Eager to Learn

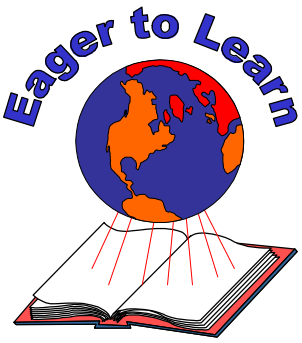
A course on family literacy

Funding: ***National Literacy Secretariat (HRDC)***
Government of Canada
1999

Edited by: Darlene Scott
Richard Engram

Research by: Wendell Head
Sean Murray

Layout & Design: Carol Anne Ryan



Open a book…
& open a whole new world
of opportunities!

Community Services Council

Mission:

The Community Services Council (CSC) of Newfoundland and Labrador is an independent voluntary organization dedicated to promoting social and economic well being. It acts as a catalyst to enhance the voluntary sector and to bring together community organizations, governments and individuals in identifying needs and concerns. As a leading social planning and research organization, CSC, in collaboration with others, initiates analysis of critical issues, formulates policy objectives, and develops strategies and services to improve human well-being.

Eager to Learn:
A Course on Family Literacy

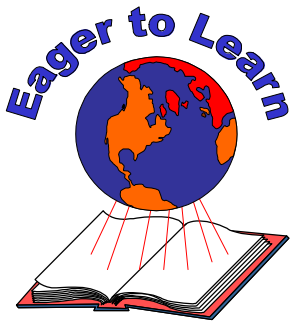
What you will find in this binder...

Parents or other caregivers are potentially the most important people in the education of their children.

Leslie Mandel Morrow
New Perspectives, New Practices
International Reading Association

Dedication

This course in family literacy is dedicated to parents enrolled in adult basic education classes.



Open a book……
& open a whole new world
of opportunities!

COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL
Newfoundland and Labrador
Suite 201, 2nd Floor, Virginia Park Plaza
Newfoundland Drive
St. John's, NF A1A 3E9
Tel: (709) 753-9860 Fax: (709) 753-6112
Website: www.csc.nf.ca

Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador

Section 1

"Introduction"

St. John's, NF *1999*

Eager to Learn: A Course on Family Literacy

1. Introduction

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

Many adult learners are parents. Their own desires to learn and to find educational success motivate them to acquire new skills in helping their children or grandchildren become readers and writers at an early age. The *Eager to Learn* course has been based on the belief that enrollment in A.B.E. gives adult learners the unique ability to co-learn with their children or other young persons in their home environment. This is also true, of course, for parents enrolled in support programs and community outreach services.

1.1 How to use this course

The Community Services Council (CSC) believes there is a wide audience for *Eager to Learn*.

- as an optional communications skills credit in adult basic education (ABE)
- as a community course with parents
- as a part of a family resource centre learning program
- as a training tool with day care workers or early childhood educators

This is the first edition of *Eager to Learn*. The Community Services Council welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement. The CSC READY Centre, which delivers adult basic education (ABE) services will use *Eager to Learn* as a pilot course and hopes to develop a second edition after pilot testing.

1.2 Format

Eager to Learn has been designed as a resource binder. The course modules can be used independently from the research findings in other sections. The literature review and focus group results, however, provide interesting and unique perspectives on how to plan and deliver family literacy programs of all sorts, not just those meant for a teaching environment.

The Community Services Council encourages readers to review them in connection with the bibliography for new ideas and approaches. Be *Eager to Learn* and use the binder to improve literacy in ways that are meaningful for you.

2.0 Acknowledgements

The Community Services Council READY Centre gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the National Literacy Secretariat - Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), Government of Canada. This project was assisted by the Career Vision program, a pilot project of the Humanities & Social Sciences Federation of Canada (HSSFC) in collaboration with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).

The Community Services Council READY Centre is funded by the Department of Human Resources and Employment (HRE), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through the Services to Employment Program (STEP) enabling adult learner clients of the Department to complete adult basic education (ABE) credits within a supportive counselling environment.

This project was guided by a volunteer Research Advisory Committee comprising:

- Munden Batstone, Program Consultant
  Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

- Elizabeth Crawford, Director of Child Welfare & Community Corrections
  Human Resources & Employment, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

- Darlene Halleran - Early Childhood Educator

- Glenda Jackson, Career Education Facilitator
  Avalon East School Board

- Prof. Julia O'Sullivan - Centre for the Application of Development Science
  Memorial University of Newfoundland

- Patricia Roberts, Postings Coordinator
  Public Service Commission, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador

- Penelope M. Rowe, Executive Director
  Community Services Council (CSC) of Newfoundland & Labrador

- Darlene J. Scott, Program Coordinator
  Community Services Council READY Centre, ABE Program

- Bill Shallow - Member of Community Services Council Board of Directors,
  and READY Centre Program Advisory Committee

- Caroline Vaughn, Provincial Coordinator
  Frontier College

We extend our sincere thanks to the many programs and agencies whose wonderful materials have been quoted or adapted, throughout. Credits appear where appropriate. We offer a special thank you to the Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers Association (NLTA).

3.0 How to Contact the Community Services Council

The *Community Services Council* (CSC) operates in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Community Services Council

Suite 201, 2nd Floor
Virginia Park Plaza
Newfoundland Drive
St. John's, NF A1A 3E9

Tel: (709) 753-9860
Fax:(709) 753-6112
email: csc@thezone.net
Homepage: www.csc.nf.net

The *READY Centre* operated in St. John's, Newfoundland.

READY Centre, CSC

(Referral, Education, Assessment & Development for You)
365 Water Street, 2nd Floor
P.O. Box 1191
St. John's, NF A1C 5M9

Tel: (709) 726-4335
Fax: (709) 726-7327

Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador

Section 2

"Literature Review"

St. John's, NF *1999*

Eager to Learn: A Course on Family Literacy

2.0 Literature Review

Table of Contents

1.0 Eager to Learn

Children are born into a world which requires them to read and write, at times very well. They must, in fact, read well for success in school, work and life in general. Long before reaching school, however, children have the greatest opportunities to become literate at home, within the family.

This review of the literature was conducted so that a course of study could be written for adult learners enrolled in basic education programs. Many adult learners have reading problems. Many also feel they were raised in families where reading and writing were neglected or made into a chore. These adult learners are looking for ways to improve the family literacy environment for their own children. In order to write such a course, the literature was reviewed to ensure it included helpful approaches, based on research with families.

2.0 The Purpose of a Literature Review

Dozens of books and articles on family literacy, paired reading, literacy acquisition and other related topics were examined in preparation for the task of designing a family literacy course for adult learners. This material was placed under the scrutiny of two broad questions:

1. From what theoretical perspective is family literacy best approached?

2. What are the practical considerations of implementing such a program?

While the sources included in this review are by no means exhaustive, they are reasonably comprehensive and have provided satisfactory answers to these questions. They have highlighted several philosophical debates in the fields of family literacy and literacy acquisition generally. These sources have also proven to be invaluable for their comments and suggestions on the practical applications of family literacy programs.

Although particular citations are provided, many other authors examined in the annotated bibliography could also have been given credit for making similar points. Giving credit to each would seriously interrupt the flow of the essay, so a *Summary of Findings* has been provided in chart form at the end of the review. Please refer to section **6.0** for the *Summary of Findings.* Please also refer to the annotations in the back of the resource binder for greater detail.

3.0 The Theoretical Review

The literature revealed six major areas of theoretical consideration in family literacy: 1) the emergent literacy approach; 2) the intervention-prevention approach; 3) the whole language approach; 4) the skills based language approach; 5) the role of parents; and 6) culturally specific perspectives.

3.1 Emergent Literacy Approach

This is an approach to literacy acquisition which claims that children best acquire literacy through meaningful interactions with other people (Anderson, 1995). Research indicates it is more successful than the traditional skills-based approach to literacy (Butt, 1995; Juliebo, 1995). It is holistic (incorporating the principles of the whole language approach - see below), meaning-centered, and developmental. Basic reading skills are not the focus of emergent literacy. Understanding *meaning* is the focus (Nielson, et. al., 1996) of emergent literacy.

A fundamental assumption of this approach is that children acquire literacy through exposure to print, either through being read to and being involved in discussions about stories, or through exposure to environmental print in a variety of contexts (Spreadbury, 1994). Therefore, parents need to learn the value of different behaviours and ideas such as modeling reading, participating in authentic activities through role-playing, taking their children on educational trips, involving themselves in craft activities, creating literacy-related settings in the home (making use of corporate logos, or building 'pretend' post offices, for instance) and exposing their children to literacy in everyday activities such as cooking and going to the store (Shanahan, et. al., 1995; Spreadbury, 1994).

Sharing literacy experiences on a *daily* basis is extremely important to emergent literacy (Hlady, 1995) since understanding of print is related to the frequency of involvement in literacy events at home (Elster, 1994; Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1994). An emergent literacy approach holds that individual development of literacy is determined by the particular relationships of children, personal histories, and unique interests and needs. Accordingly, parent-child interactions need to occur in a loving and supportive home environment if children are to acquire literacy to their fullest potential (Williams, 1994).

3.2 Intervention-Prevention Approach

The link between poverty and illiteracy is explored within an Intervention - Prevention approach to family literacy. The approach assumes that low-income families, who have less access to literacy resources, including conceptual skills, may be inadequately equipped to support literacy development in their children (Auerbach, 1989). Research supporting an intervention approach has shown that child literacy improves considerably if low-income parents are given intensive training to boost skills in reading techniques and to increase understanding of literacy concepts.

Opponents of this approach say that the assumption tends to blame the victim (Taylor, 1993). Furthermore, they claim that the assumption is simply incorrect; although children from advantaged families were found to be more successful in several studies, it has also been found that many poor families have literacy-rich environments. Socioeconomic status alone does not sufficiently account for differences in literacy development, as there are often differences within the same income group (Auerbach, 1995; Smith et. al., 1995; Symons et. al., 1996).

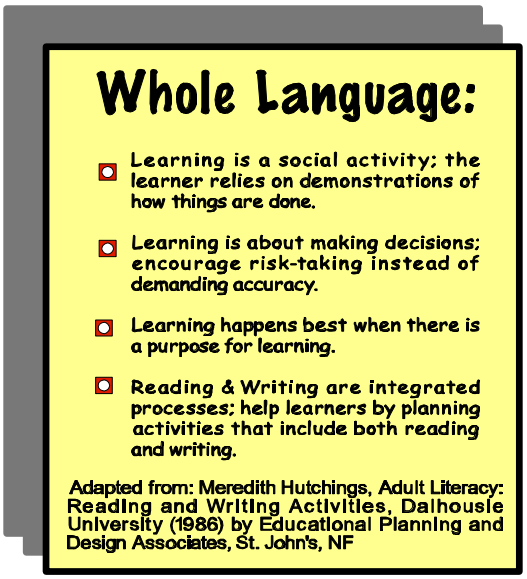
Despite this argument, the approach retains support in the literature. Educators are taught to be aware of the philosophical traps inherent in the approach (such as the tendency to blame the victim) and to make efforts to include parents as full partners in family literacy programs.

Some research has shown, for example, that parents appreciate intervention, especially if they had previously not known what schools expected of them as parents, or their children, as students. If educators recruit parents, respect them, and respond to their needs in a supportive environment that builds self-esteem and confidence, this approach to family literacy can be successful (Edwards, 1995; France, et. al., 1993).

3.3 Whole Language Approach

The whole language approach involves children learning literacy through exposure to print and through the building of a word base that will ultimately reveal to them the relationship between letters and sounds. The assumption is that children will best learn to read and write through simply reading and writing in a variety of contexts. They do not need to learn prior skills - these skills will come to them naturally.

This approach asks us to accept that literacy learning comes from the *whole* context of the language with which we live, work and play. It moves from the *whole* to the *parts* of learning.



For example, we start to learn from the whole oral language and move into understanding about letter-sound relationships; word recognition; grammar and sentence structure. The whole language approach asks us to understand that learning is a social activity which is *shared* rather than given to someone.

Methods associated with this approach include: teaching children to comprehend general passages of text, from which they can learn the meaning of specific words; repeating words in similar contexts with similar meanings; making daily *living activities* daily *literacy activities;* teaching words by analogy (learning 'ball' after learning 'tall'); utilizing read-alouds and discussions whenever possible (MacIsaac, 1996; Maguire 1991).

Most parents were taught from a skills-based approach, so their views on literacy acquisition are often incongruent with the whole language approach. Additionally, this approach to learning language assumes it is crucial that children have fun when being exposed to print. Parents and educators alike must work to create a pleasant and fun environment for the learning child (Stone, 1994)

3.4 Skills-Based Approach

A skills-based approach is grounded in the belief that children need to learn certain basic skills of printing, and letter formation before they can actually read and write successfully. For example, before children can look at a group of letters and recognize the sounds they make as a word with meaning, they must first understand how to take the letters and translate them to sound. This process of translating letters to sounds is known as the *alphabetic principle*, and proponents of the skills-based approach to literacy argue it is a skill that must take place *before* children can become successful readers.

A phonic or skills-based approach to literacy starts with the *parts* of language and moves to the *whole.* For example, a teacher using a skills-based approach to learning words might teach an

unknown letter-sound relationship to a student and then proceed to explain or teach how that relationship fits into an overall word, sentence or language structure.

Some authors argue that a whole language approach to literacy learning is inadequate because the approach assumes a direct relationship between writing language and understanding meaning of words.

According to Byrne et, al. (1996), whole language falls short because it overlooks a basic understanding of phonics, which the child would have gained from being taught letter and phoneme skills, or the basic alphabetic structure. Children learning in a whole language context may build up an impressive word base, but have difficulty with unfamiliar words if they do not know the alphabetic principles of how those words are structured. Children need to be taught skills which help them understand the principles of how words are built from letters, according to supporters of the skills-based approach.

Perhaps the best way around the debate between the whole and skills-based approaches to literacy, is to incorporate both approaches in literacy learning. This has met with considerable success for those who have done so (Stone, 1994).

3.5 The Role of Parents

Perhaps the most important theoretical element of any approach to family literacy is the role for parents. The literature makes a resounding judgment on this issue: parents *must* be full partners, and be given control and responsibility in programs addressing the literacy of their children (Cairney, 1995). They should be involved in every stage of developing family literacy programs (Come, et. al., 1995). Involvement encourages parents to take control of programs after educators withdraw. Aside from that, if parents are in control (as opposed to teachers or university leaders) other parents may be more inclined to be trustful of the program, and less worried about their own educational shortcomings (Edwards, 1995).

The literature reveals several principles which family literacy programs must incorporate if they are to successfully involve parents:

1. Address the confidence and self-esteem of parents throughout any program, but especially in the initial stages. For example, do not begin by giving parents standardized tests. Parents with low levels of education may feel apprehensive about participating in literacy programs, and their self-esteem is vulnerable when they begin. Supportive environments are crucial (Edwards, 1995).

2. Remember that parents at all income levels are very concerned about their children, and will put considerable time and effort into these programs if made to feel secure and adequate. They want to help their children, but in many cases are seeking direction on how to do this. (Unwin, 1995).

3. Create a *posture of reciprocity* between parents and teachers (including communication and cultural exchanges). In other words, create an atmosphere in which both parents and teachers recognize the value of what the other does to help children, and are willing to work together for the benefit of the children. If parents and educators have differing views on literacy, these views should be shared and discussed (Neuman, 1995).

4. Allow parents to determine the direction of literacy programs through the use of family portfolios or family albums in which they keep a record of their literacy 'work' and their own thoughts about literacy acquisition (Hoffman, 1995).

5. Account for developing literacy in parents as well as in children, as many parents may have weaknesses in literacy (Morrow, 1995).

6. Consider parents in their many different roles as adults (i.e. as parents, students, family members, community builders, and workers) (Cramer, No Date).

7. Provide parents with opportunities to learn from one another (Akroyd, 1995).

8. Explore differing cultural and generational views on literacy (Akroyd, 1995).

9. Use 'hands-on' activities when expanding parental knowledge of literacy development, since lecture-type sessions with parents do not seem to be as successful (Padak, 1994).

3.6 Culturally Specific Perspectives

Culturally specific perspectives on family literacy do not contradict any of the points already made. In fact, they are in full support of many. These perspectives are included under a separate heading simply because they have been outlined in the literature with specific principles and recommended actions (Auerbach, 1995).

The first of these two perspectives is the 'Multiple Literacies Perspective.' Principles of this approach are: (a) there should be opportunities for participants to bring with them culture-specific literacy practices; (b) a stance of inquiry should be the starting point in implementing family literacy; (c) there should be culturally familiar and relevant content; (d) there should be learner participation in developing a program; (e) there should be an emphasis on cultural maintenance rather than cultural assimilation; (f) there should be culturally familiar contexts; and (g) there should be use and instruction of the first language (Auerbach,1995).

The second perspective is the 'Social Change Perspective.' Proponents of this perspective argue that literacy is a product of political, social, and economic factors, in addition to parental input. Principles of this approach include: (a) give participants control of family literacy programs; (b) provide ample opportunity for dialogue among peers; (c) incorporate content centering around critical social issues from participants' lives; and connected to this is; (d) take action for social change. Implementing these principles in a family literacy program will allow parents to take control of their children's learning and to challenge social issues with the hope of making changes for subsequent generations (Auerbach, 1995).

Both perspectives respect the prominent role of families in transferring literacy between generations.

4.0 The Practical Review

Virtually every author made practical suggestions concerning the development and operation of family literacy programs. Each comment of this nature made by the authors concerned one of five major topics. The *Practical Review* is therefore divided into observations on: 1) parent-child interactions; 2) literacy as fun; 3) availability of literacy materials; 4) 'safe' environments; and, 5) scaffolding.

4.1 Parent-Child Interactions/Modeling

Fostering literacy development in children requires a variety of teaching and learning methods. If children are to acquire literacy at maximum capability, they must be exposed to parental modeling and reading activities.

Modeling is the term used to describe parents engaging in reading and writing, both for functional purposes and for pleasure, in front of children. When children see their parents interacting with print in a meaningful way, they learn reading-like behaviors. Not surprisingly, parental attitude towards reading, reading techniques, and level of attachment to the child, are all factors in determining the effectiveness of parental literacy modeling. The more positive these factors are, the stronger the likelihood that the child will successfully acquire literacy (Brock, 1994).

A pleasurable atmosphere is crucial to the success of reading activities, since children, like adults, learn better when they are enjoying their activities (Fagan, 1998). According to the literature, reading aloud is of particular importance to children. Reading aloud can be accompanied by any number of related activities, from discussions about print, through role-playing and writing activities, to children themselves reading aloud.

4.2 Literacy as Fun

Several authors have shown that children acquire literacy most effectively when they are having fun (Barnhart et. al., 1995; Stone, 1994). Accordingly, parents should offer children extra motivations to read whenever possible (Brenna, 1995), and show enthusiasm for reading themselves, letting their children see them reading for pleasure as often as possible. Several authors recognize the fact that many parents are preoccupied with having their children acquire the skills associated with literacy, as opposed to simply having fun with print. In cases such as this, some authors recommend that educators build on parents' knowledge of literacy acquisition by introducing the vital importance of fun in the whole process (Baker, 1997).

4.3 Availability of Literacy Materials

If a family literacy program is to be fun, interesting, and generally good, it must have a supply of developmentally appropriate resources (especially books) available to the parents and children (Barclay, 1995; Morrow, 1993). This is especially important in programs designed for low-income families, who may not have large numbers of books in their homes, as books may be expensive.

If funding is a problem, possible solutions may include: make thorough use of public libraries; get donations of magazines and newspapers; develop a family lending library; loan books to children and to parents; have book exchanges; and, teach parents how to create inexpensive home literacy centres (Brock 1994; Come et. al., 1995; Fagan 1998).

4.4 'Safe' Environments

The literature strongly indicates that, if young children are to acquire literacy successfully, they must be exposed to print within an environment in which they feel safe (Bus et. al., 1995).

The extent to which children explore the unknown print environment depends largely upon how secure or 'safe' they feel, especially with regard to the parent-child attachment. Parents must therefore create a warm, accepting atmosphere for children by responding positively to questions children ask about print, or to requests for reading aloud (Williams, 1994). They can also make their children feel safe by sitting close to their children during reading, encouraging them to take risks, and by not criticizing mistakes. Furthermore, parents and siblings must model literacy activities in a positive environment (Spreadbury, 1994).

4.5 Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a widely accepted approach to literacy in which the child controls the pace of learning. Children learn more difficult things with parents, while learning easier things on their own. In the same manner in which scaffolding is used to build a house from the bottom up, parents continually take children to new levels of learning, as children are continually mastering ascending levels of literacy (Fagan, 1998).

Throughout the scaffolding process, it is important that parents take children through literacy acquisition "little bits at a time" (Brenna, 1995). Parents must continually assess children's "region of sensitivity" (the components that children are capable of understanding, but unable to accomplish without assistance) and adhere to the 'contingency rule' which states that when

children make a mistake, teachers/parents take more control; when children get it right, teachers/parents relinquish control. For example, parents should reread favourite stories with children, and when children are too tired to finish a story, the parents finish. It is also important that, when using this method, parents understand what is developmentally appropriate for the children, for example, two-year-olds learn language and concepts through activity, not from language alone (Connor et. al., 1997).

In summary, this review of the literature demonstrates that numerous approaches to learning, building skills, parental involvement and the use of resources are useful in the development of a family literacy program.

5.0 Conclusion: Characteristics of a Successful Program

The sources included in this bibliography have provided insight into both the theoretical backgrounds of many family literacy programs, as well as the practical knowledge required to successfully implement such programs. The sources have answered the two broad questions about theory and practice with which the literature review began. The literature also served to describe several characteristics of successful programs. In summary, successful programs:

1. Are continued over a long period of time.
2. Are intensive learning experiences for both parents and children.
3. Provide daily learning experiences for all participants.
4. Offer multiple routes to enhancing child development.
5. Strive to match children's learning styles.
6. Provide environmental support for children's positive attitudes and behaviour.
7. Offer small class sizes with low ratios of children to adults.
8. Provide teacher training and improvement support.
9. Emphasize ongoing, child-focused communication between parents and formal teachers or instructors.
10. Have curriculum content/processes which are similar to what children will encounter in school.
11. Expand parental knowledge about literacy, teaching parents *how* to help their children acquire literacy skills.
12. Have educators who are committed to a time-consuming project.
13. Remain culturally sensitive and community-based, with parents sharing responsibilities and leadership.
14. Encourage educators to train parents so parents can develop and run literacy programs.
15. Provide a physical space solely for the program.
16. Informally evaluate the program to see if it is working.
17. Have a wide range of literacy materials readily available.
18. Include fun activities.
19. Blend whole language and skills training.
20. Respect individual learning styles.

6.0 Summary of Findings

THE THEORETICAL REVIEW		
Topic	**Brief Summary**	**Authors**
1. Emergent Literacy	An approach to literacy that exposes children to print in a variety of contexts, utilizing discussions, daily reading, print-related activities, and meaningful interactions to develop language and literacy in a meaning-centered manner.	Anderson, 1995; Butt, 1995; Dunning, 1994; Elster, 1994; Fagan, 1998; France et al, 1993; Hlady, 1995; Juliebo, 1995; Kazemek, 1995; Morrow et al, 1993; Neuman et al, 1997; Nielson et al, 1996; Padak, 1994; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Rasinski, 1995; Shaffer et al, 1995; Shanahan et al, 1995; Shapiro, 1995; Snow, 1993; Spreadbury, 1994; Stone, 1994; Unwin, 1995; Vedeler, 1997; Williams, 1994
2. Intervention - Prevention Approach	Many parents are inadequately equipped to support literacy development, so educators must "intervene." While many parents acknowledge this and appreciate learning things such as "developmentally appropriate teaching," this approach leads to the assumption that illiteracy not only evolves out of poverty, but creates cycles of poverty. To avoid "blaming the victim," educators must be aware of this philosophical danger and the evidence which contradicts it.	Auerbach, 1995; Auerbach, 1989; Butt, 1995; Canning, 1996; Cronan et al, 1996; Cronan et al, 1995; Edwards, 1995; France et al, 1993; Gomby et al, 1995; Hughes et al, 1995; Kazemek, 1995; Nickse et al, 1994; Paulu, 1993; Purcell-Gates et al, 1995; Shaffer et al, 1995; Shanahan et al, 1995; Smith et al, 1995; Symons et al, 1996; Taylor, 1993; Unwin, 1995
3. Whole Language	Children acquire literacy through contextual exposure to print and through the building of a word-base that will ultimately reveal to them the letter-sound relationship.	Butt, 1995; Dickinson, 1993; Elster, 1994; Gadsden, 1994; Lazar et al, 1996; MacIsaac, 1996; Maguire, 1991; Mercer, 1989; Stone, 1994; Strickland, 1994-95
4. Skills Based-Language	Some authors argue that the whole language approach is inadequate. Children may build up an impressive word base, but will have difficulty when they encounter unfamiliar words if they do not know the alphabetic principle. A solution may be to incorporate both approaches.	Byrne et al, 1996; Chaney, 1994; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Shanahan et al, 1995; Stone, 1994
5. The Role of Parents	In developing and running a family literacy project, it is essential to include parents as *full* partners. Educators must consider parents' differing cultural and generational views on literacy, possibilities of low confidence and self-esteem, as well as the literacy of parents themselves, in creating a supportive *posture of reciprocity* that not only respects and responds to parents, but involves them in developing and controlling the process *with* educators.	Akroyd, 1995; Anderson, 1995; Butt, 1995; Cairney, 1995; Canning, 1996; Come et al, 1995; Cramer, no date (PACE); Edwards, 1995; Fagan, 1997; France, et al, 1993; Handel, 1992; Hoffman, 1995; Hughes et al, 1995; Lazar et al, 1996; Linder et al, 1995; Morrow, 1995; Morrow et al, 1993; Morrow et al, 1995; Neuman, 1995; Neuman et al, 1995; Padak, 1994; Paratore et al, 1995; Rasinski, 1995; Roskos et al, 1994; Saracho, 1997; Shanahan et al, 1995; Symons et al, 1996; Unwin, 1995
6. Other Perspectives	The multiple literacies perspective focuses on cultural differences and how to incorporate them into a literacy program. The social change perspective contends that (il)literacy is a product of political, social, and economic factors, and that the "key issue is the locus of control."	Auerbach, 1995; Morrow et al, 1993; Morrow, 1995 (other authors' ideas may fit this model, but none actually discuss it).

THE PRACTICAL REVIEW		
Topic	**Brief Summary**	**Authors**
1. Parent-Child Interactions/ Activities	There are dozens of things parents can do with their children to foster literacy acquisition: paired reading, reading aloud, reading and writing for functional purposes, writing stories to/for each other, creating book-related activities, modeling literacy behaviors, and of course maintaining a positive attitude and pleasant, supportive atmosphere.	Practically every author discusses this, at least minimally.
2. Literacy as *Fun*	Children acquire literacy most effectively when they are having fun. Children not only need to have fun in the learning process; they also need to see their parents reading for pleasure and showing enthusiasm for reading.	Baker et al, 1997; Brenna, 1995; Butt, 1995; Calahan, 1995; Kazemek, 1995; Neuman et al, 1997; Stone, 1994; Unwin, 1995
3. Availability of Materials	If a program is to be effective, it must have considerable resources (i.e. children's books, etc.) available to the parents and children.	Baker et al, 1997; Barclay et al, 1995; Brock et al, 1994; Butt, 1995; Come et al, 1995; Handel, 1992; Juliebo, 1995; Morrow, 1995; Morrow et al, 1993; Padak, 1994; Shanahan et al, 1995
4. "Safe" Environments	Since the extent to which children explore the world of print depends largely upon the parent-child attachment, parents must create warm, accepting environments, respond positively to any interest children show in literacy, encourage them to take risks, and avoid criticism when they make mistakes.	Barclay et al, 1995; Barnhart et al, 1995; Bus et al, 1995; Butt, 1995; Calahan, 1995; Hlady, 1995; Morrow et al, 1993; Spreadbury, 1994; Williams et al, 1994
5. Scaffolding	This involves the parent / teacher continually taking the child a little further in the learning process, taking it "little bits at a time." It is important to let the child do what he/she is capable of, and to step in when he/she has difficulties (the rule of *contingency*).	Brenna, 1995; Connor et al, 1997; Fagan, 1998; French, 1996; Williams et al, 1994

Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador

Section 3

"Research"

St. John's, NF *1999*

Eager to Learn: A Course on Family Literacy

3. Research

Report on Focus Group Results

Table of Contents

Purpose of Focus Group Research

A series of four focus groups was initially planned as part of the primary research for *Eager to Learn*, a family literacy course. The Community Services Council felt that this would be an appropriate method to gather input from local stakeholders. The need to consult these groups became even more apparent as the literature review and bibliography progressed, and we were able to see that a broad range of approaches and philosophies was characteristic of family literacy initiatives. We were also seeking to establish priorities and to adjust the scope of our project to the needs of those for whom it was intended.

Participants were chosen through a largely informal process of contacting stakeholder institutions, explaining the nature of the project, and asking for participation. The exception to this process was the fourth focus group, which attempted to consult parents from the general public on their approaches to literacy. This group was assembled primarily through responses to ads placed in two local newspapers, as well as through word of mouth. Seven to nine participants were present for each session.

When the four initial focus groups were complete and the *Eager to Learn* binder was being assembled, our Research Advisory Committee suggested it might be prudent to consult once more with Adult Educators to gauge their reaction to what had been completed so far, and to obtain further input on the course outline. A fifth focus group was then assembled, largely made up of the same people who had attended the first Adult Educators session, and, therefore, familiar with the thrust of the project. The session gave us a final reorientation on some key points and a sense of closure, as well.

Focus Group #1

1.0 Focus Group with Adult Educators

Participants: Seven professionals in the field of Adult Basic Education.

Introduction: This focus group primarily addressed the logistics, design and implementation of a new course in the ABE curriculum. Family Literacy projects have become more and more common over the last several years, but the literature indicates that they have rarely, if ever, been incorporated into a formal ABE curriculum. For this reason, the input of Adult Educators was crucial, because this group has the most intimate familiarity with the way courses are organized and how both teachers and students utilize a course outline.

In keeping with the philosophy of self-paced learning, the Adult Educators in this focus group stressed the concept of flexibility in most of the issues addressed, including resources, content, enrollment, format, and evaluation.

Points Raised by Focus Group: The following is a summary of specific points raised in this focus group:

- Adult learners want to help their children with reading and homework; the process of offering this help should be meaningful to parents; and family literacy should include all family members.

- Basic learning awareness should be a component of this course, which would include some instruction in how to encourage children, teach children, and create a comfortable, non-threatening environment.

- Include some information about what literacy means (example: everyday literacy, communication and literacy, also a component on self-esteem and literacy).

- A needs-assessment should be included at the beginning of the course to enable the teacher/facilitator to adapt course objectives to the needs of students.

- Reading activities should be as many and as varied as possible; include stories about the lives of the students; avoid the traditional "Dick and Jane" approach; activities should be based on student interests and experiences.

- Parents should discuss real-life experiences with children; parents and children could work on stories together - write about family experiences; on a trip to the grocery store, look at the flyer first, read words, look at pictures, etc.; interview someone in the family; watch a movie, discuss, draw pictures, make a list of words, etc.

- Parents should share information with their preschooler about their own ABE school work, even if the child is too young to understand. It is important that children see their parents interact with written and printed material.

- Course content should not be limited to prescribed resources. The content of the reading material should be left to the discretion of parents and children, more so than the facilitator.

- Environmental print: students should be encouraged to find literacy everywhere around them, and not to depend on books alone. Examples include comics, magazines, street signs, store signs, displays, etc.

- Emphasis should be placed on setting a good example in the home. If children do not see their parents read, then they are less likely to do so themselves. For example, parents should not make a child read a book while they themselves watch TV.

- Children should be brought on-site to demonstrate reading activities, and to allow students to take turns reading to them.

- People not currently enrolled in an ABE program might also be allowed to take the course.

- Credit must be awarded for this course to encourage students to enrol, so that this will not be a lower priority than other courses.

- A decision on the number of credits to be awarded should be made only after the course proposal has been mostly completed, as the credits awarded will reflect the depth of material covered.

- A family literacy course should be a core credit in the Communications Skills category.

- Enrolment in this course should not be limited by any factors such as the age of students' children, or whether or not they have children. Flexibility should be incorporated into the program to accommodate a practicum aspect for those who do not have a child with whom to work.

- The course should be conducted primarily in a group format with flexibility. Smaller groups, pairs, and individual projects should also be incorporated. Even though the course would be offered as a group, individualized plans could be prepared for each student if they have special circumstances or particular needs. Despite the importance of offering this course through a group format, it was felt that even if only one person was interested in taking the course, there should be a way for that person to do so.

- Any evaluation that matches course objectives will suffice. In general, however, tests and major academic assignments should be avoided in the interests of associating pleasure and enjoyment, rather than pressure and work, with reading. This will require a creative approach.

Suggestions for evaluation:

1) Evaluation structure should be straightforward so that students know what is expected of them.
2) Students need to be made aware of progress and grades periodically throughout the course.
3) Arrive at a mark with the student in individual meetings. The facilitator could incorporate negotiation/self-assessment based on individual learning objectives.
4) Do not mark the success or failure of a parent's activity with the child, but what they learned by doing it.
5) Each course group will create some course objectives. The course should have many objectives and broad curriculum guidelines, so that instructors can customize it for the needs of different groups and individuals. This will also allow students to help set the agenda as well.
6) Evaluation must be flexible depending on individual needs. Some students have children, others do not, some may not have much access to children, etc. Evaluation should be weighted according to the individual.
7) Students should keep reflective journals as part of their evaluation.

Suggestions for resources:

1) Ask an individual at the library to act as a direct liaison to the course facilitator. Visits to the library should be incorporated into the course.
2) Book ownership was considered to be a small but significant factor. Incorporating a small element of book ownership would place more value on books.
3) School-age children could probably get books from their school library.
4) Hold a book drive, have book exchanges.
5) Consider giving a book to those who successfully complete the course.

Focus Group #2

2.0 Focus Group with Adult Learners

***Participants*:** Nine Adult Learners from three ABE facilities.

Introduction: Participants were generally aware that an early introduction to reading was beneficial to young children, but felt strongly that they needed to be better informed about how to bring this about. They also felt that learners' self-esteem would have to be addressed before they would have the confidence to be pro-active in their child's reading.

Participants made a number of suggestions regarding course content and organization, which highlights findings from the literature that the best family literacy projects incorporate a certain level of parental control. These parents were certainly willing and able to be involved in this process. Interestingly, participants were also very much in tune with the basic philosophy behind family literacy. Many of them were able to pinpoint their own late or poor introduction to literacy as a cause of their own academic problems during their regular school years, a situation they were motivated to avoid in their own children.

Point Raised by Focus Group: The following is a summary of specific points raised in this focus group:

- It is very important to introduce reading to children from birth. This allows for exposure to words and pictures, and helps children to know the difference between objects, people, and animals.

- It is important to introduce literacy in the home in order to take advantage of learning over the first five years of life.

- Parents cannot depend on preschools or daycares because there are too many children, leaving little room for individual attention.

- Two children may be just as intelligent and capable, but the one who gets a good background in literacy at home will succeed whereas the one who does not will fail.

- An early introduction to literacy will give children a self-esteem boost when they get to school. Children who get their first introduction to reading in kindergarten may think "I can't do it so I'm not going to try," while those who had an early introduction to literacy would say, "I know how to do that. Can I help?"

- Little or no literacy introduction at home can have devastating consequences later in school. The child will experience embarrassment at not knowing words that her peers know, and this may lead to social withdrawal. Early literacy will help avoid frustration on the part of the child in school; it will be a confidence booster.

- Such a course will allow parents to learn from their children as well.

- When a child is learning, it gives the parent a sense of satisfaction from having taught the child: "To hear your child say 'My mommy' or 'My daddy taught me this', or your child's teacher saying, 'You're doing a wonderful job' is worth a million dollars."

- Parents seem comfortable acting as teacher to their child. They value this role. "We <u>are</u> teachers."

- It is important to adult learners that they teach their children the value of getting a good education.

- Self-esteem is a big factor for adult learners. They want to be able to say, "I can teach my child by what I just learned."

- Parents are wondering, “Am I doing the right thing?" Participants seem to see the course as having an element of parenting skills. One person even referred to it as a ‘parenting course.’

- One participant disagreed with the notion that students in a family literacy course could also learn from each other, since most people's parenting models are their own parents, and, “We don't know what's right or wrong until somebody tells us." Parents want to know whether they are doing something wrong. This may be self-esteem related, as parents are not always willing to trust their own judgement.

- Some parents do not feel confident in their own literacy skills. This prompted the suggestion that parents should be able to bring their children in to see Mom or Dad learning too. They felt that this would make learning valuable and important to the child.

- The self-esteem portion of the course should be completed with adults before bringing in children.

- One-on-one is much better; it allows the child and parent to ask and answer questions; this gives the child a better knowledge of language.

- Potential literacy activities: play memory games; learn songs, hand out words; use flash cards; use everyday surroundings to build vocabulary. The example was given of a child who brought home lyrics to ‘White Christmas’ and was having trouble reading them, but when they started singing the words he went through the song without a hitch.

- It is important for children to see their parents engaged in reading and writing activities. One participant reports a major improvement in his life since he has been able to do his literacy school work while his children do theirs around the same table. They sometimes work on vocabulary and spelling together.

- There seems to be little concern about being 'put on the spot' in front of other adults or children in terms of reading. It was even suggested that a parent might misspell a word to see if the child picks up on it. It was also suggested that it is important for children to see their parents learning from their mistakes as a modelling activity.

- Resources: libraries, flea markets, Good Will, etc. One student asked whether they would have to buy books to take the course.

Focus Group #3

3.0 Focus Group with Early Childhood Educators

***Participants*:** Eight professionals in Early Childhood Education and Development.

Introduction: The number of resources being produced in the field of family literacy has multiplied considerably over the last several years. It was therefore important at this stage to consult with professionals in this field to help prioritize the most important aspects of early childhood education as it relates to family literacy.

The relationship between the age of children and their ability to engage in various learning activities was a point of concern for some, in that various stages of development would require age-specific approaches in some cases. This concept was seen to be important in terms of both the mandate of the course and as a topic for learners to cover. Perhaps the point most emphasized, however, was that parent-child interaction should be made as central to the course as logistics could allow.

Points Raised by Focus Group: The following is a summary of specific points made in this focus group:

- There is a body of knowledge available from which to provide useful information to parents, but if there is the potential to include children, to have real-life situations, then so many more things become possible. [Whether this means bringing children on-site would depend on a number of factors, including the practical limitations of the facility.]

- A group course rather than self-pacing would be required, because learning about language comes from practice and interaction.

- Family literacy was felt to be extremely important: "It is the way children learn to read and enjoy print."

- Teaching the value of language and reading is important. This would take place early in the course.

- Involving the whole family is a key point.

- The fun aspect should always be emphasized. This will help set the tone and the attitude can be passed on to children.

- Advocacy and self-esteem should be threads throughout the course.

- Parents often do not know about the little things they can do (use environmental print such as road signs, etc.).

- Being able to watch literacy activities being modelled is important for parents. This should be covered at the beginning of the course - field trips to daycares, Family Resource Centre; role-plays within the classroom; things on video.

- Even if each student does not have a child available, they could still take part as an "active observer."

- Reading to children is very important; seeing their parents reading is also very important for children. Books should be around the house from infancy.

- It is important for parents to feel comfortable just telling stories to their children - not having to depend on a book. Parents also need to feel comfortable with language and sharing special times with their child. If not, then they will not be ready to read a book. Just having a special time to share and tell stories can lead into reading.

- Before reading begins, consider language and interaction between adult and baby. Parents and children also need experience, which will help make reading rich when they arrive at it. Example: going to the harbour to see boats will make the word 'boat' important when they later meet it in print. We need to pay attention to things other than sitting down with a book. If the image that a word conjures up in a child's mind is a very rich image, such as a great variety of balls, rather than only one ball, then the excitement of reading that word will be much greater.

- It is important for parents to understand different developmental needs of children (age appropriate activities) and consider the child's attention span. This is necessary to avoid parental frustration at building up unrealistic expectations for the age of a child. Introduce some basic developmental psychology. How and when fine and gross motor skills develop must also be considered before parents can expect children to be able to print.

- It is important for parents not to worry too much about skills-building, but to have fun, and play with words as you would blocks or a sandbox. Very high expectations or pressure to perform given activities can cause bad feelings between the parent and child.

- There is nothing wrong with printing with preschool children. If they take to it, they are ready; if not, they are not ready.

- Be careful that we do not pressure parents into thinking that children have to know how to print before they get to kindergarten. Keep things positive and without pressure.

- Young children who have access to crayons, etc., will come naturally to printing letters and writing their names. The curriculum should include something on the progression from drawing to writing.

- One basic skill for parents is pointing to words as they are read.

- Parents need to get across to children the idea of what reading is for and how it is done.

- Parents need to talk informally about letters and words so that the child who is age five and going to school is not floored by so many new things like letters, words, books, and pages.

- Parents should be educated on what is a good book, but they also need to know that it is okay to read a not-so-good book. Go with the child's interests as well as your own.

- Rhyme and rhythm are important mnemonic devices - the importance of this from the parent's point of view is that even those who are not confident in their own literacy can at least do rhymes and songs with children. This could be a confidence-builder for parents.

- Do not struggle with the child - change activities, learn a rhyme or song such as the Itsy Bitsy Spider. Parent and child should have fun with words - it should not be like homework or a test, but a lifestyle choice. Slip it in whenever possible during the day.

- It is just as important for a child to see a parent writing as reading, because children are very curious about such things. Example: making a shopping list.

- Print should be introduced to the child's environment from the earliest possible age. Parents should understand that even infants will absorb the behaviour pattern of reading and interacting with books even if they do not understand the words or story. This also gets the parents into the habit of reading to children.

- Some suggested activities: label items around the house such as toys and other objects; look at labels of items at the grocery store; use family albums or picture books for discussion; sing songs; go to the library; make up a story, and get the child to fill in the name of the character, what happens next, etc.

- Parents should make family books or books about their children. This helps emphasize the value of reading and books. A group of parents could make a book together.

- It all comes back to interaction - realizing that sometimes the TV goes off and that we have to make time just to talk back and forth using language, playing with words, talking about ourselves, and about things we read and feel and think and hope. Parents can enhance meal time and bed time this way - not just using books.

- A combination of skills-based and whole language teaching methods was suggested in order to capitalize on the advantages of both.

- Parents need to be trained in advocacy. They need to know how to talk to professionals such as teachers - how to say to a teacher, for example, "It's nothing against the child or you personally, but this particular approach is not working." If parents are not confident in their own literacy or educational background, then they are intimidated by institutions such as schools and dealing with teachers or administrators.

- Create a safe, stable, comfortable environment: use routine; keep books in one area; keep things predictable. The best way to deal with this kind of topic is when parents trust one other enough to brainstorm about the issue of safety and security.

- Do not hold communication with your child for ransom. If the child misbehaves, the discipline must fit the offence - do not give 'the silent treatment.'

- Not <u>just</u> a literacy course - cannot separate literacy from parenting skills.

- Television/computers: it is important to deal with the point of view that a parent can sit the child down in front of a favourite childrens' show and assume it is all the enrichment that he or she will need. The issue of television-watching needs to be addressed concerning its inadequacy for replacing human contact and interaction.

- Parents will need to be aware of children's books and where to get them (the library, etc.). Local content should be sought in terms of books and activities in order to make them more relevant to students, and therefore more interesting.

- One participant felt we could accommodate a wide age range by having younger children in one day a week and older children another day. The course activities would change every time it is offered depending on the needs of students and the age ranges of their children.

- Another participant felt that the variables would be too great. Two separate courses might be required if the course covered ages beyond preschool. Most participants agreed on this.

- Participants felt that the course should be limited to parents of preschool as opposed to school-age children. A whole different category of skills would be required for parents of older children once school is involved.

- Parents of children who are in the early school years who take this course would be more likely to do so because their kids are having problems.

Focus Group #4

4.0 Focus Group with Parents

***Participants*:** Eight parents who have an interest in early literacy

***Introduction*:** This focus group was an attempt to bring expertise from the community at large into the process. Many participants brought a wealth of ideas drawn from experience with their own children, from resources that they have acquired for personal use, and from volunteering in the community. In many ways, this group represented the views of parents who were very well informed in terms of family literacy and early childhood literacy. As a result, a number of good ideas were brought forward.

Participants emphasized quality, constant communication between parent and child, and the need to adapt parental expectations to the unique characteristics of each individual child.

Points Raised by Focus Group: The following is a summary of specific points made in this focus group:

- Children will be far behind by kindergarten if they have not received reasonable exposure to reading and books.

- Early literacy helps stimulate a child's imagination and memory.

- Flexibility is a key approach for parents to take when reading to children. Different children will require different approaches to reading.

- The developmental aspect must also be considered - children will perform different tasks and arrive at various stages of development at different ages.

- Parents should be reassured when their child is not as far ahead in literacy development as they would like. The key is exposing children to books and print without pressuring them or feeling pressured as parents. Parents should not set rigid goals for their preschool children in terms of literacy achievement.

- An early immersion in literacy will allow a child to absorb the mechanics of reading: left to right, front to back, that a symbol means a word (the child is not necessarily memorizing specific words, but discovering that there is a pattern or system to written communication).

- Children can also learn through books that pictures are symbols for things in the world. This allows them to begin categorizing and organizing their environment.

- All children have different preferences in how to enjoy reading: some will listen all the way through quietly; others only want to read parts of books. Parents do not have to take the active role. Sometimes children will want to turn the pages and point to things, or they may want to make up a story or read to the parent.

- Sometimes a child will choose a longer or more advanced book than the attention span required to sit through. The parent can then just make up a story based on the pictures.

- Parents should try to make associations, comparisons, and connections between things the child has read and things in their real environment.

- Parents can capitalize on a child's interest in computer or video games, for example, by buying a magazine about video games for the child to read or look at.

- Allow children to control the reading session to a certain extent - go with their preferences.

- Adults can read to each other as well as to their child. This is a modelling activity. It can be done informally, such as one parent reading the newspaper aloud while the other is cooking or washing dishes.

- Parents can help and encourage children to make signs to put around the house naming rooms or giving directions.

- Children can gain pride and self-confidence from learning rhymes and songs. For example, the rhyme "patty cake, patty cake, baker's ___" can be used in this way, leaving out words for the child to put in. Rhymes also help teach phonics - the sounds of letters and words. For example, if the child knows "hat," then they will quickly learn "mat," "cat," "sat," etc.

- Let the child use and experiment with a tape recorder. Use it to make up stories and songs.

- Parents should allow the child to teach, read to, and show <u>them</u>.

- Being enthusiastic about your child's efforts is important: "when you see something grab your kid, go with it!"

- Some kindergartens require that children know how to spell their name and address before they come to school. Parents may have to deal with this. In general, however, parents should make writing materials available and respond to their child's interest, but not pressure the child. Some children may prefer larger writing utensils (chalk, markers, etc.) or may not do well with writing at all until they get older, based on their level of motor skill development.

- A good rule of thumb for baby talk would be always to respond and acknowledge the child's attempts at communication, while keeping your level of response just a step ahead developmentally in order to challenge the child and keep learning happening. At early stages of development, baby talk is fine, but once the child is capable of more advanced communication, it is important to keep on or ahead of her level.

- Television watching can be of concern, but as long as there is a good groundwork being laid in literacy, it should not be a major problem. It helps if a parent watches TV with the child so that they can discuss the program. There should be some cause for concern where the television is on all day long, every day, to the detriment of interaction with family and friends or other activities.

- Television is a major force in people's homes, especially those that have not been exposed to books very much. It can be used as a bridge to literacy, however, in that some childrens' shows also have books based on the program. This can be used to pique the child's interest. If parents do not find something that kids are interested in and want to do, then reading will be work rather than fun.

- Parents need to maintain quality, constant communication with their child. Whether it is television, books, or any literacy or play activity, it is the accompanying communication that provides the enrichment.

Supplementary Focus Group #5

5.0 Focus Group to Review Draft Course

***Participants*:** Seven individuals, most of whom work in the field of ABE, who were asked to review a draft of the *Eager to Learn* project.

***Introduction**:* The purpose of this focus group was to obtain feedback as we headed into the final stages of the project. Participants focussed primarily on the practical concerns of implementing the course.

Many of the following suggestions are beyond the mandate of researchers, and could be considered recommendations to the Department of Education in terms of implementation. Many of the specific recommendations in terms of course content and layout have already been incorporated into the existing course handbook.

Points Raised by Focus Group: The following is a summary of specific themes presented in this focus group.

- It should be a Communication Skills course provided that the minimum required number of credits in this category be increased from six to eight. There are not enough required courses in this category as it is.

- The problem with offering it as a General Options (G.O.) course is that many students come into ABE with their "G.O.s maxed out." Therefore, many people who would benefit from this course would not be able to take it. "Putting it in G.O. might just put it on a shelf."

- It should be worth at least two credits.

- It should <u>not</u> be a required course.

- The course should be "sold" to instructors so that it will be offered more often.

- The course should be in-serviced to instructors first: "I'd want to be an expert at this before I got at it."

- Include an introductory module: what is family literacy?

- If a resource is not meant for participants but for facilitators, then this should be indicated.

- Keep modules short.

- Be careful not to get bogged down with learning disabilities. It should not be overemphasized, considering that this course is focussed more on pre-school than school-aged children, who may be too young to assess for many learning disabilities anyway.

6.0 Summary of Themes from all Five Focus Groups

Focus Group #1

- The course should be flexible, so that it can be adjusted to the needs of the students.
- Use real-life experience whenever possible rather than "book learning".
- Environmental print should be part of the course.
- Modelling of literate behaviour by parents is important.
- The course should be conducted in a group format, with individualized activities for those with special circumstances. If someone wanted to do the course individually, however, it is important that he or she be allowed to do so.
- Tests and assignments should be avoided in the interests of associating pleasure and enjoyment, rather than pressure and work, with reading.
- Continue getting feedback from learners to keep the course as relevant as possible to the real experiences of students.

Focus Group #2

- Parents are interested in helping their children in any way they can. They realize the importance of literacy in child development and in later success at school.
- Parents will gain a sense of satisfaction by helping teach their children.
- Self-esteem must be a consideration throughout the course.

Focus Group #3

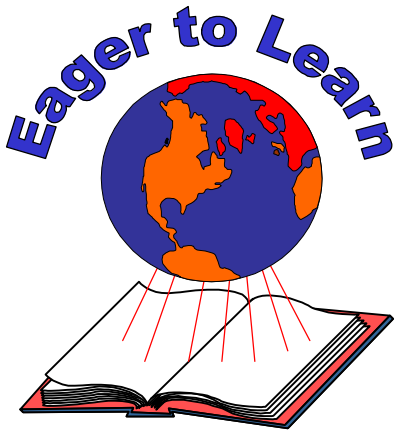
- "Real-life" situations should be incorporated into the course whenever possible.
- It should be a requirement that this course be offered as a group, because learning about language comes from interaction.
- The "fun" aspect should always be emphasized.
- Advocacy and self-esteem should be threads throughout the course.
- Children should be given opportunities to enrich their daily lives with new and varied experiences whenever possible.
- Parents should have an understanding of the basic developmental needs and characteristics of children at different ages.

Focus Group #4

- Early immersion in literacy will allow a child to absorb the concept and the mechanics of reading before they go to school.
- Parents should understand that children require a flexible approach, in that each child will respond differently to any given approach.
- Children can gain pride and self-confidence from learning rhymes and songs.
- Parents should emphasize participation and fun rather than skills-building for pre-schoolers.
- Television should be explored by parents in terms of its effect on children and literacy development.
- Parents' priority should be to maintain constant, quality interaction with their children.

Supplementary Focus Group #5

- Should be in Communications Skills
- Should be two credits.
- Should not be required of all students.
- Should be in-serviced if the course is approved so that Communication Skills teachers will be ready and comfortable with offering the course.



Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador

Section 4

"Overview"

St. John's, NF *1999*

Overview

In Eager to Learn: A Course on Family Literacy, you will:

Discuss how parents are teachers;

Learn new ways to prepare your children for school;

Talk about the importance of feeling good about yourself and about learning;

Learn new literacy development skills to use with children;

Learn about normal child development from infancy to the school years;

Think about literacy as an every day activity;

Have fun with literacy development;

Learn about different learning styles;

Learn about the challenges faced by some children as they develop their literacy;

Share your experiences with other parents and learners;

Discuss home and school relationships which can be helpful to children.;

Most importantly, this course will build on skills and knowledge you already have and use every day.

Eager to Learn: A Course on Family Literacy

4. Overview

Table of Contents

1.0 Why Do a Course on Family Literacy?

This course should provide adult learners, many of whom are parents, with the tools to introduce literacy to the young children in their families. The course assumes that an adult's desire to learn can be a foundation for the ability and willingness of that adult to promote and strengthen literacy learning in their offspring.

1.1 Aims:

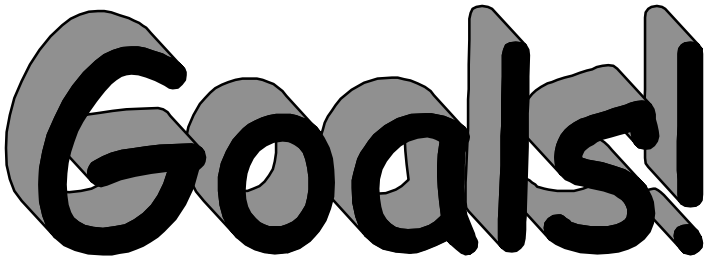
Over the long term, the children whose parents are enrolled in this course should have a better start on the road to life-long learning. As a result, it is hoped that *Eager to Learn* will make a positive impact on the lives of both parents and children, as well as the health and well-being of our society as a whole.

1.2 Goals:

The goals of this course were determined through a process of research and consultation. A literature review focused primarily on family literacy and explored child development, literacy in general, and learning disabilities.

Following this research, parents from the general public, early childhood educators, adult learners, and adult educators were consulted through a series of focus groups both to clarify what would be expected from a course in family literacy, and to discuss how these expectations could be met. In the end, this study and consultation combined to produce a set of guiding principles, or goals, that would have to inform our objectives if the broader aims of the course were to be met.

The goals are meant to complement one another.



The goals for this course are as follows:

1.To introduce the concept of family literacy.

2. To foster high levels of self-esteem and confidence in adult learners.

3. To emphasize the importance of parent-child interactions and activities.

4. To make learners aware of basic child development, and what is appropriate literacy learning for children at different stages.

5. To demonstrate the importance of a home environment conducive to literacy acquisition.

6. To explore with learners the manners in which parents can make literacy materials available to their children.

7. To highlight some techniques parents can use to develop literacy in their children.

8. To develop with learners an understanding of the importance of fun in acquiring literacy.

9. To enhance learners' abilities to support and advocate on behalf of their children with educators.

10. To equip learners with a basic understanding of learning styles and learning disabilities.

2.0 Rationale and Assumptions About Learners

An inadequate or non-existent introduction to literacy can sentence a child to a life of frustration and underachievement. Once this process is under way, it can only be addressed through a compensatory or remedial approach, which often does not reach those who need it most. Although such an approach can be successful, it would obviously be preferable for both the individuals concerned and society in general to avoid such problems in the first place. The traditional approach to literacy issues has been one of reaction after the fact.

The concept behind *Eager to Learn* evolved from several important facts relating to literacy and to adult learners pursuing high school equivalency:

- The vast majority of adult learners are either parents, grandparents, or are about to become parents.

- Adult learners are coping with personal needs as well as the needs of their children. Accordingly, the success or failure of their children in school has an impact on the lives of parents.

- Many adult learners self-refer specifically to improve their ability to read, write, and speak with their children. It therefore becomes especially important for adult learners to feel competent and confident as they prepare to assist their children with the rigours of school and homework.

Eager to Learn is an attempt to maximize human potential by helping to prevent future illiteracy. We know that young children are highly focused on absorbing and decoding the world around them. It is during this critical stage of their development, from birth to the early school years, that a solid foundation must be laid for the acquisition of literacy. Because parents are the primary care-givers during this period, it follows that they are the obvious candidates to provide the necessary immersion in literacy.

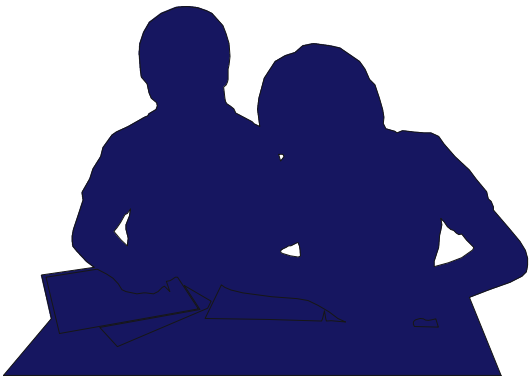
Our model of literacy promotion attempts to build on the strengths of parents, as well as their availability and orientation to learning within the ABE setting:

< Adult learners are an appropriate target group, because they are already motivated and present in a learning environment.

< They have daily access to the support of instructors and other professionals who are responsive to situations as they arise on a day-to-day basis.

< Adult learners are already in the supportive peer network of an adult learning facility.

< *Eager to Learn* is needed to strengthen the connection between the assets of learners in the adult education setting and the investment opportunity presented by their children. The end result should be a more literate, fulfilled, and productive society.



3.0 Evaluation

Focus group research strongly emphasized the importance of avoiding tests and quizzes whenever possible so as not to associate stress or negative connotations with this course. Instead, the facilitator must use a combination of approaches which will accurately reflect the degree to which learners meet each objective. This involves staying away from traditional methods in favour of indirect approaches which involve the learner to the fullest extent.

Participation should be a major component of evaluation. Participation refers to time spent both inside the classroom and during practicums or field trips. A course journal or portfolio should be kept by students as an instrument of evaluation. Activities included in the course could present opportunities for evaluation as well. Self-evaluation might also be an option in certain instances. Tests and assignments may be called for, however, when specific subject matter calls for familiarity with new terms and concepts. In general, it is hoped that students in this course will learn through observation, participation, and application, and should be evaluated using a combination of all of these methods.

The *suggested* value of each Module is as follows:

Module One	5%
Module Two	5%
Module Three	15%
Module Four	20%
Module Five	20%
Module Six	15%
Module Seven	10%
Module Eight	10%

4.0 Potential Resources

Please refer to the annotated bibliography at the end of this proposal for a brief description of each resource.

Growing into Literacy. William T. Fagan, James G. Anderson and Mary Cronin. (1998). Education, Learning Literacy Network. ISBN: 0-9681324-4-8

Helping Your Child Get Ready for School. Nancy Paulu. (1993). U.S. Department of Education.

Learning and Reading Partners. Maitland MacIsaac. (1996). The Prince Edward Island Literacy Alliance. Charlottetown.

Literacy and Parenting Skills. Laureen Mackenzie and Elaine Cairns. (1996). Alberta Vocational College. ISBN: 0-9681233-0-9

Literacy for Life: Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties. (1996) Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. St. John's.

Literacy for Life: Home Reading Guide. (1994). Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. St. John's.

PACE Family Literacy Program. Lina Cramer. (No date). Family Resource Coalition.

Films and Videos:

Reading: A Gift of a Lifetime. Joan Oldford-Matchim (22 minutes) Available from: Literacy Services of Canada Ltd., P.O. Box 52192, Edmonton, Alberta. T6G 2T5 Tel: (780) 413-6491, Fax: (780) 413-6582 Email: brokop@telusplanet.net

Literacy and Your Family. Medicine Hat College & Homespun Video Productions (90 minutes) Available from: Literacy Services of Canada Ltd., P.O. Box 52192, Edmonton, Alberta. T6G 2T5 Tel: (780) 413-6491, Fax: (780) 413-6582 Email: brokop@telusplanet.net

Other Resources:

There are many suggestions for literacy activities on the Internet. Simply use a world wide web browser of your choice to conduct a search on family literacy or related topics.

Parents themselves are often a wealth of information, and teachers are also invaluable. Draw on your community resources as much as possible.

5.0 Course Outline

> ***Learner's Hint:***
>
> The literature on family literacy emphasizes the importance of parents having control in the learning process and sharing ideas with one another. It is therefore recommended that this course be offered in a group setting if and when possible.

1. What is Family Literacy? . . . . . Module 1

1.1 Determine the characteristics of family literacy.
1.2 Explain the importance of family literacy.
1.3 Explain how literacy is a school issue, a workplace issue, and a family issue.

2. Parents as People . . . . . Module 2

2.1 Discuss the concept of self-esteem.
2.2 Conduct and analyze a self-esteem assessment guide.
2.3 Explore methods of raising self-esteem.
2.4 Demonstrate the importance of self-esteem to learning.
2.5 Define family goals as a means of visualizing success.

3. Learning About Children . . . . . Module 3

3.1 Discuss the importance of parent - child interactions.
3.2 Understand the basics of child development and literacy acquisition during the pre-school years.
3.3 Identify learning styles.
3.4 **Practicum I** (Observation): Investigate developmental expectations of children at given ages through observation or discussion with child-care professionals.

4. Preparing Your Home for Literacy . . . . . Module 4

4.1 Identify the characteristics of a nurturing, supportive home environment.
4.2 Identify options for acquiring literacy material.
4.3 Understand that television can be a friend or foe as a literacy tool in early literacy acquisition.
4.4 Define environmental print and examine its use in enhancing family literacy.
4.5 Discuss the importance of writing, printing, drawing, and painting in literacy development, and explore their applications.
4.6 Describe the characteristics of a literacy-oriented home.
4.7 Define and demonstrate the concept of modelling literate behaviour.

5. Having Fun With Literacy . . . . . Module 5

5.1 Illustrate how new experiences can be used to build a broader foundation for literacy.
5.2 Explain the importance of play in the learning process.
5.3 Identify and evaluate some literacy-oriented games.
5.4 Examine some common rhymes and songs to assess their importance in literacy development.
5.5 Evaluate the effectiveness of jokes, riddles and comics as learning tools.
5.6 **Practicum II** (Interaction): Interact with children at a cooperating local daycare to investigate the value of fun activities in building literacy.

6. Reading and Talking . . . . . Module 6

6.1 Discuss the importance of oral language in literacy development.
6.2 Compare strategies learners can use when reading with children.
6.3 Define scaffolding, and examine how it can be used as a technique to build literacy.
6.4 **Practicum III** (Application): Read and talk to children, and apply techniques used in this Module.

7. Challenges of Learning ..... Module 7

7.1 Define and discuss the challenges to learning.
7.2 Establish some of the early warning signs of learning disabilities that may warrant further investigation by a professional.
7.3 Compare and contrast learning styles and learning disabilities.
7.4 Outline some common strategies for dealing with learning disabilities.
7.5 Investigate resources available in the community to help with learning disabilities.

8. Taking Literacy to School and Beyond ..... Module 8

8.1 Discuss the challenges associated with preparing children for pre-school.
8.2 Explain what is expected of children when they go to school, and discuss ways to prepare children for this experience.
8.3 Identify ways of developing good partnerships with teachers, and explore approaches to helping children with homework.
8.4 Explore ways to promote literacy throughout the school years and beyond.

Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador

Section 4

"Modules One to Eight"

St. John's, NF *1999*

Module 1

What is Family Literacy?

EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 1 - What is Family Literacy?

Learners must understand what they are studying, and why they are studying it. The purpose of this module is to introduce family literacy, so learners can see that family literacy is not just a course, but something that is important in their lives. The module is designed to get learners thinking about, and demonstrating their own knowledge about families and literacy.

1.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Determine the characteristics of family literacy.	Learners will be able to describe several characteristics of family literacy, drawn from their own life experiences.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:*** How to use the Resources

  The facilitator may use the Brainstorming Session: "What is Family Literacy?" included in this document to assist learners in producing a list of characteristics of family literacy.

  - Have learners write their own suggestions on a flip chart.
  - Accept words, pictures and symbols.
  - Discuss the list.
  - Compare the list with the suggestions in the resource section.

1.2

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Explain the importance of family literacy.	Learners will be able to explain why family literacy is important in their lives and the lives of their children.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  Only learners themselves can know how important family literacy is in their lives. The facilitator should guide a discussion about this after learners are comfortable discussing what family literacy involves.

  - Use the resource "Brainstorming Session - What is the importance of family literacy?"
  - Encourage discussion about all kinds of families.

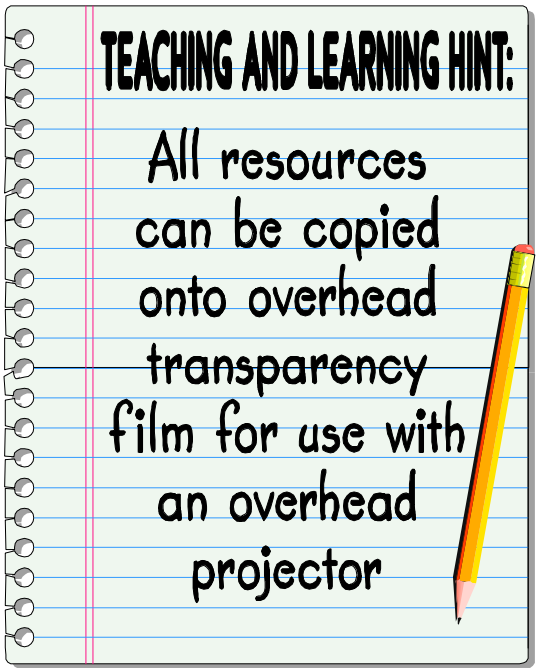
1.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Explain how literacy is a school issue, a workplace issue, and a family issue.	Learners will understand the importance of literacy at school, at work, and at home.

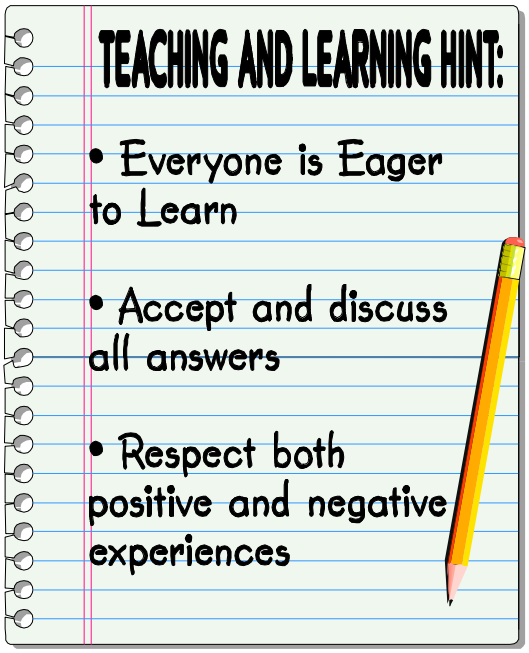
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  The facilitator should guide a discussion with learners, and may use the resource "Literacy at School, at Work, & at Home" as a guideline for this discussion.

  - Have learners list and discuss school, work and home issues.
  - Personal comments are welcome.
  - Encourage everyone in the group to participate.
  - Show a video on family literacy to help with the discussion.
  - Concentrate on what is important to the learners who are taking this course.

MODULE 1 - RESOURCES





Brainstorming Session - What is Family Literacy?

Family literacy is not easy to define because it includes so many different things. However, if we think about what a family is, and what literacy involves, we can probably get a good idea of what family literacy is. Let's try by writing down our ideas in the spaces provided!!

What do you think makes up a family?

What do you think literacy involves?

Write down some things you think would be part of family literacy.

Brainstorming Session - What is Family Literacy?

Some possible responses:

What do you think makes up a family?

- Mom
- Dad
- Children
- Cousins, Aunts & Uncles
- Those we live with
- Siblings
- Grandparents
- Neighbours
- Foster Parents
- Those we visit
- Those we talk to on the telephone
- Baby Sitters

What do you think literacy involves?

- Reading
- Writing
- Reading out loud
- Mail
- Drawing/Scribbling
- Using road signs
- Buying groceries
- Cards and letters
- Storytelling
- Play

What describes Family literacy?

- Reading together
- Crayons & paper
- Comics
- Homework
- Drawing
- Writing
- Notes on the fridge
- Groceries lists
- Books

Brainstorming Session - What is the Importance of Family Literacy?

Where do children learn?

When do children learn?

Why do I want my child to be literate?

Brainstorming Session - What is the Importance of Family Literacy?

Some suggested responses:

Where do children learn?

- In the womb
- In the stroller
- In Mom's arms
- In Dad's arms
- On the kitchen floor

When do children Learn?

- In the morning and afternoon and at night
- When they are happy
- When they are loved
- When they are interested
- When they see new things
- When they are having fun

Why do I want my child to begin literacy development in the family?

- To be able to read
- To do well in school
- To prepare for higher education
- To use a computer

Literacy at School, at Work, & at Home

In group discussion, try to answer the following questions. Chances are, there will be many different answers. Try for at least three..

Why do you think literacy is a school issue?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Why do you think literacy is a work issue?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Why do you think literacy is a family issue?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Literacy at School, at Work, & at Home

School Issues

- homework
- grades
- class presentation
- notes from teachers
- school announcements
- notes to school
- parental involvement

Work Issues

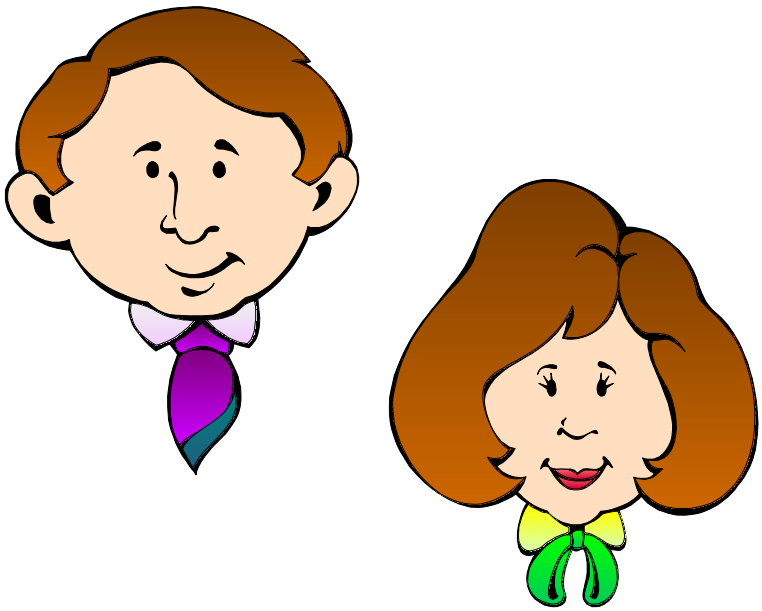
- invoices
- cash register
- signs
- following directions
- policy manual
- instructions
- memos

Family Issues

- We all live in families
- Families are our first teachers
- Families are different sizes
- Families helping others
- Helping children and siblings
- Siblings help each other

Module 2

Parents as People



EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 2 - Parents as People

This Module is meant to provide the facilitator and learners with a sense of student self-esteem levels, and depending on whether learners have a generally high or low self-esteem, to engage in esteem-building activities as needed.

2.1	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Discuss the concept of self-esteem.	Learners will understand the relationship between attitudes and self-esteem, and the importance of self-esteem in family literacy.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  Remember that all learners have strengths.

  Remember that all parents are teachers.

  To get learners thinking about the meaning of self-esteem, the facilitator can conduct a brainstorming session such as the one outlined in "What is Self-Esteem?" The results of this brainstorming session may then be used to launch a discussion about the importance of self-esteem in family literacy, asking learners questions such as:

  - Do attitudes about themselves affect the way parents approach their own literacy?

  - Does self-esteem affect the way parents approach literacy with their children?

2.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Conduct and analyse a self-esteem assessment guide	Learners will be aware of their own attitudes and self-esteem, and will understand how these affect decisions they make.

 Notes to Facilitator:

To make learners more aware of their own self-esteem, facilitator may use the "Self-Esteem Assessment," resource, but remember, it's not a test!

- This assessment could be used to get students thinking about the roots of their self-esteem, and to discover how the attitudes they have about themselves can affect the decisions they make.
- It is important that the facilitator make learners aware that this is an awareness exercise. They will not be graded! Allow learners to complete the guide in private.
- Follow the assessment guide with a supportive group discussion.

2.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Explore methods of raising self-esteem	Learners will demonstrate knowledge of at least two methods of building self-esteem.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Facilitator may use the "Thinking About Good Things" resource to explain how self-esteem can be raised by focussing on a person's good qualities. The "Making Changes" resource could be used to illustrate how improving ourselves can also build self-esteem.

- Lead a discussion that would attempt to develop other methods of building self-esteem.

2.4

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Demonstrate the importance of self-esteem to learning	Understand the connection between self-esteem and literacy.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  Use this learning opportunity to promote a belief that we are all teachers, with worth and skills.

  - Demonstrate that we learn best when we feel good about ourselves.
  - Demonstrate that negative personal feelings impair learning.

2.5

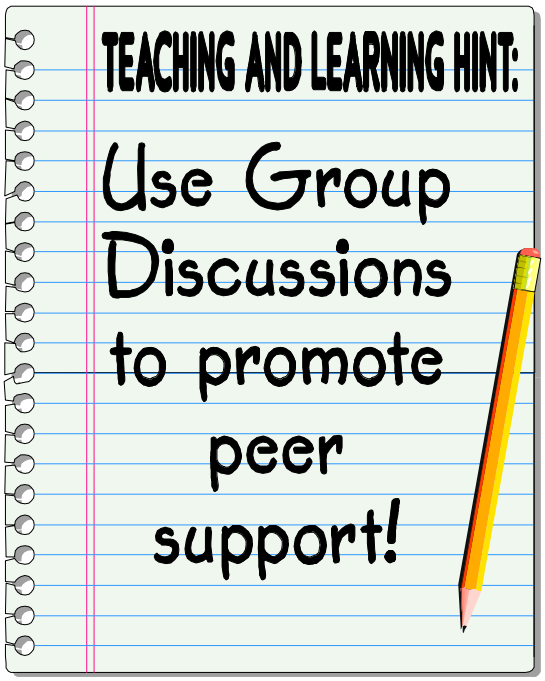
OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Define family goals as a means of visualizing success.	Learners will establish long-term literacy goals, both for themselves and their children.

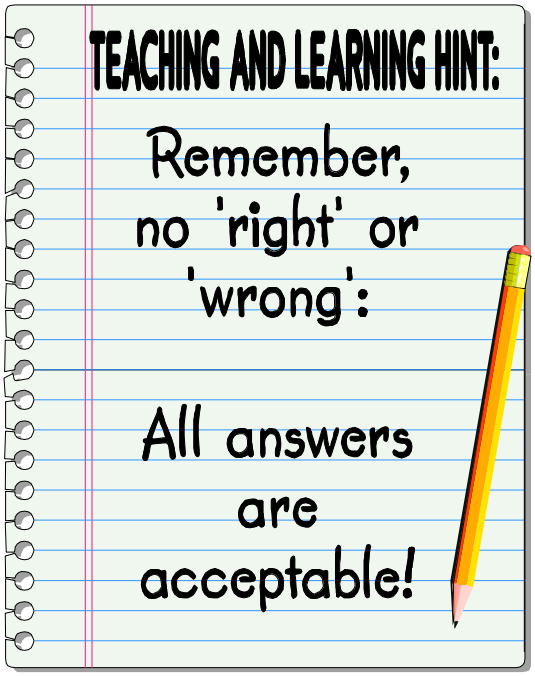
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

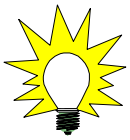
  Goal setting is one way the facilitator may choose to get learners thinking about long-term family goals. The facilitator may wish to discuss this activity with learners beforehand to explain that the purpose is to develop self-awareness and to set realistic goals.

  - Have learners share their goals for themselves.
  - Have learners share their goals for their children.

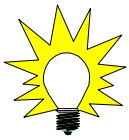
MODULE 2 - RESOURCES







Brainstorming Session
What is Self-Esteem?



We have all heard about self-esteem, and many of us can identify the characteristics of a person with a high self-esteem. But what is self-esteem? What do we mean when we say that someone has high self-esteem? If we can point out some characteristics of a person with a high self-esteem, and figure out why we chose the characteristics we did, then perhaps we can come up with a definition of self-esteem. After you write down your ideas in the spaces provided, see if you can write a definition of self-esteem.

What are some characteristics of a person with high self-esteem?

What are the characteristics of a person with low self-esteem?

How do people's attitudes affect their decisions?

Where do these attitudes come from?

What do these attitudes have to do with self-esteem?

Self-Esteem

Place a check (**U**) in the box under the response that you feel is most appropriate for each question.

1. I consider myself to be a nice person who is pleasant to be around.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

2. I am an interesting person.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

3. I am talented.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

4. I am always there to help others in need.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

5. I like to be challenged with new things.

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

6. **I like to learn.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

7. **I am basically happy.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

8. **I work hard to make life better for myself and my child.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

9. **I have close friends that I can count on.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

10. **I try to laugh at life's little problems.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

11. **I look after myself.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

12. **I try to exercise regularly.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

13. **I have a lot of inner strength.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

14. **I can overcome obstacles in life.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

15. **I am loved.**

Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	No Opinion	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
~	~	~	~	~

What Now?

This was not a test!

Have a group discussion on the following:

- Why do I think that way about myself?
- What are some things we do to ourselves to lower self-esteem?
- Where did my attitudes about myself come from?
- What do other people do to lower our self-esteem?
- How do my attitudes about myself affect the way I act?

Thinking About Good Things

One of the most important steps in building self-esteem is realizing that we have good qualities. Sometimes it is so easy to think about the things we do not like about ourselves, that we forget the things we do like. In this exercise, let us forget about the things we do not like about ourselves, and write down at least one good quality for each question.

What is something I am good at?_____

_____

What are some good things my friends say about me? _____

_____

What is something I know a lot about? _____

_____

What gives me a sense of satisfaction? _____

_____

What is something that is important to me? _____

_____

What helps me finish something I have started? _____

_____

What is something I have improved upon? _____

_____

What is something I have accomplished? _____

_____

What is something I am proud of? _____

_____

Making Changes

Realizing and focussing on our good qualities is an important part of building self-esteem. It is also important to think about things we can and would like to improve about ourselves, and to figure out how we can make these changes. In this exercise, let's identify some things we would like to change in our lives by completing the following sentences.

Remember, the best way to make changes is a little bit at a time, so try to finish each sentence with a change that you can realistically make.

Something I would like to improve about myself is ... _____

_____

I would feel better if ..._____

_____

If I could quit something, it would be ... _____

_____

I would like to have more time for ... _____

_____

Something I would like to do more often is ... _____

_____

If I had time, I would like to learn more about ... _____

_____

Something I would like to accomplish is ... _____

_____

I would like to have more patience when I ... _____

_____

Something I would like to do less is ... _____

_____

A Definition of Self-Esteem

I learn when I am...

Children learn when they are...

Why is Self-Esteem Important For Learning?

- Studies show that bright children who think poorly of themselves may do poorly in school, but average children who believe in themselves can excel.

- Good self-esteem has a positive effect on just about every part of children's lives - how they get along with others, how they handle school and studying, how they deal with pressure and stress, and just about everything they do as children, adolescents, and adults.

So why is self-esteem important to learning?

Children who have high self-esteem are willing to tackle tough learning assignments. They're willing to try something new. And even if they don't get the answer right the first time, they will usually keep on trying until they get it right. High self-esteem helps children in other ways as well. Kids with high self-esteem are happier, have more friends, and are more accepted by others.

Ways to Promote Self-Esteem in the Children we live with.

< When we feel a lecture coming on, we can switch it off; ask for further information; turn the discussion back to the child.

< When we are tempted to declare how "wrong" a child is, we can ask the child to clarify or to explain what he is thinking or feeling. Children will express themselves more freely if they do not feel the threat of a judge's sentence.

< When a "nagging session" is about to happen, we can try humour instead. Nagging destroys communication, while humour can salvage it. The most important thing to know about nagging is that we are often not aware that we are doing it. Instead of nagging a child, try turning a chore into a competition or a game.

< When strong emotions such as anger are present, it is usually better to talk out a problem later when things are calmer. Strong emotion makes productive dialogue impossible. Let the emotion subside before tackling the problem.

< Catch your child doing something good.

To build our child's self-esteem, we can say things like:

- “Let's do it together.”
- “We're really proud of you.”
- “Thank-you.”
- “You're the family expert on this.”
- “What do you think?”
- “That's the best job you've done yet.”

We can avoid saying things like:

- "When I was a child, I was lucky to have ..."
- "That's ridiculous."
- "When will you ever learn?"
- "You're too young to understand."
- "Here, let me do it, you'll only get it wrong."
- "Don't get in my way."

A Few More Thoughts....

- Every time you teach your children a new skill, such as setting the table, making a batch of cookies, building a bird house from scraps of wood, you're building self-esteem by helping them feel competent and capable.

- Comparing children is harmful to their self-esteem. If you have more than one child, try not to say things like, "Your brother always brought home straight ‘A’s. Why can't you?" Instead, help each child find - and feel good about - his or her own strengths.

- Try a sneak attack to build your child's self-esteem. Sometimes, let your child overhear a compliment, "accidentally- on-purpose."

- When you have a criticism to make, keep it short and to the point. When you have a compliment to give, praise your child to the sky. Chances are you'll have to spend less time on discipline.

Adapted from The Essential Link, by Eva Whitmore, Newfoundland & Labrador Home and School Federation, 1996.

A Practical Activity on Self-Esteem and Learning

Divide evenly into groups of two. Everyone gets a buddy! One buddy is the adult; one buddy is a child who is doing something 'wrong' and must stop.

Spend two or three minutes having the 'adult' insist that the activity stop. Use words only and have the 'child' buddy remain silent.

Come together as a group and have each 'child' buddy explain what it was like to be told to stop their activity . Use words only and have the 'adult' remain silent.

- How successful were negative comments on stopping activity by the child?

- How successful were positive comments on stopping activity by the child?

- How did the child feel, while being silent?

- How did the adult feel when being silent?

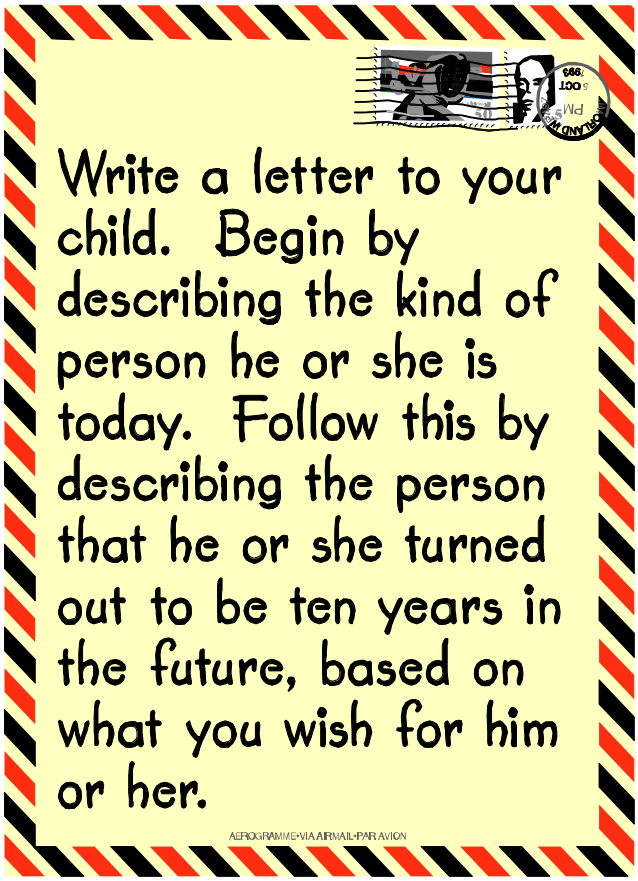
- What did the 'children' learn about self-esteem?

- What did the 'adults' learn about self-esteem?

Goals of Parents for Their Children

Imagine that it is ten or twenty years from today. Your child will be ____ years old. You, of course, don't seem to have aged a bit.

Activity:



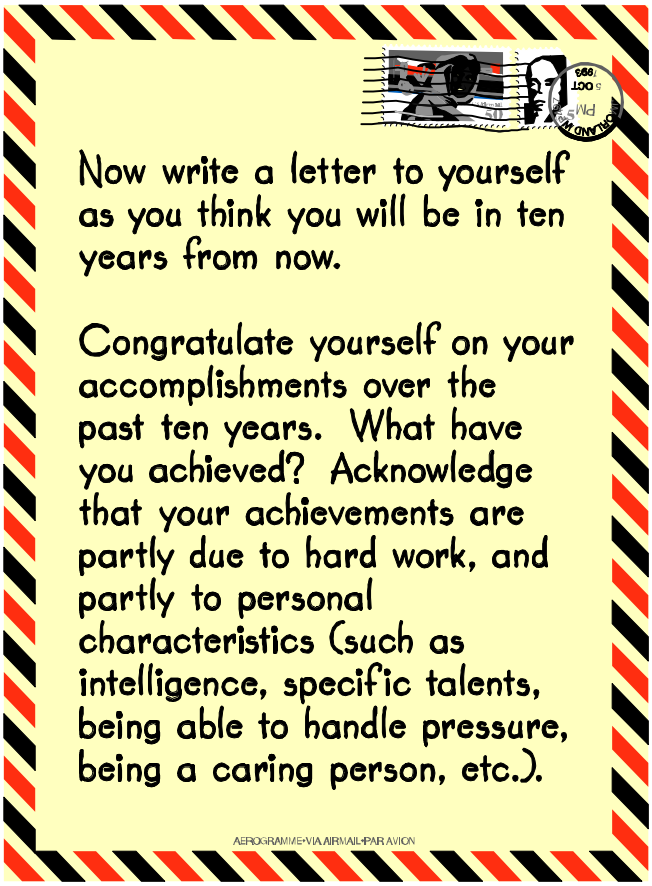
Here's a way to start:

"I want my child to ...."

When you have finished your letter, identify three or four of the most important qualities you would like your child to possess in the future. By yourself or through discussion, try to come up with ways that you can help nurture the development of these qualities in your child.

Goals of Parents for Themselves

Activity:

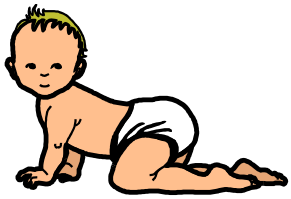


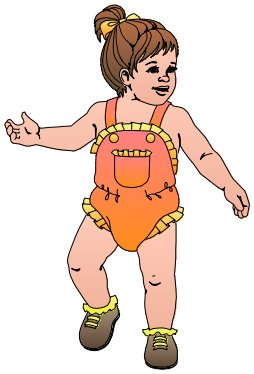
When you have written this letter to yourself, identify three or four of the personal characteristics which will have helped you succeed ten years from now. How can you build on and use these characteristics today to help achieve your goals in the future?

Partly adapted from Learning and Reading Partners, PEI Literacy Alliance, Charlottetown, PEI, 1994.

Module 3

Learning About Children





EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 3 - Learning About Children

Parents recognize the value of spending time with their children. They may not realize, however, that the time they spend is very important to the literacy development of each child. If parents are to be effective literacy teachers to their children, it is important that they understand this aspect of the relationship between parents and children. Parents can do this by learning about how children develop and grow - physically, emotionally, and mentally. If parents are able to gain this knowledge, they will be better prepared to guide their children towards successful literacy.

The goal of this module therefore, is to equip parents with some basic knowledge and an understanding of child development and literacy through addressing the following topics:

3.1	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Discuss the importance of parent-child interactions.	Learners will become aware of their own beliefs about the importance of parent-child interactions, and will also become aware of the beliefs of professional educators on this matter.
	Notes to Facilitator:	
	The facilitator should guide a discussion with learners to allow them to express their views on parent-child interactions.. • Learners may wish to read theses quotes aloud. or, • Ask learners to add their own comments.	

3.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Understand the basics of child development and literacy acquisition during the pre-school years.	Learners will understand what behaviours can be expected of young children at different ages, and what is needed at each age to best promote literacy development.

 Notes to Facilitator:

The resources on child development are meant only to give learners a brief overview of how children develop, and what they need.

- The facilitator may wish to supplement these resources with other material on this topic.
- Photocopy these resources to hand out.
- Ask for personal examples of children's activities for group discussion.

3.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Identify learning styles.	Learners will understand their own learning styles and the learning styles of their children.

 Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator may wish to use the resources on "Auditory Learners," "Visual Learners," and "Kinesthetic Learners."

- Photocopy the pages as handouts.
- Ask parents to compare their personal learning styles with the handouts.
- Ask parents to determine which type of learner their child is.
- Ask parents to use some of the techniques outlined to assist their children.

3.4	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Practicum I (Observation): Investigate developmental expectations of children at given ages through observation or discussion with child-care professionals.	Learners will gain practical knowledge of child development through observing them or through interviewing child-care professionals.

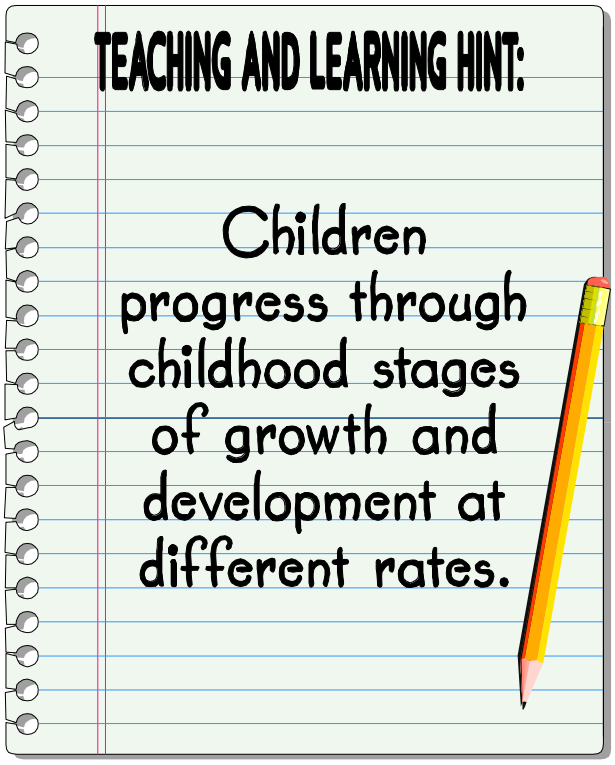
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

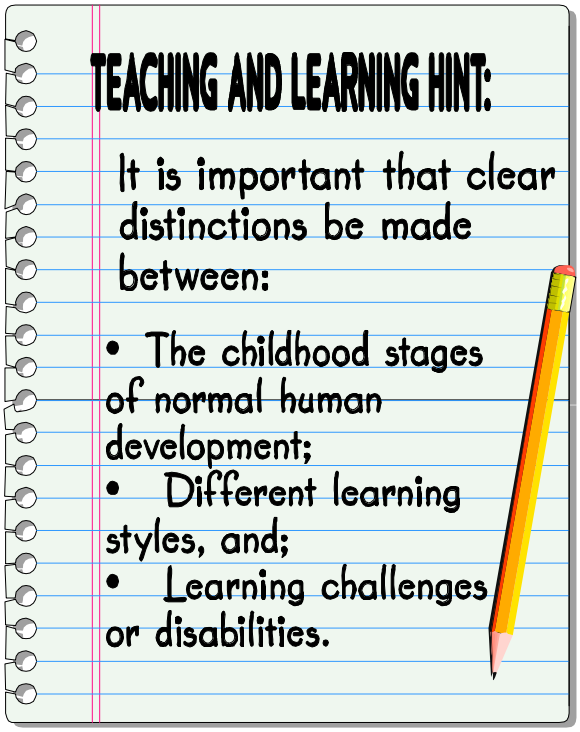
  The "Practicum I" may be used in meeting this objective.

  - Be creative if it is not possible to locate a child care centre with observation facilities. For example, have learners video tape a child and 'analyse' the child's activities.

  - Have learners tape children's activities on television commercials and encourage them to comment on the stages of child development.

MODULE 3 - RESOURCES





Parent-Child Interactions

The following are some quotations from authors in the field of family literacy which stress the importance of parents' roles in their children's literacy.

"When parents help their children to learn, they help open the door to a new world. As a parent, you can begin an endless learning chain: you read to your children, they develop a love of stories and poems, they want to read on their own, they practice reading, and finally they read for their own information or pleasure. They become readers, and their world is forever expanded and enriched."

Bernice Cullinan & Brad Bagert, Helping Your Child Learn to Read

"Children learn to love the sound of language before they even notice the existence of printed words on a page. Reading books aloud to children stimulates their imagination and expands their understanding of the world. It helps them develop language and listening skills and helps them to understand the written word. When the rhythm and melody of language become a part of a child's life, learning to read will be as natural as learning to walk and talk."

Bernice Cullinan & Brad Bagert, Helping Your Child Learn to Read

"Even after children learn to read by themselves, it's still important for you to read aloud together. By reading stories that are on their interest level, but beyond their reading level, you can stretch young readers' understanding and motivate them to improve their skills."

Bernice Cullinan & Brad Bagert, Helping Your Child Learn to Read

"Such practices in the home as shared reading, reading aloud, making a variety of print materials available, and promoting positive attitudes towards literacy have been found to have a significant impact on children's literacy learning."

Lesley Mandel Morrow, "Family Literacy:
Perspective and Practices," The Reading Teacher.

Birth to 1 Year

What to expect …

Babies grow and change dramatically during their first year. They begin to:

- **Develop some control over their bodies. They learn to hold up their heads; roll over; sit up; crawl; stand up; and, in some cases, walk**
- **Become aware of themselves as separate from others. They learn to look at their hands and toes and play with them. They learn to cry when parents leave, and they recognize their name**
- **Communicate and develop language skills. First babies cry and make throaty noises. Later they babble and say mama and dada. Then they make lots of sounds and begin to name a few close people and objects**
- **Play games. First they play with their hands. Later they show an interest in toys, enjoy "putting in and taking out" games, and eventually carry around or hug dolls or stuffed toys**
- **Relate to others. First they respond to adults more than to other babies. Later they notice other babies but tend to treat them like objects instead of people. Then they pay attention when other babies cry**

What they need …

Babies require:

- **A loving caregiver who can respond to their cries and gurgles**
- **Hugs and kisses**
- **Someone who gets to know their special qualities**
- **Someone to keep them safe and comfortable**
- **Opportunities to move about and practice new physical skills**
- **Safe objects to look at, bat, grab, bang, pat, roll, and examine**
- **Safe play areas**
- **Opportunities to hear language and to make sounds**
- **Someone to read, talk and sing to them.**

1 to 2 Years

What to expect …

Children this age are:

- **Energetic (walk more steadily, run, push, pull, take apart, carry, climb on and grab things)**
- **Self-centred**
- **Busy (like to flip light switches, pour things in and out of containers, unwrap packages, and empty drawers)**

Between their first and second birthdays, they:

- **Like to imitate the sounds and actions of others (by pretending to do housework or yardwork, for example)**
- **Want to be independent and do it themselves (and express this by saying "No!")**
- **Can be clingy**
- **Can have relatively short attention spans if not involved in an activity**
- **Add variations to their physical skills (by walking backwards or sideways, for example)**
- **Begin to see how they are like and unlike other children**
- **Become more sensitive to the moods of others**
- **Play alone or alongside other toddlers**
- **Increase their vocabularies from about 2 or 3 words to about 250 words and understand more of what people say to them**

1 to 2 Years (cont'd)

Children this age require:

- **A safe environment for exploring**
- **Opportunities to make their own choices ("Do you want the red cup or the blue one?")**
- **Clear and reasonable limits**
- **Opportunities to use big muscles (in the arms and legs, for example)**
- **Opportunities to manipulate small objects, such as puzzles and stackable toys**
- **Patience from caregivers**
- **Reasonable rules**
- **Activities that allow them to touch, taste, smell, hear, and see new things**
- **Chances to learn about "cause and effect"-- that things they do produce certain results (when a stack of blocks gets too high it will fall over)**
- **Opportunities to develop and practice their language skills**
- **Chances to learn about kindness and caring about others' feelings**
- **Someone to read to them**
- **Learning opportunities that are 'fun'**

2 to 3 Years

What to expect …

Children this age are:

- **Becoming more aware of others and their own feelings**
- **Often stubborn and may have temper tantrums**
- **Developing a great interest in other children and enjoy being near them (although they are usually self-centred)**
- **Able to jump, hop, roll, and climb**
- **Developing an interest in pretend play--playing at keeping house, for example, or pretending to cook and care for a baby**
- **Expanding their vocabularies (from about 250 to 1,000 words during the year)**
- **Putting together 2, 3, and 4-word sentences**

What they need …

Children this age require opportunities to:

- **Develop hand coordination (with puzzles or large beads to string or by scribbling, for example)**
- **Do more things for themselves, such as putting on clothing**
- **Make easy choices**
- **Sing, talk, and develop their language**
- **Play with other children**
- **Try out different ways to move their bodies**
- **Be read to**
- **Do things in the community, such as taking walks and visiting libraries, museums, informal restaurants, parks, beaches, and zoos**

3 to 4 Years

What to expect …

Children this age:

- **Start to play *with* other children, instead of *next to* them**
- **Are more likely to take turns and share**
- **Are friendly and giving**
- **Begin to understand that other people have feelings and rights**
- **Like silly humour, riddles, and practical jokes**
- **Like to please and to conform**
- **Generally become more cooperative and enjoy new experiences**
- **Are increasingly self-reliant and probably can dress without help (except for buttons and shoelaces)**
- **May develop fears ("Mommy, there's a monster under my bed.") and have imaginary companions**
- **Are more graceful physically than 2-year-olds, love to run, skip, jump, catch a ball, climb downstairs, and dance to music**
- **Are great talkers, speak in sentences, and continue to add more words to their vocabularies**
- **Have greater control over hand and arm muscles, which is reflected in their drawings and scribbling**

What they need …

Children this age require opportunities to:

- **Develop their blooming language abilities through books, games, songs, science, and art activities**
- **Develop more self-help skills--for example, to dress and undress themselves**
- **Draw with crayons, work puzzles, build things, and pretend**
- **Play with other children so they can learn to listen, take turns, and share**
- **Be read to**
- **Develop more physical coordination - for example: hopping on both feet**
- **Make correct choices**

4 to 5 Years

What to expect …

Children this age:

- **Are active and have lots of energy**
- **May be aggressive in their play**
- **Can show extremes from being loud and adventurous to acting shy and dependent**
- **Enjoy more group activities because they have longer attention spans**
- **Like making faces and being sill**
- **May form cliques with friends and can be bossy**
- **May change friendships quickly**
- **May brag and engage in name-calling during play**
- **May experiment with swear words and bathroom words**
- **Can be very imaginative and like to exaggerate**
- **Have better control in running, jumping, and hopping but tend to be clumsy**
- **Are great talkers and questioners**
- **Love to use words in rhymes, nonsense, and jokes**

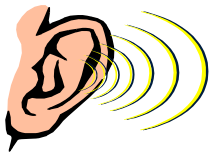
What they need…

Children this age need opportunities to:

- **Experiment and discover within limits**
- **Use blunt-tipped scissors, crayons, and put together simple jigsaw puzzles**
- **Practice outdoor play activities**
- **Develop their growing interest in academic things, such as science and mathematics, and activities that involve exploring and investigating**
- **Group items that are similar (for example, by size)**
- **Stretch their imaginations and curiosity**
- **See how reading and writing are useful (for example, by listening to stories and poems, dictating stories to adults, and by talking with other children and adults)**

1

Auditory Learners



What are Auditory Learners?

Auditory Learners are people who learn best when things are explained to them verbally.

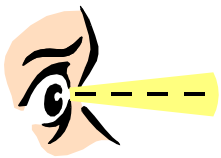
What are the characteristics of auditory learners?

- Follow oral directions well, much better than written directions
- Have strong verbal skills and seem to enjoy talking and auditory stimulation
- Moves lips when reading or actually reads aloud to self
- Relies on phonic cues
- Requires a pointer when reading; follows with finger
- Remember names more than faces
- Have difficulty with writing assignments and copying
- Poor note takers
- May reverse, invert, or omit letters
- Higher comprehension on oral reading than on silent reading
- Consistent error patterns in math
- Do poorly on matching, interpreting graphs and charts, and other visual tasks
- Learn best from lectures and auditory presentation
- Prefer music to art
- Physically express emotions; laugh out loud, become visibly angry, use hands to express self
- Attempt to solve problems by "talking them through"
- Have strong expressive vocabulary; mask problems well
- Great at outlining excuses and telling stories
- Attempt to memorize everything
- Good at giving others directions

Adapted from Anna Courish and David Philpott, Maximizing Potential

2

Visual Learners



What are Visual Learners?

Visual learners are people who learn best when they are shown how to do something; they learn best by following what they see.

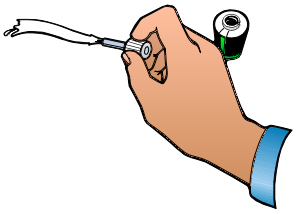
What are the characteristics of a visual learner?

- Learns by seeing and observing the actions of others
- Prefers demonstrations
- Follows visual instructions well
- Has difficulty with oral directions; does much better when shown what to do
- Recognizes words by sight & relies on initial consonants
- Likes descriptions and has vivid imagination, which is used to increase memory
- Notices subtle detail, changes, colours, typographical errors
- Memory is more visually structured (will remember faces more than names, and the visual placement of objects)
- Has neat handwriting, takes neat notes, and is meticulous
- Has to have surroundings neat and tidy
- Very deliberate and focussed in attacking a new concept; plans, organizes, structures very well
- Prefers art to music
- Prefers reading to listening
- Becomes confused by auditory detail more than visual detail
- Can use a dictionary well but needs to recite the alphabet to find the right section
- Rarely talks in class; "people of few words"
- Strong book orientation, can find their place quickly and are quick to start an assignment
- Like to watch the faces of teachers

Adapted from Anna Courish and David Philpott, Maximizing Potential.

3

Kinesthetic Learners



What are Kinesthetic Learners?

Kinesthetic learners are people who learn best when they are physically involved in doing what they are learning, and thus have more success learning athletic activities that require movement and physical participation, than activities that are geared towards visual and auditory learners.

What are the characteristics of kinesthetic learners?

- Extremely physical in actions; fidgets, touches, feels. Learn best by doing
- Struggle with reading; do not like reading or being read to
- Poor spellers and sometimes have weak language development
- Have poor handwriting and are sloppy in many tasks; write things over
- Appear not to pay attention; lost in their own world
- Appear to be restless and have trouble focussing on oral or visual presentations
- Have strong fine and gross motor skills; often are athletic
- Excel in physical tasks such as crafts, woodworking, machinery
- Not academically oriented
- Require concrete learning aids; have more difficulty with learning abstract concepts

Adapted from Anna Courish and David Philpott, Maximizing Potential.

1

L *Helping Auditory Learners*

What are some teaching methods you can use?

1. Teach children to talk through the steps in a task or activity
2. Encourage children to spell out loud so they can hear the letters
3. Have children say the sounds out loud when attacking new words
4. Have children point to written words
5. Encourage thinking out loud and listen to what children are saying
6. Encourage oral reporting
7. Sometimes name punctuation marks out loud when learning to read
8. Use tape-recorded instruction for information

What are some other things you can do?

1. Take out as much noise as possible when children are learning
2. Find a quiet place for children to work
3. Very soft music background may be used, but definitely not bouncy music
4. Do not talk too much since this can distract children from learning
5. Use as few words as possible
6. If you repeat something, use the same words, if possible
7. Speak directly to children
8. Children may need earphones to help cut out distractions

2

L *Helping Visual Learners*

What are some teaching methods you can use?

1. Give visual directions and demonstrations as often as possible
2. Use flash cards and wall visuals. Use a "look-say" whole word approach to reading
3. Use plenty of maps, graphs, and charts
4. Use colour-coding systems and other highly visual aids
5. Use mirror practice in speech training, and use rulers and number-lines to develop children's concepts of number and number skills

What are some other things you can do?

1. Take out visual distractions whenever possible
2. Put a heavy line around worksheets to help children attend to one item at a time
3. Give children a marker to highlight items of importance
4. Allow children to point if necessary
5. Have children work in a cleared area
6. Allow children to work on one sheet, rather than handling several sheets at once
7. Give one step of an assignment at a time

Used with permission; (adapted from Maitland MacIsaac, Learning and Reading Partners.)

3

L *Helping Kinesthetic Learners*

What are some teaching methods you can use?

1. Let children explore things as a part of learning
2. Use manipulatives when doing mathematics
3. Have children tap things out when they are learning
4. Use learning aids that allow children to touch for reinforcement
5. Use all the concrete, manipulative devices possible when teaching anything
6. Use role-playing whenever possible
7. Have children use painting, drawing, or building opportunities to learn

What are some other things you can do?

1. Use pictures to help establish associations whether in areas of words, numbers, or meanings
2. Attach labels whenever possible
3. Use hearing, seeing, and touching methods for teaching
4. Plan times for movement and breaks from learning

Practicum I

• *This practicum should reinforce what has been learned in Module Three. Learners might carry out their observations at a local daycare or pre-school if possible. This practicum can be carried out just as easily at home, however, or by using films or videos of children.*

• *Learners should record their observations, and may wish to answer the following questions:*

1. How old were the children you observed?

2. Do you think they were all at the same developmental stage?

3. Did you see the behaviours that should be expected at that age? Could you describe one?

4. What activities were being conducted to increase self esteem?

5. What activities were being conducted that increased children's growth in the following areas:

   - Speech
   - Oral
   - Play
   - Song
   - Parental involvement
   - Drawing
   - Scribbling

6. Did you see caregivers doing any of the things that children need at that age? Can you describe what was done? How did the children respond?

7. Did the caregivers make attempts to accommodate different learning styles? If so, how did they do this?

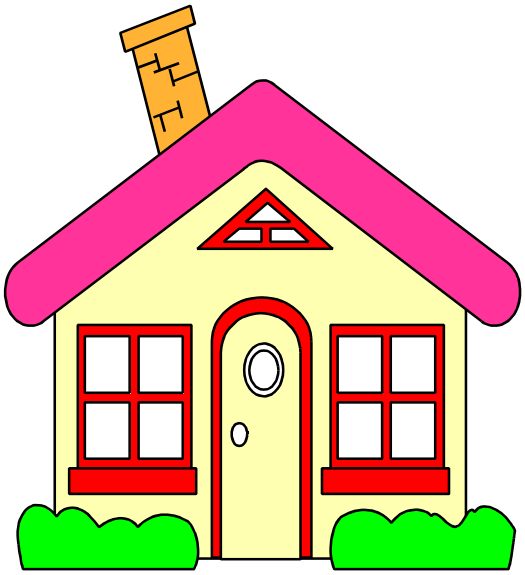
8. Do you think it is important that families also do such things? Could you do some of these thing at home?

9. Were the children learning things? What were they learning?

10. Could the daycare workers have enhanced the learning of the children?

Module 4

Preparing Your Home For Literacy



EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 4 - Preparing the Home for Literacy

The first environment known to a child is the home where he or she is living. Parents can make physical changes in this environment to create a good setting for literacy development.

4.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Identify the characteristics of a nurturing, supportive home environment	Learners will understand that a nurturing, supportive home environment will help children become literate.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Promote a sensitive and caring approach to this module. Respect the fact that all parents do the best they can for their children and want their children to succeed in literacy.

- Help learners identify themselves as teachers.
- Seek the knowledge that learners, themselves, bring to this course.
- Use the 'Developing Trust' exercise as a reading assignment.

4.2

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Identify options for acquiring literacy materials.	Learners should demonstrate an awareness of where books and other literacy materials can be found in the community, and ways to access those materials.

 Notes to Facilitator:

What books are appropriate for what ages? Parents can create a book exchange, visit the library, or discuss other resources. How this objective is met will depend on the resources available in the community.

- There are many different types of books. These should be explained to learners.
- Facilitator should become familiar with options for acquiring books in the local area.
- Focus on inexpensive ways to acquire print.

4.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Understand that television can be a friend or foe as a tool in early literacy acquisition.	Learners should demonstrate an understanding of how television can have both positive and negative effects on literacy development.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Television is present in most homes and is used more often by children than by adults. Many TV programs are designed specifically for children.

- Use the 'Home Reading Guide' as a reading assignment.
- Use the 'Friend or Foe' reading about television to promote discussion.

4.4	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Define environmental print and examine its use in enhancing family literacy.	Learners should be able to define environmental print and understand how it can be used to enhance literacy.

 Notes to Facilitator:

This topic extends the examination of literacy in the child's environment, including beyond the home.

- Focus on activities which help learners locate sources of print
- Conduct learning activities which give parents and learners new tools - new ways of recording/recognizing their environment for children, and teaching their children to recognize environmental signs. Examples include: street signs, supermarkets, stores, post office, fish plant, food, cereal boxes, health care aids, and clothing symbols.
- Identify inexpensive sources of print samples (flyers, signs, calendars).

4.5	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Discuss the importance of writing, printing, drawing and painting in literacy development, and explore their applications..	Learners should demonstrate an awareness of how these tools are used in literacy development.

 Notes to Facilitator:

- Students should discuss the importance of making materials available to children.
- Developmental characteristics should be considered in terms of what kind of writing, if any, should be expected by a given age.

4.6	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Describe the characteristics of a literacy-oriented home	Learners should be able to list several characteristics of a literacy-oriented home.

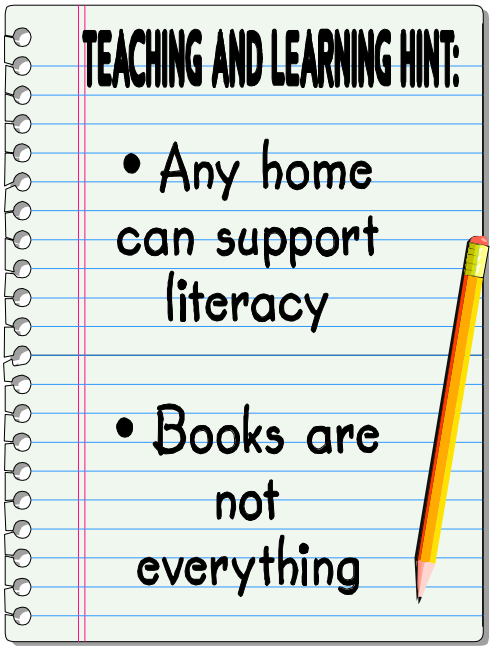
 Notes to Facilitator:

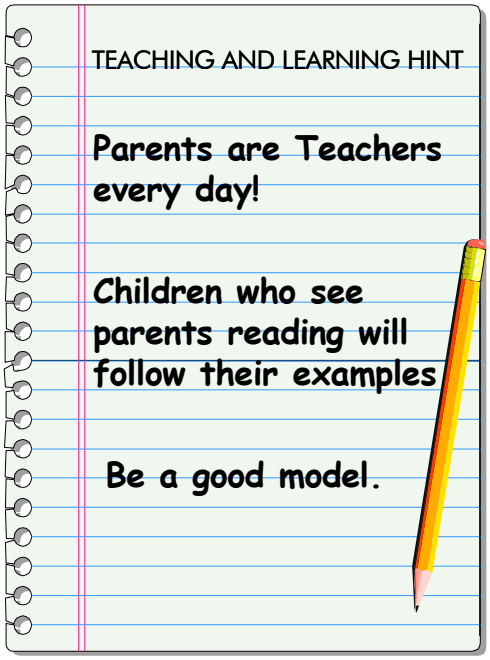
Learners may wish to design a home literacy centre. This is a place in the home where books, writing materials, environmental print, and other literacy resources are available in a comfortable setting for regular use

- A literacy centre has resources for reading, writing and drawing.
- A literacy centre is for fun.
- A literacy centre is just as much about ‘attitude’ as it is about printing or reading.
- Literacy includes music.
- Use a variety of materials for differing developmental ages.

4.7	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Define and demonstrate the concept of modelling literate behaviour.	Learners should be able to define and demonstrate the concept of modelling literate behaviour.
	Notes to Facilitator: • Facilitator can use classroom modelling to explain the importance of parental modelling of literate behaviour. • Class demonstrations, paired or group activities, brainstorming, or other appropriate methods can be used to discover, discuss, and practice appropriate modelling behaviour.	

MODULE 4 - RESOURCES





Developing Trust: A Reading Assignment

Newborn babies need to become attached to at least one person who provides security and love. Usually this is a parent! This first and most basic emotional attachment is the start for all human relationships.

What you'll need

- Loving arms
- Music

What to do

1. Include happy rituals in your baby's schedule. For example, at bedtime, sing the same song every night, rock her, or rub her tummy.

2. Pick up your crying baby promptly. Try to find out what's wrong. Is she hungry? Wet? Bored? Too hot? Crying is your baby's way of communicating. By comforting her you send the message that language has a purpose and that someone wants to understand.

3. Gently move your newborn's arms and legs. Or tickle her lightly under the chin or on the tummy. When she starts to control her head, lie on the floor and put the baby on your chest. Let her reach for your nose, or grab your hair. Talk to her and name each thing she touches, and even some basic description including such things as colour and numbers.

4. Sing and cuddle with your baby. Hold her snuggled in your arms or lying face up on your lap with her head on your knees. Make sure the head of a newborn is well-supported. Sing a favourite lullaby.

   To entertain your baby, sing an active song. For example:

   If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!
   If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!
   If you're happy and you know it, and you really want to show it,
   If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands!

   If you don't know lullabies or rhymes for babies, make up your own!

5. Dance with your baby. To soothe her when she's upset, put her head on your shoulder and hum softly or listen to recorded music as you glide around the room. To amuse her when she's cheerful, try a bouncy tune.

Taken from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Learners are Teachers

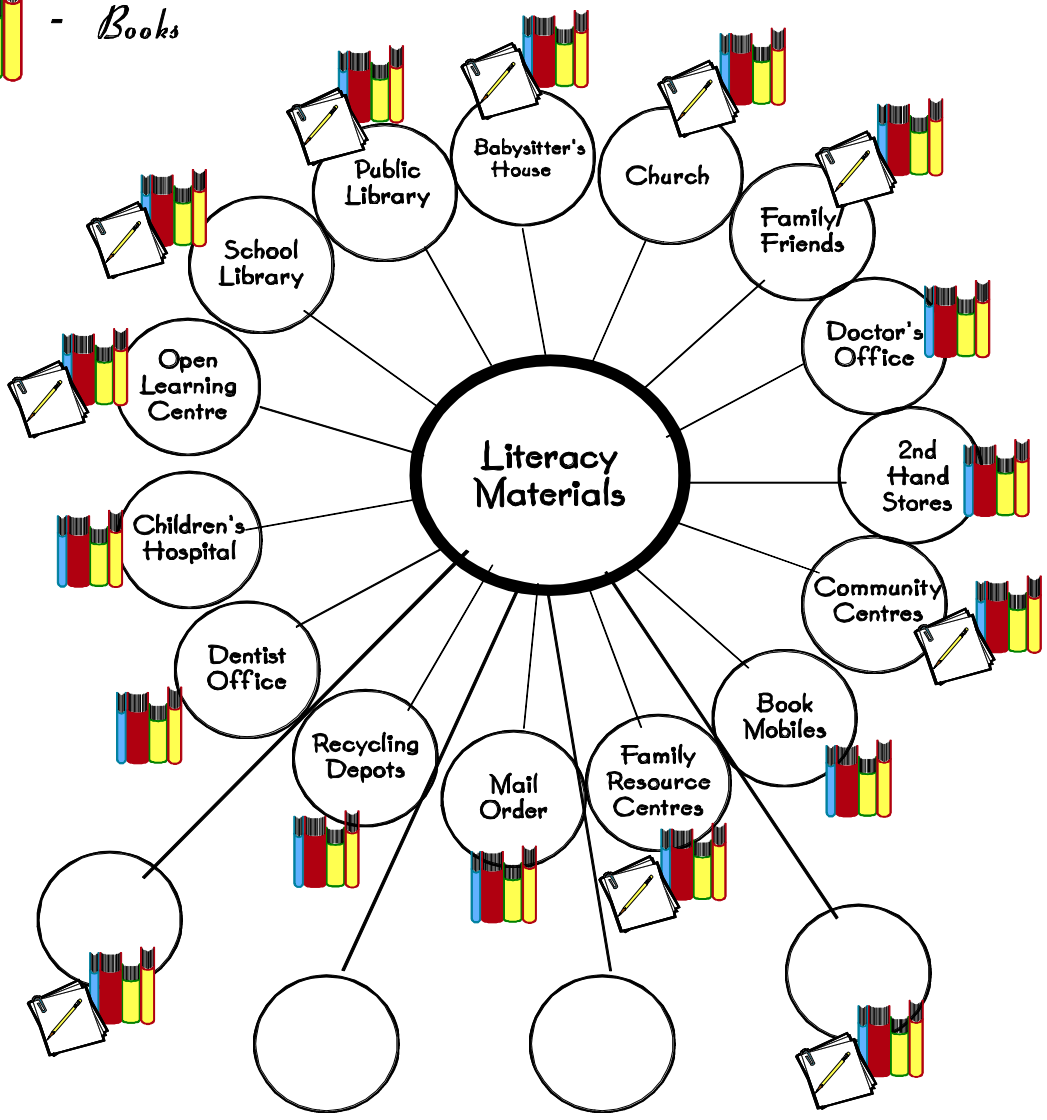
I am a learner when I:

I am a teacher when I:

Where Can I Find Literacy Materials?

- Drawing/Scribbling

- Books

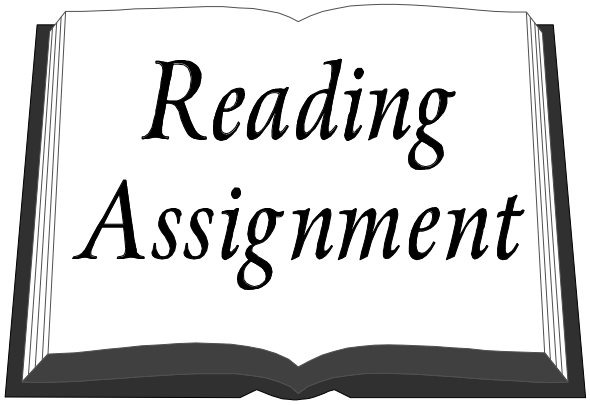


Can you think of other places to find literacy materials?

LITERACY FOR LIFE

Home Reading Guide

Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers' Association



Used with permission. Thanks!

Building A Home Reading Environment

The results of a Harvard University study rate the "home reading environment" as the single most important home factor affecting literacy development in children. In fact, children who grow up in a good "home reading environment" are much more likely to be strong and interested readers than children who do not, no matter how much reading is encouraged at school.

How do you create a good home reading environment? In this section, you'll find seven steps to help you get started. It's important that you follow each step, whether your child is three, five or 15 years old. However, not all the suggestions under each step will work with all ages - some are appropriate for younger children, some are best for older, and some are great for children of all ages!

STEP 1: Establish A Reading Routine In Your Household

▶ Decide on a **time** and **place** that works for you and your family. This doesn't mean that you have to read at the same time everyday if your schedules just won't allow that, or that you have to read in the same room every time. But it does mean that you have to establish a routine so you can read regularly. Sunday, for instance, could be for curling up in the family room at 2:00 in the afternoon; Monday, could be for sitting at the kitchen table and reading aloud to one another; and so on.

▶ The **times** you chose should be negotiated so they're convenient for everyone involved, and you shouldn't have to sacrifice other things you and your child absolutely want or need to do. The times should also be as free of distractions as you can make them - that means turning off the television and stereo!

▶ The **place** (or **places**) should be comfortable for you, whether that means reading around a table, while lounging on the sofa, or while curled up in bed. Remember, though, the place should also be well lit.

STEP 2: Provide A Variety Of Reading Materials

▶ Be sure to consider your child's interests (sports, hobbies, science fiction, adventure, whatever)!

▶ Try to select books and other reading materials that are at the right reading level. If you aren't sure how to go about doing this, there are two things you can try. The first is to ask your child to read a page or paragraph from his or her book, then count silently to yourself every word that's skipped or stumbled over. If you count five or more such words, the book is too difficult for your child, and you should either replace it or read it aloud.

▶ Make sure your child is exposed to different types of books: mysteries, biographies, fantasy, poetry, information books, fiction, non-fiction, and so on.

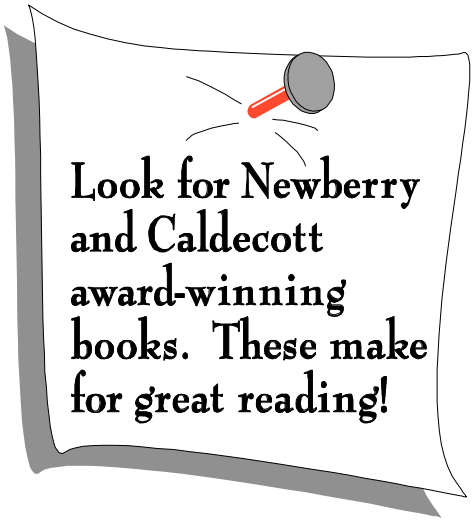
▶ Expose your child to various forms of reading material: newspapers, magazines, novels, short stories, books on tape, etc. Books on tape, for instance, can provide great entertainment during long car rides!

▶ Call attention to the words on billboards, packaging, signs, and other such things in your home and community.

▶ Include books and other reading materials in your gift-giving; make a book the gift your child can count on receiving for any special occasion when you normally receive gifts.

▶ Remember that the public library is a great source of reading material and a great place to introduce your child to everything from picture books to encyclopaedias. One of your goals should be to have the whole family register in the library. However, if there's no public library, check to see if your school resource centre (library) is an alternative. Libraries often offer story time hours and have visiting authors.

▶ When buying books, remember to look at "used" as well as new books. If your community doesn't have a bookstore, be sure to take advantage of school book fairs or join a book club. This will keep you and your family in touch with new publications and provide an opportunity for regular purchases.



STEP 3: Motivate And Encourage Your Child

▶ Respond positively to your child's questions, thoughts and ideas. When reading aloud to your child, stop and ask questions about what might happen next, what just happened, or what your child thinks of the events unfolding in the story. Encourage your child to comment as you go along, and offer thoughts and ideas about what is being read. When a child is reading a book on his or her own, ask questions about the story.

Ask:

Who... What...When... Where... Why... How... Why do you think that... How do you know that... and, What do you think would have happened if...?

▶ Praise your children's reading efforts. Make sure you let them know that you notice when they're reading and you like it! The other half of this, of course, is to remind them when you notice that they're not reading and give some *gentle* encouragement (Don't nag).

▶ Create an expectation with an empty bookshelf! Start off with a book that will really stimulate an interest in reading together as a "shared" experience, then get a bookcase to hold the family's treasures. Exactly how you do this is entirely up to you. You can shop together for a bookshelf that you can simply bring home and put in place. You can purchase something that requires some assembly and have all bookshelf owners involved in putting it together. Or, if you have a talent or interest in woodworking, you might decide to build your own. The important thing is to fill the shelves with your shared books. And when the shelves are filled, you get to share the sense of accomplishment ... and probably start on the next bookshelf!

STEP 4: Show Your Child That You Value Reading

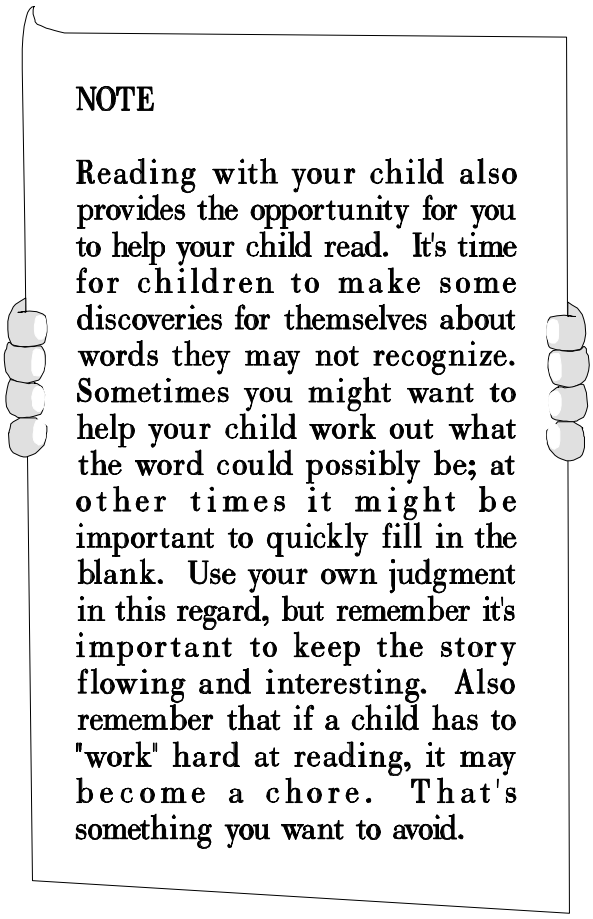
▶ READ! Your child should see you reading something everyday, even if it's the newspaper. It's a well documented fact that children imitate the behaviour of adults. If you're a good reading model (if you read regularly for information, pleasure, and certain everyday activities), chances are your child will get the message that reading is important! Remember, though, if you wait until your child is tucked into bed to have your own reading time, your child doesn't get to see you reading!

▶ Establish a "caught reading" rule in your household. It won't be one of those rules that means trouble, however. If you're caught reading you should expect to be rewarded (with smiles and approval at least)!

STEP 5: Share The Reading Experience With Your Child

▶ Read **aloud** to your child - everyday if at all possible. This doesn't mean you read only to children who can't yet read for themselves. The point has been made all too often that we stop reading when they can read for themselves. Although we associate it with childhood, reading aloud is enjoyed by people of all ages and can be just as stimulating for the teen as it is for the five-year-old. And, when children have the ability to read, it simply allows them to share the reading experience in a different way.

▶ Read **with** your child. This may mean that the two of you are sharing reading time by reading in the same room, it may mean that you're sharing the same book and are reading together, or it may mean your child is reading to you. All are valuable experiences! When you're reading the same book- whether you're reading, your child is reading, or you're taking turns - try asking questions and responding to the questions your child asks.



STEP 6: Make Reading Relevant

▶ Leave notes around your house as reminders of important dates, times, etc. and encourage your child to write notes to you. You can sneak notes into your child's lunch box, or put them under pillows, and you should remember to always ask for a response.

▶ Put junk mail to good use by sorting through and reading it together.

▶ Write the family grocery list together. You could even plan meals or entire menus together and have your child write them out. Then, when it's time to prepare meals that require the use of a cookbook, your child can read the recipe aloud and measure the ingredients. Reading cookbooks can provide a very tasty experience ... especially if you're cooking something!

▶ Encourage children to write by providing lots of materials. Depending on the ages involved, this could mean pens, pencils, crayons, or markers, and sheets of paper or blank page books. Remember that for young children, drawings and scribbles are the beginning of their writing development, so encourage these. For older children, writing in journals or diaries can help improve their skills and help them get excited about writing.

▶ Have your child help you scan magazines to clip the money-saving coupons. You may want to reward him or her by giving a percentage of the savings found.

▶ Enter contests and respond to consumer surveys with your child so that you can fill out the forms and address the envelopes together.

▶ Have children help you use the yellow pages in the telephone book when you're looking for particular information. Or, have them search the newspaper with you for sale prices of groceries and other family items.

▶ Have children help you select perfect greeting cards for family members or friends. This will mean they get to browse through the card stacks and read all the verses and messages until they find the card that's just right!

▶ Have a written conversation with older children; this really works when the conversation deals with a difficult topic.

STEP 7: Make Reading Fun

▶ Have children relate what they read to their own experiences. Always remember that when you read, it's very important to make the connections between the words on the page and the information you already have inside your head. If it's an adventure story, relate it to an adventure in your own life. Relate a happy story to a happy event in your life, a sad story to a sad event, and so on.

▶ Play reading games with younger children. For instance, you can make a game of finding letters hidden in your kitchen - on soup cans, cookie bags, cereal boxes and soap. Ask your child to find three A's or seven B's, or five items that have the first letter of his or her name. Or, play this transformer game. Begin with a word your child already knows, then change one or two letters in the beginning, middle or end of the word and have your child read the transformed word. For example, if you start with a boat, some transformed words could be goat, moan, mean, meat.

There are also lots of rhyming games that help with language development. Before you start, remember to explain that two words that sound alike are said to rhyme and give two examples-house and mouse; dog and log.

Here are some ideas:

Make up riddles

- I rhyme with cool. You can swim in me. What am I? (pool)
- I rhyme with lake. You can eat me. What am I? (cake)
- I rhyme with see. You can climb me. What am I? (tree)

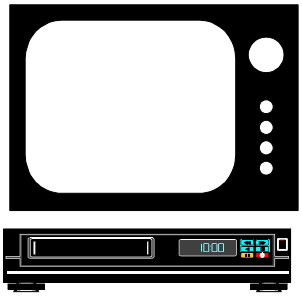
Make up statements and wait for the response

- Name an animal that rhymes with sat. (cat, bat).
- Name a flower that rhymes with toes. (rose)
- Name a letter that rhymes with tea. (P, C, D)
- Name a number that rhymes with shoe. (two)

▶ When reading aloud, read with expression. A story can be made all the more enjoyable when each character is given a different voice or accent. Exaggeration is usually a fun way to spice up a conversation between two characters, no matter what your age!

▶ Invite someone to your home, maybe a grandparent or friend, to be the guest reader during your regular reading time. While it's important to maintain the continuity and routine of your reading time, variety adds extra enjoyment. Make sure the person you invite understands how your reading time works and is willing to participate in a meaningful way.

▶ If you have a personal computer in your home, try taking advantage of many children's natural curiosity about computers. Very young children can point out letters on the keyboard. You can also look for reading (and even writing) software that's designed for your child's reading level.



TELEVISION - Friend or Foe?

Television must be considered in the context of any family literacy course. It is a reality in most homes. Children often watch television for hours a day. Some of this programming may be helpful for literacy, especially educational programming, but a lot of programming is not likely to have any positive effect.

To help you make these choices and to consider the pros and cons, we want to give you more than one source to work with, and encourage you to seek further ones.

Roll Credits…

- The first source is adapted from an essay entitled "Good Television Habits" from a U.S. Department of Education Internet publication called Getting Your Child Ready For School.

- The second source is a piece called "Television Viewing," which can be found in the Newfoundland and Labrador Home and School Federation resource binder called The Essential Link, with slight adaptations.

Good Television Habits

Children in North America may have watched an average of 4,000 hours of television by the time they begin school. Most experts agree that this is too much. But banning television isn't the answer, because good television can spark curiosity and open up new worlds to children. Monitoring how much and what they watch helps children, starting at an early age, to develop good viewing habits.

Too much television can be harmful because:

< It can expose children to too much sex and violence;
< Children can be unduly influenced by junk-food and toy commercials;
< It can give children a poor model for good behaviour before they have developed a clear sense of right and wrong;
< Young children do not have the experience and wisdom to understand complicated plots or scary scenes;
< Sitting passively in front of the set for extended periods of time can slow young children's social and intellectual development.

Here are some tips to help children develop good television viewing habits.

- Keep a record of how many hours of TV your children watch, and what they watch. Generally, it's good to limit the amount to two hours or less a day, although you can make exceptions for special programs.

- Learn about current TV programs and videos and select good ones. As parents, you know your children best. So, select TV programs and videos that are meaningful to your family. Some TV programs you may wish to consider include Sesame Street or Shining Time Station.

- Plan with your children (starting at age 3) what programs to watch. After selecting programs appropriate for your children, help them decide which ones to watch. Turn the TV on when these shows start, and turn the set off when they are over.

- Watch television with your children so you can answer questions and talk about what they see. Pay special attention to how they respond so you can help them understand what they're seeing, if that's needed.

- Follow up TV viewing with activities or games. You might have your child tell you a new word he learned on television that you can look up together in the dictionary. Or you might have her make up her own story about one of her favourite TV characters.

- Include the whole family in discussion and activities or games that relate to television programs. Older siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents can all contribute.

- Make certain that television isn't regularly used as a babysitter. Instead, try to balance good television with other fun activities for your child.

Television Viewing

You as parents have to decide how much television viewing you consider desirable. Your decision will be based on your views of the connection between violence on television and violence in real life, your views on the educational value of television, your observations of your children's other interests and other individual factors.

Research studies do not always agree but some things seem clear:

- Television does affect children - how they play, how they see the world, how they act.

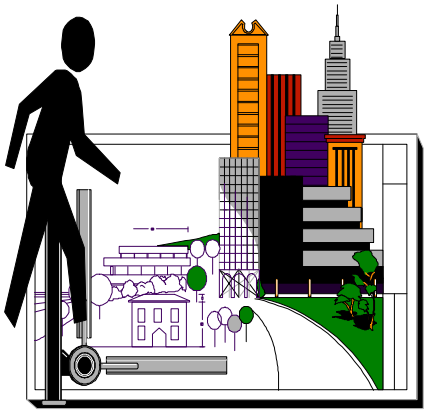
- Violence on television affects children and youth in several ways. Kids who watch a lot of violence may believe that it is alright for people to be violent. It makes them more likely to act in violent ways such as shouting, bullying, and fighting. The effects of television may be stronger on children who have experience with real violence. The effects of television violence on children can have a serious impact on school, on play, and on home life.

- Television has positive effects on children too, and is good at getting pro-social messages across.

- The more children watch, the greater the effects of watching.

- The more children talk and think about what they see on the screen, the less TV affects them. Children learn nonviolent ways to handle problems from adults who watch TV with them and who suggest other ways of solving problems.

- Television affects children's health, their physical fitness, and nutrition. Kids who watch a lot of television are less physically fit. Children are more likely to choose foods they see in television commercials and that means their choices are not always healthy.



Environmental Print

Environmental print is found in your physical environment. It may be a brand name on a box of cookies, a sign in the park giving directions, or a logo on a machine. There are many examples of environmental print.

Environmental print is a tool available to everyone to help with literacy development. You can teach your child to find print everywhere. Through environmental print, your child may begin to understand that words and letters mean something and that they are useful. This realization is a very important step on the way to literacy.

Best of all - environmental print is a free source of literacy-building!

Practice Activity

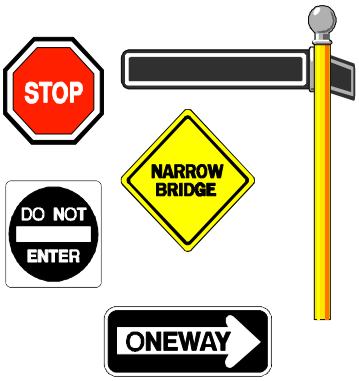
Go for a short walk outdoors (15 minutes or so) by yourself or with a friend. On your walk, write down as many examples of environmental print as you can find. What kinds of signs do you find? Look everywhere. Write down the examples you find and share them with others when you return to class.

Or,

Go to your kitchen and spend 10 or 15 minutes listing the sources of print. Overlook nothing. Open doors and lift things. Where is print? Write down the examples and share them with others.

Let's Take a Walk: A Reading Assignment

Taking a walk with your child is an excellent way to introduce environmental print. First, pick a street or two near your home that might have a small business, a recreation centre, or something else with a sign. As you walk with your child, point out some signs, such as street signs, stop signs, store signs, signs at a playground, etc. Explain to your child that signs must have letters, and that they tell you something. When appropriate, explain what the signs mean. See if your child can point out any signs to you. If you are walking near a sign, try playing "I spy:"



"I spy, with my little eye, a sign that is green."

or

"I spy, with my little eye, a very big red sign."

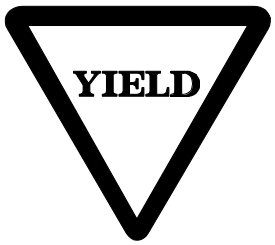
Don't worry if your child is not completely fascinated with signs. Just turn it into a game. Don't harp on it. If she isn't listening, just point out some signs to yourself, out loud. For example, "Wow, there sure are a lot of stop signs. They're always red, and they're always on corners and they have four big letters that spell "S-T-O-P." Your child will notice what you are talking about and become interested.

While you are out on your walk, remember to keep talking with your child, commenting on other things that you both see. If you play "I spy," you don't always have to use signs. Mix it up for variety's sake to maintain the child's interest. If she knows her colours, look for a black car, a blue house, etc. This is an activity that could be repeated many times. Walk the same route each time until the child knows where all the signs are, then try another route.

As your child gets older, point out bigger words! Have fun!

Here are Four Quick "Workshops" on Environmental Print:

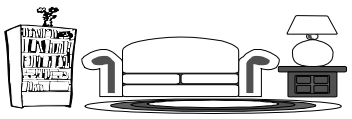
1. Making Signs



2. Shop 'Til You Drop

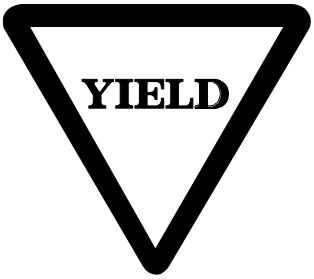
3. My Book

4. Building a Family Home Literacy Centre



Workshop 1 ..... *Making Signs*

Some things you will need:



- Paper or bristol board
- Blunt-nosed scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Pencil
- Tape

Activity:

Help a small child, at home, to make a printed sign for each room, object or person the child can name. Have fun hanging or placing the signs throughout the home.

Learning Discussion:

- How interesting was this exercise for you? For the child?
- Was it fun? If not, how could it be made more enjoyable?
- What age is best for this exercise?

Notes:

Workshop 2 .....*Shop 'Til You Drop*

Material:

- Sales flyers
- A trip to the grocery store

Activity:

Plan a shopping trip with a child by finding items in sales flyers. Use pictures, or words to make a list. At the grocery store, name or spell the items with the child.

Learning Discussion:

- What did you learn? What did the child learn?
- Was it fun?
- What age is best for this exercise?

Notes:

Workshop 3 ..... *My Book*

What you'll need:

- Paper
- Yarn, pipe cleaners, or staples
- A paper punch for holes
- Pencil, pen, crayons
- Paste
- Blunt-tipped scissors

Activity:

Help a child make a booklet of five or six pages. Your child can help punch holes close to one edge and thread yarn through the holes to keep the pages together. You can also bind the book with twisted pipe cleaners, or staple the pages together. Be creative and accept your child's suggestions.

On the outside cover, write your child's name, or encourage the child to do so.

Let your child decide what will go on each page. Examples: Other people in my family. My favourite toys. My favourite books. My friends. My pet. My neighbourhood. My home (or my bedroom). My own drawings.

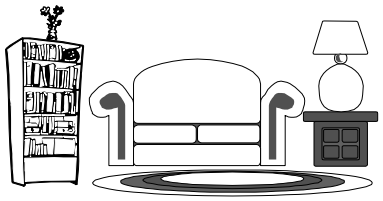
Learning Discussion:

- Printing, drawing, reading and writing are all literacy activities. Which are used by very young children? Which are used by older children?
- How long did the child stay interested in this activity?
- Was it a fun exercise?

Notes:

Workshop 4 …… *Building A Family Literacy Centre*

Material:



- A comfortable corner of your home where reading, writing or drawing can take place.
- Books, magazines, flyers, newspapers, playing cards, cardboard cartons, tape recorder, paper, pencils, pens, crayons, and anything else you think is useful in building literacy skills.

Activity:

Set aside a small part of your home for reading, writing and drawing. Take some time every day for a week or so to spend time with your child or children, just on these activities. Be flexible about the times because the 'attention span' of a child may be short, or be different from day to day.

Learning Discussion:

- What 'modelling' activities were you able to carry out?
- Did you spend time in the literacy centre alone?
- Did you read books together, print, write or draw together?
- Did brothers and sisters spend time together in the literacy centre?
- Which activities were the most fun?
- What are your recommendations for building a literacy centre in a home?

Notes:

Here are a few tips about introducing your preschoolers to art:

- **Q** Let them decide what to draw or paint.
- **Q** Don't fix up their pictures. It will take lots of practice before you can recognize their pictures. That may not happen until they are in kindergarten.
- **Q** Give them lots of different materials to work with. Parents can demonstrate new types of art materials.
- **Q** Find an art activity at the right age level for your child. Let the child do as much of the project as possible.
- **Q** Ask preschoolers to *talk* about their pictures.
- **Q** Display your child's art prominently in your home. Use lots of praise!

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Module 5

Having Fun With Literacy

EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 5 - Having Fun with Literacy

Children love to play, laugh, sing, and experience the world around them. As they do, they develop their mental, physical, and emotional selves, and they learn how to relate to others. This is an important fundamental of literacy development.

This Module stresses the importance of the parent's role in facilitating the learning process by enriching the learning experience with fun and play. Parents should learn that literacy is not achieved through work alone, but through fun and new experience as well.

5.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Illustrate how new experiences can be used to build a broader foundation for literacy.	Learners should demonstrate an understanding that personal experience is a basis for literacy development in children.

 Notes to Facilitator:

New experience stimulates literacy by providing opportunities for communication and increased vocabulary.

- Field trips should promote new learning.
- Learners should have some choice about where to go on a field trip.
- Concentrate on a 'fun' field trip and let the learning happen naturally.

5.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Explain the importance of play in the learning process.	Learners should demonstrate an understanding of how play can be used as a learning tool.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Learners may want to brainstorm examples of play which facilitate learning, or more particularly, literacy learning.

- Make-believe is an example of a kind of play which comes naturally to children, that they enjoy, and which can have positive effects on vocabulary, imagination, and a child's ability to relate to others.

- Storytelling is a form of play.

5.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Identify and evaluate some literacy-oriented games.	Learners should demonstrate an awareness of literacy-oriented games and be able to assess their value in terms of literacy.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Many games are suited to older children and will have to be adapted for an approach with younger children. You may want learners to try the games themselves, and do a comparative analysis as to which game or games are the most educational and most fun.

- Learners may also want to bring in ideas or games themselves, such as Junior Boggle or Scrabble.

- Explain that these are only examples and try to have learners introduce games they know.

- Have learners choose a game to 'learn' with classmates.

5.4

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Examine some common rhymes and songs to assess their importance in literacy development	Learners should demonstrate an awareness that rhymes and songs play a role in early childhood literacy development.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Facilitator may want to compile some children's rhymes or songs from the library, or have learners bring examples to class.

- Each person could pick a rhyme or song and to find a way to teach it to the other learners.
- Developing a journal or portfolio of rhymes can be used for evaluation purposes.

5.5

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Evaluate the effectiveness of jokes, riddles, and comics as learning tools.	Learners should demonstrate an appreciation for the role of jokes, riddles, and comics as learning tools.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Learners should consider the developmental stages of children. At what age can children begin to appreciate humour? When can they appreciate puns and riddles? How can comics be used as a tool to promote literacy?

- A brainstorming session or other appropriate means can be used to explore these kinds of questions.

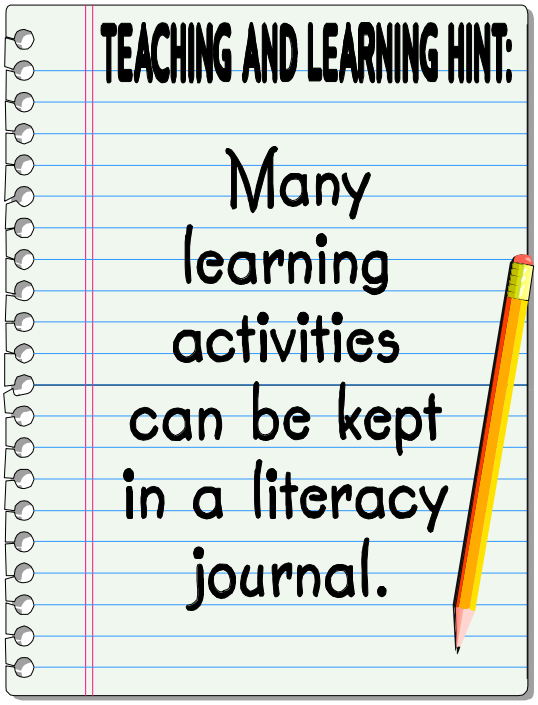
5.6	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Practicum II (Interaction): Interact with children at a cooperating local daycare to investigate the value of fun activities in building literacy.	Learners should demonstrate personal awareness of ways to use fun activities for encouraging early literacy development.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  The primary purpose of the Practicum is to allow learners the opportunity to put into practice something they have learned.

  - Direct interaction with a child or children, preferably in a supervised setting, should be encouraged.
  - Discuss the value of unstructured play.
  - Have learners discuss play which is appropriate to various age groups.

MODULE 5 - RESOURCES



Recording a Field Trip!

The purpose of this exercise is to introduce learners to new experience and to allow learners to discover how important such experiences are in building literacy. Remember that this is only one way to introduce new experiences to learners - there may be many more.

1. Try to pick a destination that is unfamiliar, and that everyone can agree on. Spend at least two hours in this place.

2. While there, explore and learn as much as possible. Ask questions, if possible.

3. Write about your new experience in a journal. In your journal, ask questions like ...

   (a) What was fun about this trip?

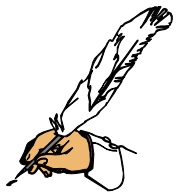
   (b) What did I enjoy the most?

   (c) What are some things that I learned during this trip?

   (d) What are some things a child might learn?

   (e) What is the value of going on trips like this in terms of my own literacy?

   (f) Would I take a child to this place?



NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Some Literacy-Oriented Games

Your library and bookstore have many books on language activities for children. Here are a few easy 'tried and true' favourites.

1. Grandma is Strange

Each player takes turns having a strange grandmother. The first player starts out: "My Grandmother is very strange. She loves tennis but she hates games." The statement is based on a secret combination that the player has thought up.

The next player asks a question, for example:
Q: "Does she like carrots?"
A: "Yes" answers the first, and gives them another clue, "but she hates peas."
Q: "Does she like dogs?"
A: "No, but she's crazy about raccoons."

The secret combination is that Grandmother likes anything that has a double letter in it, like buttons - but not bows; zoos, but not animals; pepper, but not salt.

As players discover Grandmother's secret, they can join in giving clues to other players.
The last player to "catch on" to the secret is the next one to have a strange grandmother.

2. Teapot

One of the players must cover his ears while all the others choose a secret verb. When the verb has been chosen, the player uncovers his ears and begins to question the others, substituting the word "teapot" for the mysterious verb. "How often do you teapot?" might be one question. "Can someone over eighty teapot with ease?" might be another. You can set a limit of ten questions before a guess, to which sensible answers must be given. If the player guesses correctly he gains a point and another player becomes the speaker.

3. The Minister's Cat

This game uses adjectives, or words that describe nouns. Each player has a definite order. The leader starts by saying, "The minister's cat is a _____ cat," filling in the blank with an adjective beginning with A, for example, an angry cat. The next person continues finding another adjective with A until everyone is out. Then everyone shifts to B, and so on through the alphabet. You may decide to skip X and Z!

4. Yarn Spinning

You need to fill a cardboard box with a random selection of different and preferably slightly unusual objects. For example, a toothbrush, a feather duster, binoculars, a left shoe, a foreign coin, a bus schedule, an egg cup, a Bible, a jar of sugar, and a screwdriver would do nicely. Try to pick safe objects which are not sharp.

To play the game, invite each player in turn to close her eyes and pick four objects out of the box. You then give her five minutes in which to tell a story, any story she cares to invent. The only condition is that she must bring each of her four objects into the story at some stage. When everyone has spun their yarn, the group should discuss the most amusing parts of each story.

5. Twenty Questions

One player must cover her ears while all the others choose an object - it can be anything from an apple to a zebra, from Mickey Mouse to the moon. When the object has been chosen, the player can unplug her ears and has twenty questions - all of them requiring Yes or No answers - in which to arrive at the identity of the mystery object. To help her on her way, the others are allowed to say whether the object is "animal," "vegetable," or "mineral," or a combination of all three. Players who uncover their mystery objects by the time they reach their twentieth question gain a point, and the player with the most points after a set number of rounds, wins the game.

..... *And for younger children*

These games are mainly for school-aged children. Can any of them be made simpler, so that a younger child might enjoy them? For example, "**Twenty Questions**" could become a simple guessing game. The adult could say "I am thinking of something that is ____," describing perhaps a toy or everyday object that the child is familiar with. There are no real rules, so the child can keep asking questions, and the adult can give hints whenever necessary. Start with something very simple, using more difficult things as the child becomes good at the game. What are some other examples of games for younger children which involve playing with words?

Adapted from The Essential Link, Eva Whitmore, Newfoundland & Labrador Home and School Federation, 1996.

Making Music Makers +

Music is a way to communicate that all children understand. It's not necessary for them to follow the words to a song. It makes them happy just to hear the comfort in your voice or on the recording or to dance to a peppy tune.

Introduce music to your children early. Listening to you sing will help them learn to make their voices go up and down--even if you can't carry a tune! Music and dance teach preschoolers to listen, to coordinate hand and finger movements, and to express themselves creatively.

Materials:

- dried beans
- buttons
- masking tape
- recorder and blank tape
- cardboard cylinders
- string
- pieces of wood
- elastic bands
- anything that makes a pleasing noise

Activity:

Using simple household products, and lots of imagination, create a musical instrument. Use the instrument to introduce a child to a song you know and love, perhaps one from your own childhood. Record your child having fun with the song and play it back, together. Discuss the song or write parts of the song on paper. A child may wish to 'draw a picture' of the song or its words. Encourage this, but do not insist - because this exercise is about fun, not work!

Learning Discussion:

- What was fun about this exercise?
- Did the child ask questions about your song?
- What did you learn about your own song?

Notes:

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Practicum II

• *Hopefully, learners will be able to visit a daycare (in a group size which is manageable and agreeable to the daycare), so as to spend two to three hours observing and interacting with children. Learners must act under the direction of Early Childhood Educators, assisting or leading activities with individuals or small groups of children as is appropriate. Learners should record their observations and the results of their interactions.*

• *Some questions which may be appropriate for learners to answer are as follows:*

1. Did you take note of activities which children *enjoyed* that also resulted in *learning*?

2. Describe one such activity.

3. What happened? Did children learn things such as: following directions; physical coordination; social skills (like cooperation or sharing); new vocabulary; using their imagination; anything else?

4. Does this activity have any value in terms of literacy?

5. Can families use this or a similar activity?

Module 6

Reading and Talking

EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 6 - Reading & Talking

Most parents want to do everything in their power to assist their children's literacy development. This Module provides some proven techniques to assist parents in reading and talking to their children which parents may or may not already be using.

It is extremely important that the facilitator continue to build on the self-esteem of learners throughout this module. The goal is to make parents feel good about being parents, and to build on what they already do.

6.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Discuss the importance of oral language in literacy development	Learners should demonstrate an understanding of the importance of oral language in literacy development.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  "Some Points on the Importance of Oral Communication" might be a good place to start with this objective.

  - Stress the importance of starting early.
  - Discuss ways to create opportunities for reading aloud.
  - Hold a group discussion on how to make reading a daily activity at home.

6.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Compare strategies learners can use when reading with children.	Learners will demonstrate an awareness of strategies that can be used when reading to children.

 Notes to Facilitator:

"Read to Me" contains some suggestions for paired reading. Learners may want to practice reading to one another in pairs, using various strategies as appropriate.

- Demonstrate paired or shared reading in class.
- Demonstrate oral reading in class.
- Demonstrate creation of stories in class.

6.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Define scaffolding, and examine how it can be used as a technique to build literacy.	Learners will demonstrate an understanding that literacy develops, over time, by adding new skills to old skills.

 Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator may wish to use the resource “What is Scaffolding?” to explain this term. When this is done, parents should discuss occasions when they have used or would use this technique.

- Review child development issues.
- Demonstrate scaffolding in class.

6.4

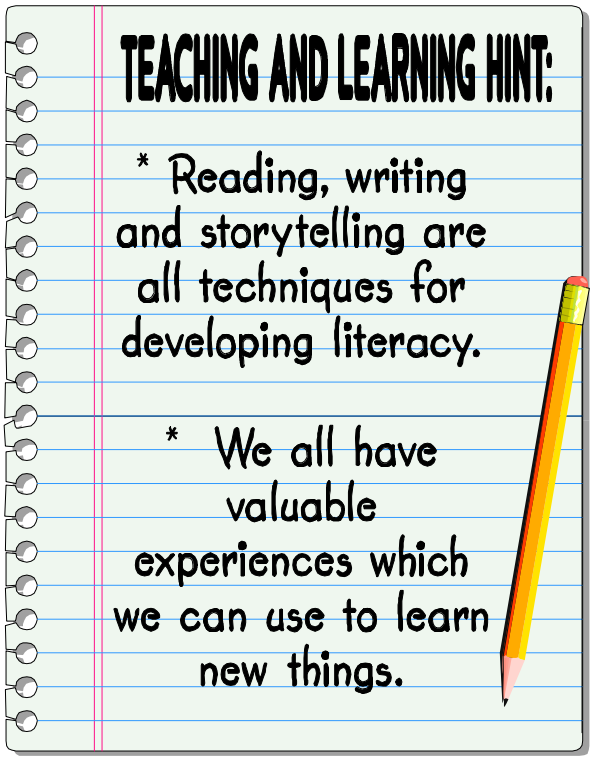
OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Practicum III (Application): Read and talk to children, and apply techniques used in this Module.	Learners should understand the relevance of reading techniques in the development of literacy.

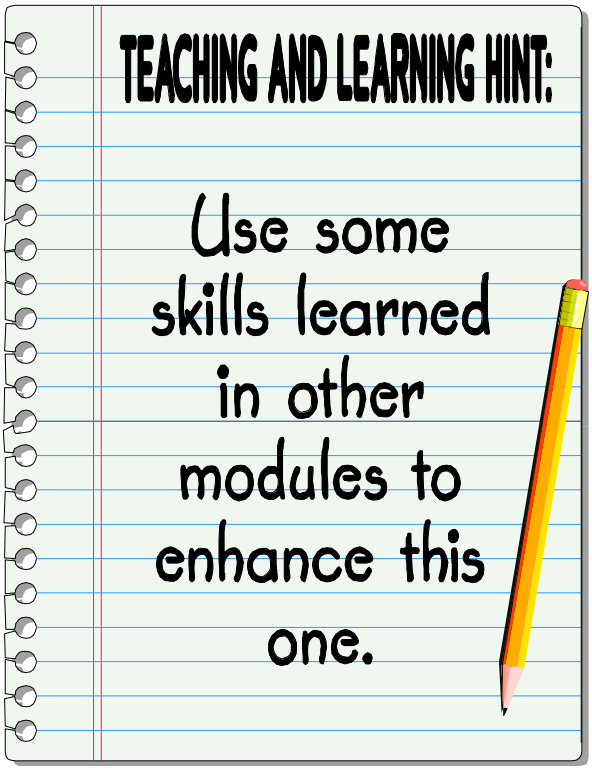
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  This objective could be met in a cooperating daycare or at home, whichever is most feasible.

  - Be clear about expectations
  - Choose only one form of reading activity to practice
  - Have learners record their observations about the practice activity.
  - Hold group discussions after the practicums to share learning.

MODULE 6 - RESOURCES





Read to Me!

The single most important way for children to develop the knowledge they need to succeed in reading is for you to read aloud to them--beginning early.

What you'll need:

- Children's books
- A children's dictionary (optional)
- Your own ideas about what to read aloud.

What to do:

1. **Read aloud to your child every day**. From birth to 6 months your baby probably won't understand what you're reading, but that's okay. You can get her used to the sound of your voice and get her used to seeing and touching books.

2. **To start out, use board books with no words or just a few words**. Point to the colours and the pictures and say their names. Simple books can teach children things that will later help them learn to read. For example, they learn about the structure of language--that there are spaces between the words and that the print goes from left to right.

3. **Tell stories.** Encourage your child to ask questions and talk about the story. Ask her to predict what will come next. Point to things in books that she can relate to in her own life: "Look at the picture of the boat. Do you remember the boat we saw in the harbour?"

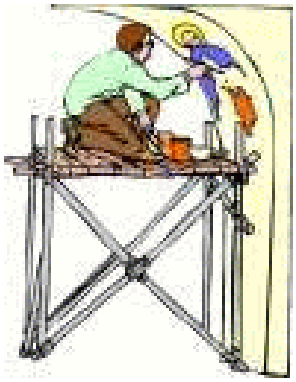
4. **Look for reading programs**. There may be programs in your community that can provide opportunities for you to improve your own reading, if you think that is necessary, and to read with your child. Friends and relatives can also read to your child, and senior citizen volunteers are available in some communities to do the same.

5. **Use a children's dictionary**. If possible, use one that has pictures next to the words. Then start the "let's look it up" habit.

6. **Visit a library as often as possible**. Begin making weekly trips to the library when your child is very young. See that your child gets her own library card as soon as possible. Many libraries issue cards to children as soon as they can print their names. If your community has no public library, ask a local school if you and your child can visit their library.

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

What is Scaffolding?



Have you ever watched the construction of a two or three storey building?

If so, you know that it is difficult to finish the exterior siding in the high places without something to support you. Builders have solved this problem by simply building something to stand on - something called scaffolding. At the lower levels of the building, they do not need any help. As they need to reach higher and higher, however, the builders need the help and support of scaffolding in order to reach the highest places, as seen in the picture. So what does this have to do with family literacy?

Scaffolding is a technique that allows children to do for themselves what they have already learned, and supports them when they are reaching for higher levels of learning.

> Always remember that one purpose of scaffolding, both in construction and in literacy, is to keep people from falling. Do not be surprised if children forget some things you have already taught them. When they reach a point where they begin to have difficulty, it is your job, as the 'scaffolding', to make sure they do not see themselves as failures. Encourage them, support them, and help them reach their highest potential!! Help them 'build' on

Scaffolding occurs at all levels, regardless of the developmental stage of your child.

An example:

A child may have learned to connect the dots while drawing/scribbling. If the leader outlined some dots in the shapes of certain letters, for example an 'M,' the child could connect the dots and then discover that s/he has created a letter. This letter begins several words including man, marry, and marmalade. The child could then list other words that begin with the same letter. It may be nice to start with the letter that begins the child's name or even the beginning of the alphabet before moving on to whole numbers.

Some Points On the Importance of Oral Communication

Talk to your children, beginning at birth.

Babies need to hear your voice. A television or the radio can't take the place of your voice because it doesn't respond to coos and babbles. The more you talk to your baby, the more he will have to talk about as he gets older. Talking with children broadens their understanding of language and of the world.

Everyday activities, such as eating dinner or taking a bath, provide opportunities to talk, sometimes in detail, about what's happening and respond to your child. "First let's stick the plug in the drain. Now we'll turn on the water. I see you want to put your rubber duck in the bathtub. That's a good idea. Look, it's yellow, just like the rubber duck on `Sesame Street.'"

Listen to your children.

Children have their own special thoughts and feelings, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. As their language skills develop, encourage them to talk. Listening is the best way to learn what's on their minds and to discover what they know and don't know, and how they think and learn. It also shows children that their feelings and ideas are valuable.

Ask questions.

Particularly ones that require more than a "yes" or "no" response. While walking in a park, for example, most 2- and 3-year-olds will stop to pick up leaves. You might point out how the leaves are the same, and how they are different. With older children you might ask, "What else grows on trees?"

Answer questions.

Questions can help children learn to compare and classify things. Answer your children's questions thoughtfully and, whenever possible, encourage them to answer their own questions. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Then together with your child, try to find the answer.

Read aloud to your children every day.

Reading can begin with babies and continue throughout the preschool years. Even though they don't understand the story or the poem, reading together gives children a chance to learn about language, enjoy the sound of your voice, and be close to you. You don't have to be an excellent reader for your child to enjoy this time together. You may also want to take your child to a local library that offers special story hours.

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Puppet Magic

Puppets can be fascinating. Children know that puppets are not alive. And yet, they move and talk like real living things. Try making one at home.

What you'll need:

- An old clean sock
- An old glove
- Buttons (larger than 1 inch in diameter to prevent swallowing)
- Needle and thread
- Ribbon
- Felt-tipped pens
- Nontoxic glue
- Yarn

What to do:

Sock puppet. Use an old clean sock. Sew on buttons for eyes and nose. Paste or sew on a piece of red fabric for the mouth. Put a bow made from ribbon at the neck.

Finger puppets. Cut the ends off the fingers of an old glove. Draw faces on the fingers with felt-tipped pens. Glue yarn on for hair.

Have the puppet talk to your child. "Hello. My name is Tanya. What a great T-shirt you have on! I like the rabbit on the front of your T-shirt." Or have the puppet sing a simple song. Change your voice when the puppet talks or sings.

Puppets provide an opportunity to talk to children and encourage them to speak. They also help children learn new words, use their imaginations, and develop their hand and finger coordination. Children will make many mistakes when they learn to talk. Instead of correcting them directly, reply by using the right grammar. For example, if your child says, "Michael done it," reply, "Yes, Michael did it." Speak slowly and clearly so that your child can imitate your speech. Use full, but short sentences, and avoid baby talk.

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

Chores!

Any household task can become a good learning game and can be fun.

What you'll need:

Jobs around the home that need to get done, such as:

- Doing the laundry
- Washing and drying dishes
- Carrying out the garbage
- Setting the dinner table
- Dusting

What to do:

Tell your child about the job you will do together. Explain why the family needs the job done. Describe how you will do it and how your child can help.

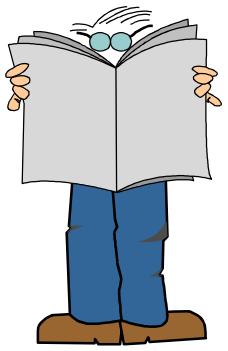
Teach your child new words that belong to each job. "Let's put the placemats on the table, along with the napkins."

Doing laundry together provides many opportunities to learn. Ask your child to help you remember all the clothes that need to be washed. See how many things he can name. Socks? T-shirts? Pajamas? Have him help you gather all the dirty clothes. Have your child help you make piles of light and dark colours.

Home chores can help children learn new words, how to listen and follow directions, how to count, and how to sort. Chores can also help children improve their physical coordination and learn responsibility.

Adapted from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, by Nancy Paulu, US Department of Education, 1993. Http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html

READING STRATEGY 1 - ORAL READING



Materials:

- Books, Magazines, Newspapers.
- Song Sheets

Activity:

Break into small groups to practice reading aloud.

Take turns reading aloud for three to five minutes. It might be helpful to break into groups of parents with very small children, parents with toddlers and parents of pre-schoolers. Discuss child development principles and review what activities are appropriate to children of differing ages.

Practice reading *with* children, not *to* them. Encourage children to interact with you, while reading. This may require you to answer lots of questions and sit with a child on your lap or very close to you. Remember the concept of *scaffolding*. You will need to respect prior learning of the child and look for opportunities to demonstrate new learning, by building on their skills.

Try pointing to pictures using different voices, speaking loudly or softly. Try to speak with emotions; try happy, sad, fearful.

Learning Discussion:

- Reading to very young children may require very basic skills. Readers may wish to concentrate on having children learn to hold a book upright, turn pages from right to left, point to words, point to characters in stories, see colours.

- Reading with toddlers will require more specialized reading and learning skills such as identification of words, punctuation, explanation of beginning and endings in a story line and comparisons between characters, colours or objectives.

- Reading to children who are about to enter school will require detailed attention to story lines, discussion about the meaning of stories, chances to change and expand on the stories and opportunities to make comparisons with other books or real-life events.

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

READING STRATEGY 2 - SHARED READING

Materials:

- Children's books with words and pictures

Activity:

Break into pairs of reading partners. Decide who will be the adult and who will be the child in each reading pair. You might like to think of the child at a certain age.

The adult begins this exercise by reading a part of the book and then encouraging or asking the child to read a portion and to ask questions or make statements about the contents. Try different approaches to shared reading such as: the adult reads a page and then the child reads a page, or the adult reads the entire book and then the child reads the book.

Think of as many different ways to share reading the same book, as you can. Spend two or three minutes on this activity. Then, switch roles, and do it again. You may wish to switch books, as well. It would be a good idea, for example, for some reading pairs to practice this exercise with very simple books and for some pairs to practice this exercise with longer or more detailed books or passages of writing.

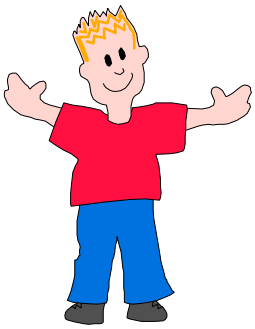
Learning Discussion:

- At what age do you think a child would benefit from shared reading? Would you use this technique with a very young child?
- What kind of books are best for shared reading?
- Was it more fun to be the adult, or the child? How would you make this exercise more fun?
- When you were the child, what kind of questions helped you stay interested or helped you understand the material?
- When you were the adult, did you find it easy to explain the reading materials? Would you encourage a child to ask questions before and after this type of reading?

Notes:

READING STRATEGY 3 - STORY TELLING

Materials:



- Photographs
- Household objects
- Puppets

Activity:

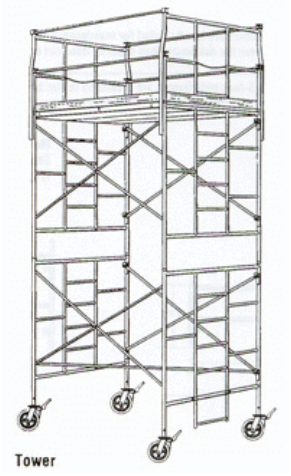
Take turns creating stories by starting with one object or picture. Try creating and telling a story alone. Then try creating and telling a story by asking for suggestions. Take a family photograph from a friend and make up a story about that photo.

Learning Discussion:

- Why is story telling an important part of literacy development?
- Is storytelling an opportunity for learning new words?
- Is storytelling done best by one person or with others?
- Is it more fun to hear a story or to tell a story?
- Did each story have a beginning, a middle, and an end?
- Could you predict the outcome of any of the stories?

Notes:

READING STRATEGY 4 - SCAFFOLDING


Tower

Activity:

Remember a skill or a task you learned for the first time. Or, try to remember the last time you taught someone else a new skill or task. This could be a recent skill such as a math or computer or grammar skill you learned while studying, or it could be something you learned at home such as a household maintenance chore or as a child. Think about any number of skills you already have in sewing, cooking, driving, cycling, sports or crafts.

Think about the steps of learning or techniques which were involved in the experience.

Using a sheet of paper, in two columns titled 'old activity' and 'new activity' outline the individual skills which you had used to develop your new skills.

Example:

Old Activity	New Activity
Hitting a softball	Shooting a hockey ball
Old Skill	**New Skill**
_____	_____
_____	_____

The discussion should be about the skills used in the old activity of hitting the softball, ie. hands together, feet spread appropriately, proper stance, eye-hand coordination, left or right hand swing, etc. and how these skills were used to develop the new activity. Compare the old list with the new list.

Learning Discussion:

How was scaffolding used to make the new technique easier to learn?

Did you notice after the discussion that you have probably used scaffolding on several occasions and not realized it?

How would scaffolding techniques apply to the development of literacy?

Notes:

_____

_____

Practicum III

• Choose one of the four reading activities which have been described in Module Six, oral reading, shared reading, story telling or scaffolding. Spend 30 minutes or more with a child, or children and practice the technique in a literacy outing.

Record your observations using the following questions:

Reading Activity: _____

1. Describe the activity, and why you chose it.

2. Did the child enjoy the activity? Why or why not?

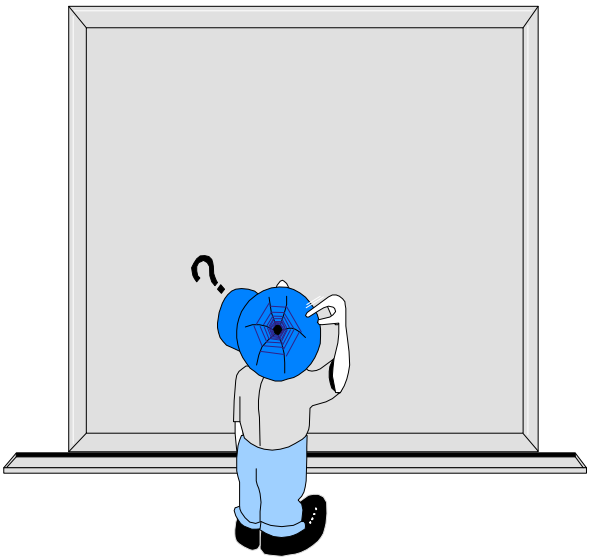
3. Did this activity help build literacy?

4. How could this reading activity be used every day?

Name:_____

Module 7

Challenges of Learning



EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 7 - Challenges of Learning

A continuing concern to some parents is whether or not their child is normal, healthy and able to learn. In most cases this is not a problem, but parents should know that there are some children who have difficulty learning, and that these children may need special help. Sometimes this is simply a matter of understanding children's learning styles. Students should, however, receive some exposure to the concept of learning disabilities, their warning signs, known coping strategies, and how and where to access resources.

7.1	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Define and discuss challenges to learning.	Learners will gain an understanding of learning disabilities, warning signs, strategies, and available professionals.

 Notes to Facilitator:

Many definitions have been suggested for the term *learning disabilities*. You may have one that works with your group of learners, or you may wish to have the group develop its own definition.

The *Newfoundland & Labrador Teacher's Association Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties* contains a checklist which may be used by learners to help identify learning disabilities in school age children.

- Definitions might form a basis for discussion, or for sharing of personal anecdotes among students.
- The understanding of learning disabilities is subject to change. Students could be encouraged to come up with their own definitions.
- Students should recognize that the *diagnosis* of a learning disability must be done by a professional, and need not limit a person's potential to learn.
- Students could be encouraged to pursue independent research on learning disabilities to ensure their information is current, and to promote shared learning.

7.2	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Establish some of the early warning signs of learning disabilities that may warrant further investigation by a professional.	Learners will demonstrate an awareness of the early warning signs of learning disabilities.

 Notes to Facilitator:

It should be emphasized to learners that a checklist is not to be used to diagnose a learning disability, but only to get an indication for further investigation by a professional.

- Have learners supplement the checklist

7.3	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Compare and *contrast* learning styles and learning disabilities.	Learners should demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics of learning styles as *opposed* to learning disabilities, and the difference between these classifications.

 Notes to Facilitator:

- Review normal child development issues
- Review learning ‘styles’
- Review learning ‘disabilities.’
- Note differences

7.4	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Outline some common strategies for dealing with learning disabilities.	Understand that learning disabilities do not have to impede learning.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  - "The NLTA Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties" contains information which will address this objective.
  - Brainstorm strategies in class for new ideas.

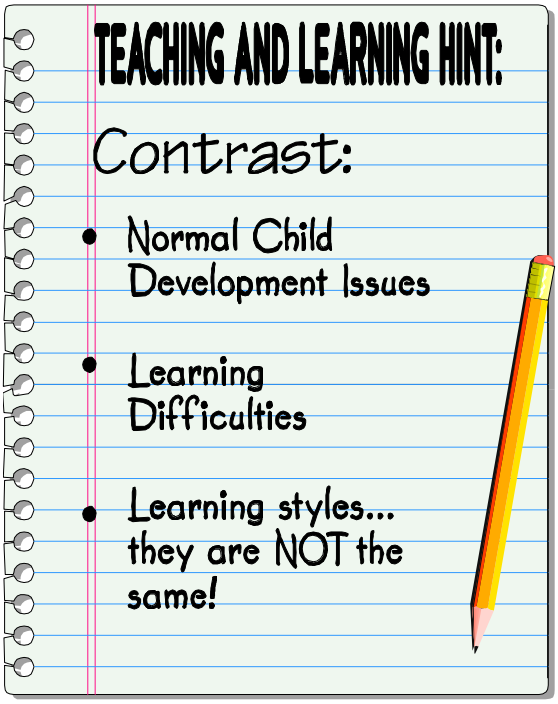
7.5	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Investigate resources available in the community to help with learning disabilities.	Learners should demonstrate knowledge of appropriate professionals who are available to work with learning disabled children. Learners should demonstrate a knowledge of community supports for parents.

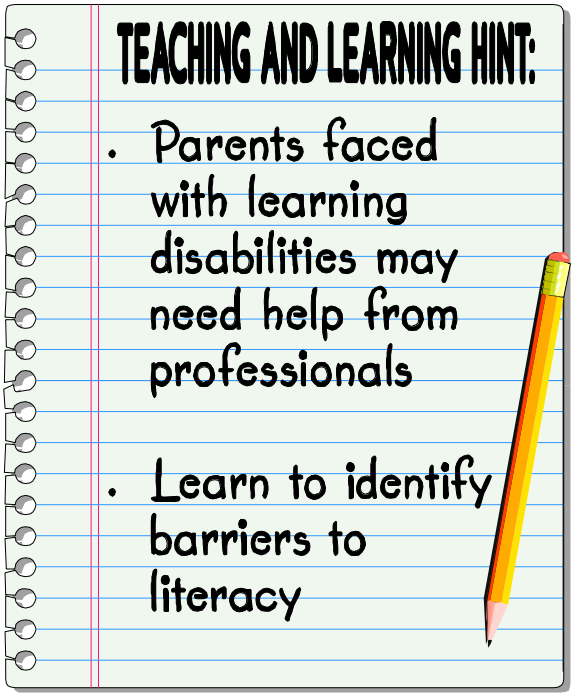
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  Facilitator should investigate the various resources and supports available in the local area in order to make this information available to students.

  - Learners may be assigned to do this investigation themselves.
  - Learners could interview one of these professionals and prepare a report on how that individual is involved with learning disabilities.

MODULE 7 - RESOURCES





1.

Learning Disability

Definition:

- A learning disability is a barrier to some part of the learning process.

- It may be a result of a problem of information processing with respect to *perception*, *organization*, or *coordination.*

- It is a central nervous system dysfunction which interferes with the brain's ability to process information in a conventional manner.

Remember:

A learning disability is NOT the same as 'low intelligence.'

2.

Learning Disability

Indicators:

- Uneven and inconsistent achievement profile
- Problems with reading, comprehension, or mathematical computations
- Difficulty with writing, spelling, grammar, or oral expression of language
- Disorientation in space or time
- Reversing letters, numbers, or words (beyond a certain age)
- Difficulty in following directions
- Inability to organize studies
- Deficits in social skills
- Problems with short or long term memory

3.

Learning Disability

Characteristics:

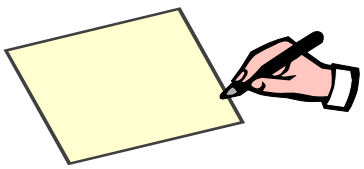
- A Learning Disability is not related to intelligence but rather is a problem of information processing,
- Learning Disabilities do NOT include visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbances or environmental variables.
- Learning disabilities are predominantly problems of perception, organization or coordination.
- Learning Disabilities are often recognized in adults as deficits in one or more of the following areas: reading, comprehension, spelling, written expression, math computation and problem solving.
- Less frequent, but no less troublesome, are problems in organizational skills, time management and social skills. Many Learning Disabled adults also have language-based and/or perceptual problems.
- Learning Disabilities affect approximately 10% of the population.
- Learning Disabilities are not just childhood disorders, they remain for life.
- Individuals with Learning Disabilities often have low self confidence and poor self-esteem

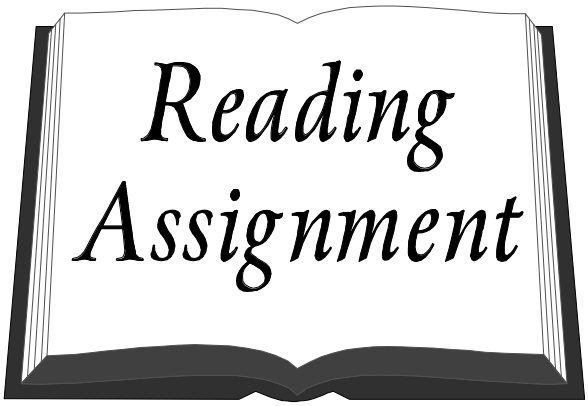
4.

Learning Disability

My Definition:

A learning disability is: _____





GUIDE TO READING AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Literacy for Life

(Thanks to the Newfoundland & Labrador Teacher's Association (NLTA) for this information! (

The **LITERACY FOR LIFE** Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties was prepared by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association under the direction and guidance of the 1994/95 and 1995/96 Communication Committees, committees comprised of teachers with experience at a variety of grade levels.

1994/95 committee members: Fred Andrews (Chairperson), Don Ash, Maureen Cadigan, Rose Marie Deacy, Marilyn Donovan, Fred Wood, and Cynthia Hartery.

1995/96 committee members: John Sutherland (Chairperson), Linda Bailet, Bill Cooze, Jerry Jenkins, Tom Kendell, Marie Rose, and Patricia Ryan.

Special thanks are extended to reading specialists Gertrude Andrews, Gwen Maguire, and Pauline Pineau and the many parents for their assistance in compiling and/or reviewing the material.

ABOUT YOUR "GUIDE TO READING AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES"

Reading is an extremely important part of children's development process and one that affects not just how they do in school, but many other aspects of their lives as well.

The actual pace at which children learn to read varies widely. Even if your child seems uninterested in reading or can't recognize words that are known by a friend who's the same age, it doesn't necessarily mean he or she has a disability. However, if your child does have a learning disability that affects his or her ability to read, it's extremely important to catch the problem early.

This **Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties** has been produced to help you decide if your child **may** have a learning disability that affects reading and to provide some suggestions in the form of TIPS and IDEAS on what you should do if you're concerned. It gives you **basic** information only, about the most typical characteristics of children with reading difficulties, and **is not** meant to provide all the information necessary for a complete diagnosis - special testing by trained professionals is necessary for this.

Something very important to keep in mind when you're reading the following pages - **Many children have one or more of the characteristics mentioned in this booklet - that's perfectly normal and doesn't mean they have learning disabilities. However, a child who has many of the characteristics MAY have a learning disability and further investigation is strongly advised.**

1) READING SKILLS

Learning to read means learning to comprehend written material. It means learning to read stories and being able to re-tell stories which have been read. It means learning to read informational material and being able to recall important content.

Successful reading means successful comprehension and understanding of what has been read.

Children who are learning to read must successfully learn to use a number of different strategies.

1. Children must learn to recognize and understand the meaning of words by using the context the words are found in.

A child who is reading and meets an unknown word must be able to use the words which precede it and the words which follow it to help identify the unknown word. For example: a child who is reading the sentence, "The woman rode a horse into the castle," may have difficulty reading the word horse. Such children need to read past the unknown word, return to the beginning of the sentence, re-read the sentence, and think of a word that would fit the meaning of the sentence. Children with reading and language difficulties often do not use these "context clues" to identify unknown words; they may often make meaningless substitutions for unknown words, reading, for example, "the woman rode a house into the castle."

Children with reading difficulties often do not self-correct these kinds of substitutions.

This leads to difficulties with comprehending stories or informational material they are reading.

This stage in the reading process involves using context clues to identify unknown words. This is a comprehension skill.

2. Children must be able to accurately "see" letters and words.

This may seem like an overly simple statement, but the point is that a small number of children actually cannot see the words that are printed on the page; for some children "b" becomes "d;" "dog" becomes "god," etc.

While most children have difficulty seeing the difference between similar letters or words up to age six, children who have pronounced difficulties with this after age six may have a visual perception problem.

3. Children must know the particular sound that goes with each letter. This is particularly true of the letters called consonants: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z, and for consonant combinations such as th, sh, ph, and so on.

The ability to read will obviously be affected if children can't recognize the letters that make up a word or don't see a word as it is actually presented. Research has also shown, however, that reading will also be affected if the children do not know how the word they see on a page may sound.

Children need to recognize words both by predicting from context clues (as noted previously) and by knowing how the word they see on the page may sound.

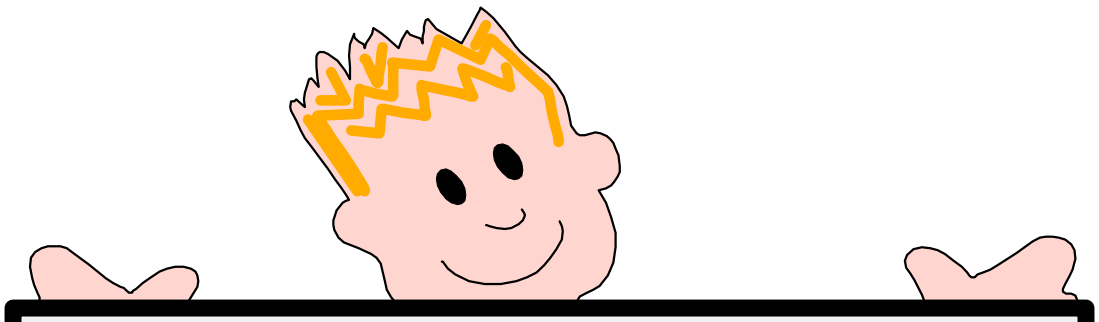
This stage in the reading process involves a combination of comprehension skill, visual skill, and auditory perceptual skill.

4. **As children recognize words "by context, by sight and by sound," they must be able to understand what they are reading. This is called "comprehension." When children read a story, they need to be able to tell who was in the story, what happened, where the story occurred, what the problem was in the story and how the problem was or was not solved. When children read informational material, they need to be able to separate important ideas from less important details.**

This stage in the reading process also involves the skill of comprehension.

Problems with reading can happen at any or all of these stages and how the problem will be handled will depend on the nature of the difficulty.

But how exactly do you know if your child has a reading/language difficulty?



The next section of this GUIDE TO READING AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES gives you information on the general characteristics of children with learning difficulties as well as specific characteristics of children with disabilities in the "comprehending," "seeing," or "hearing" areas.

We repeat, however, that many children have one or more of the characteristics mentioned in this next section - that's perfectly normal and doesn't mean they have learning disabilities. However, if your child has many of the characteristics, he or she MAY have a learning disability and we strongly advise further investigation.

2) WARNING SIGNS

Things to Look for if You Suspect There's a Problem.

- Your child has difficulty following two or three-step directions on how to complete an activity. This is a comprehension problem.

- Your child can't give you meanings for words when presented to them in a sentence, or read to them from a familiar book. This is a comprehension problem.

- Your child can't re-tell a story you read to them, or tell them. This is a comprehension problem.

- Your child can't see words properly, not necessarily because he or she needs glasses, but because he or she actually sees the words or the letters differently than they appear. This is a visual perception problem.

- Your child doesn't hear words properly, not necessarily because he or she can't hear normally, but because there is a problem distinguishing between similar sounds, etc. This is an auditory perception problem.

- Your child can sing the alphabet song, but cannot recall forms and sequence while printing. This is a memory problem.

Some General Characteristics of Children with Learning Disabilities

Children with learning disabilities often:

- have very poor printing and/or writing skills;
- have difficulty using scissors, colouring and printing inside lines;
- have difficulty tying laces, buttoning clothes or holding pencils;
- have difficulty understanding the differences between "up" and "down," "top" and "bottom," "in" and "out," "in front of" and "behind," etc.
- have difficulty telling the difference between letters, sounds and numbers;
- may have good verbal ability, but have problems with reading or with putting their own thoughts on paper;
- have difficulty understanding what is read;
- have difficulty playing with more than one child at a time;
- have difficulty catching a ball;
- have difficulty expressing ideas and relating events in a sequence;
- become easily frustrated or upset when routine is changed;
- seem unable to judge consequences of actions;
- have difficulty remembering names of things (like the seasons, the months, streets, etc.);
- have a confused sense of time and/or distance;
- are either much more active or much less active than most other children;
- have a short attention span;
- get very uneven results in areas of testing - they preform either unusually well or unusually poor in certain areas;
- may have delayed speech development, saying only single words by age two, or producing only short sentences by age three.

Characteristics of Children Who Comprehend Poorly

Children who suffer from **comprehension problems** may not read for meaning. When they look at a word, they may over-use clues to the words provided by the letters, combinations of letters, and syllables. They may not attend to the meaning of what they are reading. Such children often make up nonsense words as they are reading, or substitute words that do not make sense in the story or in the informational material they are reading.

Sound confusing? It is, especially to the child who has this type of disability.

But how can you tell if your child has this problem?

- Read to them, and at certain points stop and ask them to fill in the next word that would make sense in the sentence or the paragraph. Do not expect them to read the word; expect them to provide a meaningful response.

- Listen to your child read from material in which he or she already knows 80 percent of the words. Note the substitutions he or she makes for words in the story or informational material. Do these substitutions change the meaning of what your child is reading? Are these substitutions real words? Are these substitutions approximations of the words in the story or text that are similar to the pattern of letters in the words?

- Listen to your child as he or she reads. When they make substitutions for the words in the text, do they notice that their reading has lost meaning and go back to attempt to make self-corrections? Are their self-corrections based on producing a ord that looks and sounds more like the word, or are they based on trying to make meaning from the word?

Characteristics of Children Who See Differently

Children who suffer from **visual perception problems** may look very carefully at the words on a page, but mix up what they see and, as a result, actually see differently from other children. So even if you think certain information has been placed clearly before them, it really hasn't been, because they're not seeing what you think they're seeing and what you know is there.

Sound confusing? It is, especially to the child who has this type of disability!

But how can you tell if your child has a problem seeing the letters and words on a page? Children who see differently because they have a visual perception problem typically display many of the following characteristics:

- They reverse their letters when reading or writing.
- They are slow readers.
- They sound out words they should know by sight.
- If they substitute a word when they're reading, it usually looks similar but has a completely different meaning. For example, they read, "The car was running up a tree" instead of "The cat was running up a tree."
- When reading, they may lose their place on the page, skip words or even lines or re-read words or lines.
- They have superior ability to remember what they hear, but can't remember what they've seen. (If you read a story aloud, they'll remember it; if you ask them to read it silently, they can't.)
- They sometimes begin to learn to read and write at the same time as other children and may even progress at the same rate until Grade 2 or 3, but then they may start falling behind.
- They may squint, open their eyes wide, rub their eyes, or have red watery eyes when reading. (Sometimes their attention span seems short simply because their eyes are hurting.)
- They may see small portions of a word in focus, while the rest of the word or the page is a blur.
- They may have difficulty copying material from blackboards, textbooks, etc.
- When reading, they may move a book around quite a bit to help get the page in focus or cut down on the glare. Sometimes they'll shade the book with their arms.
- They may get motion sick when reading because of the movement they see on the page.
- They get headaches after reading for awhile. In addition to these "reading" signs, there are also some other signs that can point to difficulties in visual perception. At home, you may notice your child writes up or downhill, has unequal spacing between letters and words, or can't write on the line. At school, your child's teacher may notice the same things as well as others, like he or she makes errors, or squints and rubs his or her eyes while copying things from the chalkboard. Depth perception is also affected, and people with visual perception problems may seem clumsy, drop things more than usual, have difficulty getting on and off escalators, or constantly walk into door jams or table edges.

NOTE:

A child who has been progressing normally and then starts falling behind in reading may have some other problem that needs to be dealt with immediately. There may be changes at home, e.g. separation, divorce, death, etc., or there may even be a clash between the child and the teacher, or there may be some physical cause for the problem. It definitely is not the normal course of events to start going backwards - so action should be taken without delay.

SOMETHING TO TRY!

Ask your child what he or she sees on the page - are the lines straight or wiggly, is the page clear or blurry, and does looking at it hurt his or her eyes? If you get answers that seem strange, believe them, because it isn't at all strange for children with visual perception problems to say things like:

"The words jump off the page at me."

"The letters start moving, look like ants and all walk off the page."

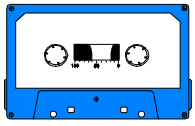
"The page turns white."

"The lines look like ocean waves and I get sick to my stomach."

IDEA!!

Teachers use a number of techniques to help children in their classrooms who see differently from others. Many of the techniques don't fit the home environment, but some do. For instance, you can encourage your child to use their fingers, a ruler or book mark to follow words when reading (this will help keep them from losing their place). You can tape record yourself reading a story and then have the child read along with the tape.

Remember, children with visual perception problems are much better at remembering what they hear than what they see. Keeping this in mind is an important part of helping both of you handle the disability on a day-to-day basis.



Characteristics of Children Who Hear Differently

Children who suffer from **auditory perception problems** may listen carefully, but hear inaccurately. Some can't tell the difference between the sounds they hear, or between different sounds heard at the same time; and some hear words in a sequence that are actually different from the real ones. They'll have problems doing what you tell them to do, or understanding what you say, simply because what you're saying doesn't make sense to them. In any case, these children are often accused of daydreaming, not listening, or being easily distracted.

Children who hear differently because they have auditory perception problems typically display many of the following characteristics:

- They never seem to listen.
- They never seem to remember what you tell them.
- They have limited speaking or listening skills.
- They have a poor sense of rhythm.
- They can't tell the difference between similar sounds or distinguish between vowel or consonant sounds.
- They mispronounce words.
- They have difficulty sounding out words (learning phonics).
- They usually write very slowly, or may whisper while writing.
- They usually whisper when reading silently.
- They can't remember basic spelling words.
- They have superior ability to remember what they see, but not what they hear.

IDEA!

Teachers use a number of techniques to help children in their classrooms who hear differently. Many of these techniques don't fit the home environment, but we've included the ones that do.

1st: you can try to eliminate extra noise; it may not distract you but it will distract a child with an auditory perception problem.

2nd: make sure you speak slowly and clearly, and, when possible, use visual clues to go with your words.

3rd: check with your child to see if he or she understands what you're saying.

SOMETHING TO TRY...

When your child substitutes one word for another word in the text and changes the meaning of the sentence:

- Repeat aloud to your child the entire sentence as he or she reads it, including the word which changed the meaning.
- Note the substituted word your child used.
- Ask your child if the word makes sense in the sentence.
- Ask your child to provide a word that makes sense.
- Read the story or text aloud to your child in a section by section, or paragraph by paragraph, or page by page manner as your child follows along in the print using their finger or a ruler. Following the reading of each section, have your child read the same section aloud.
- Read the story or text aloud with your child. This is called echo-reading. Keep your voice slightly ahead of your child's.

3) CHILDREN WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND

Sometimes, children who don't understand what they read are simply spending so much of their energy on "decoding" the words they don't have the time to "comprehend" them. These same children often have very good comprehension if someone reads to them, because when someone else is doing the reading, they do have the time to spend on figuring out meanings.

The best way to find out whether or not your child might have this sort of problem is to ask him or her about things he or she is reading. If the child can't describe the story to you or answer your "comprehension" questions, there may be a problem and you should seek professional advice.

You should be aware, however, that there are also disabilities that actually involve an inability to make those connections between word and meaning. Professional testing will be necessary so that you and your child's teacher can learn exactly what the problem is.

TIP!

If a child has not learned to read and to love reading by the middle of their grade one year, then parents should seek help at that time. Don't wait. The sooner the better. Many children are often saved from years of frustrating experience with books if they receive proper assessment and are put in the right direction when the problem arises. Research confirms the fact that prevention and early intervention are the key to successful reading.

4) WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK THERE'S A PROBLEM

As already noted a number of times, children often display a few of the characteristics described in this booklet without having a learning disability. However, if your child exhibits **many** of the characteristics described in either of the sections, it is important to seek further investigation. Here are some steps you can take to ensure your child gets the help he or she may need.

Step 1: Talk to your child's Teacher

One of the first things to do if your child is school-aged is to talk to his or her teacher. You need to compare notes to determine whether or not you are noticing similar problems. Remember, though, teachers and parents sometimes describe the same problems differently, simply because one of you sees the child in the classroom while the other sees the child at home. You'll want to make sure, early on, that you clearly understand one another.

Step 2: Talk to your child

Another important thing to do is to talk to your child. He or she may tell you simply that things sound strange or as straightforward as: "My problem is remembering what I read" or "I miss words sometimes." But you need to take the time to sit and **really listen** so you can hear what they're telling you, and you should not be critical of what they say.

Step 3: Rule out physical problems

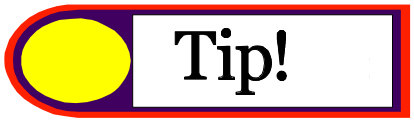
If you, your child, and/or your child's teacher think there may be a problem, it's time to arrange for professional assessment and extra help. The first things that should be ruled out are physical problems with vision or hearing.

Step 4: Arrange for educational, psychological and/or special testing

If physical problems have been ruled out, it's time for educational and psychological testing. Educational tests rate your child's academic achievement relative to other children around the same age. Psychological tests measure your child's capacities or potential in a number of areas - thinking, memory, self-esteem, etc.

1 Identify the presence or absence of a disability.

2 Provide a clear description of your child's strengths and weaknesses so effective remedial strategies can be developed.



Start keeping a file about your child as soon as you first suspect a problem. This can be in any format you find convenient (three-ring binder, series of file folders, etc.) but should include certain information:

- birth and developmental information
- medical information, including family history
- other pertinent family information (child's position in family, any changes or crises and any learning problems experienced by other members);
- information on schools and outside agencies you deal with;
- expenses and copies of correspondence;
- records of conversations, meetings, telephone calls (include date, person spoken to, result of conversation, etc.);
- names, addresses and phone numbers of the people who are involved with your child.
- anecdotal information that might help everyone involved understand your child's strengths and weaknesses.

You should be given written reports of all assessments, as well as copies of test scores. Ask for these reports, and ask as many questions as you need to, because you'll need to understand the problem fully if you're going to be able to help solve it.

5) AFTER A PROBLEM HAS BEEN CONFIRMED

Once a problem has been identified, a team effort will be particularly important in helping you and your child cope. The bottom line is that you, your child's teacher, and all the other professionals in the educational system, really want what's best for your child and together they will make up the **team** that helps your child deal with the problem. In fact, a team approach is vital, because the mix of skills and knowledge each individual will bring to the effort is vital.

Some difficulties will require only the implementation of alternative teaching strategies designed specifically to help children with disabilities learn more effectively. Your child's teacher will be familiar with these, or will have access to written information and/or other professionals who can help. You'll need to understand the various techniques being tried at school and know what you should do at home to help.

Other difficulties will require the development of an educational program designed specifically for your child (usually called the **Individual Program Plan** or IPP). This is a written plan that details curriculum, special accommodations (such as allowing your child to use a spell-checker, tape recorder, calculator or computer), and other important information. There are a number of people involved with the development of the plan, including parents, classroom teachers, specialist teachers, principals, and other professionals as required.

You'll also have a role in the implementation of the plan. For instance, you may need to read to your child every night, or to respond to teacher's comments in a home-school diary. You and your child's teacher may agree that you will always respond to particular behaviours in particular ways. In fact, there are all sorts of possible involvements, from hiring tutors to simply providing a quiet and comfortable area where your child can do his or her homework.

TIP!

After a problem has been identified, ask this question:

"What does my child need in order to learn?"

Also, make sure you understand your child's strength, as well as his or her weaknesses. These strengths will form the basis for learning and are needed to make the child feel good about himself or herself.

In all cases, ongoing evaluation and monitoring is an important part of your child's treatment, since this will show if the teaching techniques or program plan needs to be changed.

Other Organizations That Can Help

In addition to all the individuals in the education system who can help children with learning disabilities, there are also many organizations in the community. They fall into a number of categories, including: hospitals and medical clinics; home services; counselling services; recreational and social organizations; community service organizations; advocacy groups; support and self-help groups and child protection services.

Groups that may be particularly helpful are the Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (whose mandate is to help children and adults with learning disabilities) as well as your child's school. The Department of Education should be able to provide you with information on some of the others.

6) JUST ONE MORE THING (AND IN CASE YOU'VE EVER WONDERED...) THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEARNERS...

How does your child learn?

People who have learning disabilities can still have different learning styles, something that's interesting to know and can help you understand why children respond better to some things you do than others.

The following characteristics will help give you an idea of how your child learns; they might also tell you a thing or two about your own learning style.

There are three main types of learners- the visual learner, the auditory learner and the kinesthetic (tactile) learner - which is not to say that we can only learn in one of these three ways; just that we all tend to be stronger in one or two than the other(s). You can decide which type of learner your child is by deciding which of the following descriptions best applies to him or her.

Visual learners basically like to see things. They follow instructions best after having been **shown** what to do rather than having been told what to do. They learn best from bulletin boards, banners, posters, slides, flashcards, etc. They're "show me, don't tell me" people who:

- learn by seeing; they watch to see what others do;
- like demonstrations;
- recognize words by sight;
- like descriptions, have lively imaginations and draw very detailed pictures;
- remember faces more often than names;
- take notes;
- have good handwriting;
- tend to be very deliberate - plan in advance, organize, and think through problems;
- are neat, meticulous;
- see details or components and may actually miss seeing a word or work as a whole;
- notice changes quickly;
- notice colour;
- prefer art to music.

Auditory learners like to hear things. They follow oral instructions easily and verbalize well. They learn best from radio, records, TV, speeches, lectures, panels, oral questions and answers, etc. They're "tell me, don't show me" people who:

- love noise, make lots of noise (to the point of getting in trouble for being noisy);
- enjoy talking and listening;
- move lips, whisper, or even read aloud to themselves when asked to read silently;
- tend to use phonics;
- remember names more than faces;
- have a well developed vocabulary for their age;
- are easily distracted by sound;
- talk problems out, try out solutions verbally;
- express emotions verbally (laugh or cry out).
- sometimes make poor clothing choices - have no sense of what goes together;
- prefer music to art.

Kinesthetic (tactile) learners are hands-on people. They have good motor skills and learn best by actually doing. In fact, they usually just want to dig right in! They're "just let me do it" people, who:

- don't enjoy reading or being read to;
- are poor spellers; have poor handwriting;
- don't pay attention to auditory or visual presentation;
- fidget, tinker, touch, feel, put things in their mouths;
- are very physical when emotional;
- read slowly and with difficulty;
- neither look nor listen;
- often seem absorbed by some inner life or thought and therefore seem unaware of their surroundings.

7) SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS

Hearing your child has a learning disability is very disturbing and it's natural to be upset or to worry. But while learning disabilities can't actually be "cured", children with these conditions can still lead very successful and fulfilling lives. (Think about the contributions made by Winston Churchill, Agatha Christie, Hans Christian Anderson, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Edison and Albert Einstein, all of whom had learning disabilities!)

As already pointed out, the earlier a problem is caught, the better, but it's never too late to seek help. And if you do learn your child has a learning disability, remember you don't have to cope alone - you, your child's teacher, and numerous other educational professionals and community agencies, all work in your child's best interests.

Focus on your child as a whole (not just the disability).

Remember that poor self-image is often an "invisible disability" that comes hand in hand with a visible learning disability.

And offer all the encouragement, support and love that you can, so your child can have a wonderful and satisfying life.

Module 8

Taking Literacy to School & Beyond

EAGER TO LEARN

MODULE 8 -Taking Literacy to School and Beyond

One of the biggest steps a child will ever take with parents is through the door of a school. This is also one of the most stressful steps for both. The new environment, the new guidelines, the new emphasis on "school work," and of course the new faces, can all make this a difficult experience for children and parents alike.

*It is important that children be prepared for this experience, and that parents work together with professional educators to make the school experience a successful one for their children. We know that children are **eager to learn**, but parents must ensure that they are **ready to learn** as well. This Module examines the process of getting children ready for school, and offers activities and suggestions that parents can use to guide both themselves and their children through this process.*

8.1

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Discuss the challenges associated with preparing children for pre-school.	Learners should be able to demonstrate awareness of what is involved in preparing a child for daycare or preschool.

 Notes to Facilitator:

If possible, an Early Childhood Educator should be brought in as a guest speaker to offer suggestions on preparing children for preschool.

The resources "Choosing Child Care" and "Getting Along" contain some information which might be helpful in meeting this objective.

- Respect the fact that many children receive no preschool or daycare experience before kindergarten.
- Empower parents to make decisions which are *right* for them and their children.

8.2

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Explain what is expected of children when they go to school, and discuss ways to prepare children for this experience.	Learners should demonstrate awareness of what is expected of children when they begin school, and how to prepare them for this.

- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

  If possible, a Kindergarten Teacher could be brought in as a guest speaker to discuss preparatory measures. Resources which may be of assistance in this Module are "What Does it Mean to Be Ready For School?," "Ready for School Checklist,", and "What About Kindergarten?" All of which can be 'handouts' or 'discussion guides.'

8.3

OBJECTIVE:	***Outcome:***
Identify ways of developing good partnerships with teachers, and explore approaches to helping children with homework.	Learners will know how to develop good relationships with teachers, and will understand how they can best help children with homework.

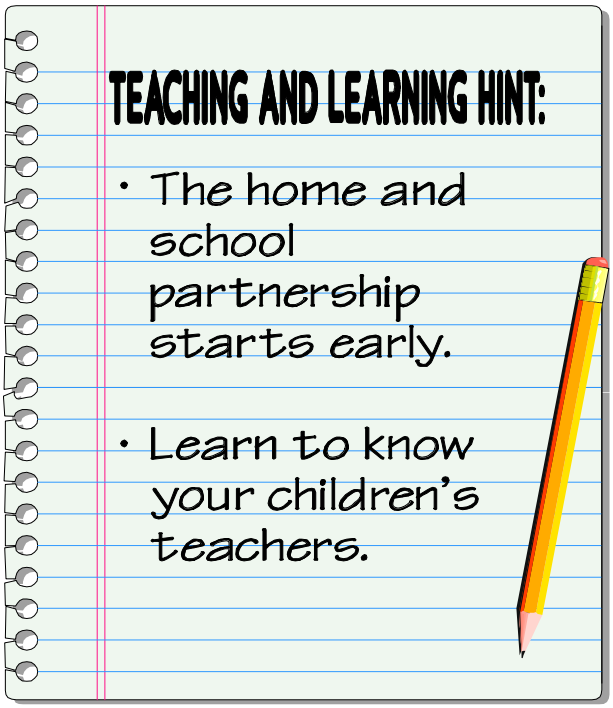
- ***Notes to Facilitator:***

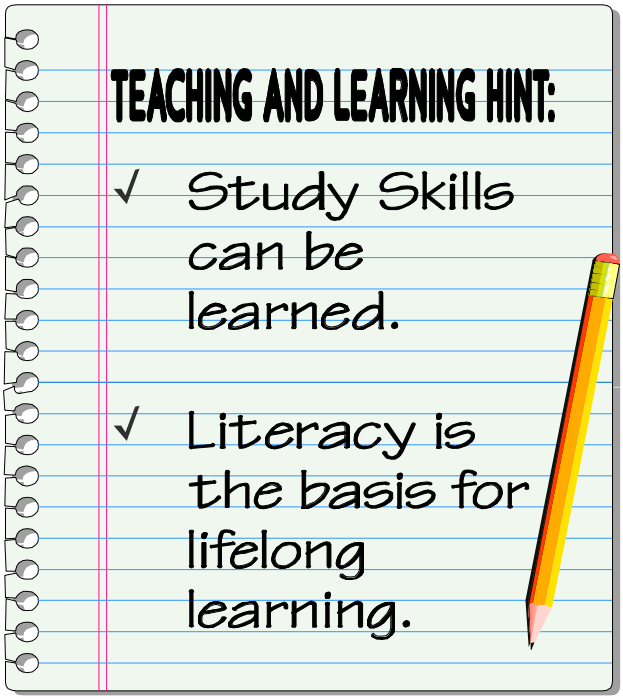
  Facilitator should guide a brainstorming session with learners in which they are the ones who suggest ways to develop good relationships with teachers. The facilitator may wish to have learners compile a list of things that make them nervous when dealing with teachers, and then have learners propose ways to change these things, or to make themselves less nervous.

  - Facilitator should guide discussion helping children with homework, and have learners explore methods they can use that would benefit children.
  - Brainstorm ways that parents, children and teachers can work together.

8.4	***OBJECTIVE:***	***Outcome:***
	Explore ways to promote literacy during the school years and beyond.	Learners will understand that what they have learned in this course can be applied to the rest of their lives.
	Notes to Facilitator: Facilitator should guide a discussion with learners that will explore literacy beyond the scope of this course. Facilitator should try to get learners thinking about ways they can encourage learning in their children long after they have entered school.	

MODULE 8 - RESOURCES





Choosing Child Care

More and more children are in preschool or other child care settings before they enter kindergarten. Choosing the right child care is important because it can affect how prepared your child is for school. Some tips to guide you:

Think about the kind of care you want for your child.

Possibilities include (a) a relative; (b) a family day care provider, usually a woman who takes care of a small group of children in her home; (c) a child care centre, which generally offers a curriculum and staff with educational backgrounds in early childhood development; and (d) a caregiver who comes into your home.

Recognize that there are many ways to find good care.

Ask friends and neighbours how they found child care. See if they, or any day care providers you may know and trust, can recommend any good people or facilities. Look in the Yellow Pages of your telephone book under "Day Care Centres" or "Child Care Centres". Look in the classified ads of your local newspaper, or place an ad of your own. Put up notices on your church bulletin board, in grocery stores, local community centres, or at the employment office of local colleges or universities. Look for notices that other people have put up.

If you are looking for a family day care provider, a local licensing agency can provide you with local listings. Many communities have resource and referral agencies that help parents identify the options that best meet their needs.

Gather information.

If you are looking for a family day care provider or for a person to come into your home, interview the person at length and check references. Before you meet with them, develop a list of questions. If you are looking at day care centres, visit them--more than once, if possible. Just because a person or a program worked for someone else doesn't mean it's right for you. With any kind of child care, check references.

No matter what kind of child care you are considering, look for caregivers who:

- **Are kind and responsive**. Good caregivers are affectionate, enjoy children, are energetic enough to keep up with your preschooler, patient, and mature enough to handle crises and conflicts.

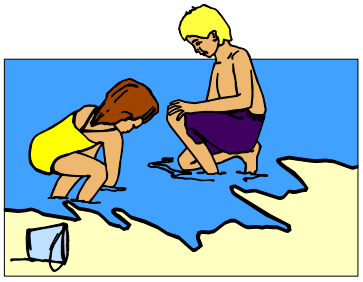
- **Have experience with preschoolers and like them**. Find out how long they have worked with preschoolers, why they are in the early child care field, and whether they provide activities that are appropriate for your child's age. Observe the caregivers with children. Do the children seem happy? How do the caregivers respond to them?

- **Recognize the individual needs of your child**. Look for caregivers who are considerate of different children's interests and needs and who can provide your child with enough attention.

- **Share a child-rearing philosophy that is similar to yours**. Find out what kind of discipline is used and how problems are handled.

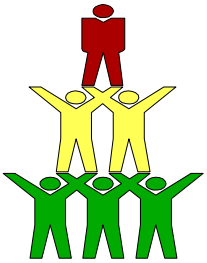
Be certain that the child care facility is clean and safe, and is filled with things to explore that are appropriate for your child's age.

Taken from Helping Your Child Get Ready for School, Nancy Paulu (1993).



Getting Along

Learning to get along with others is very important. Children who are kind, helpful, patient, and loving generally do better in school.



What you'll need

- No materials required

What to do

1. **Let your child know that you are glad to be his mommy or daddy**. Give him personal attention and encouragement. Set aside time when you and your child can do fun things together. Your happy feelings toward your child will help him feel good about himself.

2. **Set a good example**. Show your preschooler what it means to get along with others and to be respectful. Say "please" and "thank you." Treat people in ways that show you care what happens to them. Ask for things in a friendly way. Be kind to and patient with other people.

3. **Help your child find ways to solve conflicts with others**. Help your child figure out what will happen if he tries to settle his mad feelings by hitting a playmate: "James, I know that Tiffany took your toy truck. But if you hit Tiffany and you have a big fight, then Tiffany will have to go home, and the two of you won't be able to play any more today. What is another way that you can let Tiffany know you want your truck back?" James might decide to tell Tiffany that he's mad, and that he wants his truck back. Or he might let Tiffany play with his truck for 5 minutes with the hope that Tiffany will then give it back. Listening to your children's problems will often be all that is needed for them to solve their own problems.

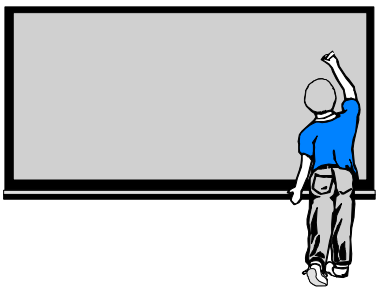
4. **Make opportunities to share and to care**. Let your child take charge of providing food for hungry birds. When a new family moves into the neighbourhood, let your preschooler help make cookies to welcome them.

5. **Be physically affectionate**. Children need hugs, kisses, an arm over the shoulder, and a pat on the back.

6. **Tell your child that you love him.** Don't assume that your loving actions will speak for themselves (although those are very important).

Children need good social skills. Teachers and other children will enjoy your youngster's company if he gets along well with others.

What Does it Mean to Be Ready for School?



There is no one quality or skill that children need to do well in school, but a combination of things contributes to success. These include good health and physical well-being, social and emotional maturity, language skills, an ability to solve problems and think creatively, and general knowledge about the world.

As you go about helping your child develop in each of these areas, remember:

- Children develop at different rates, and
- Most children are stronger in some areas than in others.

Remember, too, that being ready for school depends partly on what the school expects. One school may think it's very important for children to sit quietly and know the alphabet. Another may believe it's more important for children to get along well with others. Children who match the school's expectations may be considered better prepared. You may want to visit your child's school to learn what the principal and teachers expect and discuss any areas of disagreement. While schools may have different priorities, most educators agree that the following areas are important for success:

Good Health and Physical Well-Being

L *Prenatal - Start Early!*

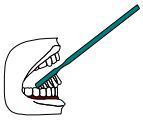
Young children need nutritious food, enough sleep, safe places to play, and regular medical care. These things help children get a good start in life and lessen the chances that they will later have serious health problems or trouble learning. Good health for children begins before birth with **good prenatal care**. Visit a doctor or medical clinic throughout your pregnancy. In addition, eat nourishing foods, avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful drugs, and get plenty of rest.

A Balanced Diet - know the food groups

Good health for children continues after birth with a balanced diet. School-aged children can concentrate better in class if they eat **nutritionally balanced meals**. These should include breads, cereals, and other grain products; fruits; vegetables; meat, poultry, fish and alternatives (such as eggs and dried beans and peas); and milk, cheese, and yogurt. Avoid too many fats and sweets. Children aged 2-5 generally can eat the same foods as adults but in smaller portions. Your child's doctor or clinic can provide advice on feeding babies and toddlers under the age of two.

Medical Care - even if children are healthy!

Preschoolers require regular **medical and dental checkups and immunizations**. It's important to find a doctor or a clinic where children can receive routine health care as well as special treatment if they are sick or injured.



Children need immunizations beginning around the age of 2 months to prevent nine diseases: measles, mumps, German measles (rubella), diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b), polio, and tuberculosis. These diseases can have serious effects on physical and mental development. Regular dental checkups should begin at the latest by the age of three.

Exercise - make it a daily habit!

Preschoolers need **opportunities to exercise and develop physical coordination**. To learn to control large muscles, children need to throw balls, run, jump, climb, and dance to music. To learn to control small muscles, particularly in the hands and fingers, they need to colour with crayons, put together puzzles, use blunt-tipped scissors, and zip jackets. In kindergarten, they will build upon these skills.

Parents of youngsters with disabilities should see a doctor as soon as a problem is suspected. Early intervention can help these children develop to their full potential.

Social and Emotional Checklist

U I can help a child build **confidence** by: _____

_____

_____

U I can help a child be **independent** by: _____

_____

_____

U I can **motivate** a child to learn by: _____

_____

_____

U I can encourage a child to be **curious** by**:**_____

_____

_____

U I can help a child be **persistent** with tasks by: _____

_____

_____

U I can teach a child **cooperation** by: _____

_____

_____

U I can assist a child with **self-control** by: _____

_____

_____

U Children learn **empathy** when I: _____

_____

_____

Social And Emotional Preparation

Young children are often very excited about entering school. But when they do, they can face an environment that's different from what they are used to at home or even in preschool. In kindergarten, they will need to work well in large groups and get along with new adults and other children. They will have to share the teacher's attention with other youngsters.

Not all 5-year-olds start school with good social skills or emotional maturity. These take time and practice to learn. However, children improve their chances for success in kindergarten if they have had opportunities to begin developing these qualities:

Confidence.

Children must learn to feel good about themselves and believe they can succeed. Confident children are more willing to attempt new tasks--and try again if they don't succeed the first time.

Independence.

Children need to learn to do things for themselves.

Motivation.

Children must want to learn.

Curiosity.

Children are naturally curious and must remain so in order to get the most out of learning opportunities.

Persistence.

Children must learn to finish what they start.

Self-control.

Preschoolers must understand that some behaviours, such as hitting and biting, are inappropriate. They need to learn that there are good and bad ways to express anger.

Empathy.

Children must learn to have an interest in others and understand how others feel.

Parents, even more than child care centres and good schools, help children develop these skills. Here are some ways you can help your child acquire these positive qualities:

Youngsters must believe that, no matter what, someone will look out for them.

Show that you care about your children. They thrive when they have parents or other caregivers who are loving and dependable. Small children need attention, encouragement, hugs, and plenty of lap time. Children who feel loved are more likely to be confident.

Set a good example.

Children imitate what they see others do and what they hear others say. When parents exercise and eat nourishing food, children are more likely to do so. When parents treat others with respect, their children probably will, too. If parents share things, their children will learn to be thoughtful of others' feelings.

Have a positive attitude toward learning and toward school.

Children come into this world with a powerful need to discover and to explore. Parents need to encourage this curiosity if children are to keep it. Enthusiasm for what children do ("You've drawn a great picture!") helps to make them proud of their achievements.

Children also become excited about school when their parents show excitement. As your child approaches kindergarten, talk to him about school. Talk about the exciting activities in kindergarten, such as going on field trips and making fun art projects. Be enthusiastic as you describe what he will learn in school--how to read and measure and weigh things, for example.

Provide opportunities for repetition.

It takes practice to crawl, pronounce new words, or drink from a cup. Children don't get bored when they repeat things. Instead, repeating things until they are learned helps youngsters build the confidence needed to try something new.

Use appropriate discipline.

All children need to have limits set for them. Children whose parents give firm but loving discipline are generally more skilled socially and do better in school than children whose parents set too few or too many limits. Here are some tips.

- Direct children's activities, but don't make unnecessary restrictions or try to dominate.
- Offer reasons when asking your child to do something (For example, say, "Please move the toy truck off the stairs so no one falls over it"--not, "Do it because I said so.").
- Listen to your children to find out how they feel and whether they need any special support.
- Show love and respect when you are angry. Criticize a child's behaviour but not the child (For example, say, "I love you, but it is not okay for you to draw pictures on the walls. I get angry when you do that.").
- Help your children make choices and work out problems (You might ask your 4-year-old, "What can we do to keep Kevin from knocking over your blocks?").
- Be positive and encouraging. Praise your child for a job well done. Smiles and encouragement go much further to shape good behaviour than harsh punishment.

Let children do many things by themselves.

Young children need to be closely watched. But they learn to be independent and to develop confidence by doing tasks such as dressing themselves and putting their toys away. It's also important to let them make choices, rather than deciding everything for them. Remember to give them a choice only when there really is one.

Encourage your children to play with other children and be with adults who are not family members.

Preschoolers need these social opportunities to learn to see the point of view of others. Young children are more likely to get along with teachers and classmates if they already have had experiences with different adults and children.

Language and General Knowledge

Kindergarteners participate in many activities that require them to use language and to solve problems. Children who can't or don't communicate easily may have problems in school. There are many things you can do to help children learn to communicate, solve problems, and develop an understanding of the world. You can:

Give your child opportunities to play.

Play is how children learn. It is the natural way for them to explore, to become creative, and to develop academic and social skills. Play helps them learn to solve problems--for example, a wagon tips over, and children must figure out how to get it upright again. Children learn about geometry, shapes, and balance when they stack up blocks. Playing with others helps children learn how to negotiate.

Be realistic about your children's abilities and interests.

Children usually do best in school when parents estimate their abilities correctly. Parents must set high standards and encourage their preschoolers to try new things. Children who aren't challenged become bored. But ones who are pushed along too quickly, or are asked to do things that don't interest them, can become frustrated and unhappy.

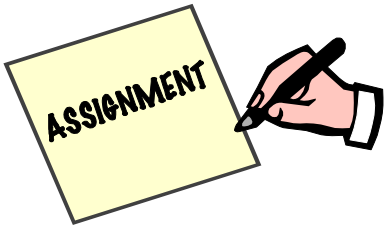
Try to keep your children from being labelled. Labels such as "dumb" or "stupid" have a powerful effect on a child's confidence and school performance.
REMEMBER TO PRAISE YOUR CHILD FOR A JOB

Provide opportunities to do and see things.

The more varied the experiences that children have, the more they learn about the world. No matter where you live, your community can provide new experiences. Go for walks in your neighbourhood, or go places on the bus. Visit museums, libraries, parks, and other community resources.

If you live in the city, spend a day in the country (or if you live in the country, spend a day in the city). Let your children hear and make music, dance, and paint. Let them participate in activities that help to develop their imaginations and let them express their ideas and feelings.

Assignment



Read the handout on Language and General Knowledge

In class, we will answer questions on:

Opportunities to play: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

My child's interests include: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Chances to do and see things are: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Ready for School Checklist

This checklist, although not exhaustive, can help to guide you in preparing your child for school. It's best to look at the items included as goals toward which to aim. They should be done, as much as possible, through everyday life or by fun activities you've planned with your child. If your child lags behind in some areas, don't worry. Remember that all children are unique. They grow and develop at different rates--and no one thing guarantees that a child is ready for school.

Good Health and Physical Well-Being

My child:

- 9 Eats a balanced diet
- 9 Receives regular medical and dental care and has had all the necessary immunizations
- 9 Gets plenty of rest
- 9 Runs, jumps, plays outdoors, and does other activities that help develop large muscles and provide exercise
- 9 Works puzzles, scribbles, colours, paints, and does other activities that help develop small muscles

Social and Emotional Preparation

My child:

- 9 Is learning to be confident enough to explore and try new things
- 9 Is learning to work well alone and to do many tasks for himself
- 9 Has many opportunities to be with other children and is learning to cooperate with them
- 9 Is curious and is motivated to learn
- 9 Is learning to finish tasks (for example, picks up own toys)
- 9 Is learning to use self-control
- 9 Can follow simple instructions
- 9 Helps with family chores

Language and General Knowledge

My child:

- 9 Has many opportunities to play
- 9 Is read to every day
- 9 Has access to books and other reading materials
- 9 Has his television viewing monitored by an adult
- 9 Is encouraged to ask questions
- 9 Is encouraged to solve problems
- 9 Has opportunities to notice similarities and differences
- 9 Is encouraged to sort and classify things (for example, by looking for red cars on the highway)
- 9 Is learning to write his name and address
- 9 Is learning to count and plays counting games
- 9 Is learning to identify shapes and colours
- 9 Has opportunities to draw, listen to and make music, and to dance
- 9 Has opportunities to get firsthand experiences to do things in the world--to see and touch objects, hear new sounds, smell and taste foods, and watch things move

What About Kindergarten?

This resource can help your child get ready for kindergarten. As the first day of school approaches, however, you may want to do extra things to make the school seem a friendlier place for both you and your child. Find out as much as you can about the school before your child enters it. You will want to learn:

- The principal's name
- The kindergarten teacher's name
- When to register for kindergarten and what forms need to be filled out
- What immunizations are required for school entry
- A description of the kindergarten program
- The kindergarten yearly calendar and daily schedule
- Transportation procedures
- Recess or snack routines
- How you can become involved in your child's education and in the school

G Some schools will send you this information, or they may hold an orientation meeting in the spring for parents who expect to enroll their children in kindergarten the following fall. If they don't, you can call the principal's office to ask or to arrange a visit.

Find out, in advance, what the school expects from entering kindergarten students.

If you know a year or two ahead of time, you will be in a better position to prepare your child. Sometimes parents and caregivers don't think the expectations are right for their children. If that is the case, you may want to meet with the principal or kindergarten teachers to talk about the expectations and ways to seek changes in the kindergarten program.

N Visit the school.

When you visit the school, take your child so your child can become familiar with it, and it won't seem scary. Walk up and down the hallways to learn where things are. Observe the other children and the classrooms.

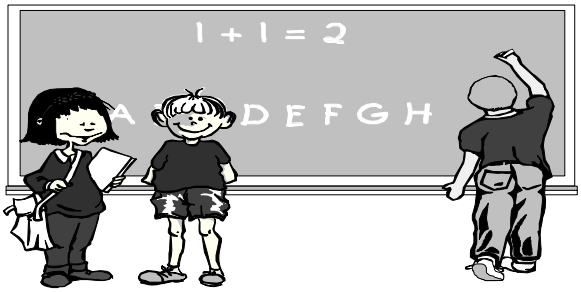
N Talk with your child about school.

During your visit, make positive comments about the school--your good attitude will rub off! ("Look at all the boys and girls painting in this classroom. Doesn't that look like fun!") Tell your child about what the children do when classes begin. Talk about the teachers and how they will help your child learn new things. Encourage your child to look at the teacher as a wise friend toward whom children should be courteous. Explain to your child how important it is to go to class each day.

N If possible, consider volunteering to help out in the school.

The staff may appreciate having an extra adult to help do everything from passing out paper and pencils in the classrooms to supervising on the playground. Volunteering is a good way to learn more about the school and to meet its staff and other parents. When the long-awaited first day of kindergarten arrives, go to school with your child (but don't stay too long). And be patient. Many young children are overwhelmed at first because they haven't had much experience in dealing with new situations. They may not immediately like school. Your child may cry or cling to you when you say goodbye each morning, but with support from you and the kindergarten teacher, this can rapidly change.

As your child proceeds through school, you will need to continue your encouragement and involvement. But for now, celebrate all that you have accomplished as a parent. Share your children's enthusiasm. Let them know how proud you are as they leave home for their first day of kindergarten. Let them know you believe they will succeed.



(Thanks to the NLTA for this material (

Homework Heaven

The best time to do homework is:

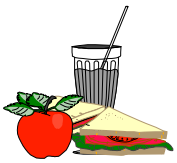
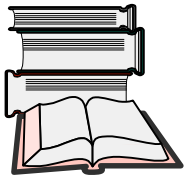
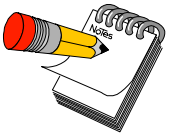
The best place to do homework is:

I like to do homework when:

I dislike homework when:

Study Tips

For you, or to share with your child!

1.  Study when well rested	**2.**  Study after eating rather than when you are hungry	**3.**  Have a routine - try to study at about the same time each day or evening	**4.**  Have a comfortable seat in a well lit area.
5.  Keep the noise down - turn off the television or loud music	**6.**  Review what you have studied, either alone or with a classmate or family member	**7.**  Keep it interesting by shifting topics - try to study small portions of several topics rather than one subject all evening long	**8.**  Keep a list of what you have studied - it shows that you are making progress

A WHO'S WHO GLOSSARY

Here's information about the people employed by some School Boards, many of whom may be involved in helping if your child has a disability.

Special Education Teacher: Provides support and instruction to students with special needs either in the classroom or in other environments.

Challenging Needs Teacher: A Special Education teacher who works with a child or a group of children with severe physical disabilities or moderate / severe handicaps.

Educational Therapist: Helps develop strategies for students with behavioural or emotional difficulties.

Student Assistant: Assists the teacher by providing personal care, carrying, lifting, behavioural management, and access to educational activities for students with difficulties.

Itinerant Teacher: Visits schools in the district to facilitate services for students with visual or hearing impairments.

Guidance Counsellor: Helps students develop positive self-images, good relationships with their peers, problem-solving skills, and an understanding of educational and career opportunities available to them.

Speech-Language Pathologist: Provides programs for students with speech and communication disorders.

School Psychologist: Promotes mental health and helps ensure children have successful learning experiences.

Language Arts Coordinator: Promotes Language Arts curriculum by working with teachers and students, including assisting in the development of individualized reading programs.

Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador

Section 5

"Annotated Bibliography"
&
"Sources for Further Reading"

St. John's, NF *1999*

1. Akroyd, Susan. "Forming a Parent Reading-Writing Class: Connecting Cultures, One Pen at a Time." ***The Reading Teacher,*** April 1995, Vol. 48, No. 7, pp. 580-584.

This article highlights the importance of getting parents and children together through writing. Parents should tell their own stories to children by writing to them in formats ranging from photo journals to diaries. The article also says it is important for instructors not to control learning sessions, but to act as facilitators, so parents can share and learn from one another. What parents wrote seemed to be interesting to the children (who were at the primary/elementary level).

2. Anderson, Jim. "How Parents Perceive Literacy Acquisition: A Cross-cultural Study." Generations of Literacy, eds. Wayne M. Linek and Elizabeth G. Sturtevant. Harrisonburg: The College Reading Association, 1995.

Most theorists and educators now support the "emergent literacy" model of early literacy, which is holistic, meaning centered, and developmental. This article questions the consistency between *emergent literacy* and parents' views on the acquisition of literacy. Euro-Canadian parents were found to be supportive of emergent literacy while some groups such as Chinese- and Indo-Canadians rejected some principles of emergent literacy. Whatever theory of literacy acquisition we decide to implement, we must be aware of differing sociocultural perspectives on literacy acquisition.

3. Auerbach, Elsa Roberts. "Deconstructing the Discourse of Strengths in Family Literacy." ***Journal of Reading Behaviour,*** 1995, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 643-661.

This article takes a look at the different approaches to family literacy as the author sees them:

1. The Intervention Prevention Approach - Literacy problems are a product of family, so the family must be changed. Parents have literacy problems so children do as well. This view tends to "blame marginalized people for their marginalization." While this leads many to believe that undereducated families fail to support their children's literacy development, Auerbach points out that such claims have been challenged by research. Proponents of this approach encourage story-reading, often neglecting other routes to literacy. Plus, considering cultural differences in approaching literacy, there are ethical concerns in trying to change the values and beliefs of families.

2. Multiple Literacies Perspective - Principles of this approach are: (a) participants should bring with them culture-specific literacy practices; (b) starting points in implementing family literacy should be a stance of inquiry; (c) programs should incorporate culturally familiar and relevant content; (d) learners should participate in developing a program; (e) emphasis should be on cultural

maintenance rather than cultural assimilation; (f) contexts for learning should be culturally familiar; and (g) instruction should be in the first language.
3. Social Change Perspective - Literacy is a product of political, social, and economic factors, as well as parental input. Principles: (a) there should be participant control; (b) there should be dialogue among peers; (c) there should be content centering around critical social issues from participants' lives; and (d) there should be a connection to taking action for social change. Primarily, though, "the key issue is the locus of control," and whether it rests largely with parents or with educators.

4. Auerbach, Elsa Roberts. "Toward a Social-Contextual Approach to Family Literacy." ***Harvard Educational Review,*** May 1989, Vol. 59, No. 2, pp. 165-181.

   In this article, Auerbach criticizes what she would in a later article (above) call the *Intervention Prevention Approach* to family literacy. She claims it operates under the deficit hypothesis, which assumes that parents lack the skills to help their children develop literacy skills. She examines what she sees as the underlying assumptions of this approach to family literacy: (*1) Poor, minority & ESL families are literacy impoverished.* She cites research that proves this to be false. (2) *Direction of literacy learning is from parent to child.* She says this is also false, as collaborative efforts between children and parents work very well. (3) *Families of successful readers perform school-like tasks at home.* Again this is a false assumption. (4) *The role of the school in literacy is not as important as the home.* Not true - classroom experiences are extremely important. (5) *Focuses on parents' inadequacies*. Auerbach claims the approach fails to look at the social and economic conditions giving rise to literacy problems.

5. Auerbach, Elsa Roberts. "Which Way for Family Literacy: Intervention or Empowerment?" in Morrow, Lesley Mandel, ed. Family Literacy Connections in Schools and Communities. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1995.

   Outlines and supports the same principles as articles by Auerbach already examined in this bibliography. It argues against the "transmission of school practices model" of family literacy, which provides parents with the tools to reinforce school-type literacy practices rather than family literacy.

6. Baker, Linda, Deborah Scher and Kirsten Mackler. "Home and Family Influences on Motivations for Reading." ***Educational Psychologist,*** Spring 1997, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 69-82.

This article claims that "children whose early encounters with literacy are enjoyable are more likely to develop a predisposition to read frequently and broadly in subsequent years." Children who are motivated to read through paired reading experiences with parents are more likely to have an increased interest in reading. Furthermore, children of parents who view reading as a source of pleasure are more motivated to read and tend to enjoy literacy learning, regardless of level of income. Making reading fun seems to be an important element of literacy acquisition. The authors suggest that higher income families have children that are more motivated to read in part because they have more materials (more *interesting* materials) available to them, which of course results in higher levels of motivation (the implication is that a family literacy program must have resources available to it in order to make *good, fun, interesting* literature available to the lower-income families). Children seem to learn the skills of language better when they are learned in a 'fun' environment, utilizing informal play settings rather than formal school-like settings. If parents are more concerned with the skills of reading rather than the pleasures of reading, then educators may do well to "build on parents' understandings and beliefs about how children learn to become literate."

7. Barclay, Kathy, Cecelia Benelli and Ann Curtis. "Literacy Begins at Birth: What Caregivers Can Learn from Parents of Children Who Learn to Read Early." ***Young Children,*** May 1995, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 24-28.

   This article discusses a daycare center that claims to replicate the important elements found in the homes of early readers. The authors outline these characteristics as follows:

   1. Rich Literacy Environment - Provide lots of books, make use of libraries, have newspapers and magazines around.
   2. Environment Conducive to Early Writing - Have lots of paper and writing instruments available to children; let them see adults writing for functional purposes, and adults / siblings support their attempts at writing.
   3. Well-Organized With Scheduled Daily Activities and Designated Responsibilities - Designate places for materials and possessions; have predictable times for eating and sleeping; and have children share household tasks with parents and siblings.
   4. Warm, Accepting Atmosphere - Respond positively to any questions children ask about print inside and outside the home, and respond to children's requests for reading aloud. Children should sit close to parents during paired reading.
   5. Interactive Strategies During Book Sharing - Engage in strategies that call attention to the function and meaning of print.

8. Barnett, W. Steven. "Long-term Effects of Early Childhood Programs on Cognitive and School Outcomes." ***The Future of Children,*** Winter 1995, Vol. 5, No. 3. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.futureofchildren.org/lto/02_lto.htm)

This article establishes that ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) programs, "can produce large effects on IQ during the early childhood years and sizable persistent effects on achievement, grade retention, special education, high school graduation, and socialization." It reviews 36 studies on ECCE programs and concludes that the positive effects, "are large enough and persistent enough to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children from low-income families: for many children, preschool programs can mean the difference between failing and passing, regular or special education, staying out of trouble or becoming involved in crime and delinquency, dropping out or graduating from high school."

9. Barnhart, June E. and Mary Ann Wham. "Read to Me! A Program Designed to Enhance Children's Attitudes Toward Reading Through Teacher and Parent Read Alouds." Generations of Literacy, eds. Wayne M. Linek and Elizabeth G. Sturtevant. Harrisonburg: The College Reading Association, 1995.

Children have a more positive attitude toward reading and literacy if it is made to be *fun*. According to the authors, reading aloud to children is extremely important in creating such positive attitudes. It is important to associate books with the positive, secure, and enjoyable atmosphere produced in shared reading with adults. The argument is essentially this: a positive attitude is crucial to emerging literacy; and reading aloud to children in a pleasurable atmosphere is crucial to the creation of a positive attitude.

10. Brenna, Beverley A. "The Development of Metacognitive Strategies in Early Readers." Horizons of Literacy, eds. Linda Wason-Ellam, Adrian Blunt and Sam Robinson. Winnipeg: The Canadian Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, 1995.

This study examines five early readers. Brenna finds that development of reading ability in these children (aged 4-6) involved the conceptualization of reading as a problem-solving process. Caregivers give their children independence in learning, getting them to attempt the problem-solving process on their own before providing assistance. If parents think a word is going to be difficult for the children, they will help with it beforehand, to build confidence. Scaffolding is important in the development of literacy according to Brenna: allow the child to control the experience; get the child to learn more difficult things with the adult, while learning easier things on their own; reread favourite stories to children; take turns reading with children, leaving the more difficult sections for the adult; when a child is too tired to finish reading a story, the adult takes over; help children when they become frustrated with words; "take it little bits at a time." Brenna

also notes the fact that parents of early readers experience enjoyment from reading themselves, and make learning to read pleasurable for the children, offering them extra motivations where possible.

11. Brock, Dana R. and Elizabeth L. Dodd. "A Family Lending Library: Promoting Early Literacy Development." ***Young Children,*** March 1994, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 16-21.

    This article recognizes that, "the home environment has a direct influence on children's early literacy development, including the availability of reading and writing materials; the modelling of literate behaviours by adults, siblings, and others; and the verbal interactions between children and adults." The authors point out that many parents indicate a lack of suitable materials as well as knowledge of literacy acquisition; and suggest the family lending library as a solution to this problem. They outline three major steps in developing a family lending library:

    1. Focus on Families - do some research on the families for whom you will be making this library; find out things like family type and size, age ranges, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, languages, occupations, education, hobbies, etc.
    2. Collect Books and Materials - In getting reading material for parents, consult professional organizations, use video and audio cassettes. For literacy development, utilize home learning activities, have a good selection of toys, and of course a wide variety of books.
    3. Plan Operational Procedures - Identify resources for funding, select a location, schedule hours of operation, determine check-out procedures, collect items for transporting materials belonging to the library, and plan strategies for advertisement.

    The article also has useful questionnaires to help in the process.

12. Bus, Adriana G. and Marinus H. van Ijzendoorn. "Mothers Reading to their 3-year-olds: The Role of Mother-Child Attachment Security in Becoming Literate." ***Reading Research Quarterly,*** Oct.-Dec. 1995, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 998-1015.

    This study links literacy acquisition to the level of mother-child attachment. The authors assume that "interest in reading is not a natural phenomenon but rather is evoked by the pleasure of sharing a book with the parent. Children become interested in reading books because of parental efforts to evoke and support interest." They argue that literacy is initially an unknown element of a child's environment, and the extent to which the child explores this element of the environment depends on how securely the child is attached to the mother. They conclude that, "children rated as insecure are less inclined to explore unknown aspects of their environment. Learning processes in the domain of literacy seem firmly embedded in the emotional context .... literacy is not the outcome of an environment enriched with written material but it strongly depends on parental

ability to involve young children in literacy experiences." The child must first feel a high level of attachment security. Then the child must be read to frequently; literacy will follow.

13. Butt, M. Belle Sparkes. Enhancing Reading Achievement of Grade Two Students: A Program for Parents. M.Ed. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1995.

    Butt implemented and studied the effects of an Intervention/Prevention approach to family literacy. She conducted research in Conception Bay North in Newfoundland and found that such an approach resulted in considerable improvements in the reading abilities of primary school children. Her research showed that families of low socioeconomic status were most in need of intervention, because, "with limited needs for literacy in their everyday activities, they usually interact with their children in ways that do not promote literacy development." She sees the illiteracy problem of Newfoundland as being one of a generational cycle, but contends the cycle can be broken if educators and parents work together as partners for, "by training parents to assist with children's literacy development in the home, we would be getting at the root of our illiteracy problem and placing emphasis on prevention as well as cure." Butt also found that parents usually *want* to teach their children to read and write, but simply lack the know-how to do so.

    There were several other principles of literacy acquisition that Butt deemed important: families must have a great deal of materials made available to them; literacy is best approached from a whole language perspective rather than a skills-based one; children must be taught to read in warm, intimate, informal and natural settings; parents must be trained in appropriate book selection; literacy development must be child-centred; and many others.

14. Byrne, Brian, Ruth Fielding-Barnsley and Luise Ashley. "What Does the Child Bring to the Task of Learning to Read? A Summary of the New England Reading Acquisition Projects." ***Australian Journal of Psychology,*** Dec. 1996, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 119-123.

    The authors of this article tackle a fundamental issue in the nature/nurture debate concerning literacy acquisition. The "nature" side of the debate contends that children acquire literacy in the same way and for the same reasons that they learn to speak and listen. Proponents of this argument tend to believe that the *whole language* approach is the best way to make children literate. The authors, however, have conducted extensive research that suggests otherwise. They found that children could build up an impressive stock of "sight-words" (words they recognize by sight) but still be unable to read independently. Children seem to have two fundamental difficulties in acquiring literacy: first is an expectation that writing maps directly into meaning; secondly, children have problems detecting letter-phoneme relations. In other words, they do not seem to grasp that letters represent *sounds* of language, which in turn have meaning. "This means that children need to be taught to be aware of the phonemic organization of speech; it is not something

they come equipped with." So the whole language approach to literacy development is inadequate in and of itself; children need to be taught the *alphabetic principle* which entails (a) an understanding of the principle of phonemic segmentation of speech, and (b) knowledge of letter-phoneme correspondences.

15. Cairney, Trevor H. and Lynne Munsie. "Parent Participation in Literacy Learning." ***The Reading Teacher,*** Feb. 1995, Vol. 48, No. 5, pp. 392-403.

    Cairney and Munsie outline the development and results of a family literacy project called TTALL (*The Talk to a Literacy Learner* Program). They highlight parental involvement and control in every stage of the process; "Parents must be viewed as partners." They saw nine major results of their project: (1) It had an impact upon the way parents interact with their children; (2) Parents were offered strategies they didn't have before; (3) It helped parents to choose resource material, help children with book selection, and use libraries more effectively; (4) Parents gained new knowledge; (5) The parents' families were affected; (6) Parents began to share their insights outside the family; (7) Parents gained a greater understanding of schools; (8) Parents grew in confidence and self-esteem; and (9) Children's literacy performance levels, attitudes, and interests were improved. The authors very briefly describe how these results were achieved.

16. Calahan, Charles A. "Temperament of Primary Caregivers and Development of Literacy." ***Perceptual and Motor Skills,*** Dec. 1995, Vol. 81, No. 3, pp. 828-830.

    This article reinforces the position that parental attitude, style, reading technique, and mother-child attachment are important factors in the development of literacy. The article is, however, not specific regarding what elements, in particular, either positively or negatively influence literacy development.

17. Canning, Patricia M. Special Matters: The Report of the Review of Special Education. St. John's, NF: 1996.

    Canning recognizes the importance of early intervention for at-risk children. She notes that in Newfoundland, there are many communities without pre-schools, and that effective pre-schools could be very helpful in the literacy development of young children. One problem she highlights is that teachers and educators tend to see parents as having the abilities to improve the educational experience of young children, but not being willing to do so. "This attitude is unlikely to be consistent with successful support for families to become involved in their children's education." There needs to be more commitment to helping the parents, and moving beyond assumptions such as these. The recommendations made for pre-schools include the following:

- < programs should be delivered by qualified personnel
- < programs need to be community-based and sensitive to local circumstances
- < parents must be involved
- < developmentally appropriate learning activities & experiences must be offered
- < school boards should take some responsibility for pre-school programs
- < education programs for new parents should be established
- < book resource centres and toy exchanges, etc. should be created

18. Catts, Hugh W. "The Early Identification of Language-Based Reading Disabilities." ***Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools,*** Jan. 1997, Vol. 28, pp. 86-89.

    This article links reading disabilities and oral language-based disorders. The author argues that, through examining the oral language development of young children, it is possible to identify those who are at risk for reading disabilities. Oral language difficulties that have been associated with reading disabilities are generally "problems in what has been termed phonological processing." This includes problems in phonological awareness, word retrieval, verbal short-term memory, and speech production.

    The author also offers a checklist for the "Early Identification of Language-Based Reading Disabilities," which can be used to assist parents in recognizing the early indicators of reading problems. It is important to note that, "no single descriptor will conclusively identify a child as being at risk. However, the more descriptors that are checked, the more likely it is that the child may experience difficulties in learning to read. In the case of a child receiving a large number of checks, a full evaluation should be carried out."

19. Chaney, Carolyn. "Language Development, Metalinguistic Awareness, and Emergent Literacy Skills of 3-year-old Children in Relation to Social Class." ***Applied Psycholinguistics,*** Sept. 1994, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 371-394.

    Chaney discusses the importance of oral language development and metalinguistic awareness as precursors to literacy development. "Metalinguistic awareness is the ability to think explicitly about structural features of language (e.g. phonemes, words, and sentences) and to focus on the forms of language separately from the meanings." Chaney suggests that socioeconomic factors explain differences in literacy in that upper middle class homes simply have access to more literacy materials (books, magazines, etc.), and seem to have more family members who read for the pleasure of reading.

20. Come, Barbara and Anthony D. Fredericks. "Family Literacy in Urban Schools: Meeting the Needs of At-Risk Children." ***The Reading Teacher,*** April 1995, Vol. 48, No. 7, pp. 566-570.

This article describes a family literacy project undertaken in Savannah, Georgia. The authors insist that, "the key ingredient to the success of the program was the involvement of the parents in the planning." If parents are consulted in planning and made a part of the program, they are more likely to become involved and be supportive; they can also provide invaluable insights into differing cultural views on literacy that can improve the project. An important element of any such project is advertising and getting support through various methods (telephone trees, flyers and posters, radio stations, organized fundraisers, contacting book publishers, etc.). Another important element is expanding parents' knowledge of literacy development by having directed discussions around topics such as reading aloud, how to select a book, and questioning techniques for informal book discussions. Yet another important element is the actual availability of books, which can be gathered and distributed through a variety of methods (loaning books to children, book exchanges, loaning books to parents, etc.). The authors conclude by stressing the importance of developing such projects *with* parents rather than *for* parents. Educators must believe that "parents, no matter what their social or economic standing, have the potential for making an educational difference in their children's lives when offered sincere opportunities for becoming an important member of the education team." This article also offers some parental guidelines for building self-esteem through literacy (as self-esteem is also extremely important in literacy development):

Spend quality time together.
Encourage your child to read for fun.
Listen carefully to your child's ideas.
Find ways to praise your child.
Enjoy family activities and projects.
Share favourite books and stories.
Talk to your child often.
Establish a daily read-aloud time.
Engage your child in natural reading activities.
Model the act of reading for your child.

21. Connor, David B., Danica K. Knight and David R. Cross. "Mothers' and Fathers' Scaffolding of their 2-year-olds During Problem-Solving and Literacy Interactions." ***British Journal of Developmental Psychology,*** Sept. 1997, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 323-338.

    This article suggests that scaffolding is an effective means by which to teach children problem-solving skills, including literacy. Scaffolding entails structuring a learning interaction within a 'region of sensitivity.' The teacher must understand, what components of the overall task the child is capable of doing alone, what components the child is capable of understanding but cannot accomplish without assistance, and what components are beyond the child's current understanding and ability."

Contingency is an important element of the approach. "First, after an error by the child in following some instruction, the teacher should immediately take over more control. Second, upon the child's successful completion of an instruction, the teacher should immediately relinquish some control." The authors also found that there were no significant differences between mothers and fathers in the scaffolding of their children.

22. Cramer, Lina. PACE [Parent and Child Education] Family Literacy Program. Kentucky: Family Resource Coalition, (1991)

    This resource is a practical curriculum guide for family literacy. It focuses on parents in several capacities: parents as persons; parents as parents; parents as students; parents as family members; parents as community builders; and parents as workers. PACE is largely an activity-based curriculum. It focuses primarily on the role of parents and how they relate to their children, rather than specific literacy activities.

23. Cronan, Terry A., Sonia G. Cruz, Rosa I. Arriaga and Andrew J. Sarkin. "The Effects of a Community-Based Literacy Program on Young Children's Language and Conceptual Development." ***American Journal of Community Psychology,*** April 1996, Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 251-272.

    The study that produced this article was of an intervention/prevention family literacy program called Project PRIMER. The researchers realized the close relationship between early experiences with books and later success or failure with learning to read; and they knew the importance of dialogic reading techniques (parent-child interaction and discussion during reading, parental feedback to children, and parental awareness of children's developmental level). They utilized six basic principles in launching their study: (1) programs should continue for a long time; (2) they should be intensive; (3) they should provide daily learning experiences; (4) they should offer multiple routes to enhancing children's development; (5) they should match children's learning styles; and (6) they should provide environmental support for children's positive attitudes and behaviour. Findings of the study were that, "children show a considerable gain in language skills if parents are given intensive training in reading techniques and techniques to increase conceptual development."

24. Cronan, Terry A. and Heather R. Walen. "The Development of Project PRIMER: a Community-Based Literacy Program." ***Reading Research and Instruction,*** Fall 1995, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 37-47.

    This article describes the same Project PRIMER as in article #20. This article, however, offers insight into the more practical implementation of training the parents (i.e., some examples of techniques they were taught).

25. Cullinan, Bernice and Brod Bagert. Helping Your Child Learn to Read. U.S. Department of Education. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/Reading/).

This is a practical guide to several literacy activities for young children from infancy through age ten. It stresses the importance of reading to children when they are very young. It outlines what to expect from children as they acquire literacy, and offers a range of reading and writing activities that parents can do with their children at various levels.

26. Dickinson, David K., Linda Cote and Miriam W. Smith. "Learning Vocabulary in Preschool: Social and Discourse Contexts Affecting Vocabulary Growth." ***New Directions for Child Development,*** Fall 1993, No. 61, pp. 67-78.

The nature of learning words is examined in this article. The authors state several factors they claim are associated with word learning:

1. More frequent exposure results in better learning
2. Learning is best when rich information regarding the word's meaning is provided, especially when the cues are close to the point when the word is encountered.
3. Learning can occur when a number of new words are introduced, although presentation of too many words at once can depress learning.
4. Learning is best when children are able to comprehend fully the general passage in which the new word is encountered.
5. Learning is enhanced when the word is encountered repeatedly in roughly similar grammatical contexts with similar meanings.

27. Dunning, David B., Jana M. Mason and Janice P. Stewart. "Reading to Preschoolers: A Response to Scarborough and Dobrich (1994) and Recommendations for Future Research." ***Developmental Review,*** Sept. 1994, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 324-339.

Scarborough and Dobrich suggested that shared book reading may not be as important a factor as was originally thought in literacy acquisition; but the authors of this article cite several studies to show otherwise. They also comment that there are indeed other factors that contribute to literacy acquisition - namely child interest in literacy, parental support of literacy, and the development of oral language.

28. Edwards, Patricia A. "Empowering Low-income Mothers and Fathers to Share Books with Young Children." ***The Reading Teacher,*** April 1995, Vol. 48, No. 7, pp. 558-564.

This article describes how a family literacy program was organized over two years; the first year being guided by a "university leader," and the second year being guided by "parent leaders." Edwards wanted to conduct research in family literacy, but also wanted to leave a thriving program that required only the parents' involvement, so she chose four parents to take control of the program after she had finished. The result was a very successful literacy program. These four parents did several things that the "university leader" did not, or could not, do:

- < they shared their own fears and doubts about participating in the original program;
- < they validated for the other parents their own approaches to reading with their children;
- < they showed the parents that high levels of education were not necessary to read to children;
- < and they provided a level of trust for the parent participants (because they were more inclined to listen to their friends / neighbours) that the "university leader" could not.

Edwards takes exception to the criticisms leveled at the prevention / intervention programs. She contends that theorists have failed to consult the parents on these issues. She implies that criticisms against intervention are, for the most part, irrelevant, for in reality, most parents actually appreciate interventions.

29. Elster, Charles A. "'I Guess They Do Listen': Young Children's Emergent Readings After Adult Read-Alouds." ***Young Children,*** March 1994, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 27-31.

Elster clearly supports the holistic language approach to literacy acquisition. He shows how children exhibit emergent reading (independent 'pretend' reading) after a story is read aloud to them, and after discussions about the story (including pictures, unfamiliar words, and feelings of characters, etc.). He reveals that children 'pick up' surprisingly large amounts of stories from these read-alouds and discussions, and thereby build a strong foundation for holistic, conventional reading. The benefits of read-alouds and emergent reading can be maximized by:

1. Inviting children to participate actively in read-aloud sessions.
2. Providing frequent opportunities for young children to engage in book handling and emergent reading.
3. Reading favourite books repeatedly to encourage emergent reading, then making these books available for children to look at on their own or with other children and adults.
4. Creating opportunities to observe children's emerging literacy in authentic situations, through read-alouds and independent engagements.
5. Educating parents about the ability of their children to "pretend read" books and to participate in reading through "completion reading."

30. Enz, Billie. "Voices of Change: The Continuing Development of Literacy Programs for Young Children." ***The Reading Teacher,*** Oct. 1996, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 168-170.

This article claims there are 4 important ingredients in a successful literacy program for children: (1) Sustained time must be made available for children to engage in reading and writing; (2) It is important to trust children's choices and decision-making - this will give them confidence and improve their ability to make good decisions; (3) Parents and educators should model enthusiasm for literacy; (4) Teachers and parents should engage children in daily collaborative construction of, and conversations about print.

31. Fagan, William T. A Basic Culture-Critical (ABCC) Literacy Program: Approaching Literacy Development Through Cultural Knowledge and Thinking. St. John's, NF: William T. Fagan, 1996.

This is a literacy program designed for adults and adolescents which, "focuses on the person and the person's culture and everyday environment, and not on the text, word structure, letters and sounds, etc." Comprised of an ***Overview,*** an ***Instructor/Tutor Resource Guide***, and a ***Learner Response Book***, the content of this package is grounded in the belief that learning must center on, "issues, concerns, and problems that are meaningful and pertinent to the learners' lives, and are integral to their culture." Rather than take a skills-based approach to literacy which concentrates on the rote learning and memorization of grammar and spelling, educational facilitators must utilize the principles of holistic teaching, making use of environmental print which the learners are exposed to in their daily lives, and finding/writing materials which are culturally relevant to learners.

Throughout the ***Overview*** of this program, Fagan outlines several principles of literacy and adult education. He points out the importance of building the self-confidence of adults and empowering them at the beginning of any such program, and argues that adults must have control in such learning, and must be partners in an active collaboration with educators. He highlights the necessity to listen to adults' ideas, "for making the learning of reading and writing more meaningful," as well as the necessity of keeping such a program flexible so that materials can be added by either educators or adults when deemed appropriate or necessary. Fagan also introduces the Portfolio, along with some guidelines for its use, as a means of evaluating adults who participate in this program.

The bulk of this resource is the guide, which includes 45 sessions designed to build literacy from a holistic approach, as well as *Word Study, Word Recognition and Spelling Hints* to accompany each lesson. Also included in the appendices are several literacy activities and student work sheets to assist in the successful implementation of the program. It is interesting that, while this program is offered from a holistic approach, it is complemented by skills-oriented activities and worksheets.

32, Fagan, William T. "Early Literacy Development: Circumventing the Home-School Gap." in ***The Morning Watch,*** Winter 1997, Vol. 24, Nos. 3-4. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/~glassman/fagan.htm)

Fagan argues that family literacy must not be undertaken from a deficit model because it tends to portray parents as not wanting to help their children with literacy, but from a co-partnership perspective, in which parents and educators work *together*. It is important not to create "expert" and "non-expert" roles for educators and parents respectively. He explains how the PRINTS (Parents' Roles INteracting with Teacher Support) project worked to include parents, and to promote literacy.

The PRINTS project identified five contexts in which literacy develops: talk, play, books and book sharing, environmental print, and scribbling/drawing/writing. It also outlined five roles that parents and educators have in literacy development: providing opportunity, recognizing/acknowledging, interacting, modelling, and setting guidelines. Additionally, it outlined several other items of importance in the development of a family literacy program:

- Utilize the "day-to-day" knowledge of the parents to highlight literacy development that is already occurring and promote further development.
- Employ the principle of scaffolding.
- Encourage parents to keep portfolios for their children.
- Explain terms and concepts to parents when it becomes relevant to do so, and use examples and activities to enable them to understand these terms and concepts.
- Consider carefully parental self-esteem and confidence.
- Remember that different families have different literacy experiences regardless of socioeconomic status.
- Be aware of the transgenerational views towards education (parents may have negative feelings about school and may pass them on, or they may be ABE students who are learning in a completely different environment than their children).

The most important element is acting in partnership with the parents - empowering them to promote literacy in their children.

33. Fagan, William T., James G. Anderson, and Mary C. Cronin. Growing Into Literacy. St. John's: Education, Learning, Literacy Network, 1998.

This is a handbook of procedures from the PRINTS Project (**P**arents' **R**oles **IN**teracting with **T**eacher **S**upport). It is a program used to teach parents to introduce literacy to their pre-school children. Outlined are five major steps to literacy, or contexts within which literacy occurs: (1) books and book sharing; (2) talk and oral language; (3) play; (4) environmental print; and (5) scribbling, drawing and writing. According to the authors, parents have five important roles to play in each of these contexts. They must (1) provide opportunities; (2) acknowledge and recognize their children; (3) interact with their children; (4) model literacy behaviour; and (5) set guidelines for any activities.

The handbook also contains a number of sessions designed to enable family literacy facilitators to reveal techniques of building literacy to parents. Not only are these techniques explained in some detail, but they are also reinforced by several sample activities that may be incorporated into the sessions, or used as guides to create new activities.

34. Fox, Barbara J. "Storymates: A Cross-Age Reading Program." Pathways for Literacy, eds. Elizabeth G. Sturtevant and Wayne M. Linek. Pittsburg, KS: College Reading Association, 1994.

    Through studying the "Storymates" cross-age reading program, Fox was able to demonstrate that learners from the fourth to sixth grades, "can successfully read and share storybooks with younger children at home when the reasons for reading are clear, when activities in school are structured to highlight story structure and comprehension, and when the learners themselves assume responsibility for sharing books with younger children."

35. Fox, Barbara J. and Maripat Wright. "Connecting School and Home Literacy Experiences Through Cross-Age Reading." ***The Reading Teacher,*** Feb. 1997, Vol. 50, No. 5, pp. 396-403.

    This article also discusses the "Storymates" cross-age reading program, (see # 31) and says it is important that children know *why* they are reading, based on real life activities. When children in grades 4-6 understand the reasons for reading, and are given the responsibility of reading to and sharing literacy experiences with younger children, they can do so successfully if parents and educators provide supportive environments.

36. France, Marycarolyn G., and Jane Meeks Hager. "Recruit, Respect, Respond: A Model for Working with Low-Income Families and their Preschoolers." ***The Reading Teacher,*** April 1993, Vol. 46, No. 7, pp. 568-572.

    Clearly in support of an Intervention / Prevention approach to family literacy, this article outlines the "three R's" of successful parental involvement: (1) Recruit - be sure that parents know about the program, and that its purpose is to prepare their children for reading; (2) Respect - make sure that parents know they are *partners* in the program, that they have a sense of shared responsibility. Also take into consideration the individual circumstances of each family, and design the program in such a manner that each workshop stands on its own, so parents can be absent from one and still be full participants in the next; and, (3) Respond - allow subsequent workshops to evolve in response to the needs of the participants. The authors also provide an outline of 6 workshop sessions, focusing on different techniques to promote literacy in the home:

    1. Echo Reading - Parent reads aloud one line at a time. Child reads same line aloud immediately afterwards.
    2. Choral Reading - Parent and child read aloud in unison.

3. Paired Reading - Parent and child read aloud in unison until the child comes to a word he/she can fill in on his/her own.
4. Storytelling - Parents read story to children. Child re-tells story using the illustrations as prompts.
5. Readers Theatre - Parent and child assume roles of characters in story and read their parts.
6. Chanting - Parent and child chant in unison stories or parts of stories which lend themselves to reading with rhythm.

37. Frede, Ellen C. "The Role of Program Quality in Producing Early Childhood Program Benefits." ***The Future of Children,*** Winter 1995, Vol. 5, No. 3. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.futureofchildren.org/lto/06_lto.htm)

    Frede argues that some preschools are less effective than others in promoting the development of literacy because the quality of the programs they offer is poor. She studied several *successful* projects to determine some common elements to offer insight into the development of further preschools. She finds five common elements throughout:

    1. Small class sizes with low ratios of children to teachers.
    2. Teachers received support to reflect on and improve their teaching practices.
    3. A concentrated or long-lasting intervention; not just a short-term project.
    4. Ongoing, child-focused communication between home and school.
    5. Use of some curriculum content and classroom processes that are similar to what children encounter in school.

38. French, Lucia, "I Told You All About It, So Don't Tell Me You Don't Know:" Two-Year-Olds and Learning through Language." ***Young Children,*** Jan. 1996, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 17-20.

    When children learn through language, it is crucial that instruction be developmentally appropriate. French cites the example of her own 2-year-old son who was 'taught' about recycling through language alone. By only using speech, the teacher had failed to create any kind of mental representation that would either permit understanding or provide the child with confidence to respond to questions. As she says, "learning anything new *from language alone* is difficult for most adults....[it is] more difficult yet - often even impossible - for preschoolers who are not yet facile even with the basic language code." She goes on to outline a five-stage "Developmental Sequence for Taking in Information from Language Input." She concludes by observing that "... incomprehensible and developmentally inappropriate instruction can easily *create* children who realize that school is not a place where they can be successful."

39. Gadsden, Vivian L. "Understanding Family Literacy: Conceptual Issues Facing the Field." ***Teachers College Record,*** Fall 1994, Vol. 96, No. 1, pp. 58-86.

This article explores the many conceptions of family literacy. It questions just what constitutes literacy support to families with varied cultural, social and political histories. It also examines how the concept of family support differs according to different notions of the purpose of literacy within families. The article offers considerations towards a general framework for family literacy programs, and recommends an integrative and interdisciplinary approach.

40. Gomby, Deanna S., Mary B. Larner, Carol S. Stevenson, Eugene M. Lewit and Richard E. Behrman. "Long-Term Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs: Analysis and Recommendations." ***The Future of Children,*** Winter 1995, Vol. 5, No. 3. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.futureofchildren.org/lto/01_lto.htm)

    This article begins by revealing the enormous amount of money being spent on early childhood literacy programs, and clarifies that an underlying assumption of expenditure is that, "intervening early in the lives of disadvantaged children is assumed to provide the best opportunity to forestall later problems and to ready children for school and life." The authors then discuss five important questions concerning early childhood education / literacy strategies:

    1. What are the long-term outcomes of early childhood programs?
    2. What can be learned from the experience of the past three decades to help design more effective programs?
    3. Can early childhood programs provided in a routine manner on a large scale yield the expected benefits?
    4. How applicable are lessons learned from programs that operated 20 or 30 years ago to today's world?
    5. How can policy makers increase the coherence of the early childhood service system?

41. Haden, Catherine A., Elaine Reese and Robyn Fivush. "Mothers' Extratextual Comments During Storybook Reading: Stylistic Differences Over Time and Across Texts." ***Discourse Processes,*** March-April 1996, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 135-169.

    This study found three maternal stylistic groups (reading styles). It also uncovered a relationship between the maternal style used when reading unfamiliar storybooks, and the performance of children on literacy tests. The three maternal styles are:

    1. Describers - reading interactions are times to encourage children's contribution of directly specified information from the text and pictures; the book is used to foster expository language skills and expand concept knowledge.
    2. Comprehenders - balance many high-level comments such as predictions and inferences and print knowledge talk with some lower level description comments in the unfamiliar book, and general knowledge talk in the familiar book.

3. Collaborators - offer early explicit encouragement of the children's contributions combined with high-demand comments over time to encourage story comprehension through opening up opportunities for children to reveal what they do and do not understand and to construct shared meanings.

42. Haines, Leonard P. and Margareth E. Peterson. "Kindergarten Children's Reading Acquisition." Horizons of Literacy, eds. Linda Wason-Ellam, Adrian Blunt and Sam Robinson. Winnipeg: The Canadian Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, 1995.

    This article supports the whole language approach to literacy acquisition, and expresses support of the emergent literacy concept. The authors state that "parents, siblings, teachers, peers, the media, indeed any source that provides an opportunity for the child to engage in literacy behavior, contribute to the acquisition process. Those who value and model these activities clearly play an important motivational role...." The authors also note that, "young children seem naturally attracted to reading material that is colourful and well-illustrated, contains novel and interesting features, and uses familiar and repetitive patterns in the vocabulary." They also contend that all children can benefit from being taught to read words by analogy (learning to read *ball* after first learning *tall*) though it is most beneficial to those who have developed a higher level of segmentation ability (an awareness of phonemes and syllables in speech, as well as letter-sound knowledge). They seem to feel that literacy is best learned in social contexts, rather than by learning specific skills.

43. Handel, Ruth D. "The Partnership for Family Reading: Benefits for Families and Schools." ***The Reading Teacher,*** Oct. 1992, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 116-126.

    This article raises many important points concerning family literacy:

    1. There are many parents who do not realize the importance of reading to their children before they enter school.
    2. In a family literacy program, it is important to offer parents the opportunity to borrow books.
    3. Teachers and staff with creative energy and enthusiasm must be involved.
    4. Getting parents involved is a difficult, sometimes long process.
    5. Family reading relationships tend to improve due to involvement in family literacy programs.
    6. Quantity and quality of reading in the home tends to improve as a result of such programs.
    7. Parents and other adults improve their abilities as role models for literacy.
    8. Developing such programs is logistically time-consuming and demands a great deal of effort and commitment on the part of project leaders.

The article also offers a Family Reading workshop model, indicating topics of the major workshops conducted in the program:

1. Introductory Activities
2. Presentation of a Children's Book
3. Demonstration of a Reading Strategy
4. Practice in Pairs
5. Group Discussion
6. Preparation for Reading at Home and Book Borrowing

44. Hayes, Andrew. "Longitudinal Study of Family Literacy Program Outcomes." In L. Ann Benjamin and Jerome Lord, eds. Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice. U.S. Department of Education, January 1996. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/long.html).

    Hayes examines the task of evaluating family literacy programs over a long period. He provides a list of capabilities, concepts and principles that a good family literacy program must facilitate, such as the ability to, "communicate goals to family members," or the means to "judge the plausibility of goals for self and family."

    He makes several points that must be considered in the process of setting long-term goals for a family literacy project, or for planning evaluation and research projects. For example, he argues that an awareness of false assumptions is crucial. Past researchers have found, for instance, that, "reading material in the home is related to reading performance." An assumption based on this finding suggests that the more reading materials a family can obtain, the more likely they are to improve reading performance in their children. Hayes claims this is incorrect because the presence, or lack of reading materials is not causal in reading performance, but rather *family culture* is the causal factor. The presence, of reading materials is merely a *symptom* of a particular family culture. Researchers who intend to longitudinally evaluate family literacy programs must be aware of this point.

    Furthermore, Hayes emphasizes that, before conducting long-term evaluations of a family literacy program, there must be very good reasons for doing so; and such an undertaking must be extremely well thought out and designed before a program is even implemented. He highlights several things to consider in justifying a longitudinal study, and outlines many of the theoretical and practical dangers associated with such a study.

45. Hlady, Lori. "Emergent Literacy: Developing a Concept of Literacy Through Role-Playing." Horizons of Literacy, eds. Linda Wason-Ellam, Adrian Blunt and Sam Robinson. Winnipeg: The Canadian Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, 1995.

In this article, Hlady describes how her children have developed literacy through role-playing. She indicates that several literacy activities must have already been in place to build the necessary foundation for role-playing:

1. Talking - It is important to model speech in front of children. To avoid discouraging children, adults should respond to intended meaning rather than correcting mistakes in speech.
2. Book-Sharing - This should be a daily routine from an early age; adults should always interact with children when reading to or with them (discussions about pictures, events, or characters); books should be stored where they are available and accessible to the children at all times.
3. Story-Telling - At first, the adult tells the story, but as children gain experience, they will begin to offer their own ideas; adults should make it a safe and predictable process in which children are encouraged to take risks and not have to worry about failure.
4. Participation in a Variety of Experiences - Adults should plan outings with their children as often and regularly as possible, and have a lively discussion that carries throughout the duration of the outing or event and even afterwards; adults should build a loving and safe environment so children are not afraid of taking risks; respond to the child's intended meaning and ask questions that encourage them to think about other possibilities.

When these foundations have been laid, role-playing can become an important factor in literacy development: (a) it provides opportunities for children to improve their communication skills; (b) it deepens understanding of characters and friends; (c) it provides children with opportunities to retell and create stories; (d) it exercises flexibility of thought; and (e) it gives children hours of fun.

46. Hoffman, J. Loraine. "The Family Portfolio: Using Authentic Assessment in Family Literacy Programs." ***The Reading Teacher,*** April 1995, Vol. 48, No. 7, pp. 594-597.

Hoffman comments that many family literacy projects begin (and end) with a standardized test of participants, which can be unnerving and uncomfortable for both parents and children; the family portfolio is an excellent alternative. The author then explains how it can be used in a family literacy project, discussing its purpose, format, content, ownership and accessibility. The purpose is to allow instructors, parents and children to plan for future literacy lessons. The format could be anything from file folders to videotapes. Content, or what will be included in the portfolio, should be decided with the parents, and can include all sorts of work related to literacy. Ownership and accessibility (who gets the portfolio at the end) should be very clearly decided by the instructors and parents at the *beginning* of the project. In addition to these items, the author points out the importance of *portfolio conferences* (which should be scheduled regularly, should gradually become more controlled by parents) suggesting questions that should be raised, and *portfolio analysis*, which is crucial to developing further instructional activities in family literacy.

47. Hughes, Fergus P., James Elicker and Linn C. Veen. "A Program of Play for Infants and Their Caregivers." ***Young Children,*** Jan. 1995, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 52-58.

This article describes a program that was developed to "help parents become more effective playmates for their infants." The goals of the project were to provide parents of infants with:

1. Factual information about infant development and appropriate play activities.
2. Actual experience playing with their babies in new ways in a supportive environment.
3. Encouragement and support for taking time to relax and enjoy playing with their babies.

The authors stress the importance of careful planning in developing such a program, and emphasize that the supportive environment is extremely important to parents.

48. Juliebö, Moira F. "Early Literacy: Some Continuing Concerns." Horizons of Literacy, eds. Linda Wason-Ellam, Adrian Blunt and Sam Robinson. Winnipeg: The Canadian Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, 1995.

This author supports an emergent literacy approach to literacy development. She argues that children learn literacy, "through meaningful interactions with other people," and with the world around them. The adult should act as facilitator and there should be plenty of literacy-related materials. An extremely important element of literacy development is reading to children.

49. Kazemek, Francis E. "Commentary: Family Literacy - Reading and Writing in Rhinelander." ***Journal of Reading,*** May 1995, Vol. 38, No. 8, pp. 600-603.

Kazemek suggests that an important element of literacy development is parents who show enthusiasm for reading and who read for the pleasure of it. He warns against assuming that people of a certain socioeconomic standing operate under literacy deficits. Kazemek argues that we should focus on individuals, and, "look closely at what we and our students do daily with print: What do we read and write? With whom? For what purposes? How are different literacy acts influenced and shaped by particular relationships, personal histories, and unique interests, desires, and needs?"

50. Kropp, Paul. The Reading Solution: Making Your Child a Reader for Life. New York: Random House, 1993.

This book offers considerable insight into the role of parents in literacy development. He tells parents that "You'll never make your child a reader for life by telling him that reading is important. You have to show him." He provides tips that parents can use to promote reading. He deals with the controversial issue of television, emphasizing that, "there is a growing body of research to

indicate that if your child watches more than three hours of television a day, he will suffer problems in reading at school, and in social development." He explores the times at which children are likely to lose interest in reading, and ways to prevent this. He discusses the relationship between parents and teachers, and gives hints on how parents can better advocate on behalf of their children. Kropp then examines in some detail the nature of literacy acquisition at all age levels: from infancy to age five; ages five to eight; eight to ten; ten to twelve; during the teenage years; and into adulthood. After this, he looks at some of the most basic problems associated with reading - as well as some basic solutions. He talks about ways to excite bored readers, how to deal with the reluctant reader, and how to nurture the gifted reader.

51. Kropp, Paul and Lynda Hodson. The School Solution: Getting Canada's Schools to Work For Your Children. Toronto: Random, 1995.

    This book guides parents through the entire educational process, from choosing daycares and schools, to dealing with teachers and administrators. It outlines what parents can expect their children to learn at each grade level, and deals with topics such as special education, gifted programs, commonly asked questions, and the major issues faced by Canadian schools. This book is an excellent resource for teaching parents how to advocate on behalf of their children throughout the school years.

52. Lazar, Althier M. and Renee Weisberg. “Inviting Parents’ Perspectives: Building Home-School Partnerships to Support Children who Struggle with Literacy.” ***The Reading Teacher,*** Nov. 1996, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 228-237.

    This article clearly comes out in favour of holistic language learning. It also indicates that because most parents were taught their literacy skills within a subskill framework (and because many children are currently being taught from a whole language approach), there are incongruencies between home and school. The authors emphasize the importance of good communication between teachers and parents that would allow, “a kind of cultural exchange between home and school environments aimed at supporting students’ growth.” They also offer some practical advice on how to involve parents and how to resolve any number of problems that parental involvement may give rise to.

53. Leu, Donald J. Jr. “Exploring Literacy Within Multimedia Environments.” ***The Reading Teacher,*** Oct. 1996, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 162-165.

    This article points out that information technology and multimedia are redefining literacy. There are two important things to know about computers and their effects on learning literacy: (1) children usually learn about “complex multimedia environments by showing each other ‘cool’

things," and (2) children's usage of computers tends to focus on the superficial "cool" things, and seem to involve *extensive* reading rather than *intensive*. The author invites discussions through electronic mail, and offers some useful starting points in using the Worldwide Web to support literacy and learning.

54. Linder, Patricia E. and Laurie Elish-Piper. "Listening to Learners: Dialogue Journals in a Family Literacy Program." Generations of Literacy, eds. Wayne M. Linek and Elizabeth G. Sturtevant. Harrisonburg: The College Reading Association, 1995.

    By using dialogic journals, the researchers discovered that low-income, low literacy parents involved in the family literacy project, "used literacy for a variety of purposes as they worked towards goals and to overcome obstacles in their lives." The journals revealed the importance of children to their parents and willingness of parents to take measures to help them with literacy learning. The journals provided parents with their own 'real' context for learning literacy, and also became invaluable resources of the teacher, who could learn a great deal about individual literacy situations and respond to individual needs.

55. MacIsaac, Maitland. Learning and Reading Partners: A program for parents of school-age children that teaches them how to assist their children with learning and reading. 4th ed. Charlottetown: PEI Literacy Alliance, 1996.

    This handbook is a resource full of practical activities and information that can be of great benefit to parents who wish to build their children's literacy. It reveals how to understand children as learners by examining learning styles, addressing self-esteem, and exploring other aspects of child development. It identifies the processes of thinking, reading, and writing, and discusses how to approach each process with children of various ages. Complementing these discussions are numerous activities designed to help parents implement what they have learned.

56. MacKenzie, Laureen and Elaine Cairns. Literacy and Parenting Skills (L.A.P.S.) Calgary: Alberta Vocational College, 1996.

    L.A.P.S. is an inexpensive package for service providers who work with high-needs populations that require combined parenting and literacy skill development. This program is designed to build self-esteem and confidence in parents in a supportive environment in which they are respected and accepted, and to actively involve parents in the learning process, allowing them to determine the direction of learning. "They are not passive recipients of instruction. They will select, reflect on, and adapt or use the literacy activities they experience to meet their own needs." It is emphasized that throughout the course, parents be encouraged to model literacy-related activities to their children, and to utilize resources such as libraries as much as possible. The authors recommend

that dialogic journals be used to evaluate learner progress. Parents would write in these journals, commenting on their own literacy and parenting issues. The course facilitator would respond to these journals, making sure not to edit them, but to respond to the ideas contained in them, thus encouraging further writing.

57. Maguire, Gwendolyn Mary. The Impact of a Whole Language Program on the Reading and Writing Development of Grade Two Students. Masters Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991.

    This text recognizes the debate surrounding traditional skills-based approaches to literacy and the whole language approach. The author's research focused on determining whether or not students exposed to a whole language program would attain higher levels of literacy development than students exposed to a skills approach. A total of 104 Grade Two students comprised the sample, which was split into two research groups according to the instructional method they would be exposed to.

    After one year, the author found no significant differences in students' levels of reading comprehension, meaning vocabulary and sight vocabulary; both groups made similar gains in their performance of these literacy behaviours. There was, however, a significant difference in writing ability; the students taught from a whole language approach performed better in this area than the other students. The research found that children exposed to a whole language approach from an earlier age showed delayed effects of this exposure and, after two years, also performed better on reading comprehension and writing than their counterparts who did not have the exposure to whole language.

58. Mercer, M. M. A Whole Language Versus Skills Based Approach to Pre-School Education. Masters Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1989.

    The author conducted a study in the St. John's area on both the whole language approach to education and the skills-based approach to education. Children from participating primary schools were randomly assigned to each of these educational settings. Those assigned to the whole language approach were exposed to print in meaningful and child-centred ways through predictable books, repetitive poetry, sign-in registers, personal journal writing, simulated everyday experiences, dramatic play, use of themes and activity centres as well as teacher-made materials, and the children were encouraged to read and write. Children assigned to the skills based approach were exposed in large groups to a teacher-directed environment, in which the children were given specific instructions, taught isolated reading readiness skills through commercially made materials, and in which there was neither discussion about print, nor encouragement to write.

Mercer found that, upon subsequent testing, the experimental group (whole language) scored significantly higher in writing. There was little difference in vocabulary and reading skills between the groups, although the experimental group *did* score somewhat higher.

59. Monsour, Margaret and Carole Talan. Library-Based Family Literacy Projects. Chicago: American Library Association, 1993.

    This book offers practical information on how several library-based family literacy projects have been developed, ranging in discussion from description, methods and materials, recruitment of participants, costs, and support services. Accompanying the detailed descriptions of these Family Literacy Projects are the names of contact persons with addresses, and telephone numbers at which the they can be reached. This would be extremely useful to read from an administrative point of view.

60. Morrow, Lesley Mandel. "Family Literacy: New Perspectives, New Practices," in Morrow, Lesley Mandel, ed. Family Literacy Connections in Schools and Communities. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1995.

    Morrow reinforces several basic tenets of family literacy: the role of parents is extremely important; shared reading is important, as is making print materials available and promoting positive attitudes towards literacy; and the necessity of learning how literacy naturally occurs within family environments. She also offers a broad definition of family literacy.

61. Morrow, Lesley Mandel, and Jeanne Paratore. "Family Literacy: Perspectives and Practices." ***The Reading Teacher,*** Nov. 1993, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 194-200.

    In this article, the authors restate the importance of shared reading, reading aloud, making a variety of print materials available, and promoting positive attitudes towards literacy in literacy development. They point out that, "families are too often viewed in their deficits and dilemmas rather than in the richness of their heritages and experiences." In other words, while there is no debate that parents can learn a great deal from educators about literacy, it must also be remembered that schools can also learn from parents. The authors warn against the negative assumptions that many people have concerning poverty and illiteracy, by revealing that many low-income families, "support family literacy with exceptional effort and imagination." Finally, they reveal that many family literacy programs share three major goals: (1) to help parents become full partners in the education of their children; (2) to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners; and (3) to provide literacy instruction for parents.

62. Morrow, Lesley Mandel and Susan B. Neuman. "Introduction: Family Literacy." ***The Reading Teacher,*** April 1995, Vol.48, No.7, pp.550-551.

The authors state that family literacy programs need to enable adults to enhance their own literacy while at the same time promoting literacy in their children. It is also important to keep in mind that, "the types and forms of literacy practiced in some homes are often incongruent with those that children encounter in school." Furthermore, it is crucial to remember that poverty does not necessarily produce illiteracy, for, "there is evidence that many low-income, minority, and immigrant families cultivate rich contexts for literacy development and that they support family literacy with effort and imagination."

63. Morrow, Lesley Mandel, Diane H. Tracey, Caterina Marcone Maxwell. A Survey of Family Literacy in the United States. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1995.

This book offers a brief explanation of what family literacy is and whence it came. It also describes the many types of family literacy initiatives currently underway in the United States, and acts as a guide to those interested in finding out about particular family literacy programs. It offers the names of several family literacy programs across the United States, a brief description of each program, and a mailing address for those who wish to find out more.

64. Neuman, Susan B. "Reading Together: A Community-Supported Parent Tutoring Program." ***The Reading Teacher,*** Oct. 1995, Vol. 49, No. 2, pp. 120-129.

This article provides a practical look at a family literacy program called "Reading Together," which uses 'literacy prop boxes' as a central tool. Each box is thematically based and includes: a chant, jingle or fingerplay; storybooks; play objects; and writing books. Program success depended on numerous factors:

1. School administration welcomed the project at the school level; it was consistent with teacher goals; and the leaders created lots of enthusiasm.
2. Lots of individual attention was given to each child at the program level.
3. The program created connections between parents and children.
4. Leaders observed positive changes in parents, by investing in two generations at once.
5. The literacy prop boxes provided parents with effective intervention tools and techniques.

The author concludes the article by making several key suggestions that could contribute to the success of other family literacy projects:

1. Keep the project community based; support parent leadership and creative initiatives.
2. Offer training to the facilitators of the project.
3. Encourage the facilitators to train other parents.
4. Provide a physical place solely for the program.
5. Informally evaluate the program to see if it is working.

65. Neuman, Susan B. and Kathleen Roskos. "Literacy Knowledge in Practice: Contexts of Participation for Young Writers and Readers." ***Reading Research Quarterly,*** Jan.-Mar. 1997, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 10-32.

    Operating on the premise that, "children's earliest discoveries about written language are closely tied to daily activities as they interact with others in writing and reading situations," the authors created three literacy-related settings in an Even Start preschool: a post office, a restaurant, and a doctor's office. They found that, "in the course of play activities, children demonstrated declarative knowledge about literacy (e.g. roles, and names of literacy objects), procedural knowledge (e.g. routines), and strategic knowledge (e.g. metacognition). In each context, the children (3-4 year olds) adapted tools of literacy for specific purposes and engaged in several strategic behaviours in problem-solving situations.

66. Neuman, Susan B., Tracy Hagedorn, Donna Celano and Pauline Daly. "Toward a Collaborative Approach to Parent Involvement in Early Education: A Study of Teenage Mothers in an African-American Community." ***American Educational Research Journal,*** Winter 1995, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 801-827.

    Recognizing that parents are extremely important in the literacy development of young children, the authors of this article discuss methods for gaining parental involvement in family literacy. Importantly, researchers found that most parents in the low-income group studied were very interested in helping their children; they, "clearly valued educational achievement, security and independence in learning, respect from and for teachers, and information that might enable them to enhance their children's learning." The authors believe that if parental involvement is to be successful, there has to be a *posture of reciprocity*, and this requires a shift in the balance of power between schools and communities. In other words, parents and teachers need to respect one another, and actively collaborate with one another. They conclude by pointing out that "mutual respect is not enough; groups with diverse agendas need to identify shared goals and devise strategies for successful implementation."

67. Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Literacy for Life: Guide to Reading and Language Difficulties. Newfoundland: Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1996.

    This book was written to help parents discover whether or not a child *may* have a learning disability that affects reading ability. While the book "is not meant to provide all the information necessary for a complete diagnosis," it does offer basic information to assist parents in recognizing the early indicators of learning disabilities. The book discusses several warning signs and characteristics of children with learning disabilities, offers ideas and things to try if a child exhibits some of the warning signs, and outlines what to do if a learning disability is suspected or confirmed.

68. Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Literacy For Life: Home Reading Guide. St. John's: Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1994.

This book was written to help parents establish a home environment that will encourage and support reading and writing. It discusses parents as models of reading behaviour, stating that modelling is the 'first step' in establishing a home reading environment. It outlines seven steps in creating a home conducive to literacy:

1. Establish a reading routine in your household.
2. Provide a variety of reading materials.
3. Motivate and encourage your child.
4. Show your child that you value reading.
5. Share the reading experience with your child.
6. Make reading relevant.
7. Make reading fun.

Aside from these steps, this book also comments on how literacy develops during early childhood, and offers several tips to parents in the form of activities they can try with their children.

69. Nickse, Ruth S., Ann Marie Speicher and Pamela C. Buchek. "An Intergenerational Adult Literacy Project: A Family Intervention/Prevention Model." Adult Literacy: A Compendium of Articles From the Journal of Reading. Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 1994.

The authors of this article are clearly in support of an intervention/prevention approach to family literacy. They restate several underlying principles of family literacy that other authors have expounded upon; they offer a *Checklist of Literacy-Related Activities* that would be useful to incorporate into any family literacy program; and they make many recommendations for implementation in family literacy projects.

U	*Checklist of Literacy-Related Activities*
U	Read to children.
U	Ask children about homework.
U	Look at children's homework.
U	Help children with homework.
U	Listen to children read a book.
U	Write notes and messages to children.
U	Play word games with children.
U	View television with children and discuss it afterwards.
U	Buy books with children and for children.
U	Visit a library with children whenever possible.
U	Help children to write a letter, or send a letter or greeting card to someone.
U	Ask children about school and reading.

70. Nielsen, Diane Corcoran and Dianne L. Monson. "Effects of Literacy Environment on Literacy Development of Kindergarten Children." ***Journal of Educational Research,*** May-June 1996, Vol. 89, No. 5, pp. 259-271.

    This study examined two different kindergarten literacy frameworks (environment or *emergent literacy*, and events or *skills-based literacy*), and found that two teachers were noticeably different. More importantly, they found that "children in the emergent literacy kindergarten, though considerably younger than the children in the reading readiness kindergarten, made significant gains in literacy achievement."

71. O'Sullivan, Julia T. "Reading Beliefs and Reading Achievement: A Development Study of Students From Low Income Families." Summary Reports of Paths to Literacy and Illiteracy in Newfoundland and Labrador (Report Number 6). Eds. Linda M. Phillips and Stephen P. Norris. St. John's, NF: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1992.

    This article begins by stating that, "students from low income families ... are the students most at risk for underachievement in reading." After emphasizing the need to uncover the causes of reading competence if under-achievement is to be corrected, the author reveals children's beliefs about reading achievement as an important causal factor in literacy acquisition. She contends that, "students who believe they are good readers and who expect to do well, persist when they

encounter reading problems," while "students with negative reading beliefs give up easily when they experience problems ...." She also notes that children's reading beliefs are grounded not only in interpretations of their own reading abilities, but also in the beliefs that teachers and parents communicate to them.

The author concludes that, "students from low income families can achieve excellence in reading and this excellence is determined in large part by motivational beliefs." She stresses that, "because parents form beliefs and pass them down to children, it is imperative that parents develop beliefs consistent with achieving excellence in reading." She is not suggesting that modifying beliefs alone will produce a literate population. She points out that teachers and reading instructors need to have better training, and that parents themselves "should be educated about reading development and instruction."

72. Padak, Nancy D. "Curriculum, Instruction, and Evaluation in Ohio's Family Literacy Programs." Pathways for Literacy, eds. Elizabeth G. Sturtevant and Wayne M. Linek. Pittsburg, KS: College Reading Association, 1994.

    This article looks at several family literacy projects and found that there were not only benefits for the children who participated, but also for the parents themselves. The author also suggests, "carefully articulated goals related to families as units should form the foundation of family literacy programs, and activities and instruction should be directly related to goals. In addition, family literacy programs need appropriate materials (e.g. high quality children's literature), including some for distribution to families." Furthermore, when expanding parental knowledge about the nature of literacy acquisition, lecture-type classes were not identified as successful. Parents seemed to get more out of looking at children's literature, modeling and authentic activities, educational trips (library, etc.) and craft activities.

73. Paratore, Jeanne R., Anne Homza, Barbara Krol-Sinclair, Trinidad Lewis-Barrow, Gigliana Melzi, Robin Stergis and Hannah Haynes. "Shifting Boundaries in Home and School Responsibilities: The Construction of Home-Based Literacy Portfolios by Immigrant Parents and Their Children." ***Research in the Teaching of English,*** Dec. 1995, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 367-389.

    While there is general consensus that parents play an important role in children's learning, there are still many questions about how to establish a good collaborative relationship between parents and teachers. The authors of this article suggest that: "the creation of home portfolios may provide a starting point for teachers and parents to discuss children's developing literacy." Such portfolios can help parents become aware of and knowledgeable about their children's literacy development. They can also help teachers find out about the ways that children engage in literacy with their parents and home environment.

74. Paulu, Nancy. Helping Your Child Get Ready for School. U.S. Department of Education, 1993. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/GetReadyForSchool/index.html).

This publication offers practical suggestions and tips to parents to enable them to get their children ready for school. It looks at children from ages 0 to 5, outlines what to expect in each stage of their development, and what kind of learning activities are developmentally appropriate for each stage.

75. Purcell-Gates, Victoria. "Stories, Coupons, and the *TV Guide*: Relationships Between Home Literacy Experiences and Emergent Literacy Knowledge." ***Reading Research Quarterly,*** Oct.-Dec. 1996, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 406-428.

This study examined the home literacy environments of several low-income families to determine the relationships between the types and frequencies of literacy events in the homes to the level of emergent literacy exhibited by the children. Three major patterns were discovered:

1. "Children's understanding of the intentionality of print is related to both the frequency of literacy events in the home and to their personal focus and involvement in the literacy events."
2. "Children knew more about the alphabetic principle and the specific forms of written language more in homes where literate members read and wrote at more complex levels of discourse for their own entertainment and leisure."
3. "Parents' intentional involvement in their children's literacy learning was higher when their children began formal literacy instruction in school."

76. Purcell-Gates, Victoria, Susan L'Allier and Dorothy Smith. "Literacy at the Harts' and the Larsons': Diversity Among Poor, Innercity Families." ***The Reading Teacher,*** April 1995, Vol. 48, No. 7, pp. 572-578.

This article addresses the assumption that the children in low-income families "experience no - or very few - literacy events within their homes...." The authors examined several low-income families and found that, while some were indeed poor in literacy, others had a literacy-rich environment. The implication is that many teachers need to move beyond such assumptions as these and, "look at each child as an individual coming from a unique family setting."

77. Rasinski, Timothy V. "Fast Start: A Parental Involvement Reading Program for Primary Grade Students." Generations of Literacy, eds. Wayne M. Linek and Elizabeth G. Sturtevant. Harrisonburg: The College Reading Association, 1995.

This article describes in practical detail several aspects of a family literacy project called "Fast Start," designed to provide children with a boost in literacy through parental involvement at the primary level. The article discusses things such as cost effectiveness and the difficulties associated with getting parents involved. In the actual program itself, "parents and children read a brief, highly predictable, and interesting text each day,.... [involving] parents reading to their child, paired reading, and in time the child reading on his or her own." This helps to build word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Activities and discussions after reading are also helpful.

78. Roskos, Kathleen A. and Susan B. Neuman. "Of Scribbles, Schemas, and Storybooks: Using Literacy Albums to Document Young Children's Literacy Growth." ***Young Children,*** Jan. 1994, Vol. 49, No. 2, pp. 78-85.

    This article is a practical guide to the use of *Literacy Albums* to record a child's literacy development. The authors indicate how such an album should be constructed, how it should be used, and its potential as a tool to encourage further literacy growth.

79. Saracho, Olivia N. "Home Literacy Program and Children's Development of Literacy." ***Perceptual and Motor Skills,*** Aug. 1997, Vol. 85, No. 1, pp. 185-186.

    This study revealed that the children of families that participated in home literacy programs had acquired more literacy skills than those who did not. Many parents did not realize how important they were in their children's literacy development until they participated in the programs.

80. Scarborough, Hollis S. and Wanda Dobrich. "Another Look at Parent-Preschooler Bookreading: How Naked is the Emperor?" ***Developmental Review,*** Sept. 1994, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 340-347.

    The authors of this article, while not denying the importance of shared reading in literacy acquisition, suggest that many educators have focused on it to such an extent that other factors have been overlooked. They argue that shared book reading may not be as important as some researchers / educators suggest. There are many elements of literacy development, and shared book reading is only.

81. Shaffer, Gary L. and George H. McNinch. "Parents' Perceptions of Young Children's Awareness of Environmental Print." Generations of Literacy, eds. Wayne M. Linek and Elizabeth G. Sturtevant. Harrisonburg: The College Reading Association, 1995.

    The researchers who produced this article found that 4-year-olds from advantaged families, "were about twice as successful in reading logos [common brand names] as were young children from

the at-risk group." (At-risk defined as primarily poor, single parent, uneducated parents). Despite this difference, the response of children from both groups suggest that the use of logos could be an excellent tool in literacy development, and the authors recommend its use in parenting classes that work to serve high-risk families.

82. Shanahan, Timothy, Margaret Mulhern and Flora Rodriguez-Brown. "Project FLAME: Lessons Learned from a Family Literacy Program for Linguistic Minority Families." ***The Reading Teacher,*** April 1995, Vol. 48, No. 7, pp. 586-593.

This article answers a series of practical questions concerning the design and implementation of a culturally sensitive family literacy program. It stresses the importance of having strong parental support, and offers suggestions on how to gain such support. The researchers seem to have taken an intervention prevention approach, and offered training sessions to the parents called 'Parents as Teachers Sessions.' Several topics were addressed:

1. Creating Home Literacy Centers - create a literacy activity center in a box including pencils, crayons, paper, scissors, paste, magazines, pictures, etc. How to make one; how to use it.
2. Book Sharing - The most effective ways to share books with children. How to talk about books when your own literacy is limited.
3. Book Selection - Quality criteria for selecting books appropriate for children's needs and interests.
4. Library Visit - Public Library tour, complete with applications for library cards.
5. Book Fairs - Parents buy (with coupons) books for their children.
6. Teaching the ABCs - Simple ways to teach letters and sounds. Emphasis on language games, songs, and language experience activities.
7. Children's Writing - How young children write, and ways to encourage home writing.
8. Community Literacy - How parents can share their own literacy uses with their children during marketing and other daily activities.
9. Classroom Observations - Classroom visitations to gain a sense of how their children are taught in schools.
10. Parent-Teacher get-togethers - Guided discussions about children's education with teachers and principals.
11. Math for your Child - games and activities for helping children to understand numbers and arithmetic.
12. How Parents can Help with Homework - Ways parents can monitor and help with children's homework even when they cannot do the homework themselves.

83. Shapiro, Jon. "Home Literacy Environment and Young Children's Literacy Knowledge and Behavior." Generations of Literacy, eds. Wayne M. Linek and Elizabeth G. Sturtevant. Harrisonburg: The College Reading Association, 1995.

This article supports the thesis that the home literacy environment is closely related to young children's emergent literacy.

84. Smith, Susan Sidney and Rhonda G. Dixon. "Literacy Concepts of Low- and Middle-Class Four-year-Olds Entering Preschool." ***Journal of Educational Research,*** Mar.-April 1995, Vol. 88, No. 4, pp. 243-252.

This study found that children from low-income families were at a distinct disadvantage when compared with their middle-class peers in understanding written language. They do indicate, however, that the key factor is not economic in nature. Indeed the explanation for low levels of literacy have more to do with "a paucity in early experiences with print."

85. Snow, Catherine E. "Families as Social Contexts for Literacy Development." ***New Directions for Child Development,*** Fall 1993, No. 61, pp. 11-24.

Families are the most important social context for literacy development. Parent-child interactions during book-reading are fundamental to literacy acquisition. Furthermore, the author contends, parent-child interactions go far beyond those related to books and reading; indeed they create an extremely complex world of oral and verbal interaction that is also fundamental to literacy.

86. Spreadbury, Julie. Read me a Story: Parents, Teachers and Children as Partners in Literacy Learning. Victoria: Australian Reading Association, 1994.

This book primarily, "advocates that children learn to read in the context of a loving home long before they attend formal schooling. To do so they require adults and/or older brothers and sisters who give a model for literacy by reading and writing themselves." The author believes that, above all else, reading to children is extremely important in their emergent literacy. The book supports many of the same principles discussed in the Williams article below (entry # 95), but is longer and offers considerable practical advice to both teachers and parents.

87. St. Pierre, Robert G., Jean I. Layzer and Helen V. Barnes. "Two-Generation Programs: Design, Cost, and Short-term Effectiveness." ***The Future of Children,*** Winter 1995, Vol. 5, No. 3. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.futureofchildren.org/lto/04_lto.htm)

This article examines six two-generation programs that were implemented for the purpose of providing children with educational services, and providing parents with opportunities to enhance their parenting skills, education and literacy. The authors found there were few substantial short-term positive effects produced by these two-generation programs, and are dubious of any long-term effects. Through a comparison to programs that have met with success, the authors identify the shortcomings of the programs in their study, thereby offering a couple of insightful recommendations for successful programs. Instead of directing education and services towards parents, in the hopes that parents will pass benefits on to their children, "there is substantial evidence that effects on children are best achieved by services aimed directly at children." Furthermore, programs must be intensive if they are to be successful, and be continued over a long period of time.

88. Stone, Laura. "Teaching Sam to Enjoy Reading." ***Young Children,*** Jan. 1994, Vol. 49, No. 2, pp. 76-77.

Interestingly, this article seems to support both the whole language approach and the skills approach to literacy development. The author highlights 'Sam's' biggest problem as motivation; and the solution to this problem as a child-centered holistic reading environment, in which Sam is encouraged to choose his reading material, to learn literacy in the context of his life and the world he has explored to a degree already (caterpillars, stars, etc.). It was important to put focus on having *fun* with reading, and to take the focus *off* meaningless series of worksheets. On the other hand, when it was discovered that Sam (who was 7) simply could not read unfamiliar words, a skills approach was adapted to teach him the principles of phonics. The adaptation of both of these principles proved to be very successful.

89. Strickland, Dorothy S. "Reinventing Our Literacy Programs: Books, Basics, Balance." ***Reading Teacher,*** Dec. - Jan. 1994-95, Vol. 48, No. 4, pp. 294-302.

Supports the whole language approach to literacy acquisition, and outlines some of the problems associated with converting educational applications from skills to whole language. The author recognizes legitimate concerns about too readily abandoning phonics, grammar, and spelling.

90. Symons, Sonya, Tara Szuszkiewicz and Camille Bonnell. "Parental Exposure and Young Children's Language and Literacy Skills." ***The Alberta Journal of Educational Research,*** Mar. 1996, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 49-58.

This article reveals that early childhood literacy development is very closely related to parental education and print exposure. It was also found that socioeconomic status did not account for individual differences within this study.

91. Taylor, Denny. "Family Literacy: Resisting Deficit Models." ***TESOL Quarterly,*** Fall 1993, Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 550-553.

    Supports criticisms of the Intervention / Prevention approach to family literacy. Cautions that we must be careful not to blame the victim; families (and illiteracy) do not create poverty. Poverty is a product of social forces. Educators must be careful not to adhere to the several false assumptions regarding illiteracy and poverty.

92. Unwin, Cynthia G. "Elizabeth's Story: The Potential of Home-Based Family Literacy Intervention." ***The Reading Teacher,*** April 1995, Vol. 48, No. 7, pp. 552-557.

    This is an excellent example of a home-based family literacy intervention that worked. The author offers many valuable insights into successful intervention that may benefit other educators:

    1. Most parents in low-income families really, "want to help their children learn and simply do not know how," and will likely put a great deal of effort into a family literacy program if they are approached properly. It is important to make them *partners* in their children's education.
    2. Schools can be very threatening to many parents, and it may be a good idea to begin family literacy (if not in the homes of families) in neutral places where the parents feel 'safe.' It is extremely important that parents and children have many books available to them, either by owning or borrowing through libraries.

93. Vedeler, Liv. "Dramatic Play: A Format for 'Literate' Language?" ***British Journal of Educational Psychology,*** June 1997, Vol. 67, No. 2, pp. 153-167.

    Dramatic play and role-playing may be counted as a literacy-related activity, because it encourages children to associate meaning with words and communicate effectively with others. Dramatic play elicits decontextualized language from children, as they must explain to others the theme and role they are undertaking. It is suggested that such activity would be conducive to literacy acquisition; since dramatic play is a situation in which young children use more developed syntax, and the ability to use more developed syntax is associated with later reading ability.

94. Whitmore, Eva. The Essential Link: A Productive Partnership for our Children's Growth and Development. Newfoundland & Labrador Home & School Federation, in Cooperation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association, 1996.

    The driving force behind the production of this resource was the desire to "promote parental involvement at all levels" of children's education. The rationale behind this goal was that children will be more likely to succeed both in school and in life, if schools have an active partnership with parents in supporting learning. The author outlines several benefits that accrue from parents and

teachers working together (not the least of which is higher student achievement), and identifies several types of partnerships that may exist between home and school, ranging from cooperation on learning activities taking place at home, to parental involvement on school councils. The author also notes the various incentives and barriers to parental involvement, emphasizing that parents' ideas must be respected, and parents themselves treated as equal partners.

Information is provided to help parents advocate on behalf of their children. Many learning activities are discussed to assist parents in promoting learning at home. A section called "Parents are Teachers Too!" provides parents with an arsenal of ideas to enhance their home learning environment. The importance of parental modeling is discussed. Other topics include dealing with abuse, overcoming learning disabilities, selection and use of educational toys and materials, helping with homework, coping with *attention deficit disorders*, assisting gifted children, plus many other topics relevant to parental involvement in children's education.

95. Williams, Richard P. and Judith K. Davis. "Lead Sprightly Into Literacy." ***Young Children,*** May 1994, Vol.49, No.4, pp.37-41.

This article describes an 'emergent literacy' approach to teaching young children to read and write. It views the process of literacy acquisition as: (1) A Child-Centered Experience - children must be allowed to make choices in their reading and writing, and they must be encouraged to explore the world of print through play; (2) A Social Interaction - parents must interact with children to provide them with a safe environment from which they are not afraid to take risks. They must also interact with children in developmentally appropriate manners (i.e. scaffolding, or linking the child's current knowledge to new or expanded concepts). The authors then move on to discuss the kind of classroom literacy that would complement emergent literacy, such as promoting literacy through planned events (e.g. exploring various aspects of the world of print associated with a cooking activity), or through developing literacy 'productions' (which focus on developing activities that can be gleaned from a particular book, and then exploring literacy through both the activities and the book).

End of Annotated Bibliography

But, for more reading pleasure..... L

Sources for Further Reading

1. Adams, Marilyn Jager. Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990.

2. Alamprese, Judith. "Integrated Services, Cross-Agency Collaboration, and Family Literacy." In L. Ann Benjamin and Jerome Lord, eds. Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice. U.S. Department of Education, January 1996. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/integ.html).

3. Arnold, David S., and Grover J. Whitehurst. "Accelerating Language Development through Picture Book Reading: A Summary of Dialogic Reading and its Effects." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

4. Auerbach, Elsa R. Making Meaning, Making Change: A Guide to Participatory Curriculum Development for Adult ESL and Family Literacy. Boston: University of Massachusetts, English Family Literacy Project, 1990.

5. Baker, Linda, Robert Serpell, and Susan Sonnenschein. "Opportunities for Literacy Learning in the Homes of Urban Preschoolers." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

6. Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. First Teachers: A Family Literacy Handbook for Parents, Policy-Makers, and Literacy Providers. Washington, D.C.: Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, 1989.

7. Beals, Diane E., Jeanne M. De Temple, and David K. Dickinson. "Talking and Listening that Support Early Literacy Development of Children from Low-Income Families." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

8. Beebe, Mona Jane. Literacy Theories Informing the Teaching of Reading. Paper prepared for the Conference on Exploring the Breadth and Depth of Literacy. Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1989.

9. Behm, Mary, and Richard Behm. Let's Read: 101 Ideas to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Write. Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, 1995.

10. Booth, Jack, ed. The More We Get Together: Shared Reading. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1984.

11. Brizius, Jack A., and Susan A. Foster. Generation to Generation: Realizing the Promise of Family Literacy. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press, 1993.

12. Butler, Dorothy, and Marie Clay. Reading Begins at Home: Preparing Children for Reading Before They go to School. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1987.

13. Christie, James F., ed. Play and Early Literacy Development. New York: State University of New York Press, 1991.

14. Daisey, P. "Intergenerational Literacy Programs: Rationale, Description, and Effectiveness." ***Journal of Clinical Child Psychology,*** Vol. 20 (1991), pp.11-17.

15. Darling, Sharon, and Susan Paull. "Implications for Family Literacy Programs." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

16. Edwards, P. Talking Your Way to Literacy: A Program to Help Non-Reading Parents Prepare their Children for Reading. Chicago: Children's Press, 1990.

17. Edwards, P.A. "Connecting Parents to the School's Curriculum." In V.L. Gadsden and D.A. Wagner, eds. Literacy Among African-American Youth: Issues in Learning, Teaching, and Schooling. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1993.

18. Edwards, Patricia A. "Combining Parents' and Teachers' Thoughts about Storybook Reading at Home and School." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. NJ: International Reading Association, 1995.

19. Edwards, Patricia A. "Responses of Teachers and African-American Mothers to a Book-Reading Intervention Program." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

20. Enz, Billie J., and Lyndon W. Searfoss. "Let the Circle be Unbroken: Teens as Literacy Learners and Teachers." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

21. Fagan, William T. A Framework for Literacy Development: Effective Program and Instructional Strategies for Reading and Writing for Low-Achieving Adults and Children. Montreal: Editions de la Cheneliere, 1992.

22. Feagin, Michelle, and Clairece Booher Feagin. Reading Together. Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1990.

23. Fitzgerald, Jill, Dixie Lee Spiegel, and James W. Cunningham. "The Relationship Between Parental Literacy Level and Perceptions of Emergent Literacy." ***Journal of Reading Behavior,*** 1991, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 191-213.

24. Gabler, Carol, and Jan Goethel. The Path to Family Literacy. Eau Claire, WI: Chippewa Valley Publishing, 1994.

25. Gadsden, Vivian L. "Designing and Conducting Family Literacy Programs that Account for Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Other Cultural Differences." In L. Ann Benjamin and Jerome Lord, eds. Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice. U.S. Department of Education, January 1996. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/design.html).

26. Gadsden, Vivian L. "Representations of Literacy: Parents' Images in Two Cultural Communities." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

27. Gaj, Nancye, et. al. Motheread Training Guide. Raleigh, NC: Motheread, Inc., 1995.

28. Gambrell, Linda B., Janice F. Almasi, Qing Xie, and Victoria J. Heland. "Helping First Graders Get a Running Start in Reading." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

29. Goldsmith, Ellen, and Ruth Doman Handel. Family Reading: An Intergenerational Approach to Literacy. Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press, 1990.

30. Gould, Toni S. Get Ready to Read: A Practical Guide for Teaching Young Children at Home and in School. New York: Walker and Company, 1991.

31. Graves, Ruth, and James H. Wendorf. "The Reading is Fundamental Motivational Approach to Family Literacy." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

32. Griffith, Alex, and Dorothy Hamilton. Learning at Home: The Parent, Teacher, Child Alliance. London: Methuen, 1987.

33. Handel, Ruth D., and Ellen Goldsmith. "Family Reading - Still Got it: Adults as Learners, Literacy Resources, and Actors in the World." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

34. Harrison, Colin. "Family Literacy Practices in the United Kingdom - An International Perspective." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

35. Harry, Beth. "Family Literacy Programs: Creating a Fit with Families of Children with Disabilities." In L. Ann Benjamin and Jerome Lord, eds. Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice. U.S. Department of Education, January 1996. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/create.html).

36. Holt, Daniel, ed. Assessing Success in Family Literacy Projects: Alternate Approaches to Assessment & Evaluation. McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems, 1994.

37. Jones, Claudia. More Parents are Teachers Too: Encouraging Your 6-to-12-year-old. Charlotte, VT: Williamson Pub. Co., 1990.

38. Jones, Claudia. Parents are Teachers, Too: Enriching Your Child's First Six Years. Charlotte, VT: Williamson Pub. Co., 1988.

39. Karweit, Nancy. "The Effect of Story Reading on the Language Development of Disadvantaged Prekindergarten Students." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

40. Kline, Peter. The Everyday Genius: Restoring Children's Natural Joy of Learning, and Yours Too. Arlington, Va: Great Ocean Publishers, 1988.

41. Koskinen, Patricia S., Irene H. Blum, Nancy Tennant, E. Marie Parker, Mary W. Straub, and Christine Curry. "Have you Heard any Good Books Lately? Encouraging Shared Reading at Home with Books and Audiotapes." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

42. Lewis, Barbara S. A Good Beginning: Enjoying Your Baby's First Year. Syracuse, N.Y.: New Readers Press, 1990.

43. Liggett, Twila C. "The Family Literacy Alliance: Using Public Television, Book-Based Series to Motivate At-Risk Populations." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

44. Lundberg, Ingvar, Jirgan Frost, and Ole-Peter Peterson. "Effects of an Extensive Program for Stimulating Phonological Awareness in Preschool Children." ***Reading Research Quarterly,*** Vol. 23, No.3, Summer 1988, pp. 263-284.

45. MacDonald, Theodore. "Adult Empowerment: Teaching Parents to Teach." ***Adults Learning (England),*** Vol. 5, No.5, Jan. 1994, pp.133-34.

46. Madigan, Daniel. "Shared Lives and Shared Stories: Exploring Critical Literacy Connections Among Family Members." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

47. McIvor, M. Conlon. Family Literacy in Action: A Survey of Successful Programs. Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press, 1990.

48. McKee, Patricia A., and Nancy Rhett. "The Even Start Family Literacy Program." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

49. Mikulecky, Larry. "Family Literacy: Parent and Child Interactions." In L. Ann Benjamin and Jerome Lord, eds. Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice. U.S. Department of Education, January 1996. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/parent.html).

50. Miller, Linda. Towards Reading: Literacy Development in the Pre-School Years. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996.

51. Morrow, Lesley Mandel. Literacy Development in the Early Years: Helping Children Read and Write. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1993.

52. Morrow, Lesley Mandel, Jody L. Scoblionko, and Dixie Shafer. "The Family Writing and Reading Appreciation Program." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

53. Neuman, Susan B. "Enhancing Adolescent Mothers' Guided Participation in Literacy." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

54. Nickse, Ruth S. Family and Intergenerational Literacy Programs: An Update of "The Noises of Literacy". Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Center on Education and Training for Employment, 1990.

55. Nickse, Ruth S. The Noises of Literacy. Washington: U.S. Department of Education, 1989

56. Nickse, Ruth S., and Shelley Quezada. "Collaborations: A Key to Success in Family Literacy Programs." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994..

57. Nicoll, Vivienne, and Lyn Wilkie, eds. Literacy at Home and School: A Guide for Parents. Newtown, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association, 1991.

58. O'Sullivan, Julia T. and Mark L. Howe. "Causal Attributions and Reading Achievement: Individual Differences in Low-Income Families." ***Contemporary Educational Psychology,*** Vol. 21, 1996, pp. 363-387.

59. Oldford-Matchim, Joan. Help Your Child Become a Reader: A Guide for Reading, Conversations, Activities and Games. St. John's: Significant Others as Reading Teachers, 1994.

60. Ollilia, Lloyd O. and Margie I. Mayfield, eds. Emerging Literacy: Preschool, Kindergarten, and Primary Grades. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1992.

61. Paratore, Jeanne R. "Implementing an Intergenerational Literacy Project: Lessons Learned." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

62. PLAN Inc. Laying the Foundations (Kit): A Parent-Child Literacy Training Kit. Washington, D.C.: PLAN Inc., 1988.

63. Potts, Meta W., and Susan Paull. "A Comprehensive Approach to Family-Focused Services." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

64. Powell, Douglas. "Teaching Parenting and Basic Skills to Parents: What we Know." In L. Ann Benjamin and Jerome Lord, eds. Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice. Department of Education, January 1996. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/teachp.html).

65. Quezada, Shelley. Developing Literacy Programs in Small and Medium Sized Libraries. Chicago: American Library Association, 1996.

66. Quezada, Shelley, and Ruth S. Nickse. Community Collaborations for Family Literacy Handbook. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1993.

67. Ryan, Katherine E., Barbara Geissler, and Suzanne Knell. "Evaluating Family Literacy Programs: Tales From the Field." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

68. Schwartz, Judith I. Literacy Begins at Home: Helping Your Child Grow Up Reading and Writing. Springfield, IL: C. C. Thomas, 1991.

69. Segel, Elizabeth. "'I Got to Get Him Started Out Right': Promoting Literacy by Beginning with Books." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

70. Shimron, Joseph. "The Making of Readers: The Work of Professor Dina Feitelson." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

71. Simpson, Catherine. A Learning Plan for Literacy: A Layperson's Tutoring Guide. St. John's: The Newfoundland and Labrador Literacy Coalition, 1991.

72. Smith, Sheila, ed. Two Generation Programs For Families in Poverty: A New Intervention Strategy. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Pub. Corp., 1995.

73. Snow, Catherine E. "Enhancing Literacy Development: Programs and Research Perspectives." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

74. Snow, Catherine E. and Patton Tabors. "Intergenerational Transfer of Literacy." In L. Ann Benjamin and Jerome Lord, eds. Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice. U.S. Department of Education, January 1996. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/transfer.html).

75. Somerfield, Benita. "Parents and Children Reading Together: The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

76. Sroka, Iris, Jeanette Betancourt, and Myra Ozaeta. "Linking Families, Childcare, and Literacy: *Sesame Street* Preschool Educational Program." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

77. St. Pierre, Robert and Jean Layzer. "Informing Approaches to Serving Families in Family Literacy: Lessons From Other Family Intervention Programs." In L. Ann Benjamin and Jerome Lord, eds. Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice. U.S. Department of Education, January 1996. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/lesson.html).

78. Stillman, Peter R. Families Writing. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1989.

79. Strickland, Dorothy. "Meeting the Needs of Families in Literacy Programs." In L. Ann Benjamin and Jerome Lord, eds. Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice. U.S. Department of Education, January 1996. (January 1998 Internet Address: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/need.html).

80. Taylor, Barbara M. Reading Together: Helping Children Get a Good Start in Reading. Glenview, IL: GoodYearBooks, 1991.

81. Taylor, Denny. Family Literacy: Young Children Learning to Read and Write. Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983.

82. Taylor, Denny, and Catherine Dorsey-Gaines. Growing Up Literate: Learning From Inner-City Families. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1988.

83. Taylor, Denny, and Dorothy S. Strickland. Family Storybook Reading. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1986.

84. Thogmartin, Mark B. Teach a Child to Read with Children's Books: Combining Story Reading, Phonics, and Writing to Promote Reading Success. Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, Family Literacy Center: EDINFO Press, 1996.

85. Toomey, Derek, and Judith Sloane. "Fostering Children's Early Literacy Development through Parent Involvement: A Five-Year Program." In David K. Dickinson, ed. Bridges to Literacy: Children, Families, and Schools. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1994.

86. Tracey, Diane H. "Children Practicing Reading at Home: What We Know about how Parents Help." In Lesley Mandel Morrow, ed. Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities. New Jersey: International Reading Association, 1995.

87. Weinberg, Pamela. Family Literacy and the School: How Teachers can Help. Syracuse: New Readers Press, 1990.

88. Weinberg, Pamela. You and Your Child's Teacher. Syracuse: New Readers Press, 1990.

89. Weinstein-Shr, Gail, and Elizabeth P. Quintero, eds. Immigrant Learners and their Families: Literacy to Connect the Generations. McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems, 1995.

90. Yedlin, Jane, and Caroline T. Linse. Families and Schools. Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1991.

Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador

Section 6

"Addendum"

St. John's, NF *1999*

"Addendum"

Feedback From the 1999-2000 Pilot Phase of "Eager to Learn"

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Community Services Council (CSC) of Newfoundland and Labrador conducted an evaluation of the *Eager to Learn* resource manual in 1999-2000. Comments were obtained from:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE) Instructors at the College of the North Atlantic (CONA) in St. John's and Clarenville, Newfoundland;
- Staff from the Brighter Futures Coalition in St. John's, Newfoundland;
- Staff from Health and Community Services, St. John's Region;
- Representatives of the Association of Early Childhood Educators (AECENL) of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The evaluation focused on delivering Eager to Learn as an ABE credit in Newfoundland settings.

2.0 OTHER COURSE APPLICATIONS FOR THIS COURSE

The course could be used in a variety of settings in addition to Adult Basic Education but was not field tested in either of those locations by CSC:

- The course could be beneficial to schools as a parent resource package or as a preschool orientation package. More work needs to be done in this area to develop this.

- The course could easily be delivered at Community Centres or Family Resource Centres.

- The course can be delivered to early childhood educators for continuing education requirements.

3.0 FEEDBACK

3.1 Overall Commentary on *Eager to Learn*

- The *Eager to Learn* course binder is well written. It is easy to comprehend and understand. The modules are well laid out with objectives and outcomes.

- The course binder is adaptable to a variety of environments. It is usable by facilitators with varying degrees of knowledge in family literacy. One of the instructors, a Physics instructor, had not taught any family literacy course before and reported he taught it with very little difficulty. However, teachers who are inexperienced with direct literacy teaching may wish the resource binder be enhanced with some additional background information on family literacy. One potential source of such information is the NALD database (www.nald.ca).

- The objectives flow smoothly from one to the other, even to the point facilitators did not realize when moving across objectives. The sections tie together well. There was much information to be used for discussion and analysis.

- The suggested resources are adequate to teach the course but need to be supplemented by new information, especially if students request more information on particular topics. This is readily available from a variety of sources.

- The course is flexible enough to acknowledge and support literacy activities already ongoing in homes. It is also flexible enough to support the diverse families that are served. Literacy is not only an issue for low income families but for all families.

- The course is primarily intended to deal with family literacy issues of children aged 0 to 5 but many parents used some of the ideas for their older children. Parents of older children were reflective in the groups and assisted the parents of younger children. This flexibility especially showed itself during the class discussions when much of the support occurred.

- Some adults in the course reported that they enjoyed the course in spite of not having any children and that Eager to Learn prepared them for future parenthood.

- Non-parenting adults reported that it was a little more difficult to do the activities that required the participation of children. During class discussions the parents had more concrete comments to offer the group than non-parents.

3.2 Specific Comments on Modules in *Eager to Learn* (1-8)

The following are direct quotes taken from evaluation questionnaires and survey forms filled out during the pilot phase of *Eager to Learn*. The Community Services Council, Newfoundland & Labrador would like to thank everyone who responded.

Direct Quotes

- "When delivering the course, try to keep the group size down to a maximum of twenty people."

- "The course does not have to be delivered as a whole course but can be delivered in sections or as part of another course. Be careful if calling it a course because people may not then be willing to use parts of it."

- "People would be willing to participate in this type of course if they feel it benefits their family. Most would be here for my family".

- "Be aware that some people may have negative connotations about the words family literacy." "Are you telling me I can't read or am not a fit person?," may be a comment by some parents.

- "The course is in a straightforward format that can be easily used by people."

- "The group work in conjunction with the individual work is good because it allows for individuals some flexibility to work with their families and the group work allows for ideas and information sharing."

- "One binder cannot cover all things but this one has a variety of ideas and items that can be used and adapted."

- "Be a nice idea to build a binder as the adults go through the course so they can see success and feel they are getting somewhere."

- "Reading is enjoyable and not a 'chore.' It is a close time to be shared between family and friends."

- "Emphasize the 'fun' aspect of the course."

- "The order of the modules is appropriate and flows smoothly."

- "It is good that the emphasis is on child development."

- "When offering the course there should be a nominal fee as people are more apt to value something that is purchased."

The following are direct quotes on the eight learning modules in the resource binder.

Module 1 - What is Family Literacy?

- This module sets the tone for the rest of the course.
- Emphasize the fun aspect of family literary.
- The course deals with helping young children *learn to read* instead of *teaching them* to read.
- This course can be a means to getting adults involved in their own literacy training.
- The brainstorming ideas worked well and prompted much discussion.

Module 2 - Parents as People

- Instructors in this pilot phase felt this was a make or break session for the whole course.
- Do not make people feel responsible for problems with their children.
- Include a section on good things about children.
- The first two modules contain a lot of theory and not as much practical exercises to do with the children. When completing these first two modules add a practical activity and /or give something tangible that can be taken away from the course.
- Be certain nobody feels deficient by providing, at this point, an overview of the course and focusing on the placement of this module relative to the remainder of the course.
- Inform all students that the self esteem guide is not a test. Make certain people feel a sense of accomplishment when doing this exercise.

- It is important to increase parents' self esteem and provide them with an understanding of how to build the self esteem of children.

Module 3 - Learning About Children

- It is important for course facilitators, leaders or instructors to have an understanding of child development and what is appropriate at the different ages. This includes activities, reading, talking, and behavioral expectations. As well, be aware of differences in learning styles.

- Be careful of the word Practicum - use 'Application' or 'Activity'.

- Use a generic approach to dealing with issues in this module; avoid personal anecdotes.

- Make sure you link the stages of child development to literacy acquisition.

- Be certain everyone understands that the ages and stages are not 'cast in stone' and that children progress at different rates. Likewise, people have characteristics of each of the different learning styles.

- There is a lack of information pertaining to multiple births in this module. Facilitators may wish to supplement.

Module 4 - Preparing Your Home for Literacy

- Modeling is very important in order for parents to transmit literacy skills to their children. Children must see their parents reading, writing, etc and valuing literacy. Literacy can also be taught in the broad sense and not just with reading and writing. Look everywhere around you for literacy materials. You can be a good parent-teacher doing a multitude of other activities. You can teach children many skills and concepts without spending lots of money.

- The diagram outlining where you can find literacy materials could be a good starter for this section.

- Include information around art and numeracy, and maybe do a similar diagram for places to find numeracy materials, and perhaps generate the chart during a class.

- Emphasize that books are important but not everything.

- A trip to the library, new or used book store would be a beneficial exercise for this module.

Module 5 - Having Fun with Literacy

- Include numeracy with the literacy.

- The course facilitator could do a web on numeracy, similar to the literacy web in Module 4, on how children currently use their numeracy skills.

Module 6 - Reading & Talking

- Emphasize the importance of oral language development in the literacy of children. Help eliminate attitudes such as "What can I talk to him about? He's only two." And "Why would I read to a baby?"

- Be sure to maximize the strategies and make effective use of all the different techniques.

Module 7 - Challenges of Learning

- The title is "challenges of learning," but deals primarily with learning disabilities. Many challenges have been omitted. These include physical, speech language deficits, sensory motor deficits, social skills, environmental deprivation, emotional difficulties, etc.
- Be very clear about the differences between learning disabilities and developmental milestones or achievements.

- This section was found to be informative and easy to read, especially for someone who does not have a lot of training in that area. It is good for a quick reference.

- The course is gentle and positive and honest pertaining to learning disabilities.

Module 8 - Taking Literacy to School & Beyond

- Be aware of cultural differences that may exist in a population.

- Emphasize that the overall objectives of this module deal with issues occurring from birth - not only the year preceding school.

- Build a confidence in parents so they will actively participate in school - go to curriculum night, parent-teacher interviews - without feeling they are in a threatening environment. Establish effective channels of communication between home and school.

- There should be sensitivity and awareness among educators that the school system has disappointed many people who might be taking a course on family literacy.

3.3 Time Frame for Delivering this Course

The time frame for the course will be 20-40 hours of direct instruction with additional time required for learners to work at home to an approximate total of 60 hours.

- This will vary depending on the needs of the group and the composition of the group members.

- Note that 60 hours of instruction is the minimum for an Adult Basic Education credit.

Group members will likely want to discuss issues in each module. Allow for discussion time, especially following the introduction of new topics.

3.4 Course Goals and Objectives

Instructors in the pilot phase felt the course met and even exceeded its goals and objectives.

- The module objectives flowed smoothly from one to the other and within the units.

- The units are self-contained which provides the course some flexibility but also lends itself to supplementary resources from additional family literacy programs.

Facilitators reported no omissions in the course objectives.

3.5 Delivery Methods

Group discussion was the most common delivery method. Because of the wide range of topics in the course, different methods were used at different times including brainstorming sessions, guest speakers, lectures, videos, written tasks, and self-exploration.

Group discussion allowed for experiences to be drawn upon from outside the course or within the students' own environments. Self-paced delivery methods would be less well adapted to the course as much of the strength lies in the peer and group interactions.

3.6 Evaluation Techniques for Marking and Grading

This course may be offered on a graded, or non-graded basis.

- It will be necessary to provide Adult Basic Education (ABE) students with a score out of 100 percent if they are using *Eager to Learn* for a General Options credit. Refer to the Overview Section (page 5) in the front of the resource binder for *suggested* values in each teaching module.

- It is also acceptable to assign a Pass or Fail value to the full course, depending on the teaching circumstances and the requirements of students.

Instructors who took part in the Pilot Phase of *Eager to Learn* found it possible to assign grades and scores to participation in journal writing; class discussions; role plays and any of the assignments called for in the resource binder.

- Use your imagination and feel free to ask students their preference for evaluation.

Some students prefer the assurance of a grade, whereas others may be more comfortable with a simple *Pass* or *Fail* designation. The resource binder does not contain criteria for marking a difference between Pass and Fail. An instructor wishing to use such a system would be best advised to develop clear criteria for passing or failing a student and to share these, in advance, with students enrolled in *Eager to Learn.*

Regardless of marking procedures, instructors would be well advised to keep an attendance record of class time, per student. Professional organizations with requirements for on-going education, for example, usually ask for a record of hours spent in instruction. They may also

ask for your recommenced guidelines on how much self-directed study time was associated with the course.

3.7 Resources

The suggested resources and the course binder are fairly extensive and adequate but need to be supplemented in some areas. Depending on the topic and the level of interest there may be a need to add some materials, especially if students are interested in learning 'challenges' an area where new learning resources are being developed continuously.

3.8 Suggestions for Course Improvement

Instructors were pleased with the course and offered few suggestions for change. They did suggest materials should be updated periodically to keep things current and to add to the resource list, especially if *Eager to Learn* was used by ABE students as a General Options credit.

3.9 Students' Initial Expectations of the Course

Students at all three pilot sites enrolled in the course for a variety of reasons. Some wanted to enhance their parenting skills, and get some idea what family literacy is all about. Others wanted to formulate new ideas of family literacy, learn/hear ideas on how to become more involved in the learning of their children or grandchildren, and gain new parenting skills. One group of learners had recently taken a course 'Parents as Teaching Partners' and wanted to build on this newly acquired knowledge. Still others were uncertain what to expect but were willing to try a new course!

3.10 Students' Evaluation of the Course

Most students were pleased with the course and felt it was beneficial and worthwhile. They enjoyed sharing ideas and learning from each other. They spent time reflecting on their own family situations and realized others had to cope with similar situations. They were reassured that they were already doing some positive things toward improving family literacy. Some of the students would have liked more material and a longer course. Overall it seems to have met their expectations.

4.0 SUMMARY

The 1999-2000 evaluation showed that a course on family literacy is worthwhile as both a personal and educational experience. The course was interesting to students and instructors alike. It was flexible and fun.

Thanks Everyone!

My Personal Definition of Family Literacy:

Class Evaluation

What did we learn together?

Family literacy, for me, is:

The best part, for me, was:

The worst part, for me, was:

Anything else?

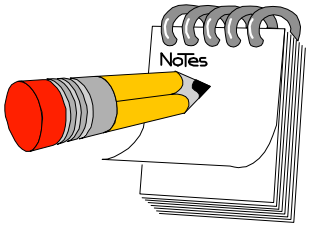
Community Services Council
Newfoundland and Labrador

Section 7

"Notes"

St. John's, NF *1999*

Notes



7. Notes

7. Notes