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PARENTS SUPPORTING LITERACY AT HOME K-6

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Education: Reading Option

by

Jennifer Miller Lara

June 1995

PARENTS SUPPORTING LITERACY AT HOME K-6

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

by
Jennifer Ann Lara

June 1995

Approved by:


Adria Klein, First Reader

5-10-95
Date


Joseph Gray, Second Reader

ABSTRACT

An unknown source once said, "You can't leave footprints on the sands of time if you're sitting down." This paper was written to expose parents to the reading methods used within the classroom in the effort to help bridge the gap between home and school. The goal is to educate parents on reading so they will support their children's reading at home. Unfortunately, many students are entering school with little background in reading which sets them behind. In her book, Read to Me: Raising Kids Who Love to Read, Cullinan (1992) states, "Voracious readers are made, not born. No child is born loving baseball or pizza; they learn to like what they see their parents valuing" (p. 115). Literacy develops naturally if children are immersed in an environment enriched with print. As Smith (1983) points out, "Learning to read is a complex and delicate task in which almost all the rules, all the cues, and all the feedback can be obtained only through the act of reading itself" (p. 23). The intention of this project is to reach out to parents to help bring them into the reading process. Not only does storybook time give families time to bond, it also sets the stage for developing life long readers. Cullinan (1992) shares, "Ten minutes of freely chosen reading at home makes a big improvement on reading tests at school" (p. 100).

The handbook was written to stress to parents the importance of having a literacy environment within a home. Helpful techniques are provided for parents who have a low literacy level, are nonEnglish readers, or have a busy lifestyle. Strategies are demonstrated

for readers when they come to an unknown word, and suggestions are provided for dealing with homework and TV. The handbook also includes a list of recommended literature and guidelines for choosing children's books.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents, Gerald and Georgia Miller, for being the wonderful parents and reading role models they are. I remember standing in a book store one day when my father told me he'd *always* have enough money to buy me a book. That special comment has always stayed with me. We fondly called my father a walking encyclopedia because of the vast amount of reading he did in many subject areas. I have childhood memories of my mother waking up an hour earlier to read her books while the house was still quiet. Growing up amongst avid readers and having an appreciation of books is something I would like to pass on to my students.

I would also like to thank my husband Jose Lara, who guided me through the master's program. His constant love and support made the road much easier and worthwhile.

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INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Reading and writing begin at home long before a child starts school. Learning to read happens naturally by purposeful and daily involvement with print, and comfortable and rememberable storytime with loved ones. Learning to read does not happen as well with flashcards, worksheets, drills, or any expensively purchased programs. This paper was written to make parents aware of the important role they play in the success their child has at school. This author does not believe parents see themselves in this important light. They are afraid they might contradict what is happening in the classroom or claim stumbling blocks in their daily lives that prevents them having the time to read with their children. This project was written to educate parents in the reading process and provide practical guidelines to support their child's literacy at home. The parent handbook was written to help narrow the gap between the classroom and home.

Recent research on how children learn to read has given special attention to the child's home environment. A great deal of research points to the fact that a child's early encounters with print at home have a tremendous effect on the child's later progress at school. In 1982 Jerome Harste, Carolyn Burke and Virginia Woodward reported to the National Institute of Education (Butler & Clay, 1982):

Whether by design or default, children who were reported as always being 'drug around' on shopping trips, trips to the courthouse, trips to the doctor's office, trips anywhere, whether or not the trip seemingly matched the child's developmental interest, seemed to have an advantage. These same children who were reported as always 'under foot,' who naturally got included in cooking and setting the table, who were reported as writing out shopping lists and reading them during shopping, who were given paper and pen to recite a letter to grandmother while the adult

wrote letters or sent bills, who were given the occupant mail to open and read while the mother opened and read the rest of the mail, were seemingly at an advantage. Most of these activities had no great literacy teaching design behind them in the parent's eyes, but were done more by virtue of the fact that the child was about and involvement seemed natural largely because it was the only logical way the parent had for getting about the business of the day (p. 8).

Parents have the opportunity to use their everyday experiences to enhance their child's language and extend their knowledge of the world. By pumping up a flat tire, caring for pets, following recipes, and playing board games, children are being exposed to new language and hearing other people use the same words in different situations, so they are learning that some words have more than one meaning. This is exposure to language they may soon encounter in books or experiment with in their own writing. Hill (1989) writes in her book Home: Where Reading And Writing Begin,

As a consequence, all of the family activities we engaged in - the puzzles we worked; the bedtime stories we read; the family outings we took; the special family events we prepared for; the gardening, cooking, cleaning, and redecorating we did; the conversations and even the disagreements we had - were unrecognized as important learning times that played an integral part in my son's learning to talk, listen, read and write (p. 2).

Bialostok (1992) warns, "Schools are filled with children whose parents have assumed that they played no role in preparing their children for reading" (p.14). He shares how this situation is similar to a patient asking their doctor to be cured of an illnesses that could have been prevented by proper health practices. Bialostok states,

A doctor can only do so much if you don't care for yourself. A dentist can't guarantee teeth into old age unless you brush and floss regularly. A therapist cannot undo a miserable childhood. A teacher, no matter how skilled, loving, hardworking, and devoted, cannot provide the groundwork that parents can

provide their child. Reading aloud to your child is incredibly important! (p.15).

Storybook reading exposes children to rich vocabulary and reading patterns, while allowing families time to bond. A few pages into a book, accidents and bad tempers fade and busy schedules are left behind. Stories provide children with almost limitless opportunities for learning. While they are reading about the world and making connections between the characters and their own life, children have their family to trust and ask questions of. There are a wide variety of children's books on almost every conceivable topic. Moving, a new baby, a parent's loss of a job, divorce or a death in the family could perhaps be understood a little more with a well-chosen book. Through the pages of literature, characters confront similar situations so young readers come to realize they are not alone in that experience. This is a wonderful way parents can provide their children with additional information on a sensitive issue. Once children learn to read on their own, the parent's role of reading to them, should not be over. Children enjoy this time together and benefit from hearing parents read more complex language patterns and vast vocabulary. Good books are often enjoyed over and over.

Children who learn to read at home are learning in the most natural environment there is, between parent and child. They are reading literature for meaning and enjoyment. Students who enter into a whole language classroom continue this natural style of reading. However, reading programs in schools differ from classroom to classroom. Currently there are three theories or belief systems of teaching and the learning of reading. The

Decoding Model, Skills Model, and Whole Language Based Model are theoretical orientations that strongly influence the way teaching and learning of reading take place.

In the Decoding model the focus of reading is on sounds. This is a layered effect, when readers can produce the symbols (letters) into sounds, words develop and finally meaning comes to the reader. Comprehension is measured on how well the child uses the sounds. The Skills model of reading focuses on words. Instruction is given in high frequency vocabulary, letters/sounds, and in meaning. After reading a story, a series of comprehension questions are asked and workbook sheets are given to test reading success. Comprehension is measured to the one correct answer given by the author or the textbook publisher.

According to the Whole Language model, reading and writing are learned by doing. Language is learned through meaningful conversation and text. Children learn to read when they are exposed to a vast amount of literature and reading strategies. In her book, Your Child Can Read and You Can Help: A Book for Parents, Ervin (1979) shares this example,

Teaching your child by doing is easy for you because you've been doing it ever since he was born. You didn't teach him to tie his shoes by saying: "Now, listen to me, Bobbie. You hold the laces in each hand, then you cross them over. . . ." No, you sat down on the sofa with him and actually tied the laces with him, saying: "Now hold the laces in your hand like this. Good, that's right. No, hold them a bit tighter. . . ." You use exactly the same method when you teach him such things as counting, identifying colors, recognizing the letters, and, finally, to read (p. 27).

Adults don't learn a vocabulary of 50,000 plus words by doing worksheets or running to the dictionary each time. Language is learned when it is needed and used. Classroom

assignments are based on purpose. For example, rather than learning to write letters for the format's sake, students may choose to write a letter to someone they know, or for something they are learning about while learning the letter format in the process.

Comprehension in the whole language classroom is based on what the reader brings to the story based on their background. Therefore there are no wrong answers. Students who enroll in Decoding and Skills classrooms might find it frustrating to be grouped into ability levels and by having reading broken down into parts. There is a Chinese proverb that says: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." This author believes the whole language philosophy enables teachers and parents to create a foundation for reading strategies and a love of reading to last a lifetime, and it is the view point in this paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Parents play one of the most important roles in their child's education. A major aim for educators needs to be bringing parents into the classroom and exposing them to the new methods, curriculum and philosophy in teaching reading. Within the home there are many opportunities parents can take to help reinforce the methods being taught in the classroom. By working together, teachers and parents can form a very effective and powerful team. Although a busy lifestyle, a parent's low literacy level, and a second language within the home can be a challenge to reading with a child, these do not need to serve as a deterrent in supporting a child's literacy at home.

Infants learn from the first day of birth that communication is vital to be held, fed, and changed. Parents encourage all attempts of language as they talk and sing to their babies in return. Positive feedback at all language attempts, inspires children even more. With real use of language and support from their parents talking appears to come easily to children. The same is true for reading. A supportive learning environment at home can enhance a child's progress at school. Research shows that successful readers have had someone to read to them regularly (Silvern, 1985). Children who were read to from eight to ten minutes a day showed higher academic achievement than children who were not. Even more impressive is the research that shows that gifted children were read to for approximately twenty minutes a day.

There is a lot to be learned from children who enter into school already reading.

Phinney (1988) states, "Because early readers have learned naturally, we can discover from watching them how reading is most easily learned" (p. 30). She points out, by learning to read before they started school it is obvious a credentialed teacher did not need to be present for these children to learn. A 1976 study by Margaret Clark (Butler and Clay, 1982) focused on thirty-two children, all of whom could read by the time they entered school at age five. The children came from very different economic backgrounds, but all came from families where books were read and stories were told. The study describes one boy who was the youngest of seven children, all of whom were early readers. Although their father left school at fourteen, and was an unskilled laborer, he loved fairy stories and shared these with his children. The parents put aside money for books, took their children to the library often, and loved reading themselves. "No one had tried to teach the youngest child to read at this early age; surrounded by books and people who read for pleasure, he had learned" (Butler and Clay, 1982, p. 9). Frank Smith (1983) states in his book Essays into Literacy, "Learning to read is a complex and delicate task in which almost all the rules, all the cues, and all the feedback can be obtained only through the act of reading itself" (p. 23).

A young girl named Cushla is an example of how reading with a child helps them later on in school. From birth she was a multi-handicapped, chronically-ill baby who needed constant care. Her early childhood was filled with crises and illness. Doctors predicted a future of severe retardation for her. Cushla's family decided to fill her life with language and books. To the surprise of her doctors, by the time she was six and a half,

she was reading at a level well beyond her actual age. Although she still had all her original handicaps, Cushla learned to read because she was in an environment rich with language and stories (Butler and Clay, 1982, p.17).

Another example of the power of family story time is of a healthy little girl and her mother's fascinating diary. The mother kept an account of her daughter's experiences with books from the time she was two until she entered school. The diary was published into a book titled, Books Before Five by Dorothy Neal White. Butler and Clay share one passage from the diary when the daughter was just two years old:

The experience makes the book richer, and the book enriches the personal experience even at this level. I am astonished at the early age this backward and forward flow between books and life takes place. With adults or older children, one cannot observe it so easily, but here at this age when all a child's experiences are known and the books read are shared, when the voluble gabble which in her speech reveals all the associations, the interaction is seen very clearly (p. 17).

Reading together is one of the most beneficial things a parent can do with their child. As The Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois (1994) puts it, "Children who enjoy reading read a lot. The more they read the better they are at reading and the more they enjoy it" (p.10). Reading together is a bonding time between parent and child that provides security and warmth along with exposure to enriching vocabulary. Listening comprehension is the first step to reading. While children are listening to their parents read they are building a reservoir of words that they will later encounter in their own reading. Phinney (1988) shares,

"Reading is the visual representation of a process already mastered through sound. It is easier for the blind to learn to read than the deaf, because blind people have

learned the structures and auditory representations of language naturally, using the sense that was refined for that purpose. The profoundly deaf haven't had those five years or so of intensive prior experience in learning our highly complex communication system" (p. 13).

This is one reason that parents play such an important role during their child's language development in the first few years of life. Children need to be exposed to language in a variety of settings and purposes. Reading and family outings are two methods parents can use to involve children in meaningful language.

One state already moving ahead with parent education is Missouri. Every school district within the state has a parent education program. Educators go into the home of families who have children under five years old. The educators read to the children while informing the parents of the reading strategies they are using. Teachers say children start school with advanced skills with books, are very aware, and ask good questions. Parents are also very pleased because they can tell the difference in their children. Although this program is present in most states, Missouri is the only state where it is implemented district wide (Williams, 1994). Literacy has been the major focus of education during the last decade. The United States Department of Education selected The Commission on Reading to research areas to improve literacy in America. Their extensive research gave recommendations to improve literacy in Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson, 1985). The commission made the following recommendations; "Parents should read to preschool children and informally teach them about reading and writing." and "Parents should support school-aged children's continued growth as readers." (p. 117).

Parent education is a key element in developing strong readers. Winter & Rouse (1990) explain, "Helping the child learn to read is perceived by many to be the task of the school, and teachers are expected to work this magic with children without assistance from the home" (p. 383). The American charity called CARE that has helped children in wartorn countries for 50 years, is now turning it's attention within the United States. It has started a pilot reading program in four elementary schools within poor neighborhoods. "In some inner-city schools, a large majority of children enter kindergarten without any appreciation of books" says the deputy superintendent of Boston schools, Arthur Steller. "We can teach the reading skills in classrooms, but it's the parents at home, reading with children and having the children read to them that cements those skills and the appreciation for reading." The program delivered packages of 10 books to kindergartners and first-graders. One parent described how her child responded when she received her book packet, "She immediately opened the box and immediately started reading-before she could even get in the house and get her coat off." The school principal says it is this kind of enthusiasm that will give these students an advantage later on (Thompson, 1995).

Educators are finding the children coming into the schools are in two diverse groups. One group is prepared or already reading and the other group is not. With parent education, the home environment can support and enhance the child's progress at school. According to Cairney & Munsie (1992) :

It has been our aim to treat parents as learners, and to see them grow as parents, because it is our belief that to do otherwise is short sighted. If children are to be given a chance to succeed with literacy (and schooling)

the parents have to be helped to become long term supporters of their children's learning. Continued growth in children as learners is at least partly dependent upon the quality of interactions that these children experience with their parents within the home (p. 40).

For parents to become more involved in their child's literacy, they need to be made aware of changes in education. Teachers need to expose and encourage parents to the new philosophy and strategies used in teaching reading. According to Routman (1988), "Parents relate their child's education to their own school experience. If they wrote misspelled words ten times each, that's what they ask their child to do at home. If they "sounded out" every word, they encourage their child to do the same. In order for them to reinforce and support what is going on in school, they need to be brought into the process" (p. 226). Most adults in the United States were taught to read primarily through phonics, worksheets and flashcards which is why they are doubtful of the new reading and writing programs in schools. In order for parents to support their child's literacy at home in it's most natural formation, they need to become familiar with the different reading strategies educators are teaching children when they come across unknown words, and what the research shows about parent's reading with their child at home.

What Teachers Can do to Educate Parents

Parent education can be done through meetings with parents where the teacher explains their views of language, learning, teaching and the curriculum. Or through workshops in the classroom. The teacher can demonstrate methods that parents can try

out themselves at the workshop. These sessions can include a question and answer period to best meet the parent's needs and concerns. Video tapes on a checkout bases from the classroom can also be used, showing parents methods to try in their home. Parent handbooks are one other option that can be used to educate the parents in the changes made in teaching reading. Parents should be encouraged to come into the classroom to help them understand what is happening and why. In their article, Involving the Uninvolved: How to, Fredericks and Rasinski (1990), researched the most successful methods for working with parents. One method is flooding parents with lots of written and visual information over an extended time. One shot publicity campaigns are not sufficient to provide parents with the information they need to become involved and stay involved. Another method that works well with parents is providing them with a healthy dose of recognition with prizes such as books and book marks, awards, and certificates. "It's just human nature that we all want to be recognized for our efforts-both large and small" (Fredericks and Rasinski, 1990, p. 424). Students can write invitations to recruit parents, monthly newsletter to solicit parents participation in a variety of curriculum-related events, or design special awards to be sent to their own parents. Educators need to adopt an open-door policy for parents to come into the classroom at any time, and teachers may consider using the telephone frequently as a means to convey good news and information. Educators may also take the time to find out why parents who are not involved choose to distance themselves from the program. "Approach these talks with an open and nonjudgmental attitude-your goal is to discover reasons for nonsupport, not to

condemn. You may be surprised to learn that uninvolved parents have ample time but lack sufficient information" (Fredericks and Rasinski, 1990, p. 425). The authors also suggest that whenever possible, videotapes of the special class and school programs are made available for parents who were unable to attend some functions. The distinguishing factor in all of Fredericks and Rasinski's research shows that successful parent involvement programs all aggressively recruited parents and included them into the reading curriculum.

How Parents Can Help Outside the Classroom

Parents can also help their child outside the school setting in many ways. The following are suggestions that do not require a lot of time or fancy materials and can often be done while going places, eating together or doing chores. The University of Illinois (1994) recommends;

- 1.) Start by having plenty to read within reach.
- 2.) Make time for reading.
- 3.) Provide a quiet space for reading.
- 4.) Visit libraries and bookstores often.
- 5.) Get your child to talk about their reading.
- 6.) Talk informally with your child and their friends about books and magazines.
- 7.) Tie in their reading with real life.
- 8.) Don't criticize.
- 9.) Always read to your child because a person is never too old to be read to.
- 10.) Have them read aloud to you and younger siblings.
- 11.) Encourage your child to tell you about comprehension problems that arise during their reading (p.3).

Again, parents can help their child's literacy by exposing them to everyday experiences. Trips to the post office, parent's job site, the park, museums, libraries, and other everyday facets of life give the child new experiences and language to put in their bank of knowledge that will eventually be used. Goodman (1986) states, "Readers construct

meaning during reading. They use their prior learning and experiences to make sense of the text" (p. 38). In educating parents of changes in curriculum, teachers need to point out methods already being used by parents to ease their tension and promote their comfort level. As Routman (1988) points out, "Parents are powerful agents for change and teacher support if they are included as part of the educational process" (p. 227).

Effective Choices Made within the Home

Some parents claim many road blocks in their everyday life limit the amount of time they can spend with their children. One common complaint is a busy lifestyle. In many cases both the mother and father are working which limits the amount of time a parent has left over at the end of the day to devote just to their child. The following is a description of a parent dealing with the same problem (Hill, 1989),

Mrs. Allen said that at one time she used to think she didn't have any extra time to read to her children either, but she learned to listen to them read while doing other things. She explained that as she stirred the gravy or washed the dishes, her youngsters took turns reading to her. When she finished telling us this, Mrs. Allen paused and then said, "And now that I'm thinking about it, next time I'll read to them while they wash the dishes" (p.49).

One parent shared how they read a story while their pre-schooler was in the bathtub. Another suggestion is having parents make audiocassette tapes of new books. If the parents are gone or too busy to read, their children could still listen to the tapes. Parents could even exchange tapes between family friends to get a wider variety of stories for their children to listen to. The public library is also a great resource for finding books

with cassettes.

Story book time does not need to be limited to parents only. Other family members such as brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, and babysitters should share in reading. For children who go to child care centers, parents could pack up favorite books and ask that the center read with their child. There are also CD-Rom programs for the computer that highlight and read books aloud for children to follow along or read aloud with. TV programs that promote and encourage reading, such as *Reading Rainbow* (PBS) and *The Magic Schoolbus* (PBS), are recorded on video tape and are available at public libraries. The bottom line is that working parents need to plan carefully and make time to sit down with their children. This can be a very relaxing time after a hectic day to sit and read with your child. According to The University of Illinois (1994), "Reading can be a refuge from noise, overstimulation and the hubbub of everyday activities" (p. 5).

The children's lives today are also busy, filled with clubs, sports and lessons. Parents can suggest books and magazines that match their child's interests in hobbies, movies, sports and crafts. Comic books or popular series books might inspire children to want to squeeze reading into their schedule. However, effective choices need to be decided upon and some family behaviors may also need to change. Parents need to be seen as reading role models. Just as young children enjoy imitating their parents' behavior such as dressing up or playing mom and dad, children will also imitate their parents in reading if they demonstrate a motivating attitude. The television may need to be turned

off earlier each evening, allowing everyone time to settle down with a book. The

University of Illinois (1994) states,

Children who read widely have bigger vocabularies, have better skill at writing, and know more information. This helps them understand more complex ideas than their classmates who do not read. Reading can help them interpret our sometimes perplexing world. Reading can show them the experiences of others and help them discover that they are not alone. Reading can show them that other people have similar problems, and can offer solutions to some predicaments. And reading is the best source there is for factual information. People who read more, know more (p. 1).

Trelease (1989) states, "television has become the most pervasive and powerful influence on the human family and, at the same time, the major stumbling block to literacy in America" (p. 117). Not all television is bad, in fact some can be very educational.

However it is essential that parents set limits on what is being watched (quality) and the acceptable amount of time or shows allowed (quantity). Parents won't need to use the TV as a babysitter if they help their children develop creative interest and a love of reading.

A Second Language at Home

Another challenge faced in some homes is working with two languages. As noted by Freeman and Freeman (1992) in their book Whole Language for Second Language Learners,

When teaching Spanish-speaking students to read, it is essential to provide quality children's literature for them in their primary language. Quality literature in Spanish helps Hispanic students celebrate their first language and culture. It promotes self-esteem and pride and encourages language minority students to become empowered learners (p. 195).

By encouraging bilingual students to read in their primary language the children are able to use their previous experience and capitalize on their strengths within their first language. With children reading in their native tongue, parents are still able to sit down and read with their children. Although children's books in Spanish were hard to come across in the past, today they come in big books, storybooks, cookbooks, plays, counting books, and alphabet books. Freemand and Cervantes (1991) compiled an annotated bibliography of more than 350 Spanish children's books. These books can be found at school libraries, public libraries, and ordered at any major book store. And it will not be long until these children become familiar with English words. When they do, it is important that reading is based on meaningful and predictable materials where they can draw on experiences they are familiar with. The California English-Language Arts Framework (1987) states, "As we learn to read a first language by reading, we acquire a second language by picking up much unconsciously as we seek to understand meaning for our own needs and purposes" (p. 22).

Literacy Levels of Parents

Literacy levels within the home are another major concern for helping children to read. One way illiterate or semi-literate parents can help their children is by using wordless and predictable books. These two types of books help build vocabulary and confidence. In wordless books the reader interprets the pictures orally. By reading the

pictures, the book is told through the illustrations rather than read through text.

Predictable books help build readers by using words or phrases that are repeated over and over. Trelease (1989) gives this example,

Because the story line contains phrases that are repeated over and over ("Then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll . . ."), the child can easily predict what's coming- and often joins in on the reading (which enhances comprehension). For example in Barbara Seulling's *The Teeny Tiny Woman*, the words "teeny tiny" are repeated fifty times through out the book's thirteen sentences. In addition, predictable books often contain a cumulative sequence as in *Henny Penny*: "So Henny Penny, Chicken Licken, Turkey Lurkey, and Foxy Loxy went to see the king" (p.53).

Wordless and predictable books are especially beneficial for children with limited English skills, and adults who are illiterate or semiliterate. Their text is less intimidating and as a result builds self-confidence in their reader. Due to their tremendous success in the classroom, the number of these books being published has greatly increased in the last few years.

In summary, parents are their child's first and most important teacher in language and reading and they need to make effective choices when it comes to supporting their child's literacy. The University of Illinois (1994) shares, "If your adolescent says he or she doesn't want to read, don't give up. When a toddler refuses to eat and clamps an angry mouth shut, parents don't stop giving food. It won't happen overnight but the same gentle persistence that works with a toddler will work with your adolescent reluctant reader" (p. 3). Time needs to be made in a parent's busy schedule to share their favorite poems, fairy tales, storybooks and enthusiasm in reading. Parents need to go to their

child's school to show support and make a clear message that their education is very important to them. The TV may need to be turned off an hour earlier so families can sit down and experience the warmth of reading a book together. Parents are in the powerful position of being able to visit locations where their child's interest lie and encourage their children to read on those topics. A parent can give a gift no more special than that of sitting down with their children and showing their children how important they are and sharing some of life's experiences, good and bad, through stories and books in the warmth of their arms.

GOALS, OBJECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Goals

The primary goal in writing this project is to have parents recognize the importance of reading together and the strong impact it plays in their child's literacy. This project is intended to encourage family storytime, to give strategies to use while reading, and to promote lifetime readers.

Objectives

The following guidelines were used in planning this project:

1. To share information on reading with parents so they can enhance what is being learned in the classroom.
2. To demonstrate reading strategies for parents to support their child when coming to an unknown word.
3. To recommend reading techniques for parents with different needs, such as nonEnglish reading, low literacy levels and busy lifestyles.
4. To give suggestions that any family could implement, because they do not require a lot of time or fancy materials.
5. To provide parents with additional resources.
6. To reassure parents that many of the things they may already be doing are beneficial.
7. To suggest ways for dealing with homework and using TV effectively.
8. To list children's literature and reduce the amount of time spent on finding quality literature to use within the home.

Limitations

By sharing information in the form of a handbook, a limitation of this project may be based on the literacy levels of the parents. The large amount of information within the handbook will be spread out, with a different section sent home the first and third Monday of each month. By spreading the amount of information out over time, parents may find the reading more manageable.

This project is also limited to parents who read in English. It is the intention of this author to have the handbook translated into Spanish in the future to meet the needs of all parents. Finally, this project is written in the whole language viewpoint which may be a limitation if it does not correspond with the reading philosophy of the parents.

APPENDIX A

Parent Handbook

for

SUPPORTING LITERACY AT HOME

Grades K - 6

You may have tangible wealth untold;
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.
Richer than I you can never be -
I had a Mother who read to me.
-Strickland Gillilan

by

Jennifer Lara

California State University
San Bernardino

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Dear Parents,

Learning to read happens naturally by purposeful and daily involvement with print, along with comfortable and rememberable storytime with loved ones. Research on how children learn to read has paid special attention to the child's home environment. Steven Bialostok, author of Raising Readers states,

A doctor can only do so much if you don't care for yourself. A dentist can't guarantee teeth into old age unless you brush and floss regularly. A therapist cannot undo a miserable childhood. A teacher, no matter how skilled, loving, hardworking, and devoted, cannot provide the groundwork that parents can provide their child. Reading aloud to your child is incredibly important! (p. 15).

Storybook reading exposes children to rich vocabulary and reading patterns, while allowing families time to bond. As Dr. Seuss once said, "You really can't teach reading as a science. Love gets mixed up in it." Parents are their child's first teacher, and in fliers sent home twice a month I will provide practical guidelines to help you support your child's literacy at home. You will receive new information the first and third Monday of each month. I wish you many pleasurable hours of reading and hope we can work together to make your child a life long reader.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Lara

Did You Know . . .

Some facts on reading quoted from Cullinan:

- Children follow their parent's example. If they see you relax in front of television, they will, too. If they see you read, they will, too.

- Fathers should make an extra effort to read to their children. Young boys often associate reading or schoolwork with women, so a father's early involvement with books and reading can do much to elevate books in a boy's estimation.

- Encouragement works better than punishment; accentuate the positive things your child does. It helps build self-confidence, which leads to more success.

- Often a child will take the same book that was read to him and begin reading it himself.

- Children still need to be read to after they learn to read on their own. They need to hear what good reading sounds like.

- Ten minutes of freely chosen reading at home makes a big improvement in a child's performance on reading tests at school.

- Kids need to know that you are interested in their school. Attend parent meetings, visit your child's classroom. Keep in touch with school.

- Children learn to become better readers by writing. When children write they notice what other writers do in the books they read.

- Children in grades three through twelve learn the meanings of about 3,000 new words a year - the majority of new words are learned incidentally while reading books and other materials (1992, p.100).

Reading Strategies to Use with Your Child

The way reading is taught in schools today has been changing. New emphasis is on reading literature books and using a child's background experiences to relate to the story. The focus is on reading for meaning, not on perfecting sounds and letters.

Very recently, research has shown the popular phonics programs available on the market cannot guarantee their claims to have all children read. Author Steven Bialostok shares, "Too often parents take away from wonderful read-aloud time striving to create four-year-olds with PhDs in phonics. Instead of spending countless hours every week "phonic-ing" with your child, use the same time to read aloud, allowing the child to see the print" (p. 45). Phonics are important and teachers still want children to understand some phonics, however they have changed their focus on how to use it as a strategy in reading. Instead of having a child sound out the unknown word *house*, in the sentence "I live in a _____", children can use their background knowledge of what would make sense in the sentence. The possible answers could range from house to cave. Now that the possibilities for this unknown word have been narrowed down to logical choices, the child can think which of these possibilities starts with the "h" sound. Hut or houseboat could still be possibilities along with house, however the illustrations or following text should rule out those possibilities. Although this sounds like a time consuming process phonics itself is a very tedious and complex system. Rather than reading stories for perfect reading and pronunciation, children are now reading for meaning.

Students are encouraged to predict the content as they read. This is a very natural

process. When humans listen to others speak, we focus on the meaning of their message, not the individual words or sounds. We anticipate on what the speaker's ideas are. One very important role parents have is giving your children exposure to new experiences. These can be everyday experiences such as going to the post office, bank, park, library, changing a tire, etc. As your children are exposed to new experiences and vocabulary, they expand their background knowledge and ability to predict while reading.

The following are suggestions to try at home in supporting your child's literacy:

(1.) When reading a new book together, try this format:

A.) **Introduce the new story-** This should be kept brief. The aim is to whet their appetite by reading the story title and looking at the illustration to make predictions about the story. This helps make connections with their past experiences. Read the name of the author so children can become familiar with the work of different authors.

B.) **Read the story-** The adult reads the story all the way through, pausing only to heighten the child's interest by allowing them to make a prediction, such as "What do you think will happen next?"

C.) **Discuss the story-** Children may compare their predictions with the outcome of the story. Some sample questions to discuss about the story are listed below in number 3. One example is asking your child their favorite part of the story.

D.) **Read it again-** Usually your child will suggest this. Try to have them join in on the story somehow this time by reading a repetitive phrase or using echoic or choral read aloud methods described below. However do not insist that they join in, this should be as non-threatening as possible.

(2.) Two read aloud methods used in classrooms can be easily used between you and your child at home. Echoic reading is particularly useful for nonfluent readers. The adult reads sections of print and the children reread those sections. By reading sections aloud first, the adult provides proper word attack, fluency, and expression to be imitated by the children. Another method called Choral reading is used by reading the story together at the same time. If the child is unsure of a word, they are hearing the answer immediately.

(3.) The following are questions to ask periodically after a story. They are not designed to be given all at one time or used as a test. They are intended for discussion purposes, since reading for pleasure and understanding is the main objective.

- *(setting) Where and when does the story take place? How do you know?
- *(plot) Did the story end as you expected it to? What clues did the author offer to prepare you to expect this ending?
- *(characters) Who is the main character in the story? What kind of person is this character? How do you know?
- *(point of view) Who is telling the story? What clues helped you decide?
- *(mood and theme) Did you have strong feelings as you read the story? What did the author do to make you feel strongly?
- *(relating to other books/themes) Think about the book. Did it remind you of any other characters or stories?

(4.) Rather than expect your child to sound out all of the unknown words they come across, try these reading strategies instead:

- *Continue reading to see if the meaning of the unknown word will become clear through the text (a strategy commonly used by adults).
- *Sound out the first letter of the unknown word and predict what word would make sense.
- *Look at the illustrations and take a guess at the word.
- *Read the sentence again.
- *If you still do not know the word try to substitute it with a logical choice of a word you do know.

Some Do's and Don'ts When Reading with Your Child

DO's:

- Do read to your child! And the sooner you get started the better. Although it is becoming increasingly difficult to find the time to do the things we need to do, let alone the things we enjoy doing, reading aloud to your child can be both pleasurable and beneficial.
- Do accept the way your child reads with the same pleasure you showed when your child first talked. Praise and encourage all their attempts at reading.
- Do reread books. Child learn about language and the interaction of the plot and characters from each rereading.
- Do make reading a relaxed, enjoyable experience for all.
- Do read new books first, and read them more than once. Read with enthusiasm and drama. This will familiarize your child with the sentence patterns, vocabulary, and story line so they can experience success when reading the book independently.
- Do adjust your reading pace to fit the story. During a suspenseful part, slow down, draw your words out, bring your listeners to the edge of their seats. The most common mistake in reading aloud is reading too fast. Read slowly enough for the child to draw a mental picture. Try to end on a cliffhanger to get your child back the next day.
- Do encourage your child to read print all around you such as street signs, posters, road maps, names on packages in the supermarket, TV listings, menus, weather reports, and so on.
- Do get your child a library card. It is impossible to own every good book ever written, so check out new options at the library on a regular basis, and purchase the books your child just can't put down.
- Do remember that reading aloud comes naturally to very few people. To do it successfully and with ease takes practice.
- Do read books that are enjoyable to both of you. C. S. Lewis (the author of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*) once said "A book which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children's book".

-Do pick the right books for your child's reading and emotional level. Adults can read to a child from a book with a more sophisticated plot and use of language, however a child should do independent reading from books appropriate to their own reading levels.

-Do encourage grandparents, aunts, and uncles to give your children's favorite books or magazine subscriptions as gifts on their birthday and special holidays.

DON'TS:

-Don't insist that your child sound out all the unknown words they come upon. In the English language there are more than fifty different ways to pronounce the letter *a* depending on the letters surrounding it. By struggling through this tedious process the meaning of the story can be lost. When you come to this point, either

- *Keep reading and try to guess the meaning of the word in text, like most adults do.

- * Look at the illustrations for clues.

- *Read the sentence again.

- *Sound out the first letter and guess what word would make sense there.

-Don't get impatient and upset when reading with your child. If you feel yourself getting discouraged, call it a night and try again tomorrow.

-Don't force your child to read or listen to you read if they don't want to. Ask yourself these questions if this happens:

- *Does your child feel that their efforts will be criticized?

- *Is the reading material boring?

- *Are you reading books at too advanced or too low of a level?

- *Is your child tired?

- *Is this an inappropriate time?

-Don't correct every reading error your child makes. If the error is a sensible one that doesn't change the meaning of the story, let it go. No one enjoys being ridiculed every mistake they make. Children will become hesitant to read if they are corrected on every error.

-Don't use books as a threat - "If you don't eat all your dinner, no story tonight!" As soon as the child sees that you've turned the book into a weapon, they'll change their attitude about books from positive to negative.

-Don't worry about your child's reading materials you don't approve of. If sports

magazines, comic books, or teenage romance stories are getting your child to read, be happy! Award winning books are sure to follow somewhere in the future.

-Don't be discouraged if your child isn't responding to reading as early as you expected. Meet with your child's teacher. The most important advise is to read with them every day!

-Don't try to compete with television. If asked, "Which do you want, a story or television?" they will usually choose the latter. Parent are the adults, and should say, "The TV goes off at 8:30 in this house." Try to establish one traditional time each day for a story.

-And finally, **Don't** expect your child to read if you are not a good role model! You don't have to be a good reader yourself, just share the fun and enjoyment of books with your children.

Ideas for Busy Parents

Working parents inside and out of the home deserve a few minutes away from noise and interruptions to relax and share a story with your child. In order to make time for this, parents need to plan their time carefully. The following suggestions are from several different working parents themselves:

* Hill (1989), shares about one parent who said she learned to listen to her children read while stirring the gravy or washing the dishes. "And now that I'm thinking about it, next time I'll read to them while they wash the dishes" (p. 49).

*Many parents find that after the evening chores have been completed, and your child has bathed, both parents and children are more relaxed and ready to sit down and read stories together.

*A parent shares in Hill's book, "Reading a book to him, or having him read to me, gave him the attention he wanted and gave me a chance to rest for a minute or two at the same time. From my own experience, I know that spending a few minutes was relaxing for me as well as beneficial to my son"(p. 50).

*Another parent shared how he would make audiocassette tapes whenever he read a new book to his boy. On those occasions the father did not have time to read with his child, his boy would listen to those tapes. The father then began to trade the tapes on and off with other parents doing the same thing. (Hill, p.49)

*Books on tape can also be checked out of a public library for free. Time spent at home or in the car can be spent listening to these stories.

*Computer CD Rom programs called *Living Books* offer wonderful exposure to books that "come alive" on the computer. Children follow along as the computer highlights each word as it is read aloud. Children can read along with the computer, or just sit back and listen to the story.

*If your children spends after school hours in some form of day care, send along some of their favorite literature.

*Grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, and older siblings can also be involved in the reading process.

*The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) television channel offers a wonderful show called *Reading Rainbow*. There are over one hundred programs based on different literature books. This TV series takes you on a journey inside the two covers of a book. After listening to the story, the journey continues when the host explores ideas and places the book is based on. Children from all different walks of life end the journey in each show by recommending other literature related to the theme. The themes include topics such as working together as a team, nature, other cultures, families and feelings.

*Some parents suggest trying to provide literacy experiences on weekends such as cooking a recipe, playing board games, taking a trip to the library or book store, reading labels at the grocery store, etc, to make up for unavailable time during the week.

Using TV Effectively

Positive family experiences are the most important element in helping children grow up smart, savvy, healthy and happy. However influences outside the home can help, too: school, sports, clubs, church, and TV, if used in a responsible matter. Because of a demand from parents for better shows, the networks are coming up with *some responsible shows* that children can actually benefit from. Since television sets are in almost every home in America, it is unrealistic to tell parents just to turn it off. Instead I'm offering some suggestions for using your TV in an effective matter.

1. Be selective and monitor the programs your child watches. I included a list of recommended TV shows below. Trelease (1989) points out, "Parents regularly use television as a babysitter -yet how many would hire a sitter who systematically taught children to solve most of their problems violently and to desire things they didn't need" (p. 119).

2. Watch the show with your child and discuss it afterwards. Ask your child their favorite part of the program and why, ask if that is how real people act, would they have handled it any differently, what questions they have after watching the show, or what they learned from it.

3. Read books that relate to their favorite shows. For example the *Reading Rainbow* program is based off children's storybooks and suggest other books related to the topic. *The Magic Schoolbus* series is also based on some very popular science books.

4. Agree on a set number of shows or hour(s) your child watches TV, write it down and stick by it. After the initial shock of not watching hours of TV, you'll be pleased how your child chooses to spend this new found time; playing with a pet, writing letters to relatives and friends, roller skating, board games, reading a book, bike riding, etc.

Shows on regular network channels:

Beakman's World (CBS)

Bill Nye the Science Guy (PBS)

Fudge (ABC) Based off Judy Blume books

Ghostwriter (PBS)

The Magic Schoolbus (PBS)

Name Your Adventure (NBC)

Nature (PBS)

Reading Rainbow (PBS)

Slim Goodbody (PBS)

Shows on cable television:

All That (Nickelodeon)

Beakman's World (The Learning Channel)

Are You Afraid of the Dark? (Nickelodeon)

Ready, Set, Learn! (The Learning Channel)

Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales for Every Child (HBO)

Shelley DuVall's Bedtime Stories (Showtime)

Legends of the Hidden Temple (Nickelodeon)

Overbeck (1995) suggest the following evening programs from "Shows that parents love- and kids can learn from" (p. 34).

Home Improvement: (ABC) Deals with family concepts such as parents arguing and brotherly brawls. Overbeck suggest, "You can counteract the effect of a message you're not crazy about with a little judicious commentary- when Tim Taylor's sons are going a little heavy on the dad-as-dope routine, I just tell my daughter, "I don't think those kids should treat their dad like that, do you?" (p.34).

Nature: (PBS) Gives you the inside scoop on the wonders of our astonishing world.

Coach: (ABC) Tough and tender show of some aging jocks that brings up gender stereotypes.

Star Trek: Voyager (UPN) and **Deep Space Nine:** Showing that underneath it all, people are people with their multispecies, multiracial , multiethnic cast.

Trelease warns (1989), "Television is the test of the modern world. Used correctly, it can inform, entertain and inspire. Used incorrectly, television will control families and community, limiting our language, dreams and achievements. It is our "test" to pass or fail" (p. 134).

Homework

Good homework is an extension, or practice of the skills being learned in the classroom. It should not contain unfamiliar or difficult work, but challenging reviews of classroom concepts. According to the districts guidelines for grade level, the following are reasonable and suggested time allotments for homework assignments:

Kindergarten - 2nd grade: 10 to 30 minutes a day

Grades 3 - 4: 30 to 45 minutes a day

Grades 5 - 6: up to 60 minutes a day

How Parents Can Help with Homework:

Children need to have their own location or desk in their home set up for their homework and a set time they are expected to start it. Some parents choose to be actively involved in their child's homework by listening and questioning them, and others choose a passive role of signing the homework to show that they know it is completed properly. However, Nicoll and Wilkie (1991) suggest that all parents can help their child by:

- By being supportive and encouraging rather than anxious and critical. When asked to comment, temper criticism with praise: "That's a great idea. Can you think of another way of saying it?"
- Being descriptive with your praise: "I like the way you used that word."
- Giving children incentives if necessary: "When you've finished that, why don't we play a game or read a story together?"
- Being positive about school and learning, and encourage children in all their endeavors. (p. 70).

Some additional activities if children have completed their homework and ask for more:

-After reading a story encourage your child to write or discuss their reactions/emotions to the story.

-Take family trips to the local library to borrow books.

-Turn off the TV one hour earlier and read aloud as a family.

-As children grow older, encourage them to start looking through the newspaper in the comic strips, current affairs, local activities, and whatever else interest them.

If you are uncertain about any part of the homework assignment, contact your child's teacher to clarify. They should be happy to answer any question to help your child master the concepts assigned.

Guidelines for Choosing Children's Literature

It is important for parents to expose your children to the best quality literature most of the time. Adults read all types of literature and occasionally as Bialostok points out in his book, Raising Readers, "Children may love the latest book based on a cartoon character or toy, but that doesn't mean a steady diet of that kind of book is recommended" (p. 87). On the following pages I've included a list of quality literature that has been well loved by adults as well as children. Two safe choices in children's books are Caldecott Medal books which are awarded for their illustrations and Newberry Medal books which are awarded for outstanding story content.

The following are key elements to consider when choosing children's literature:

*Look for quality illustrations: As Bialostok points out, "Children must be exposed to quality art just as they must be exposed to quality writing. Children respond to illustrations in books long before they notice the print. The illustrations tell the story" (p. 91).

*Look for books with interesting content: Books that have something worthwhile to say, it has "meat" in it. The characters are often interesting and identifiable. The book may also include situations where the reader reflects on their own life in some fashion.

*Look for books with predictable language patterns: Books that contain repetition, rhythm, patterns, or rhyme allow children to memorize stories and participate in the reading sooner.

*Look for books that you both enjoy. Children will usually catch on if you do not like the book the first time you read it, imagine your delight the fifteenth time you are asked to read it! The children's book market has thousands of new stories competing on the market each year. So be honest with your child and ask for a book you both appreciate.

Taylor and Strickland share, "Good books become special treasures that can be listened to today and read tomorrow"(p. 81).

A List of Children's Literature

This recommended literature list is divided into the different categories of books listed below. The categories begin with easy readers for beginners and moves up to challenging books for more experienced readers. Try to find the stories appropriate for your child's comfort level in reading. Remember family members can read to a child from a book with a more sophisticated plot and use of language, however a child should do independent reading from books appropriate to their own reading levels. The following books have stood against the test of time and are well loved by adults as well as children.

Wordless books

Predictable books

Books that can be read in a short period of time / picture books

Books that can be read over a period of time / novels

Children's magazines

Wordless Books: These books "tell" a story using pictures as clues to the emerging plot.

A Boy, A Dog and a Frog - M. Mayor

The Adventures of Paddy Pork - J. Goodall

Anno's Britain - M. Anno

Anno's Journey - M. Anno

Anno's U.S.A. - M. Anno

Apples - N. Hogrogian

The Bear and the Fly - P. Winter

Bobo's Dream - M. Alexander

Bubble, Bubble - M. Mayer

Changes, Changes - P. Hutchins

Deep in the Forest - B. Turtle

Good Dog, Carl - A. Day

Noah's Ark - P. Spier
Pancakes for Breakfast - T. dePaola
The Snowman - R. Briggs
The Silver Pony - L. Ward
The Story of an English Village - J. Goodall

Predictable Books: Certain words or sentence patterns are used repeatedly throughout the story to enable children to predict their appearance and join in on the reading.

Are You My Mother? - P.D. Eastman
Ask Mister Bear - M. Flack
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? - B. Martin Jr.
Chicken Soup with Rice - M. Sendak
Do You Want to be My Friend? - M. Sendak
Goodnight Moon - M.W.Brown
The Gunnywolf - A. Delaney
Henny Penny - P. Galdone
I Was Walking Down the Road - S. Barchas
It Looked Like Spilt Milk - C. Shaw
Mrs. Wishy - Washy - J. Cowley
Noisy Nora - R. Wells
Over in the Meadow - O. Wadsworth
Seven Little Rabbits - J. Becker
The Teeny Tiny Woman - B. Seuling
Rosie's Walk - P. Hutchins
The Napping House - A. Woods
Jamberry - B. Degan
The Three Little Pigs - P. Galdon
Tikki Tikki Tembo - A. Mosel

The Wheels on the Bus - M. Kovalski

Where's Spot - E. Hill

Books read over a short period of time / storybooks:

A Chair for My Mother - V.B. Williams

A Light in the Attic - S. Silverstein

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day - J. Viorst

Amelia Bedelia - P. Parish

A New Coat for Anna - H. Ziefert

Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing - J. Barrett

Annie and the Old One - M. Miles

Arrow to the Sun - G. McDermott

Barn Dance! - B. Martin Jr. & J. Archambault

Caps for Sale - E. Slobodkina

Chickens Aren't the Only Ones - R. Heller

Cloudy with the Chance of Meatballs - J. Barrott

Corduroy - D. Freeman

Crow Boy - T. Yashima

Doctor De Soto - W. Steig

Do Not Open - B. Turtle

Fables - A. Lobel

Frog and Toad are Friends - A. Lobel

Gilberto and the Wind - M. Ets

The Giving Tree - S. Silverstein

The Goat in the Rug - C. Blood & M. Link

The Great Kapok Tree - L. Cherry

The Grouchy Ladybug - E. Carle

Horton Hatches the Egg - Dr. Seuss

How Much is a Million? - D. Schwartz
I Know an Old Lady - R. Boone & A. Mills
If You Gave a Mouse a Cookie - L. Numeroff
Is Your Mama a Llama? - D. Guarino
It Could Always Be Worse - M. Zemach
Just a Dream - C. VanAllsburg
17 Kings and 42 Elephants - M. Mahy
Knots on a Counting Rope - B. Maring Jr. & J. Archambault
Leo the Late Bloomer - R. Kraus
The Little Engine That Could - W. Piper
The Little House - V. L. Burton
Love You Forever - R. Munsch
Mama, Do You Love Me? - B. M. Joosse
Millions of Cats - W. Gag
Ming Lo Moves the Mountain - A. Lobel
Miss Rumphius - B. Cooney
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters - J. Steptoe
New Kid on the Block - J. Prelutsky
Nothing Sticks Like a Shadow - A. Tompert
One Hunter - P. Hutchins
The Paperbag Princess - R. Munsch
People - P. Spier
Piggybook - A. Browne
The Polar Express - C. Van Allsburg
The Rag Coat - L. Mills
Rechenka's Eggs - P. Polacco
Round Trip - A. Jones
The Salamander Room - A. Mazer
Simon's Book - H. Drescher

Something Big Has Been Here - J. Prelutsky
Stellaluna - J. Cannon
Tacky the Penguin - H. Lester
Talking Eggs - R. S. Souci
Tar Beach - F. Ringgold
The Story of Ferdinand - M. Leaf
The Tenth Good Thing About Barney - J. Viorst
There's a Nightmare in My Closet - M. Mayer
Thunder Cake - P. Polacco
The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs - J. Scieszka
Tuesday - D. Wiesner
The Very Hungry Caterpillar - E. Carle
Wagon Wheels - B. Brenner
The Wednesday Surprise - E. Bunting
Weird Parents - A. Wood
When I Was Young in the Mountains - C. Rylant
Where the Sidewalk Ends - S. Silverstein
Where the Wild Things Are - M. Sendak
William's Doll - C. Zolotow
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears - V. Aadema

Books that can be read over a period of time / novels: Occasionally parents can read above a child's intellectual level to challenge them, however they should not read above a child's emotional level. Parents may consult the age level on the book cover or a librarian for the appropriateness.

A Wrinkle in Time - M. L'Engle
Be a Perfect Person in Just Three Days - S. Manes
Bridge to Terabithia - K. Paterson

Call it Courage - A. Sperry
Charlotte's Web - E. B. White
Choose Your Own Adventure - E. Packard
The Courage of Sarah Noble - A. Dalglish
Dear Mr. Henshaw - B. Cleary
Fantastic Mr. Fox - R. Dahl
From the Mixed - Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler - E. L. Konigsburg
Hatchet - G. Paulsen
The Hundred Dresses - E. Estes
Ida Early Comes Over the Mountain - R. Burch
In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson - B. B. Lord
The Indian in the Cupboard - L. R. Banks
Island of the Blue Dolphins - S. O'Dell
Jacob Have I Loved - K. Paterson
James and the Giant Peach - R. Dahl
Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices - P. Fleischman
Julie of the Wolves - J. C. George
Little House on the Prairie - L. I. Wilder
The Littles - J. Peterson
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe - C. S. Lewis
Matilda - R. Dahl
Mr. Popper's Penguins - R. & F. Atwater
My Side of the Mountain - J. George
Ole Yeller - F. Gipson
On My Honor - M. D. Bauer
Ramona the Pest - B. Cleary
Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry - M. D. Taylor
Sarah, Plain and Tall - P. MacLachlan
The Secret Garden - F. H. Burnett

Shiloh - P. Naylor
The Sign of the Beaver - E. G. Speare
Sing Down the Moon - S. O'Dell
The Slave Dancer - P. Fox
Souder - W. H. Armstrong
Strider - B. Cleary
Stone Fox - J. R. Gardiner
The Story of Doctor Doolittle - H. Lofting
Superfudge - J. Blume
Tales of a Fourth - Grade Nothing - J. Blume
Thank You, Jackie Robinson - B. Cohen
Tuck Everlasting - N. Babbitt
Where the Red Fern Grows - W. Rawls
The Whipping Boy - S. Fleischman

Children's magazines:

Children's Digest - Includes stories, poems, science, nature, book reviews. Parents Magazine Enterprises, Box 567B, 1100 Waterway Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46209. This is recommended for ages 9-12 and includes 9 issues per year.

3 - 2 - 1 Contact - Science explorations. E + MC Square, P.O. Box 511777, Boulder, CO 80321-1177. Ages 9 - 12.

Cricket - Artistic literary magazine for children, with monthly insert for parents. Open Court Publishing, Caris Corp., Box 100, La Salle, IL 61301. This includes 12 issues per year for ages 6-12.

Dynamite - With-it features, jokes, games, and arcade section. 645 Count Morbida's Castle, Marion, OH 43302. For ages 6-12, 12 issues.

Ebony, Jr. - Black history, fiction, nonfiction, crafts, games. Johnson Publishing Co., Inc., 820 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605. This includes 10 issues a year for ages 6-12.

Highlights for Children - Stories of fiction and nonfiction, science, crafts. Highlights for Children, P.O. Box 269, 2300 W. Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43216. This includes 11 issues per year for ages 6-12.

National Geographic World - Nature and science discovery. 17th and M Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. For ages 8 - 12.

Ranger Rick - National Wildlife Foundation, 17th and M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20035. Includes 12 issues for ages 6-12.

Sesame Street - Stories, nature, puzzles, and games. Children's Television Workshop, One Lincoln Plaza, New York, NY 10023. This includes 10 issues per year for ages 2-6.

Zoobooks - Animal and nature discovery. 3590 Kettner Blvd., San Diego, CA 92101. Ages 9 - 12.

Parents can also write to the American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611 for the these brochures: **The Caldecott Medal Books, Notable Children's Books, and Books for All Ages (a series of three pamphlets).**

List of Parent References

The following parent resources were found to be very helpful while writing this handbook.

I encourage you to read these in supporting your child to become a better reader. All can be found at a public library or ordered at any book store.

Trelease, J. (1989). *The new read-aloud handbook*. New York: Penguin Books.

This is a million-copy best seller that contains a giant treasury of great read-aloud books. Trelease includes valuable information on how to begin reading aloud, which books to choose, a short description of each book cited, related books, and suggestions on how to coax children away from the television.

Cullinan, B. E. (1992). *Read to me: Raising kids who love to read*. New York: Scholastic.

This book includes recommended literature for each age group along with writing ideas and interesting information that parents should know.

Bennett, S. & Bennett, R. (1991). *365 TV-free activities you can do with your child*.

Holbrook, MA: Bob Adams, Inc. Publishers.

The Bennetts suggest learning sign language, bean bag olympics, making hand silhouettes from the lamp shade, doing tongue twisters, starting an ant farm, becoming pen pals, making sock puppets, cloud watching, making flip books, milk jug catch, word games, having fun with static electricity, sewing cards, making nature displays or mobiles, learning morse code, making easy bird feeders with mild cartons, creating a family flag, and many other activities.

Bialostok, S. (1992). *Raising readers: Helping your child to literacy*. Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers.

I found this book to one of the most enjoyable and informative parent resource books

read. It focuses on the literacy process of children at home and children already in the classroom. Bialostok included a question and answer chapter on parent's most commonly asked questions, shares how people learn to read, and tells parents what to look for in their children's reading.

***Literacy at home and school: a guide for parents*, Edited by Vivienne Nicoll and Lyn Wilkie (1991) Primary English Teaching Association.**

This guide was written by a team of teachers that focuses on current approaches to teaching, writing and spelling. It includes ways for parents to help children develop as readers and writers at home, and discusses issues such as homework, school reports, and parent-teacher interviews.

Taylor, D., & Strickland, D. S. (1986). *Family storybook reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The authors provide vivid accounts of parents sharing storybooks with children. Taylor and Strickland focus on families from different lifestyles and cultural backgrounds. The reader becomes acquainted with the special role that storybook reading plays in family life and in the acquisition of language and literacy skills.

Hill, M. W. (1989). *Home where reading and writing begin*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hills says most parents don't see themselves as teachers, yet they are their children's literacy-learning partners each time they respond to their child's questions or help share their knowledge in any way. The author gives suggestions on how parents can find time to read with their children, and to the importance of listening to their children read.

Glossary

The following is a list of terms that parents will probably hear or read about in the reading process:

brainstorming- ideas on the topic quickly compiled or jotted down

conference- a small or individual meeting between teacher and student(s) designed to improve understanding in reading, literature, writing, etc

conventional spelling- standard English spelling found in dictionaries

creative writing- fiction writing that encourages using a student's personal background knowledge and self-expression

DEAR- *drop everything and read* - a silent reading method used in classrooms

echo-reading- a method used to help improve reading fluency, where the adult leads the reading of a piece and the child immediately echoes each word

edit- the process of checking a piece of writing for spelling, grammar, punctuation, layout and sense in order to improve it

grammar- a system of rules within a language that describes words and their arrangement and/or use within a sentence or text

invented spelling- a student's made-up attempts to spell unknown words

lap-reading- a shared reading experience of a parent / adult with a child sitting on their lap

modeling- an indirect teaching strategy that demonstrates a skill needed by student(s)

non-standard spelling- a student's made-up attempts to spell unknown words

oral reading- reading aloud, can include many different forms

phonetic spelling- is a developmental stage in spelling where all the sounds in words are approximately represented

pre-phonetic spelling- an early stage of the spelling development where limited relationships between letters and sounds are shown

process writing- the steps of rehearsing, drafting, revising, and editing a writer goes through in order to publish a piece of their work

publish- a student has prepared a piece of their writing for an audience

reading-like behavior- actions of non-readers showing their understanding of the reading process such as imitating turning pages, and reciting text starting from the upper left corner and reading line by line down the page

retelling- students retell main ideas from a story, used as a form of reading evaluation

shared book experience- this usually includes a large-sized book or multiple copies of a story for all students to participate in the reading

shared language experience- an adult and child discuss their reactions of a common experience such as watching a movie

shared reading- an adult and child reading aloud together and discussing aspects of the story

standard spelling- the conventional spelling of a word as found in dictionaries

sustained silent reading- a silent reading method used in classrooms

temporary spelling- a student's made-up attempts to spell unknown words

transitional spelling stage- a developmental stage where the writer is going beyond letter-sound relationships

USSR- *uninterrupted sustained silent reading* - a silent reading method used in classrooms

WEIRD- *we enjoy independent reading daily* - a silent reading method used in classrooms

writers' circle- a group writing conference

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