips, lunch, etc.)
 - parent interviews (grades, report cards)

 - Knowing your community
 - foster farm programs
 - using the library
 - museums, places to visit
 - City of Ott - recreational programs

 - Being a Parent
 - how to talk to your child
 - how to discipline your child
 - Problems children face - racism, drugs, alcohol, violence in school
 - Nutrition

 - Other?
-

Sample Parent Survey - Part One

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Ages and Birth Dates:

Before making contact with this program, my family was / was not aware of the _____ Program.

Are you interested in the books and tapes for:

Adults _____ Children _____

Do you attend a Reading Circle in

Yes _____ No _____

Do you use the Library in _____

Yes (how often) _____ No _____

Check reasons for joining this program:

My child wanted to join _____ I wanted my child to join _____ Brothers/sisters had joined _____

Friends had joined _____ Other _____

Part Two: Parent Inventory - Reading

(To Be Done as an Interview. Practitioner Records)

1. As an adult, what do you read for your own adult enjoyment/interest?
2. How do you rate your own enjoyment of what you read?
 - One of the most enjoyable things I do
 - Usually enjoyable
 - Sometimes enjoyable
 - Not enjoyable
3. I seem to read to my child/ren:
 - Often, once a day
 - Usually, few times a week
 - Sometimes, once in a while
 - Not very often
4. Overall, how enjoyable is it for you to read to your child?
 - One of the most enjoyable things I do with my child
 - Usually an enjoyable experience for me
 - Sometimes an enjoyable experience for me
 - Not an enjoyable experience for me
5. What do you like best about reading to your child?
6. What do you like least about reading to your child?
7. What do you hope to see happening in your home because of the program?
8. What is the best time to visit you at home?
Week Night _____ Weekend am _____ pm _____
9. What do you like to read together, what subjects interest your children?

10. Tell something about you as a very young child - do you recall being read to?
Was that something you grew up with?

11. I would rate my child's interest in reading:

Not Very interested	Frequently (daily)	Occasionally likes to read in free time	Chooses to read during free time at least a few times a week
---------------------	--------------------	---	--

Check your opinion:

12. Young children get bored if they hear the same story again and again.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Agree	Disagree

13. It is best to save reading to children until they know how to sit and listen quietly to a story.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Agree	Disagree

14. It is important to talk to young children, even babies who don't understand.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Agree	Disagree

Things that can happen while reading to your child:

	Not at all	Sometimes	Usually	Frequently
15. I talk about the story or discuss the pictures or words	1	2	3	4
16. My child asks questions or makes comments about the story.	1	2	3	4
17. My child joins in when I am reading rhymes, repeated words, or familiar sentences.	1	2	3	4
18. My child does not pay attention when I read to him/her, so I can't finish the story.	1	2	3	4
19. I tell my child about my own feelings about a story I have read.	1	2	3	4

20. Please express any concerns you have, make comments, ask questions:

Interviewer/Contact Person

**SAMPLE
PARENT SURVEY**

Name:	Telephone:
Address:	Native Language:
Can you read in your native language?	Can you write in your native language?
Single mother Single father Married	

Name of Children/Birthdate	Grade	Name of School
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

1. Are you presently attending school? Yes No Where _____

2. What time is best for you to attend this program?
 morning afternoon evenings

3. What days are best for you to attend this program?
 Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

4. What do you need to help you attend? Child Care Translator
 Friend to come with you Other _____

5. What would you like to learn?
 - Apartment management (how to work with the apartment manager, get something repaired, ask about rent, look for an apartment)
 - Citizenship
 - Communication with legal authorities (attorneys, police, legal support, legal aid, neighborhood watch)

- Education (registration how to notify the school of illness, talk to the teacher/principal, visit your child's school, understand grades and progress reports)
- English as a second language (oral communication, reading, and writing)
- Health (immunizations, hygiene, medical and dental check-ups, how to talk to the doctor and dentist, fill out medical forms)
- Mathematics (money, banking, numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)
- Nutrition (common foods, healthful eating)
- Parenting/child rearing (developmental stages, suggestions on how to help your child at home, how to communicate effectively with your child)
- Safety (emergencies, car seats, fire prevention, water safety, first aid)
- Other

6. What kind of help do your children need?

* Note: Interviewer should follow up with Parent Inventory: Reading.

Appendix 2

Sample Progress Monitoring Forms

**Progress Report
After School Program**

Child _____

Progress Report From _____ TO _____ 1996

Things Accomplished:

Areas to Work On:

COMMENTS:

Dear Parent,

If you have any questions or concerns about your child, please contact me at

Sincerely,

After School Tutor

Sample Form-Field Observations

Name: _____ Observer _____			
Date _____			
<u>Parent Interest</u> Circle One 1. Little interest in the materials; little interaction during visits.	2. Partitipates int he session, shows interest in the materials.	3. Encourages child's interest and makes connections for the child; identifies ways to use the activity at home, etc.	<u>Notes</u>
Note parenetal expression of concern for child's development (reading, school, etc) no concerns noted _____ Concerns			
<u>Parent Knowledge of Child's Devolpment</u> Circle 1. Few parental observations of child's developing language, reading or achievements.	2. Able to identify child's activities related to reading devlopment (child's talk, how she/he reads, draws, etc.)	3. Able to identify both child's activities related to reading development and identifies parental activites to promote child's development.	<u>Notes</u>
How many books and tapes did this person borrow? _____			
If in taget group, why? _____			
Suggestions for the future _____			

Field Observations

Name		Observer	
		Date	
<p><u>Child Interest</u> Circle one.</p> <p>1. Little enthusiasm/interest in materials; little interaction during visit.</p>	<p>2. Participates in session; shows interest.</p>	<p>3. Interested in materials; makes connections, interactions, etc.</p>	<p><u>Notes</u></p>
<p><u>Child Reading</u> Relate each (you may note these observations from discussion with parent)</p> <p>Seems to enjoy shared reading</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Seems to enjoy reading alone</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Reads in free time</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Developing specific reading interests</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(comics, poetry, etc.)</p> <p>Talks about books/Engages in play</p> <p>_____</p> <p>related activity</p> <p>Other</p>		<p><u>Notes</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>Legend:</p> <p>1 = Little or not at all</p> <p>2 = Some</p> <p>3 = Frequently</p>			

The Ottawa Board of Education has provided ABE teachers with a, "start-up" format for using portfolios. The following are some samples of portfolio recording techniques which have been useful in a family focused ABE program.

Dear reader,

Our writing and thinking is 'DRAFT', that is, under construction. With time and practice our spelling, punctuation, and handwriting will continue to develop and improve.

Please look at our work to see how we think, what we are practicing, and what skills we can use confidently.

Thank you for your understanding, support and time.

Private

Remember...

- This section is private
- Learners can choose to use this section and know that the comments will be treated confidentially.
- Learners can choose at any time to bring items from this section forward to other sections in their portfolio.

SAMPLE GOAL FORM

Some things I do well:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Some things I am working on:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Some things I want to work on next:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE OF
LEARNER: _____

SHARED WITH: _____

**Sample Form
Parent-Child Conversation**

Parent's Name _____ Date _____

PARENT TALK	Not at all 1	Some 2	Often 3
-------------	-----------------	-----------	------------

1. I asked questions to encourage my child to talk.
2. I used names and labels as I played so my child could imitate
3. I used specific words for colour, size, shape, etc.
4. I described what my child was doing as we played.
5. I reminded my child of other related experiences when we played.

My Child -- Speaking and Listening

My Child Uses Language	Not at all 1	Some 2	Often 3
------------------------	-----------------	-----------	------------

1. To request help.
2. To engage me in play.
(you be the ...)
3. To request information.
(What...?)
4. To plan the next activity or tell how to play.
5. To label or name something.
6. To explain an activity.
(How a toy works ...)

Sample- Parent and Child Together

Date:

Observer:

The Parent.....

(Dates)-

Offers positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour										
Offers encouragement										
Gives age appropriate directions										
Shows physical closeness/affection										
Redirects inappropriate behaviour										
Stops activity when child loses interest										
Lets child "control/do the activity"										
Listens when child talks										
Offers help when child is frustrated										
Asks "right there" questions										
Asks "remember when" questions"										
Answers child' questions										
Sets appropriate limits with consistency										

Legend: 1 = not at all
2 = beginning
3 = consolidating
4 = mastery

Sample - Learner Profile

Observer
Learner Name

Date/s
Topic/s

1	2	3	Notes
<u>Activity Engagement</u> Apathetic, resistant.	Participates to meet other's goals; follows other's direction.	Makes connections to personal experiences, identifies ways to use the activity.	
<u>Problem Solving</u> Seems helpless, frustrated by problem.	Uses limited resources, wants quick fix.	Wrestles with problems using various resources. Enjoys solving and learning new ways.	
<u>Self Evaluation</u> Goals setting too broad or non existent. Single focus, global in nature.	Developing insights, some specifics noted; limited goal setting.	Uses a variety of observations. Notes improvement. Establishing meaningful goals.	
<u>Confidence</u> Shy, unsure of abilities. Does not volunteer, reluctant to answer; needs a lot of support.	Acts confidently with familiar information; seems somewhat willing to take risks.	Freely talks about self, shares information with the group looks for additional challenges.	
<u>Social Interaction</u> Loner, shy or needs to be drawn out by others or tendency to take over/show off, causing resentment.	Developing friendships in group uses the group as a resource. Listens, takes turn.	Has friends in group, uses the group as a resource, acts as a resource to others.	
<u>Transfer to Real Life</u> Does not use literacy skills outside or at home with family.	Notes practice at home.	Brings examples and questions from home.	

(D. Holt, Assessing Success in Family Literacy Projects, 1994)

Sample - Learner Profile Summary Sheet

Observer:

Date:

Names

Activity Engagement										
Problem Solving										
Self Evaluation										
Confidence										
Social Interaction										
Transfer to real life										

* Scores -- 1,2,3
See legend

Home Time

Name _____ Date _____

Check the things done with your child.
Write about it in your journal.

(INSIDE OUR HOME)	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S
played with my child							
read to my child							
looked at books together							
told stories together							
did puppet or felt stories							
playing with my child at bath time							
drew pictures about stories							
played with my child while preparing meals							
looked at the newspaper together							
read my own book							
went through the mail together							
pointed out print at home							
helped my child with homework							
wrote a note to my child							
helped my child with writing							
asked child about school activities							
made shopping lists together							
made things by following directions							
made things by following directions							
cooked together following recipes							
selected TV shows to watch together							
discussed what we watched on TV							
(OUTSIDE OUR HOME)							
attended school activities							
visited the library							
visited friends/family							
went shopping and talked about it							
noticed print outside							
visited the post office, park, etc. and talked about what we saw							

Appendix 3

Sample Exit - Follow Up Forms

Sample -- Exit Interview

Name: _____ Date: _____

How I feel I have benefited from this program:

What I liked the most:

What I would change:

What advice would you give others registering for this program?

Would you recommend this program to others? Why? Why not?

Have your interests changed or have new interests developed for you, from being in the program?

How has your child benefited by coming to the program?

Have your child's interests changed developed in the way s/he is at home (drawing, books, etc)?

Has your child changed in the way s/he relates or plays with other children? _____
How? (sharing, friendly, determined, fights, etc.)

Has your child changed some of the ways s/he relates to you? (has routines, talks, listens, etc.)

Is your child more interested in "make believe pretending, making up stories?

Have you found yourself doing more reading with your child at home? ____ Why? Why not?

Parent Reading inventory - Follow Up

Name _____ Date _____

Child Name(s) _____

1. As an adult, what do you read for your own adult enjoyment/interest?
2. How do you rate your own enjoyment of what you read? - One of the most enjoyable things I do
 - Usually enjoyable
 - Sometimes enjoyable
 - Not enjoyable
3. I seem to read to my child/ren:
 - Often, once a day
 - Usually, few times a week
 - Sometimes, once in a while
 - Not very often
4. Overall, how enjoyable is it for you to read to your child?
 - One of the most enjoyable things I do with my child
 - Usually an enjoyable experience for me
 - Sometimes an enjoyable experience for me
 - Not an enjoyable experience for me
5. What do you like best about reading to your child?
6. What do you like least about reading to your child?
7. What do you hope to see happening in your home because of the program?
8. I would rate my child's interest in reading:

Not very
interested

1

Occasionally like
to read

2

Chooses to read
during free time at
least a few times a
week

3

Frequently (daily)
chooses to read in
free time

4

Check your opinion:

9. Young children get bored if they hear the same story again and again. _____ Agree _____ Disagree
10. It is best to save reading to children until they know how to sit and listen quietly to a story. _____ Agree _____ Disagree
11. It is important to talk to young children, even babies who don't understand. _____ Agree _____ Disagree

Things that can happen while reading to your child:

- | | Not at all | Sometimes | Usually | Frequently |
|--|------------|-----------|---------|------------|
| 12. I talk about the story or discuss the pictures or words. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. My child asks questions or makes comments about the story. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. My child joins in when I am reading rhymes, repeated words, or familiar sentences. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. My child does not pay attention when I read to him/her, so I can't finish the story. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. I tell about my own feelings on the story when I read to my child. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. Please use this space to express any concerns you have, make comment, ask questions: | | | | |

Interviewer/Contact Person

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