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EFFICACY OF EARLY LITERACY INTERVENTION PROJECT
FOR EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN FAMILY
CHILD CARE HOMES

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

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Psychology:
Child Development

by
Gloria Ruth Kinzler
September 2008

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Approved by:



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ABSTRACT

This project focused on the concept that family childcare providers who completed "Building Literacy Bridges" intervention project, which included interactive early literacy classes on phonological and print awareness, dialogic and shared reading skills, as well as providing a literacy rich environment, would implement those concepts into their daily care with children. Nine family childcare providers completed the four-hour per week, four-week intervention project. Observations and an environmental pre-assessment and post-assessment were completed. The results of the project revealed that although the family childcare providers understood the concepts, those concepts were not implemented on a daily basis in the family childcare homes. Recommendations for improvements for future projects are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This accomplishment was long in coming-I have many people to thank for its completion.

In particular my advisor Amanda Herzog Wilcox. It was her belief in my abilities that kept me going even when I thought I would never achieve my goal. In addition, Sharon Ward who helped me jump ever more hurdles to achieve the end results.

I have had many people help me along the way, too many to list, but without family and friends who insisted that I needed to continue-especially my husband Kenneth Kinzler, I would not be where or who I am today.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to those who
believed in me through the years
and encouraged me even when I
thought I could go no
further...

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

One of the best indicators of whether a child will succeed and become competent in school and then go on to contribute actively in an increasingly literate world is the level to which the child succeeds in reading and writing (Newman, Copple & Bredekamp, 2000).

Literacy is central to academic achievement and life-long learning. The formal setting for the development of literacy in the past has most often in first grade one, but with pressure from state and federal education reforms children must now enter the elementary school setting with the skills and knowledge to succeed in literacy.

Even though reading and writing abilities have the ability to continue to develop throughout the life span, the early childhood years—from birth through age eight are becoming increasingly the most important period for literacy development (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000). As children begin to combine their oral language with pictures, print, and symbols and through play, they begin to create and communicate in many ways. Through their

interactions with the environment and adults, children begin to read words, process word and letter-sound relations, and acquire knowledge of the alphabetic system.

Legislatures throughout the nation are creating programs to foster reading. In 1998, the Administration for Children and Families and federal law decreed a standard that children will recognize 10 alphabetic letters before exiting the Head Start program at age 5 (Head Start Act, 1981). This nationwide movement suggests that it is time to examine infant, toddler, preschool, family childcare homes, and family routines as a beginning for emergent literacy. Increasing research in and the changes in the understanding of literacy development support this exploration.

Only a few years ago, people believed reading started in first grade, when children were "ready" for it. Recently through new research that viewpoint has changed. In the 1980s, researchers and scholars, in New Zealand, Canada, and the United States began research within the routine daily activities of families, caregivers, and classrooms to observe practices provide

young children with a foundation for later success in reading (Rosenkoetter & Barton, 2001).

Learning to read is affected by the "foundation skills of phonological processing, print awareness, and oral language" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2002, p. 12). When these components are lacking, children may be "unready" to begin some of the activities in the kindergarten literacy curriculum, and they are more likely than other children to be poor readers in the long run (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2002).

The latest research on brain development, united with the ever rising concerns about school readiness, has provoked interest how early care and education can support young children's cognitive, language, social, and emotional development (Baydar & Brooks-Gunn, 1991).

According to the National Center of Educational Statistics, in the U.S. over 75 percent of children under age of 5 receive some kind of non-parental care. As more children are enroll in care outside of the home, interest in the probable influence of early care and educational arrangements on children's development has become more important. Research has established that high quality early care and education placement have a significant and

positive impact on children's cognitive, language, and social development (Baydar & Brooks-Gunn, 1991).

According to the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (2002) data, thirty-six percent of the children in non-parental care are being cared for in family childcare homes. This project will focus on the relative efficacy of an early literacy intervention project to enhance early literacy practices in selected family childcare homes. Specifically, it will examine whether family childcare providers who complete a four-week training "Building Literacy Bridges" will then implement developmentally appropriate early literacy practices in their family childcare home environment.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Early Literacy

Literacy begins early in a child's development, long before children encounter instruction in reading and writing. Literacy is not easy to define, and there are many disputes and unresolved questions about how literacy develops. Literacy is defined as the notion that writing and reading are ways of making, interpreting, and communicating meaning (McLane & McNamee, 1991). They also define reading as the ability to "take meaning from print" and writing as the "ability to use print to communicate with others." According to McLane and McNamee's (1991) interpretation, reading and writing are more than decoding and encoding print: they are ways of constructing and conveying meaning with written language. Literacy is traditionally defined as the ability to read and write and it is usually considered to be an individual process (Masney, 1995). He also states that, "Each child develops psychological and linguistic elements critical to the acts of reading and writing, such as constructing meaning and developing

sound-to-letter correspondence" individually. Masney (1995) continues to state, "Increasingly, however, literacy can be defined more broadly and is being viewed as a social phenomenon. Thus, what it means to be literate varies according to socio-cultural groups" (Masney, 1995). Masney uses the term "literacies" in the plural to indicate that children are able to learn several types of literacy, such as those accomplished at school (reading textbooks), at home (writing letters), in religious practices (saying prayers), and during daily activities (writing shopping lists) (Masney, 1995).

Researchers Whitehurst and Lonigan state, "Recent years have seen the concept of early literacy extend to any situation in which an individual negotiates the environment through the use of a symbolic system like maps, bus schedules, store coupons, and television commercials" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2002).

Acquiring literacy skills is thought to start at an early age, long before formal instruction in reading and writing. These skills are often referred to as "emergent literacy". "Emergent literacy refers to the developmental precursors of formal reading and has its origins in the early life of a child" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2002).

According to Sulzby and Teale, "It includes the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are presumed to be developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing" (Sulzby & Teale, 1991).

Emergent literacy emphasizes the more natural unfolding of necessary skills through the enjoyment of books, the encouragement of developing writing skills, the building of vocabulary, positive literacy interactions between young children and adults such as shared reading, conversations, and the critical role of providing literacy-rich environments.

Teale and Sulzby (1986) also state that when attention is focused only on reading as the end product, valuable information is overlooked. It would be the consideration of what the child has learned through a careful examination of their interaction with their literate world. Thus, research on emergent literacy has shifted in direction from an adult to a child perspective (Teale & Sulzby, 1986).

Four important tenets can be drawn from Teale and Sulzby's research in emergent literacy:

1. Literacy development begins early in life, before formal instruction begins.

2. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities develop concurrently and are inter-related in young children.
3. The functions of literacy are an integral part of the learning process.
4. Children learn to read and write through active engagement in their environment.

Based upon a diverse body of research evidence, it now seems clear that literacy is also affected by the foundation skills of phonological processing, print awareness, and oral language (Adams, 1990; Burgess & Lonigan, 1998; Elbro, Borstrom, & Peterson, 1998; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987; Wagner, Torgesen, Laughon, Simmons, & Rashotte, 1993).

According to Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998), "Children with more of these skills profit more from reading instruction: they learn to read sooner, and they also read better than children with fewer skills". The authors go on to state the concept of emergent reading differs from an older viewpoint on reading acquisition that viewed the process of learning to read as starting with formal school-based instruction in reading or with

reading readiness skills taught in kindergarten, like letter recognition (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Early reading skills are also sometimes referred to as pre-literacy, a term used to describe "the range of skills developed by the preliterate child that forms the foundation for eventual print [or conventional] literacy" (van Kleeck, 1998, p. 33). Van Kleeck states "Pre-literacy and emergent literacy concepts consist of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are believed to be developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing" (van Kleeck, 1998, p. 33).

Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) outlined the different components of emergent literacy skills and identified three factors that seem to be associated with preschool children's later reading performance:

- Oral language
- Vocabulary (which is likely to have its largest impact on later reading, when children are reading for meaning rather than learning to decode words)
- Phonological awareness or processing abilities and

- Print knowledge.

Print knowledge or written language awareness refers to children's knowledge about print (e.g., print directionality, letter names) whereas phonological awareness or sensitivity refers to children's knowledge of sounds of a language. Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) say, "Phonological processes require sensitivity to, the manipulation of, or use of the sounds in words.

Phonological sensitivity requires the ability to detect and manipulate the sound structure of oral language, to be able identify words that rhyme, blend spoken syllables or phonemes together to form a word, delete syllables or phonemes from spoken words to form a new word, or count the number of phonemes in a spoken word" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Both written language awareness and phonological awareness develop in interrelated and developmental progression during the preschool years (Adams, 1990; Chaney, 1992; Hiebert, 1981; Lomax & McGee, 1987; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

CHAPTER THREE
CHARACTERISTICS THAT IMPACT LITERACY
SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT

Phonological Deficits

In their extensive study Hart and Risely (1995) report, the associations between the child's development of spoken language and ensuing development of literacy are becoming increasingly apparent (Hart & Risley 1995). According to Goswami (2002), "In particular, the child's phonological development (i.e., the progression in representing in the brain the speech units that make up different words) is now recognized to play a causal role in the acquisition of literacy" (Goswami, 2002).

As stated in the previous chapter by Whitehurst and Lonigan, "Phonological processing refers to activities that require sensitivity to, manipulation of, or use of the sounds in words" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2002). Previous research by Wagner and Torgesen (1997) Acknowledged three interconnected clusters of phonological processing abilities: phonological sensitivity, phonological naming, and phonological memory" (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987). The authors define,

“Phonological sensitivity as the ability to detect and manipulate the sound structure of oral language.

Phonological memory refers to short-term memory for sound-based information, and it is typically measured by immediate recall of verbally presented material.

Phonological naming refers to the efficiency of retrieval of phonological information from permanent memory” (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987).

Whitehurst and Lonigan (2002) go on to state that these three phonological processes in the above paragraph are “strongly related to subsequent decoding abilities and the ability to sound out words” later. Poor phonological processing skills are the hallmark of poor readers. Whitehurst and Lonigan (2002) continue to state, “A poor reader may exhibit low levels of phonological processing skills compared to his/her same age peers but have oral language skills and general cognitive abilities that are consistent with age expectation (i.e., the condition typically referred to as dyslexia), or, they may exhibit low levels of phonological processing skills, oral language, and general cognitive abilities compared to his or her same-age peers. Both types of poor readers

have deficient phonological processing which hinders their reading abilities" (Whithurst & Lonigan, 2002).

In previous and additional studies, it was found that children who have what is referred to as a double deficit, or poor abilities in both phonological sensitivity and phonological naming tasks, comparative to their same-age peers, tend to be at the very bottom of reading abilities (Bowers, 1995; Bowers & Wolf, 1993; McBride-Chang & Manis, 1996).

According to Whitehurst and Lonigan (2002), "The majority of work concerning pre-readers' phonological processing skills has examined phonological sensitivity. The individual differences in preschool and kindergarten children's phonological sensitivity are related to later success in reading achievement" (Whitehurst & Longian, (2002). In support of Whitehurst and Lonigan (2002) theory, previous studies concluded that children who are successful at detecting rhymes, syllables, or phonemes learn to read more quickly. This relationship still exists even after inconsistency due to factors such as IQ, vocabulary, memory, and social class are removed statistically (Bryant, MacLean, Bradley, & Crossland, 1990; MacLean, Bryant, & Bradley, 1987; Raz & Bryant,

1990; Wagner, Torgesen & Rashotte, 1994; Wagner, Torgesen, Rashotte, Hecht, Barker, Burgess, Donahue, & Garon, 1997).

A number of studies have used direct intervention to improve children's phonological awareness and measured consequent effects on literacy. For example, as part of a longitudinal study, Bradley and Bryant (1983) took 60 of their cohort of 400 children who had performed poorly in the oddity task (initial phoneme identification and rhyme oddity) at 4 and 5 years of age and gave them 2 years of training grouping words on the basis of sounds. Training was based on a picture-sorting task in which the children were taught to group words by onset, rhyme, vowel, and coda phonemes (e.g., placing pictures of a hat, a rat, a mat, and a bat together for grouping by rhyme). The control group learned to sort the same pictures by semantic category (e.g., placing pictures of a rat, a pig, and a cow together for "farmyard animals").

Half of the experimental group then spent the second year of the study learning how the shared phonological segments in words such as "hat," "rat," and "mat" was reflected in shared spelling. The children were given plastic letters for this task, and were taught that a

word such as "hat" could be changed into a word such as "rat" by discarding the onset and retaining the rhyme.

The other half of the experimental group continued to receive phonological training only. At the end of the second year of the study, the children in the experimental group who had plastic letters training were 8 months further in their reading than the children in the semantic control group and a year further in spelling. Compared to children who had spent the intervening period in an additional unseen control group, they were remarkably two years further in spelling and 12 months ahead in reading. The gains made by the children who had continued to receive phonological training only were not significant but still notable. This study suggests that there is a clear connection between teaching children how the alphabet is used to represent sounds in reading and spelling development.

Comparable results were found in a larger study of 235 Danish preschool children conducted by Lundberg, Frost, and Peterson (1988). They gave children eight months of daily training in meta-linguistic games and exercises such as clapping out the syllables in words and attending to the first sounds in the children's names.

The purpose of the program was to "guide the children to discover and attend to the phonological structure of language" (p. 268). The effectiveness of the program in attaining this aim was measured by comparing the children's performance in various meta-linguistic tasks after training to that of 155 children in an unseen control group. The trained children were found to be significantly ahead of the control children in a variety of meta-linguistic skills including rhyming, syllable manipulation, and phoneme segmentation. The long-term effects of the training on the children's reading and spelling progress in grades one and two was also assessed, the impact of the training was found to be significant at both grades for reading and spelling, although effects were stronger for spelling.

In yet another instance, Byrne and Fielding-Barnsley (1991a) in a similar research project used 72 preschool children, ages 3 to 4 years, to teach phonemic awareness. Thirty-two children were taught over a twelve-week period to identify a small number of phonemes in the first and last positions of words. These children scored higher on measures of phonological sensitivity than did the control group, and their ability to decode words was also higher.

Longitudinal studies have shown young children's performances on both written language awareness tasks (e.g., Badian, 2000; Stuart, 1995; Tunmer, Herriman, & Nesdale, 1998) and phonological awareness tasks (e.g., Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Elbro, Borstrom, & Peterson, 1998; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987) serve as important predictors of later reading ability (Justice, Weber, Ezell, & Bakerman, 2002).

These performances on language awareness and phonological awareness tasks are strongly linked to subsequent word decoding abilities and in the absence of intervention with children who are displaying language and phonological difficulties there are established individual differences from the late preschool period forward (Burgess & Lonigan, 1998; Wagner, Torgesen, Laughon, Simmons, & Rashotte, 1993). According to Whitehurst and Lonigan (2002), there is a core phonological deficit in nearly all-poor readers. Children scoring in the lowest 20 percent on a test of phonology in the first grade were reading at a low level when they were in fifth grade. In contrast, children who scored higher on phonology in first grade were reading at grade level in fifth grade (Shaywitz, 2003).

Socio-Economic Status

According to the Children's Defense Fund (1994), the largest groups of children in the United States who are thought to be at risk for school failure are children of the poor. During the last 30 years poverty rates for children have increased 50%. Poor children perform between 11% and 25% below their non-poor peers on achievement tests and are also at risk for learning disabilities and other special education services because of failure in literacy (Children's Defense Fund, 1994).

From a summary of 12 studies of long-term poor, poverty was a stronger predictor of school under achievement than maternal schooling or family structure (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997). Because one in four preschool children lives in poverty in the United States during the preschool years (Children's Defense Fund, 1994), a large number of children are at risk for school failure, especially for reading. Causal explanations of the poorer performance of reading of poor children are multifaceted and multi-determined, but three main hypotheses have dominated the literature in an explanation of poor reading and school performance by children of the poor. They include: (1) biological/health

mechanisms, (2) environments in which poor children live, and (3) the discrimination and poor fit for many of these children created by schools and the larger society (Vernon-Feagans, Scheffner-Hammer, Miccio & Manlove, 2002, see Neuman & Dickinson, Chapter 14).

According to the Carnegie Corporation study of 1994, families in poverty have poorer health and less access to good health care. This study states that poor children have higher rates of being born prematurely, having poorer nutrition, lower immunization rates, a greater exposure to lead, more iron deficiency in infancy, and a host of other health-related factors including otitis media (ear infections). All of these biological mechanisms can and do have an impact on the developing child that can lead to poor cognitive development and being at risk for language, reading, and later school problems.

Throughout the current literature there are consistent references to studies that in comparison to children from higher income families, children from lower socio economic status (SES) are at higher risk for reading difficulties (Dubow & Ippolito, 1994; Juel, Griffith, & Gough, 1986), are more likely to be slower in

the development of oral language skills (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Whitehurst, 1997) and for delays in the development of letter knowledge and phonological sensitivity prior to entering school (Bowey, 1995; Lonigan, Burgess, et al., 1998).

The early works of scholars in the field of child development (Bloom, 1964; Hunt, 1961) provided a framework within which to think about the influence of early environments on children. These authors contend that early stimulating environments could permanently alter the neural organization and development of the brain that could lead to better intellectual functioning later. Children not exposed to stimulating environments may not develop these neurological connections.

The writings of Zigler and Muenchow (1992) led to the early intervention movement and ultimately Head Start began with these arguments about children's development and assumed that environments of poor children were much less stimulating than the environments of middle-class families (Zigler & Muenchow, 1992).

According to Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998) poor families are not always able to provide their children with the abundant language and literacy environments that

middle-income families provide. Children in poverty were found to be lacking in the provision of preschool materials at home, book reading, phonological awareness or sensitivity activities, and other pre-literacy experiences. In addition, low-income children are more likely to have multiple risk factors related to literacy development, such as low-literate parents, poor educational opportunities, and a home language other than English that serves to further compound their poor literacy outcomes (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

In an intensive analysis of their research, Hart and Risley (1995) collected data on 29 predominantly African American children who were a part of the Juniper Gardens project in Kansas City. Their study compared the vocabulary development of these children with thirteen children of professional families. It was found that the vocabulary development of the low SES children was vastly lower than that of middle-class children. These differences increased over the preschool period and were later linked to school achievement. The authors were awestruck at how well measures of accomplishments at three years of age predicted measures of language skills at nine and ten years. From their preschool data they had

been confident that the rate of vocabulary growth would predict later performance in school. The 29 children whose parents provided more of the "fundamentals" (i.e., larger amounts of diverse language experience, more encouragement to learn, were more responsive, listened, and prompted the child to speak when they were one to two years old), the rate of vocabulary growth at age three was strongly associated with scores at age nine to ten years on both the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) of receptive vocabulary ($r = .58$) and the Test of Language Development-2: Intermediate (TOLD) ($r = .74$) and its subtests (listening, speaking, semantics, syntax). Though the sample size was small ($n = 29$), the effect size was large ($r = .92$), and the authors argued that the low SES children had been exposed to fewer vocabulary items by their parents during their preschool years and that minimal exposure was causally related to later outcomes. Additionally, they saw these differences in vocabulary widening with age so that the low SES or at-risk children were unlikely to catch up to their middle-class peers (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Upon school entrance, not surprisingly, low-income children appear to be "less ready"; they have less

experience with books, writing, hearing stories, learning and reciting rhymes, and many other types of experiences that promote literacy (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

According to Goldenberg, (2002), (Neuman & Dickinson, Chapter 15, 2002), children entering kindergarten at age 5 years from low-income Spanish speaking homes (tested in Spanish, so language was not a factor) had relatively few "emergent" literacy skills. Presented with 10 of the most frequently used letters, the average number recognized was 1 lower case letter and 1.5 uppercase letters. Two-thirds of the children tested could not name or recognize a single letter. More than three-fifths could write no letters at all. The majority could not write words correctly or phonetically attempt to write words. Fewer than half pointed somewhere in the print when asked where the tester should read; one-fourth indicated that print was read from left to right; fewer than one-fourth could point to the first and last parts of text on a page.

In contrast, children of the same age from higher-income families have more text-based literacy experiences and opportunities at home. They arrive at kindergarten able to recognize more letters, and able to

write letters, words, and even phrases. They use more invented spelling, have a better understanding of concepts of print and the idea that text is read from left to right (Goldenberg, 2002). Goldenberg goes on to remark that while there is clearly wide variability within any social group or economic level, in general, low-income children begin school with fewer literacy experiences and skills.

According to Alexander and Entwisle, (1996) once children begin first grade, low-income children tend to fall further behind their more affluent peers. During school months, the rate of low-income children's academic progress is equivalent to that of higher-income children. They progress in their learning skills over the year; however, they are unable to catch up to their affluent peers and during summer breaks and time off the academic gap widens (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996).

When one looks at socioeconomic status one would be remiss to say that being poor was the only factor in the lack of achievement of early literacy skills. According to Goldenberg (2002) there are two important qualifications to the economic status-achievement connection: (1) family socioeconomic effects on

achievement are in fact modest; and (2) effective school programs will help more children achieve, regardless of their economic class. Goldenberg goes on to state that the association between socioeconomic status and early reading achievement is weak when measured at the individual family level. Goldenberg's research implies providing effective academic school programs within poorer socioeconomic neighborhoods could have positive effect on the achievement of early literacy skills.

Studies by Walberg and Tsai (1985), and White (1982) concluded that socioeconomic "influence" on achievement is stronger when measured at the school or community level. In other words, the effects of economic status on achievement are largely the result of living in communities and attending schools with large numbers of children from a particular social class, not the result of a single family's socioeconomic characteristics. Average correlations between family socioeconomic status and measures of academic achievement are a modest $r = .2$ (Walberg & Tsai, 1985; White 1982). In contrast, when socioeconomic status is measured at the level of the school or community, the correlation with achievement is nearly $r = .7$ (White, 1982). Thus, a low SES child

attending a low-income school and living in a low-income community is at far greater risk for reading difficulties than is the same child attending and living in a middle-or high-income school and community.

One reason for the weak link between family economic status and learning to read is that there is a great deal of variability in family practices and student achievement within any economic stratum. Therefore, avoiding deterministic assumptions about the "effects" of economic status on literacy development is important. Children's pre-literacy skills and knowledge (e.g., phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print) are far better predictors of reading achievement than is family SES (Scarborough, 1998).

The problem goes far beyond learning to read and write. According to Goldenberg (2002) many children come to school and attend school under circumstances likely to adversely influence academic progress and outcomes.

As a group, low-income children are more likely to endure a wide range of disadvantages associated with poverty and single-parent families: poor access to quality health care, poor diets, dangerous neighborhoods, and behavioral and social-adaptational challenges

(Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 1999). However, there are exceptions of children who succeed in the face of formidable environmental challenges, and therefore we know that poor outcomes for children at risk are not a foregone conclusion (Werner & Smith, 1982). But why should children have to struggle against the odds? The issue becomes one of social justice, not just of improving early literacy and reading scores (Goldenberg, 2002).

Family Risk Factors

Family literacy practices in the home have a strong influence on the development of early literacy skills in children. According to the study conducted by the National Research Council (1998) "Factors recognized as family risk factors include family history of reading problems, home literacy environment, verbal interaction, and language other than English" (National Research Council, 1998). Included in those factors is low socioeconomic status as discussed above. Often when a child is diagnosed with a reading disability, there is a greater chance that other family members may also have had reading problems (Gilger, Pennington, & DeFries, 1991,

Volgerm DeFries, & Decker, 1985). The exact likelihood seems to depend on a variety of factors, including the severity of the child's reading disability.

According to the book Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children by Snow, Burns and Griffin, Ed. (1998), most of the studies of family occurrence first diagnose the child with a reading disability using a standardized assessment that identifies 5 to 10 percent of children who have an what is considered an effective education and normal intelligence. The investigators then use a similar standardized assessment to identify reading disabilities in the parents. Evidence concluded that the family nature of a reading disability is substantially above the 5 to 10 percent rate estimated for the population.

In research conducted by Scarborough (1998) he computed the average rate of reading disabilities among parents across eight family studies which included a total of 516 families. The rate within these studies varied from 25 to 60 percent, with a median value of 37 percent. Thus, all of Scarborough's studies found rates for reading disabilities among parents of reading-disabled children that were considerably higher

than expected in the normal population (Scarborough, 1998).

Family Language and Literacy Environments

Families also vary extremely in the level to which they provide helpful environments for a child's literacy growth. Parental support of the home literacy environment itself, therefore, may provide clues of an individual child's degree of risk for reading difficulties. Hess and Holloway (1984) go on to identify five broad areas of family functioning of probable influence reading on development.

The five are:

1. *Value placed on literacy:* by reading themselves and encouraging children to read, parents demonstrate that they value reading.
2. *Press for achievement:* by expressing their expectations for achievement by their children, providing reading instruction, and responding to the children's reading initiations and interest, parents can create a press for achievement.

3. *Availability and instrumental use of reading materials:* literacy experiences are more likely to occur in homes that contain children's books and other reading and writing material.
4. *Reading with children:* parents can read to preschoolers at bedtime or other times and can listen to schoolchildren's oral reading, providing assistance as needed.
5. *Opportunities for verbal interaction:* parents can provide a quantity of verbal interaction through conversations, storytelling, and shared book-reading experiences.

Researchers funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Early Child Care Research Network, (1999) have stated that "supportive, warm and engaged parent-child interactions are associated with the child's emerging competencies in social, cognitive, and linguistic domains throughout early and middle childhood" (p. 1399).

Additionally, according to the longitudinal study by Hart and Risley (1995), "The amount of time spent having meaningful conversations with their children and the guidance style of parenting that the parents use with

their children also can be related to later language and cognitive development" (Hart & Risley, 1995). In this extensive longitudinal research, Hart and Risley (1995) supported the idea that the variety of home experiences that parents provide beyond book reading are critical for children's vocabulary development (and hence early literacy skill development). In their study of 42 families over a period of 2.5 years whose children were between the ages of 9 to 36 months, the amount of quality interactive parental or caregiver language that children were exposed to in the home was significantly connected to the children's vocabulary development. Quality language would be defined as shared book reading, quality conversations with children, those that engage the child in interactive questions and answers, not just directives and other related literacy activities in the home. Additionally, Hart and Risley (1995) state "That the relation between quantity and quality of parent and caregiver language and the children's literacy development held across all SES groups they studied". Hart and Risley also confirmed that the correlation between literacy activities and language in the home make

important contributions to young children's literacy development regardless of SES.

In the book Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children Snow, Burn and Griffin Ed. (1998), home language other than English is cited as being an additional predictor of failed success in reading. If the home language of a preschooler is other than English, the ability and ease of learning to read printed English becomes difficult to some extent, chiefly if reading instruction in English begins before the child has mastered the ability to speak in English.

In their report August and Hakuta (1997) state that one of the difficulties in trying to evaluate the amount of risk associated with limited English aptitude is that cultural as well as linguistic differences are also involved and may introduce other kinds of risk factors. The authors go on to state, "That what many Hispanic children with limited English proficiency also have in common, is that their parents are under educated, their family income is usually low, they live in communities in which many families are similarly struggling, and that they attend schools with student bodies that are predominantly minority and low achieving". Factors that

have been proposed by August and Hakuta (1991) to explain, "The low levels of academic achievement among Hispanic students include many that have been cited as causal to risk factors facing other minority groups, including low SES, cultural differences between the home and school (e.g., regarding educational values and expectations), sociopolitical factors (including past and ongoing discrimination), and of perceived opportunities for minorities, and school quality". In summary, low English proficiency in a Hispanic child is a strong indication that the child is at risk for reading difficulties (August & Hakuta, 1997).

Family Home Environment Influences on Language Learning

When looking at influences on the development of early literacy skills in children, the quality of early childhood education programs cannot be eliminated. In their work, Dickinson and Tabors (2001) found associations between quality childcare settings and children's development. Their study began in 1987 as a collaborative research team composed of members of the Harvard Graduate School of Education; Tufts University; Clark University; and the Education Development Center in

Newton, Massachusetts. Researchers in this study collected data in the homes and preschools, as well as elementary and high school classrooms of a group of children from low -income families starting when the children were 3 years old. In their book "Beginning Literacy with Language", they report findings from the preschool and kindergarten period. It was found this period makes a crucial contribution in preparing children for later literacy achievement. They present descriptions of the language and literacy environments of 74 young children from low-income families. Although the analyses in the book are focused on the pre-school to kindergarten period of the Home -School Study, the research team has continued to visit the homes and classrooms of the children in the study. Home visits were made to the families when the children were 7, 9, and 12 years old, and school visits were made each year up to sophomore year in high school.

The group of children comprising the kindergarten sample was split between boys and girls (36 males, 38 females). They came from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds: 47 of the children were Caucasian, 16 were African American, 6 Latino and 5 were biracial. At the

time of the first home visit, when the children were 3 years old, 28 of them lived in one-parent households (all mothers), 40 of them lived with two adults (not always a mother and father), and 6 children lived in households with three to five adults. Eighteen of the children were single children at the time of the first home visit, thirty had one sibling, nineteen had two siblings, and seven had four or five siblings.

This study and the purpose of the book introduces the types of language and literacy environments that families provide at home and the types of language and literacy experiences that children are exposed to in their pre-school classrooms. It also examines how the differences in these language and literacy environments makes a difference in how well the children in the sample performed on language and literacy tasks in kindergarten.

The results of the study on the home environment from the Home-School Study indicate that there are a variety of sources for the skills that children bring to kindergarten and that the children who demonstrated higher-level skills were, on the whole, those who had experienced interesting talk with lots of new words, and literacy activities such as frequent and varied book

reading with different people. All of these aspects of the home literacy environment take time, because adults and children need to be together in order to talk or read. However, none of them require extensive resources. Mothers in the Home-School Study who scored high on Home Support for Literacy made use of libraries, actively searching out opportunities to buy books, often purchasing inexpensive books. Some mothers mentioned that they asked for books from family members who inquired about what presents to give the child, and many families took advantage of school book clubs. Making time to read the books and talk about them, as well as making the time to discuss other compelling topics with interesting vocabulary at other times during the day was what was required to help children prepare for kindergarten.

Preschool Settings

The Home-School Study of Language and Literacy Development (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001) also examined the relationships between the details of teachers' and children's conversations during the classroom day and their performance on measures of language and literacy development near the end of kindergarten. Audiotapes of

the children included 299 hours and 33 minutes of audiotapes of children's conversations. In addition, when the children were 3 and 4 years old, their teachers' conversations were audio-taped during the day. The research team transcribed portions of these tapes, selecting the same amount of time from each setting across rooms: 15 minutes of free play per room and 15 minutes of large group per room. The results pointed to the importance of conversations during the classroom day for children's later language and literacy development. In looking across the full collection of their data, three major points are notable:

1. The conversations children have during the classroom day when they are 3 and 4 years old are related to a broad range of skills using oral language and print at the end of kindergarten. When the children were 3 years old, those who were found talking with other children and not remaining silent for long periods later were most likely to do well on literacy and language assessments. Similarly, children who engaged in more pretend talk were more likely to perform well on the assessments.

The results reflect a complex interplay of the language-using skills that the children brought with them to preschool and the opportunities that the teachers provided them. Thus, efforts to support early literacy development must not have a singular focus on print and print-based activities to the detriment of providing rich opportunities for oral language development

2. There are important differences among activity settings. The evidence of the beneficial effects of using varied vocabulary leads to the recommendation that activities, which provide occasions for talk about, varied topics and introduction of new words are valuable. They found more evidence of effects of teachers' behaviors during group times and more evidence of children's impact on each other during free play. Teachers who are effective hold the attention of the group by asking for attention, calling on individuals, evaluating children's contributions, and, when necessary, correcting misinformation that children produce. They are those teachers who avoid long periods of talk

during which they extend the same topic or encourage a single child to review information and incorporate varied vocabulary into what they say and encourage children to use novel words. Effective teachers ensure that their talk is informative, challenges children to think, and provides explanations of what they and the group are doing. They also found that the same behavior might have opposite effects, depending on whether it occurs in large-group settings or during free play (for example, extending a topic). Thus, teachers need to tailor strategies to particular settings and researchers need to be cautious about combining data across settings. The authors determined what matters most is the activities that teachers employ and how they interact with children.

3. The full conversational environment that children experience needs to be kept in mind, considering both the input of the teacher and that of the other children. They found that the talk of both teachers and other children is

related to children's long-term development. Children's pretending provides them with important opportunities to develop literacy-related language skills. Children need to be allowed to talk to other children during free play and teachers need to encourage children to use varied vocabulary as they talk with adults in the classroom and as they play with each other. The finding of the effects of children on each other has far-reaching policy implications because it speaks to the multitude of decisions that determine which children are placed in the same classroom.

The above study tells us what is important for children to be successful in language and literacy development, however, what influence children to become early readers?

In 2004, Neuman and Celano, replicated an unpublished study by Delores Durkin (1966). In her two longitudinal studies she tested 5,103 first graders in Oakland and 4,465 in New York City. The families were interviewed to determine socioeconomic background, the personality characteristics of the early readers, and the

way in which the early reading ability developed. In both studies a group of non-early readers was matched on sex and IQ with a group of pre-readers. A general conclusion from Durkin's study was that (1) the pessimistic opinions about the effects of early reading were not corroborated, and more important, (2) that the early and non-early reading children were not markedly dissimilar. However, early readers tended to come from families that were more willing to help children learn to read. In their replication 30 years later, Neuman and Celano (2004) screened over 4,050 children (ages 3-4) from high-poverty neighborhood in Philadelphia, following a two-step process. Using a pre-primer word list (Johns, 1997), research assistants asked each child individually to identify words as a screening device. Children who read more than five words were then asked to read connected text. If they were able to read lines from the text, they were identified as early readers. In Neuman and Celano's study a total of 43 precocious early readers were identified (26 girls, 17 boys; 30 African American, 13 Caucasians). Following the screening criteria, the selected 43 children were then given assessments by Neuman and Celano to examine their general reading

abilities. At the same time the authors randomly selected children in the study to be tested using the same assessments who were not identified as readers but who were similar in all other demographic characteristics. The authors Neuman and Celano felt they made a remarkable breakthrough in that children's ability to read was related to skill development, not ability. In each skill category the researchers discovered, there were major differences between precocious early readers and their peers who were not yet reading. However, there were no differences between groups in intelligence. The results concluded that these young, precocious readers had somehow developed the critical components of early literacy through their daily activities and involvement with peers and interested adults.

Neuman and Celano (2004) are only able to hypothesize in their yet unpublished study how these 3- to 4 year-olds developed the ability to read, but interviews with families and detailed observations of childcare settings are providing some indicative answers. Unlike Durkin (1966), Neuman and Celano found that parent involvement with their children in poor communities varied dramatically. Some families living in difficult

conditions had few resources, such as access to books and opportunities for involvement. Other parents, even though poor economically, had rich kinship networks, such as family and friends and could draw from these types of family relationships to help their children. Other times, Neuman and Celano stated that an older brother or sister would become the "designated" helper or reader for the child and help as he or she was trying to read. In no instance, however, did they find a concentrated effort on the part of the parent or caregiver to teach the child to read. Rather, in difference to Durkin (1966), Neuman and Celano found that the childcare center made an huge contribution to the child's interest and curiosity about learning to read. One-hour observations of activities in these centers, two times throughout the year, revealed print-rich environments and contexts with lively conversation. Often located in church basements, storefronts, or rooms in old factories, caregivers supported early literacy in many ways. They provided:

1. Print-rich environments. Centers included writing tables, functional signs, and symbols that stimulated children use literacy, Signs that had meaning for children (not mere

decoration) helped to communicate the important message that literacy was an integral part of daily living.

2. A "Cozy Corner" library nook. Each center had a place where children could sit in cozy, small spaces and read together. Often these spaces included soft things, such as stuffed animals, pillows, and dolls, so that a child alone could feel welcome to read.
3. Literacy-related play areas. Props, such as memo pads, recipes, and cookbooks, helped children incorporate print in a very natural way.
4. Interactive circle times. In contrast to being read to, children could actively participate in reading aloud. Teachers would stop, ask questions, encourage discussion of ideas, raise new questions based on children's comments and generate a participatory role in reading with children.
5. Interactive meal times. Teachers sat with children and engaged them in conversation during meals and snack times. Often this time

became an opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with children, to hear about their daily activities outside of the center, and to connect their home and center worlds.

6. Small-group activities. Teachers would engage children in reading, writing, handwriting, or math activities in small groups.

In observing the young, precocious, early readers in centers like these, Neuman and Celano revealed a number of important findings for literacy researchers and practitioners.

- ★ First, based on their observations, it was clear that children took advantage of the environment and their caregiver's support. Interest and curiosity about reading led children to choose to play in literacy-related centers and to choose to read by themselves.
- ★ Second, high-quality centers, even in poor physical conditions, reflected similar types of stimulating activities that were reported by Durkin (1966) in home settings. These centers, therefore, provided a critical safety net for

children who might otherwise not have access to print and opportunities for engagement.

★ Third, their study led them to recognize that the link between low income and poor achievement may be vastly overestimated.

Poverty is not a monolithic construct or a life sentence. Rather, it encourages us to focus on the individual child and the talents and gifts that every child brings to the learning event.

The above research has shown that even modest augmentation of the quality of classroom environments and experiences can result in positive effects upon children's language development and pre-literacy skills. As children develop through the preschool years, language and pre-literacy skills should be a natural development given the correct language (home language and print-rich environment). Children who are supported in their efforts to explore the meaning of print and to use it as an integral part of their daily lives demonstrate a capacity to use legitimate reading and writing behaviors long before formal instruction commences (Neuman & Roskos, 1997).

When determining characteristics that impact literacy skills and development, none of the above can be ignored when determining what factors are important when developing and intervention project. Socioeconomic status (SES) has continued to raise to the forefront of early literacy development studies. Children who are underfed, unhealthy, or concerned about a safe environment find it difficult to concentrate on needed skills to acquire literacy. Poor phonological skills, family risk factors (inherited reading disabilities), poor family literacy environments with little access to books, children whose home language differs from the school setting and limited language and enriched vocabulary exposure with adults add to this risk. Any one of the characteristics can influence later literacy and language development let alone several compounding influences.

Family Child Care Home Settings

Family child care homes (also called "day care home") is a type of out-of-home child care in which one or more people care for a group of unrelated children (usually fewer than 12) on a regular basis at the care provider's own home. A family childcare home can share

many features with a childcare center, but usually possess several distinctive characteristics that make it appealing to some families. These include:

- (1) Intimacy: In a family childcare home there are fewer caregivers and when children stay in the home for several years they develop a close relationship with the caregiver. Families also often form a relationship similar to an extended family.
- (2) Flexibility: A family childcare home is more likely to cater to the special needs of individual children as well as offer flexible hours for parents who do not have fixed hours of work. Family childcare providers typically provide care for children at a variety of age and developmental levels. It is therefore possible for all siblings to receive care at the home site.
- (3) Familiarity and proximity: Family child care offers children a home-like and familiar environment and in most cases the family childcare home is close to the parent's home or work (Lu, 2003).

Compared to center-based childcare, family childcare has been under-researched. Research studies in family childcare homes are limited and usually are conducted on the quality of family childcare homes and the resulting implications for the development of children (Kontos, 1991).

One issue that has driven a number of relatively recent studies is characterizing the quality of family childcare. These studies have focused primarily on regulated providers and have used observations as the primary data source. Quality of care has been examined using a variety of approaches, including regulated characteristics such as ratio, and group size, as well as more process-oriented approaches that examine such things as provider behavior, type of children's experiences provided, and organization of the physical environment.

According to Kontos (1992), six studies conducted in the United States and Canada has measured quality in family childcare (excluding relative care) with the Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale (FDCERS) (Harms & Clifford, 1998). Although there have been several studies conducted of family childcare quality, because each of these six studies of family childcare used the

FDCERS, it is possible to examine the quality of family childcare across samples using a common methodology (Fisher, 1989; Goelman & Pence, 1987; Goelman, Shariro, & Pence, 1990; Howes, Keeling, & Sale, 1988; Howes & Stewart, 1987; Kontos, 1994).

The average FDCERS item scores across studies ranged from 2.9 to 4.33. The range of quality reported in these six studies indicated that family childcare quality varied from inadequate (potentially harmful to children) to good (developmentally enhancing), rarely reaching excellence. The typical quality of these family childcare homes was between "just below adequate" and "not quite good" (Fisher, 1989, Goelman et al., 1990, Goelman & Pence, 1987; Howes et al., 1988; Howes & Stewart, 1987; Kontos, 1994). Adequate care is considered custodial, neither developmentally enhancing nor harmful to children (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 1991).

Researchers have attempted to determine the characteristics associated with quality other than regulatory status. The factors that emerge are stimulation in the home, years of experience of providers (Fisher 1989), hours per week care is provided and the amount of television viewing (Goelman et al., 1990),

affiliation with support networks, training, and the number of the provider's own children (Kontos, 1994). So far, the only care-giving characteristic associated with quality (as measured with the FDCERS) in more than one study is regulator status.

In their study "Quality in Family Child Care and Relative Care" by Kontos, Howes, Shinn, and Galinsky (1995), the authors concluded that quality family childcare does not happen by chance. It takes sensitivity, planning, and commitment on the part of the providers to balance family, home, and childcare responsibilities in a way that is developmentally enhancing to the children. This extensive 3-state study included participants from North Carolina, Texas, and California. The participants included 820 employed mothers with a preschool-aged child enrolled in family childcare or relative care. Mothers who used family child care or relative care for a child under 6 years old were sampled in three communities in different states chosen because they were sites of Family-to-Family training programs (Family-to-Family was a national initiative sponsored by Dayton Hudson; in partnership with its Mervyn's, Target Stores, and Department Store Divisions

to promote quality in family childcare through training, accreditation, provider associations, and local consumer education). Sites included: Charlotte, North Carolina; Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas; and the San Fernando Valley, California. Mothers were eligible for the study if they worked at least 15 hours per week and if their major form of care was family child care (including care by a relative). The children could also participate in other forms of care if they were in family childcare at least 10 hours per week more than the other forms of care. Approximately half of the interviewed mothers referred their providers to the study, and approximately half of the providers were eligible and agreed to be observed.

Ultimately, 226 family childcare and relative care providers were observed and interviewed, and the target child in each provider's home was observed as well. Providers were visited for approximately 3 hours, usually between 8:30 and 11:30 in the morning. Timing of the visits was designed to cover periods during which the target child was awake and engaging in typical daily activities. The provider was asked to maintain her/his usual routine, despite the presence of the observer. Trained female observers who lived in the communities

where they worked conducted observations. At the end of the visit, providers were given a 12-page questionnaire to complete and return to the researchers. Some of the key findings for the study were:

1. That both parents and providers see a warm, caring, responsive relationship between the child and the providers, a safe environment, and good communication between the parent and provider as the crux of quality.
2. When the childcare received is sensitive, responsive, and of better quality, children are more likely to be securely attached to their providers and to achieve higher levels of cognitive competence.
3. Providers who offer more sensitive, more responsive, and overall better quality care are more "intentional" in their approach to caregiving.
4. Providers who are under licensing regulations in their states are more likely to be sensitive and responsive.
5. Providers with somewhat larger groups are more likely to be sensitive; providers with somewhat

larger groups and somewhat higher number of children per adult are more likely to have higher global quality scores.

6. Providers who report charging higher rates and following standard business and safety practices are more likely to offer higher quality childcare.
7. Providers who are still offering childcare after one year are more likely to be white, regulated, have more training, be more business-like, and to have chosen family childcare as a profession.

Approximately 1 million family childcare providers in the United States care for and educate about 4 million children (National Association for Family Child Care, 2005). Available research conducted within family childcare environments addresses quality of care (e.g., health and safety, behaviors of children in long term care, and caregiver education etc.). "Very little research is available regarding children's early literacy learning and development in such settings" (Lu, 2003). In her study Lu states, "That as the achievement of early language and literacy skills is significant to children's

later academic success, it is imperative to discover how family child care providers can develop sound literacy programs as well as provide literacy rich environments that support children's early literacy development" (Lu, 2003).

The above information presented suggests a need for further review of preschool early literacy practices in family childcare homes. Prevention of later reading difficulties involves ensuring that teachers, caregivers, families, and group care settings for young children offer experiences and support to enhance language and literacy accomplishments.

Intervention Projects

Over the last two decades researchers, educators, and psychologists have viewed the enhancement of parent-child reading experiences and activities as a means to improve language development and school performance. Leseman and deJong (1998) conducted a longitudinal study using 89 children from 28 inner-city primary schools. The children came from varied ethnic and socioeconomic statuses. The researcher's hypothesis was that the effects of socioeconomic and cultural background

on early reading achievement could be mediated by experiencing quality interactions with home literacy, home language, and early language level. From their results it was concluded that home literacy is strongly determined by socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic factors. Similarly, parents' own literacy practices appeared to determine the opportunities for young children to be involved in literacy-related experiences.

The strong focus on literacy accomplishment has educators and psychologists viewing the enrichment of parent-child/caregiver-child reading activities as a direct means by which to improve language development and school performance, and have designed interventions to increase both the quantity and quality of parent-child reading activities. Researchers have well documented the beneficial effects of these programs (Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Hart & Risley, 1995; Cark-Stewart, 1998; Leseman & de Jong, 1998; Justice, Weber, Ezell, & Bakerman, 2002). In another study, Catherine Crain-Thoreson (1999) instructed parents and early childhood special education staff in Dialogic Reading, an interactive language facilitation technique (Whitehurst, Falco, Lonigan, Fischel, Debaryshe, Valdez-Menchaca & Caulfield, 1988).

The purpose of the study was to compare the effects of this type of instruction on the adult and children's language during shared book reading and on children's vocabulary growth. The intervention took place over an eight-week period using 32 children qualifying for early childhood special education services and enrolled in preschool programs in three school districts in the Pacific Northwest. The goal of these publicly funded preschool programs was to provide early intervention for children with special needs. The mean chronological age of the children who completed the study was 51.6 months, ranging from 39 to 66 months. All children had mild to moderate language delay, scoring at least 1 standard deviation below the normed mean on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R; Dunn & Dunn, 1981). Parents of 10 of the children and seven staff members from the five different schools also participated. The results of the study were twofold: the parents and staff changed their shared book reading style positively in response to the Dialogic Reading intervention, and they became more responsive to children by slowing down, decreasing verbatim reading and information statements, and increasing their questions and expansions of

children's utterances. In response to the intervention conditions, children responded with more use of language during story time and with more elaborate expressive language.

Clarke-Stewart (1998) conducted another example of a shared reading study using 40 children, eight to ten years of age, and their parents in an experiment to assess the effects of adults and children reading together. It was hypothesized that children's interest in reading and reading fluency would be promoted by books that provided a venue for the children to both read and be read to. Two books were adapted so they contained sections at a simpler reading level alternating with sections at a more advanced reading level of the original text. The easy sections were read aloud by the children, with the advanced sections read by their parents in an interactive context in which the advanced-level text provided a "scaffold" for the child's reading. Compared to just listening to their parents read the original stories, children benefited from taking turns reading the adapted text with their parents in terms of enjoyment, attention, and reading fluency. Clark-Stewart states that reading is an important accomplishment for all

primary-school children and an essential skill in our society. Any form of literature or reading activity that can facilitate literacy development and promote acquisition of literacy would be of interest and value to parents and educators. The same kinds of books could be of use to primary-grade teachers, particularly those involved in on-to-one sessions with slow or reluctant readers (Clarke-Stewart, 1998).

Preschool children's development of early literacy skills also encompasses written language awareness, and the children's implicit and explicit knowledge about print (e.g., print directionality, letter names). Print awareness, an important element of pre-literacy development, describes young children's growing knowledge of the form and function of print and the relationship between oral language and written language. Many at-risk children, low SES for example, are behind their peers in print awareness skills.

The following study by Justice and Ezell (2002) was conducted to determine the extent to which pre-literacy knowledge, and specifically print awareness, could be facilitated during storybook reading for at-risk preschool children. The reading intervention study was

conducted with 30 children enrolled in Head Start. In this study, children were matched on chronological age and then randomly placed into an experimental or control group. Pretest measures were administered that included a bilateral hearing screening, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT-III; Dunn & Dunn, 1977; and the Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (EOWPVT-R; Gardner, 1990). Justice and Ezell then arranged children in both groups to subsequently participate in 24 small-group reading sessions over an 8-week intervention period. A total of 24 reading sessions were completed by both groups (240 session's total) during the study. The attendance of 75% (18 of 24) or more of the reading sessions, by the children, served as the minimum criterion for each child's completion of the intervention study. As required by the researchers, Justice and Ezell, all reading sessions were conducted by the same adult reader, a certified speech-language pathologist with experience in working with preschoolers. The reading sessions were held for the most part within a small private room in the Head Start center. Children were seated comfortably in circle around the adult reader, who held the book in her lap so that it was

directed towards the children. All the children were facing the book as it was read. The reading sessions were generally brief, lasting approximately 5 to 7 minutes each.

During each experimental and control-group reading session, Justice and Ezell had the adult reader pose a total of nine prompts (print or picture focus), additionally, to hold the interest of each child who participated in the sessions, each child was called on by his/her name to respond to at least one of the nine prompts. Reading sessions involving control-reading groups featured a prompt of a picture focus, whereas sessions involving the experimental reading groups featured prompts of a print focus. All other features of reading sessions were identical across experimental and control reading groups.

Justice and Ezell had the readers read eight storybooks in the intervention reading sessions. These books all contained (a) large narrative print, (b) a limited number of words on each page (averaging 20 words or fewer per page), (c) contextualized print within the illustrations, and (d) illustrations on each page. Justice and Ezell felt these features were considered

important, given the need to facilitate the print and picture focus of the reading sessions. A assortment of big books and regular-sized storybooks were used. Children in the experimental group sessions participated in shared reading sessions that included a print focus. Again Justice and Ezell had the adult reader use nine prompts about print during the reading of each target book. The focus of each prompt was one of three general types: (a) print conventions, (b) concept of word, or (c) alphabet knowledge. The reader used print convention prompts that addressed features such as print directionality, book components and contextualized print in the book illustrations. Concepts of word prompts by the adult reader as directed by Justice and Ezell study addressed features of individual words and the difference between words and other fundamentals of written language, such as letters. Alphabet awareness prompts encouraged children to attend to the individual features of alphabet letters and to identify or name individual letters that appeared within the books. As an alternative condition, control group children participated in a shared reading session with a picture focus. The control-group reading sessions were conducted in the exact manner by the

readers, as the experimental group sessions with the exception that the adult reader posed nine prompts regarding the illustrations in the book rather than the print. Justice and Ezell directed prompts regarding pictures as one of three types: (a) character focus, (b) perceptual focus, or (c) action focus. Character focus prompts regarded features of the main characters in the storybook. Perceptual feature prompts focused on the illustrations, such as color or size of objects. Action feature prompts focused on what was happening in the illustrations, such as what the characters were doing or where they were going.

Results of the intervention showed a significant main effect, and over time. Importantly, a significant interaction also was found, indicating that in collective consideration of the dependent measures the experimental group demonstrated a greater increase in print awareness performance over time compared to the control group. Results also indicated that children who participated in print-focus reading sessions outperformed their control-group peers on three measures of print awareness; words in print, print recognition, and alphabet knowledge

and in terms of overall performance (Justice & Ezell, 2002).

The positive influence of children's participation in shared reading sessions with a print focus was supported by the above findings. Specifically, results in the study by Justice and Ezell (2002) demonstrated the effectiveness of embedding print cues into book-reading sessions for enhancing print awareness for at-risk children.

In terms of precise findings, the most dramatic gains from the intervention were seen by Justice and Ezell in the experimental group for the measures of "Words in Print" and "Print Recognition". These two outcomes were those for which all children established the lowest scores at pretest. At that time, the children averaged approximately 10% and 3% correct on the Words in Print and Print Recognition measures, indicating that many children were unable to carry out any of the tasks presented before the intervention. The considerably greater gains on Words in Print and Print Recognition by the experimental-group children indicated that the intervention made a difference in pre-literacy skills specific to knowledge of contextualized print recognition

and concept of work in written language (Justice & Ezell, 2002).

In another study conducted by Neuman (1999), the focus was on the results of flooding the child's environment with books. The intervention project targeted 330 childcare centers by providing them with premium books, at a ratio of 5 books per child, and provided 10 hours of training to childcare staff on reading skills. Nueman's study examined the project's impact by systematically sampling 400, 3 and 4 year old children randomly chosen from 50 childcare centers across 10 regions, and 100 control children from comparable childcare centers not involved in the project. Nueman states, "Children's early literacy skills (receptive language, concepts of print, environmental print, letter name knowledge, concepts of writing, and narrative competence) were assessed prior to and following the study. In addition, a post-test-only sample and a kindergarten sample were included, focusing on the project's long-term impact. Changes in childcare practices were assessed throughout the project using photographic accounts of the physical environments of classrooms, literacy-related interactions between

teachers and children in sample classrooms, and storybook reading activity in both treatment and control classrooms. Process measures indicated enhanced physical access to books, greater verbal interaction around literacy, and more time spent reading and relating to books as a result of the intervention. With greater access, children in the intervention group scored significantly higher than the control group on four of six assessment measures, with gains still very much evident 6 months later in kindergarten. Findings provide powerful support for the physical proximity of books and the psychological support to childcare staff on children's early literacy development" (Neuman, 1999).

The research project provided compelling evidence for the importance of books in children's early literacy development. It argued that young children need rich and diverse reading materials to acquire the complex set of attitudes, skills and behaviors associated with literacy development. Neuman goes on to state that although the placement of books in close proximity to children is critical, it is, by itself, insufficient. Children need an excellent instructional environment as well.

In summary, those interventions that had greatest positive influence on children's literacy and language development are those in which children are engaged in reading with adults, parents, or caregivers through shared and dialogic reading experiences. Whether the focus was on print awareness or comprehension, the ability to share the time with adults who are influencing and scaffolding the child's reading experience has positive results. These experiences can be reproduced in classrooms, homes, and family childcare homes given the correct literacy environments. Literacy environments are those that include and contain the above suggestion and print rich and diverse reading materials in close proximity to children, as well as environments that also provide support to caregivers on children's early literacy development.

The preceding research indicates that literacy begins long before children encounter formal school instruction in reading and writing, and that early literacy skills are central to academic achievement and lifelong learning. The above literacy review and research also indicates that those at risk for not achieving early

literacy skills are not only children of lower socio-economical status but:

1. Children who have not developed strong language or had the opportunity to develop a strong vocabulary as stated in the research from Hart and Risley (1995).
2. Children who have not had the opportunity to develop phonological skills (Goswami, 2000) as reviewed in Chapter III.
3. Children who have not been or had the opportunity to be exposed to books or reading experiences (Neuman, 1999). Children who have not experienced dialogic or shared reading experiences with adults (Justice et al., 2002; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998).
4. Children who have not had the opportunity to practice writing skills who or have not been exposed to print rich activities and environments (Neuman et al., 2000; Justice et al., 2002).

Literary Summary

The above literacy review on emergent literacy research examines early literacy knowledge and the contexts and conditions that foster that knowledge. Even though there are differing ideas on the relationship between emerging literacy skills and reading acquisition, the literature supports the importance of early childhood exposure to oral and written language. The literature also supports that differences in socio economic status, language differences, family risk factors, and child care settings impact the child's ability to become a successful reader and literate individual.

Although most of the current research on early literacy has taken place within center-based classroom environments, the six essential elements for literacy achievement (vocabulary and language development, phonological awareness, reading and writing opportunities, and providing print rich environments) remain static. These same essential elements for providing early literacy opportunities for children should remain the same within a family childcare home. The ability to provide small group reading or one-on-one instruction using dialogic and shared reading and

scaffolding could be enhanced in the family childcare home because of the ideal setting of the low adult/child ratios.

Given the preceding research and information the training of family childcare providers who care for children in their homes is becoming paramount to providing quality care and environments that promote early literacy development through the development of language, vocabulary, phonological and print awareness, and pre-literacy skills.

With little research on early literacy practices in family childcare homes to build from, the "Building Literacy Bridges Project", a research-based early literacy instruction program for caregivers, will presume the above research on early literacy in center-based preschool programs would also apply in theory to the family childcare home.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHOD

Participants

Participants consisted of fifteen licensed family childcare providers and their assistants (family childcare providers who are licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division). Nine of the participants have completed college course work, including workshops and training in early childhood education instruction. Participants were all female ranging in age from thirty to sixty-five years of age and had two through twenty-five years of experience. All of the participants were active in a Family Child Care Association, and were accredited by the National Association of Family Child Care. Participants were recruited through letters of invitation to participate in the project. Fifteen providers agreed to participate, nine of who completed the project. The family childcare homes were all located in Riverside County.

Materials

"Building Literacy Bridges", a research based power point presentation (Appendix C), which provides instruction in four components:

1. Phonological awareness
2. Shared & Dialogic Reading
3. Print awareness
4. Emergent literacy environment.

Instruction included opportunity for participants to practice dialogic and shared reading experiences, understand the continuum of early writing skills and print awareness, and positive literacy environments.

A pre-survey/post-survey (Appendix B) design served as a framework for understanding the participant's knowledge of early literacy and their influence as caregivers. The Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale (FDCERS) (Harms et al., 1998) was conducted in each participant's family childcare home prior to the instruction (pre-test) and again after instruction (post-test) to evaluate the environment for positive early literacy component differences. The FDCERS is a 33-item scale used to rate six areas of family caregivers practices: space and furnishings, basic needs, language

and reasoning, learning activities, social development, and adult needs. Each item is rated on a 1-to-7 point scale, with a score of (1) indicating inadequate practices and a score of (7) indicating excellent practices (3 = adequate; 5 = good).

Procedures

The fifteen invited participants completed the Informed Consent document. The document explained the project components and rights to privacy. Prior to instruction the participants completed a brief ten-question Provider Survey measuring how the providers perceive their influence on literacy development of the children in their care (Appendix A). Nine licensed family childcare providers and their assistants completed the pretest survey. Two weeks prior to instruction of the "Building Literacy Bridges" a program development specialist administered (an individual who has is trained in the administration of the FDCERS instrument) the pre-test FDCERS in nine family childcare homes.

The providers attended four weekly trainings of four hours each week. The first week of training in "Building Literacy Bridges" provided instruction on research based

phonological awareness: the second week contained instruction on shared and dialogic reading: the third week print awareness; and the final week instruction was on providing emergent literacy environments. Instruction included an opportunity for practice sessions during the training, homework, and small group sharing activities to help demonstrate a clear understanding of the four key concepts. After completion of the four training sessions the family childcare providers and their assistants completed the "Building Literacy Bridges" post-test provider survey (Appendix B). Survey data was reviewed for pre/post survey differences. A FDCERS post-test was scheduled and completed four weeks after the final instructional component with the remaining nine licensed provider homes.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Results

As a result of completing the four-week "Building Literacy Bridges" instructional curriculum, the providers' attitudes regarding their role in influencing the literacy development of the children in their care increased. The Survey Post-Test illustrated that there was a shift in provider understanding of literacy concepts between the pre- and post-test scores (Table 2). The provider's answers on the post-test shifted from a response #1 on the pre-test (Less likely) to response #5 on the post-test (Highly likely) in 80% of their responses, showing an increased understanding of the curriculum content and concepts. There was a difference of 2.1 in the mean scores between the pre and post surveys completed by the participants (Table 3). This difference demonstrates that the providers gained a better understanding of what literacy instruction during the preschool years should look like from the workshops they attended.

This also appears to be true when examining the participant's actual literacy behaviors, as measured by the Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale (FDCERS). Upon reviewing the data provided by the pre/post FDCERS it appears that provider's scores generally showed a consistent pattern of improvement after completing the Building Literacy Bridges coursework. The FDCERS contains 33 items, but only 6 of these items relate to language and literacy therefore only these 6 items will be discussed in the following analyses (See Tables 4 and 5 for provider raw scores on these 6 items). After tabulating mean scores on each of the 6 items for both the pre- and post-test it was noted that provider's scores increased on 5 out of the 6 Language-Reasoning items (Table 6). The only item to decrease between the pre- and post-test was "helping children understand language - for infants and toddlers."

In addition to tabulating mean pre/post scores for each of the 6 items related to language-reasoning, mean scores across these 6 items for each provider were computed for both the pre- and post-test FDCERS (Table 7). Upon examining these mean scores it was noted that scores increased for 6 out of the 9 providers, that

scores decreased for 3 providers and that one provider's scores stayed the same between the pre and post-test. This suggests that although across FDCERS items scores increased between the pre- and post-test that scores among individual providers were variable. In other words although language-reasoning behaviors increased overall following the Building Literacy Bridges coursework, this was not true for each provider independently.

Discussion

This study had one primary goal. It was to determine that if family childcare providers attended and completed 4 sessions of early literacy training would they implement the strategies taught into their daily childcare programs. There is little research available that addresses family childcare homes and most of the research data that is available discusses quality of care with no mention of curriculum or the development of early literacy.

The data derived from the posttest surveys responses in this study indicated that the family childcare providers gained a better understanding of the importance of early literacy instruction and their role as educators

during the preschool years. Speculation could be that although the majority of the providers have been in business for 15 plus years, they may have never viewed themselves as being important in the role of education for the children in their care. When provided with research-based curriculum, strategies, and knowledge of how children develop early literacy skills, their view of their role may have changed and began to view themselves as having the ability to provide opportunities for children to explore and develop basic literacy skills.

The post-test FDCERS scores also increased for all 6 items when averaged across providers with the exception of helping infants and toddlers understand language. This particular item would address early vocabulary skills, such as naming and identifying items. It would also include the observation of providers speaking to and having conversations with infants and toddlers. Scores could have fallen in this category because observations of this item may not have been observed during the post-test or due to the limited number of providers in the study who care for infants and toddlers.

The average increase in scores would indicate that the post-test observation did see evidence of helping

children understand language for 2 years and up as well as helping child use language and reasoning. Providers may have been more responsive and willing to teach language and literacy with children in this age category because they in turn receive more individual responses back and therefore are encouraged to expand on their teaching.

Post-test scores when reviewed on each individual provider were variable, 6 went up, 4 went down and 1 remained the same.

The variance in these scores could indicate several factors, one being that the 6 providers whose scores went up were those that have more formal education and understood the importance of implementing the concepts presented. The 4 providers whose scores went down and the 1 provider who remained the same may not have been observed using all of the 6 indicators during the post-test visit. Cultural differences also may have caused a variance as several of the family child care providers primary home language was not English. Additionally, the same program development specialist who completed the Pre-test visit was not available for the Post-test visit, which could cause a variance in

interpretation of the indicators as well as a language barrier because she did not speak Spanish.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Limitations

Limitations of the study included the amount of participants. It is also recommended that an alternative method of assessment other than the FDCERS be used. The environmental rating scale (FDCERS) proved to be vague in the area of language and literacy assessment. The limitations of the FDCERS assessment tool in the area of language and literacy could also be a factor in the variances of the individual scores. Very few indicators of the FDCERS reflect the area of language and literacy or curriculum, most address quality and environmental issues. Additionally it is also recommended that if the FDCERS or another like assessment tool is used that the observations and assessments be completed by the same individual to limit individual interpretation and variance of the assessment tool.

Future Directions

If this project were to replicate it would be suggested to obtain a larger group of participants. It is also suggested to involve the parents of the children

enrolled in the family childcare homes in the study. Additionally, because of the lack of adequate early literacy assessments for family child care homes, development of a literacy assessment tool or literacy scale could be a possible project for future students in the field of child development.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent

The study in which you are being asked to participate in is designed to investigate how effective instruction is on improving early literacy development. Gloria Kinzler is conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Amanda Wilcox-Herzog, Professor of California State University San Bernardino, Human Development Department. This study has been approved by the Psychology Department Human Subjects Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

As a part of this study you will be attending and completing four instructional sessions “Building Literacy Bridges”, once per week for four hours for four weeks, on early literacy. You will be asked to participate in group discussions, group activities, and complete homework assignments. In this study you will also be asked to complete a pre-test and post-test which will take about 10 minutes each time. All of responses will be held in the strictest of confidence by the researchers. Included in the study is the completion of an assessment of the environment that will be conducted in your family childcare home prior to and after the instructional sessions. Your name will not be reported in any written work. If you are interested in the findings of this project you may contact Dr. Wilcox after September 30, 2006 at the number listed below.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free not to answer any questions without losing the opportunity to attend the instructional sessions. It is hoped that through this research study the “ Building Literacy Bridges” project will benefit children’s early literacy skills in family childcare homes. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to participants of this project.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me, Amanda Wilcox-Herzog at (909) 537-7431.

By placing a check mark in the box below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of, and that I understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Please check mark here

Today’s date: _____

APPENDIX B
PROVIDER SURVEY

Provider Survey

Please complete the following survey with 1 = less likely and 5 = highly likely.

1. As a family childcare provider I have an influence on literacy development for the children in my care.
1 2 3 4 5
2. I have a clear understanding of research-based instruction.
1 2 3 4 5
3. Parents are responsible for the literacy development for their children in my care.
1 2 3 4 5
4. Kindergarten is where children first begin to learn to read.
1 2 3 4 5
5. I understand the importance of phonological awareness.
1 2 3 4 5
6. I understand the concept of Dialogic and Shared Reading.
1 2 3 4 5
7. When children scribble they are only drawing pictures and creating art
1 2 3 4 5
8. As a family childcare provider it is important that I spend a large portion of my day talking and reading to children.
1 2 3 4 5
9. Children do not have a concept of print until they know the alphabet.
1 2 3 4 5
10. The environment of my home could have an influence on early literacy development.
1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX C

TABLES

Table 1

| Pre-Test Provider Survey N=15 | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Question Number | Response 1 | Response 2 | Response 3 | Response 4 | Response 5 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| 9 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 |

1=Less Likely
5=Highly Likely

Table 2

| Post-Test Provider Survey N=14 | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Question Number | Response 1 | Response 2 | Response 3 | Response 4 | Response 5 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 14 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 11 |
| 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| 4 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 5 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 13 |
| 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 14 |
| 7 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| 8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 13 |
| 9 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 |

1= Less Likely
5= Highly Likely

Table 3

| Pre/Post Provider Means for Survey | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Response | Pre-Survey | Post-Survey |
| 1 | 3.2 | 3.5 |
| 2 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
| 3 | 0.4 | 1.6 |
| 4 | 1 | 2.3 |
| 5 | 7.2 | 9.3 |

Table 4

| FDCERS Pre -test Language-Reasoning | Provider | #1 | #2 | #3 | #4 | #5 | #6 | #7 | #8 | #9 |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----|-----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|
| III Language-Reasoning | | | | | | | | | | |
| Informal use of lang. (I/T) | | 4 | n/a | 6 | n/a | 5 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| Infomal use of lang.(2yrs.+) | | 4 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| Help child understand lang. (I/T) | | 4 | n/a | 6 | n/a | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 6 |
| Help child understand lang. (2yrs.+) | | 5 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| Help child use lang. | | 4 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Helping children reason | | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 |

Table 5

| FDCERS Post-test Language-Reasoning | Provider | #1 | #2 | #3 | #4 | #5 | #6 | #7 | #8 | #9 |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| III Language-Reasoning | | | | | | | | | | |
| Informal use of lang. (I/T) | | 5 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 7 |
| Informal use of lang.(2yrs.+) | | 4 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| Help child understand lang. (I/T) | | 5 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| Help child understand lang. (2yrs.+) | | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| Help child use lang. | | 4 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 5 |

Table 6

Pre/Post Mean FDCERS Item Scores

| Item | Pre | Post |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | 5.1 | 6.1 |
| 2 | 5.2 | 5.5 |
| 3 | 4.8 | 5.7 |
| 4 | 6.1 | 5.4 |
| 5 | 4.7 | 5.5 |
| 6 | 4.2 | 5.1 |
| Total | 4.8 | 5.5 |

Table 7

| Pre/Post Means Provider FDCERS | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| | | Observation 1 | Observation 2 |
| Provider | | | |
| 1 | | 4.2 | 4.6 |
| 2 | | 5.5 | 6.5 |
| 3 | | 5.6 | 5.3 |
| 4 | | 5.25 | 5.2 |
| 5 | | 4.2 | 5.8 |
| 6 | | 4.5 | 5.8 |
| 7 | | 5.5 | 6.7 |
| 8 | | 5.3 | 4.7 |
| 9 | | 5.8 | 5.7 |
| Provider Mean Score | | 5.09 | 5.58 |

APPENDIX D
BUILDING LITERACY BRIDGES MANUAL

Facilitator's Guide – Overview

Interactive Strategies

Building Literacy Bridges utilizes several interactive teaching strategies that provide an opportunity for participants to interact with each other in a structured environment. These strategies when applied properly are excellent for teaching the fundamental early literacy approach for the Building Literacy Bridges Intervention Project.

A combination of the strategies is suggested to provide a stimulating environment that will keep the participants involved. The key objectives of the Building Literacy Bridges Intervention Project are to have participants gain an understanding of early literacy, as well as learn from one another.

The interactive strategies emphasize learning by interactive participation. Learning by participation is an essential ingredient in mastering concepts and ideas offered through the Building Literacy Bridges Intervention Project. Learning that is active, fun, and motivating is what will encourage participation and involvement. Remember participants in the program are scientists themselves. They have observed and developed theories about how children learn to read. They are taking this training to enhance their skills and provide new learning strategies to encourage early literacy in their early childhood environments. Sensitivity to ideas, perceptions and skills is imperative when applying the various strategies that the Building Literacy Bridges Intervention Project advocates.

The interactive strategies incorporated into the Building Literacy Bridges Project are:

1. Team Building
2. Paired Sharing
3. Role-Playing
4. Quality Circles
5. Debriefing

Interactive Strategy I

Team Builders

A team builder or icebreaker is a quick activity to get participants talking before you start a paired activity or group discussion. It allows participants to feel more comfortable talking and interacting. This helps create a feeling of cooperation and evokes an interest in one another and learning. These team-building activities can be viewed as the foundation for on-going interaction that is an underlying process of the Building Literacy Bridges Intervention Project.

Application

As a Building Literacy Bridges facilitator, you will want to insert a quick team builder whenever, you think it necessary. As a general rule, use these warm ups prior to any group activity or paired sharing, especially in the first two sessions as participants get to know one another.

Facilitator's Guide – Overview

Suggested Team Builders

The following are suggested team builders. You may want to develop different ones to fit the needs of your group.

1. Simply chat for a few minutes and acquaint yourselves.
2. What are one or two early literacy things you enjoy doing with the children in your care?
3. What is your favorite type of early literacy activity? (Singing, reading, finger play, etc.)
4. Two or three things you would like to change in your teaching environment to enhance early literacy.
5. What was your favorite book as a child?
6. When did you learn to read?
7. Who in your life was instrumental in teaching you to read?
8. Interests that you have and how you could incorporate those interests into an early literacy environments.
9. Skills you would like to gain from participation in the Building Early Literacy Project.
10. Changes you would like to make in your early literacy environment.

Interactive Strategy II

Paired Sharing

Paired sharing is a strategy to help participants initiate a discussion about a designated topic. The topics are directly associated with the sessions, unless they are team builders, so that participants can share ideas and learn from one another. The key is structure. This is not an opportunity to swap stories. Paired sharing builds relationships and helps with familiarity and cohesiveness of the whole group. With paired sharing and small group activities, everyone should become acquainted and feel comfortable to share ideas and teaching strategies.

Paired Sharing Guidelines

Diversity is the key to the paired sharing strategies.

1. Ask the participants to find someone they don't know or don't know very well and sit across from them.
2. Move chairs so they are sitting directly across from one another, knee-to-knee.
3. Tell the participants to talk with one another briefly before you give them their assignment (i.e., team builder).

4. Have participant's chose an A and then a B in their pairs. One person will be an A and one person will be a B.
5. Provide the topic of discussion and give personal examples so that participants are clear on what they should be discussing. Remind them to stay on the topic.
6. The timelines are from one to five minutes per partner depending on the topic.
7. The facilitator decides who goes first: e.g. A(s) will go first. A sample, two-minute discussion topic would be a time when they describe how they feel children learn language.
8. When keeping time, give them a 30-second warning prior to the turn ending. When time is up say "please finish your thought." Now the other partner will share for two minutes.
9. Most paired sharing will conclude with a short group discussion to clarify the key points of that particular topic.

Interactive Strategy III

Role-Playing

Role-playing is simply acting out a scene as if you were cast for a part in a movie. It is not necessary that you have acting skills; however, it is necessary that you "get into" the part and be as real as possible.

Role-playing is an opportunity for participants to really learn and practice new teaching skills.

Role-Playing Provides

1. Insight into how teaching skills can benefit children.
2. Insight into how important practicing new teaching skills is beneficial.
3. Opportunity to make changes in teaching strategies to improve teaching skills.

Rules of Role-Playing

Set the scene

Go over the exact role-play, verbally indicating that in a few moments everyone will have an opportunity to experience this activity. Answer any questions and encourage participation. Do not spend time counseling anyone about the merits of role-playing. If a participant declines to do the activity ask them to be an observer in one of the pairs. Encourage the participant to give it a try after observing others.

Interactive Strategy IV

Quality Circles

A quality circle is comprised of a small group of participants whose main purpose is to discuss strategies, methods, and techniques they can employ to solve a particular problem, improve on a particular teaching strategy, and discuss a topic presented in a Building Literacy Bridges session. The quality circle is also used as the primary interactive strategy for homework discussion after phonological, print awareness and literacy environments sessions. The group focus will access everyone's perceptions and talents. This also gives participants the opportunity to discuss successes and failures while practicing early literacy skills with children.

Quality Circle Guidelines

1. The groups should be heterogeneous or comprised of participants that do not work together.
2. The group members should move their chairs so they are facing one another in somewhat of a circle. The key to good group interaction is that they can easily see one another.
3. The group will discuss a specific topic from one of the sessions or review homework assignments. You can ask the group to decide on a volunteer basis who will go first or you can be playful and tell the group member with the curliest hair, the brightest shoes or the most colorful top to go first.

Model

Model the role-play for participants. Exaggeration helps to make the point and give the participants permission to "get loose" and have fun. If you are doing a role-play that has two components (i.e., the wrong way and then the right way), make certain you include both in your modeling session.

Give specific instructions to the participants prior to the start of role-play.

1. Please choose an A and B.
2. B(s) your role will be this. A(s) your role will be this.
3. Go over briefly what the role-play is again, because participants will be a bit nervous and anxious at this point.
4. Role-plays usually should be completed in the same manner that participants would use while teaching.
5. Try to recreate positions of the participants as if they were practicing a teaching skill.
6. Make the time limit short: 1-1.5 minutes per each role-play.
7. Troubleshooting. Circulate and monitor so you can help anyone who is having trouble.
8. Acknowledgement. Applaud after each role-play to foster enthusiasm.

4. Depending on the topic, assign the proper amount of time for sharing and for allowing the group to interact with the presenter.
Remember to remind them when they have 30 seconds left prior to ending their turn. Once the first person is finished, move on to the second, and so forth, until the group has completed the process. If a group has one more participant than the others, allow time for the last participant to share. Tell the other groups to have a general discussion until the participant has completed his/her turn.
5. When everyone is through, make sure the participants acknowledge one another before returning to the large group.

Interactive Strategy V

Debriefing

After each interactive strategy is completed, have the participants form a large group and discuss their feelings, thoughts about the experience. This will be new for some participants and they will enjoy sharing what they learned as well as what they think of the process. Keep this debriefing session short and to the point. It is important to debrief with the entire group. Debriefing provides opportunities to listen, learn, and exchange ideas. Of course words of encouragement for their great performance are always in order at the debriefing sessions.

Ground Rules

Respect:

Respect between group members is the foundation for group discussion. In order to develop trust, people must feel secure of respect. Respect is generally interpreted as "You may not like my ideas or thoughts, but remain open-minded."

Avoid Being Judgmental:

A group should be a safe, comfortable and positive place to share feelings, ideas and stories. Groups are not a place for judgment, criticism or confrontation. Planned activities require the brainpower of the entire group to be successful and judging responses can shut down the creative process.

Be Considerate:

While participating in group activities, take time to listen when others are speaking. Allow others to finish their thoughts before interjecting your own. The speaker should have full attention of all members of the group. All members should be encouraged to share with the group.

Power Point Slides

The use of the power point presentation as a visual aid is used throughout to help participants better understand concepts. The facilitator will use and read the slide presentation in conjunction with the descriptive narrative in each session.

Session I

Narrative:

Welcome to the Building Literacy Bridges Intervention Project.

The goal of this intervention project is to have children who are being cared for in family childcare homes become successful in early literacy and therefore, have successful achievement in reading in elementary school.

It is the objective and purpose of this project to provide caregivers of young children information and intervention training in the most recent scientific research on early literacy.

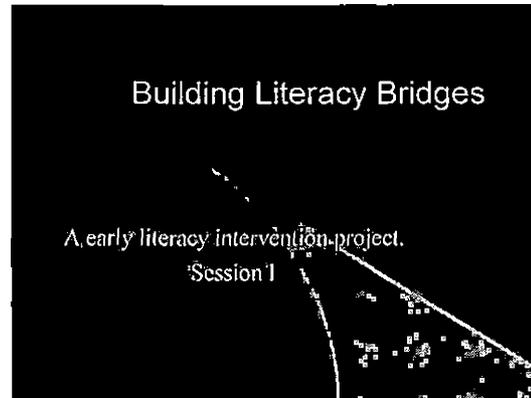
Over the next few weeks we will discover and review scientifically based research how very young children begin to understand the concepts of language and literacy. We will also review what you as a caregiver can do to help the children in your care become successful readers.

We will accomplish this through lecture, group interactions, homework projects and practice. We will review what you can do as caregiver to change your home environment to accommodate positive learning activities.

I want to welcome you to what I hope will be a new and positive experience.

Please remember all questions are welcome and that many times the best way to learn is through and with each other.

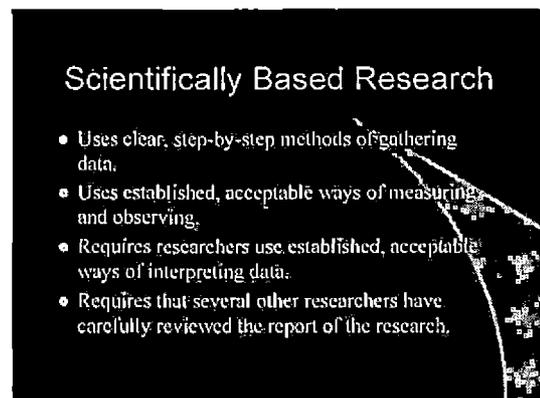
Visual Aid 1: Building Literacy Bridges



Facilitator's Goal:

Caregivers will have a clear understanding of scientifically based research and how it applies to early literacy and the Building Literacy Bridges Project.

Visual Aid 2: Scientifically Based Research



Narrative:

What is “scientifically based reading research” and why is it so important?

Scientifically based reading research provides the best available information about how you as caregivers can help prepare children in your care for learning to read in school.

Scientifically based research uses scientific procedures to obtain knowledge about how young children develop reading skills, how children can be taught to read, and how children can overcome reading difficulties. Scientifically based reading research contains these characteristics in order to be valid.

Using clear step-by-step methods of gathering data involving careful observation and measurements is essential. Often experiments are used to gather information, for example, an experiment may compare how well children learn to read when they are taught in different methods. The clear step-by-step methods validate that particular experiment or study.

Why is it important to use ways of measuring and observation?

Let’s say a researcher is trying to discover the best method of instruction to help children learn new words. The researcher must decide how to measure the child’s word learning. Should they ask the child if they know the word, should the child be able to use the word correctly when writing, or should they be able to recognize the correct definition among several choices? The way the researcher chooses to measure word learning must be acceptable to other researchers as a good, or valid measure of word learning.

Researchers must show that the conclusions they reach follow logically from the data they collected. Other researchers must be able to duplicate the research and draw the same or similar conclusions.

The study or report must include enough specific information about the research so that other researcher could repeat the research and verify the findings. These reviewers must agree that the research was done carefully and correctly and that the conclusions follow from the data collected. Usually, scientifically based reading research is published in professional journals and presented at professional meetings so that other researchers can learn from the work.

Activity: Break into small groups of three for discussion. You will have five minutes for this activity. Each group will choose a recorder and a reporter.

Question: Tell me about a news item that you have heard recently that you feel is research based? Group will choose one topic to report out the class.

Session I

All young children deserve experiences that will help them to become successful in literacy

Facilitators Goal:

Caregivers will have a clear understanding they have a key role in helping the children in their care to early literacy success.

Narrative:

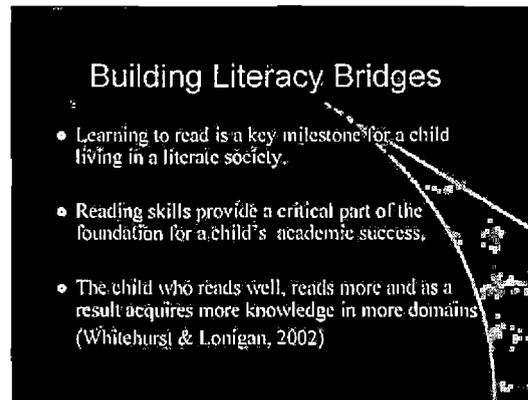
Everyone who interacts with a young child is a teacher.

As caregivers and family child care providers, you have a wonderful opportunity and the important responsibility to teach and nurture the children in your care. The years from birth to age five are a time of extraordinary growth and change. It is in these years that children develop the basic knowledge, understanding, and interests they need to reach the goal of being successful learners, readers, and writers.

As a child caregiver, teacher and family child care provider you play an important role in ensuring that “no child is left behind.” You spend many hours with children, and the right kind of activities can help them tremendously. You can be especially helpful to those children who have limited experiences at home.

This project, Building Literacy Bridges draws from scientifically based research about what you can do to help children to develop language abilities, increase their knowledge, become familiar with books and other printed materials, and learn sounds and letters.

Visual Aid 3: Building Literacy Bridges



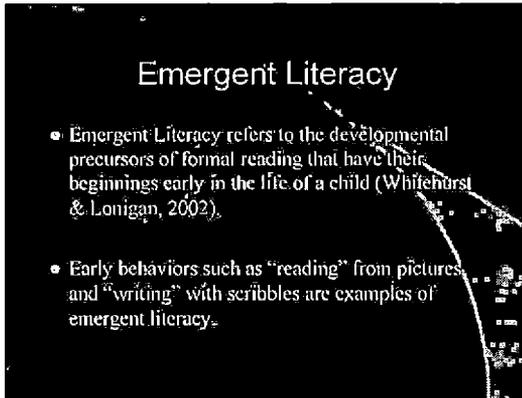
Why early literacy skills are so important in a child's life.

Nagy and Anderson (1984, p. 326) estimate that the number of words read in a year by a middle-school child who is an avid reader might approach 10 million compared to 100 thousand for the least motivated middle-school reader. By virtue of the sheer volume read, substantial advantages in vocabulary and content knowledge accrue to children who are avid readers. In contrast children who lag behind in their reading skills receive less practice in reading (Allington, 1984), miss opportunities to develop reading comprehension strategies (Brown, Palincsar, & Purcell, 1986), often encounter reading materials that are too advanced for their skills (Allington, 1984), and acquire negative attitudes about reading itself (Oka & Paris, 1987).

Session I

Learning to read is a key milestone for children living in a literate society.

Visual Aid 4: Emergent Literacy



Narrative:

Children explore their environment and build foundations for learning to read and write.

This conceptualization departs from an old perspective on reading acquisition that sees the process of learning to read as beginning with formal school-based instruction in reading, or with reading readiness skills taught in kindergarten, such as letter recognition.

The reading readiness approach creates boundaries between the “real” reading that children are taught in educational settings and everything that comes before.

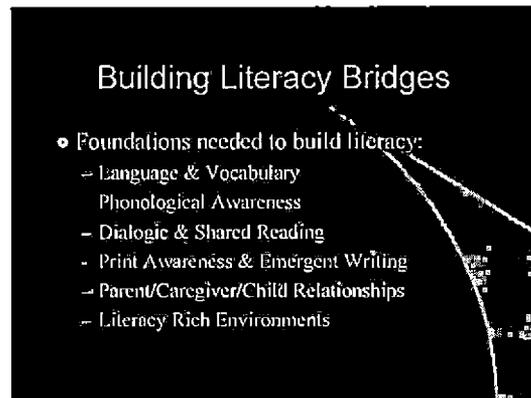
In contrast, an emergent literacy perspective views literacy-related behaviors occurring in the preschool period as legitimate and important aspects of the developmental continuum of literacy.

Children take their first critical steps toward learning to read and write very early in life. Long before they can exhibit reading and writing production skills, they exhibit reading and writing skills, they begin to acquire some basic understandings of the concepts about literacy and its functions.

Children learn to use symbols, combining their oral language, pictures, print and play into a coherent mixed medium and creating and communicating meanings in a variety of ways.

From their initial experiences and interactions with adults, children begin to read words, processing letter-sound relations and acquiring substantial knowledge of the alphabetic system.

Visual Aid 5: Foundations needed to build literacy.



There are six scientifically research based foundational skills that promote emergent literacy. These foundational skills are:

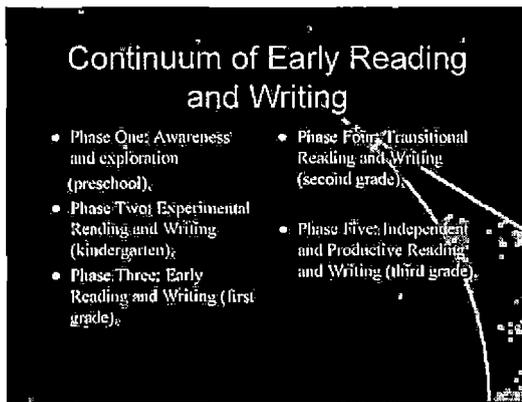
- Language & Vocabulary
- Phonological Awareness
- Dialogic & Shared Reading

Session I

- Print Awareness & Emergent Writing
- Parent/Caregiver/Child Relationships
- Literacy Rich Environments

These important foundational skills and concepts are the basics for all children to become successful in literacy. We will be reviewing each foundational skill in the coming sessions and your role as a caregiver in providing these skills.

Visual Aid 6: Continuum of Early Reading and Writing.



Narrative:

Reading and writing acquisition is better conceptualized as a developmental continuum than as an “all-or-nothing” phenomenon. This continuum of Children’s Development in Early Reading and Writing comes from Learning to Read and Write by Susan B Nueman, Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp (2000). All three authors are experts in the field of developmentally appropriate practices for young children.

Review the continuum

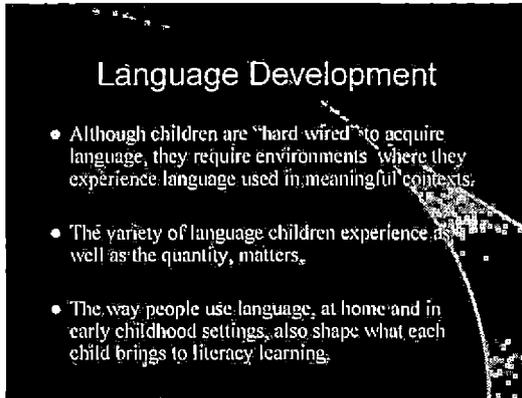
1. Phase One: Children explore their environment and build the foundations for learning to read and write.
2. Phase Two: Children develop basic concepts of print and begin to engage in and experiment with reading and writing.
3. Phase Three: Children begin to read simple stories and can write about a topic that is meaningful to them.
4. Phase Four: Children begin to read more fluently and write various text forms using simple and more complex sentences.
5. Phase Five: Children continue to extend and refine their reading and writing to suit varying purposes and audiences.

Activity: Break into paired sharing groups. Chose A and B. A will be the recorder and B will be the reporter. You will have ten minutes to review each phase and give an example of what types of behaviors and or activities children would exhibiting in each phase. For example, in phase one children will be learning language, rhymes, songs, and finger-plays. They will learn about books, pictures, etc. At the end of ten minutes the groups will report out examples of their findings.

Session I

The role of children's language skills and word knowledge cannot be overestimated.

Visual Aid 7: Language Development



Narrative:

It is important to foster young children's developing language by talking, singing and interaction throughout the day. During routines as well as during play caregivers should encourage language. Not only for language but also for social and cognitive development. Nothing is more crucial than responsiveness to what children do and say.

It is in these early back and forth exchanges; children learn the interactive game that is conversation

All children benefit from experiences that expand their language and stock of words. For children with underdeveloped language

And vocabulary, however, we must provide even more extensive language experiences; there is ground to make up.

At every opportunity caregivers need to make a point of talking and reading with them thus introducing a steady flow of new words, concepts, and linguistic structures. This is especially important for second language learners.

It is important for children to:

- Listen carefully for different purposes, such as to get information or for enjoyment.
- Use spoken language for a variety of purposes.
- Follow and give simple directions and instructions.
- Ask and answer questions.
- Use appropriate volume and speed when they speak.
- Participate in discussions and follow rules of polite conversation, such as staying on a topic and taking turns.
- Use language to express and describe their feelings and ideas.

It is important for caregivers to:

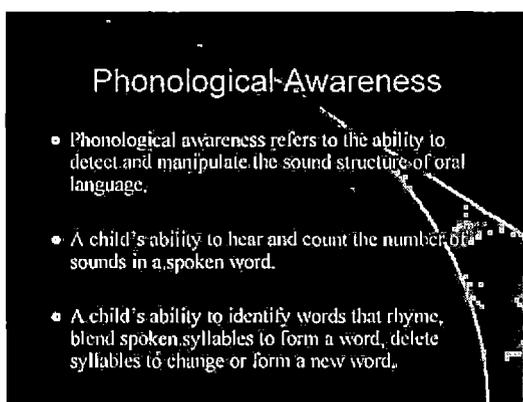
- Ask open-ended questions that invite children to expand upon their answers.
- Present new words to children to expand their vocabularies.
- Respond to children's questions so they may build their language skills.
- Engage children in conversation throughout the day.

Session I

Starting in infancy children become increasingly sensitive to the sounds of speech. Babies and toddlers enjoy hearing songs, rhymes, and chants. Their babbling goes through a gradual shift to include more and more speech sounds they hear around them.

Learning to read requires that children have considerable awareness of the sound structure of spoken language.

Visual Aid 8: Phonological Awareness



Narrative:

The name for the ability to notice and work with sounds in language is *phonological awareness*. Young children who have phonological awareness notice, for example, when words begin or end with the same sound—that bat, ball and bug all begin with the sound of b; that words can rhyme; and that sentences are made up of separate words. Phonological awareness is an oral language skill that can develop without any exposure to print or letters.

Phonological awareness is the ability to notice and work with the sounds in language. Phonological awareness progresses from awareness to large and concrete units of sound;

- words and syllables

To subsyllabic units of onset;

- initial consonant or consonant cluster in a syllable

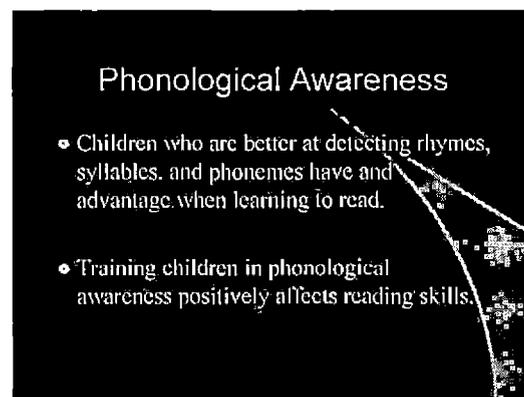
To rhyme;

- the vowel and final consonant cluster in a syllable,

To small and abstract units of sound,

- phonemes.

Visual Aid 9: Phonological Awareness



Narrative:

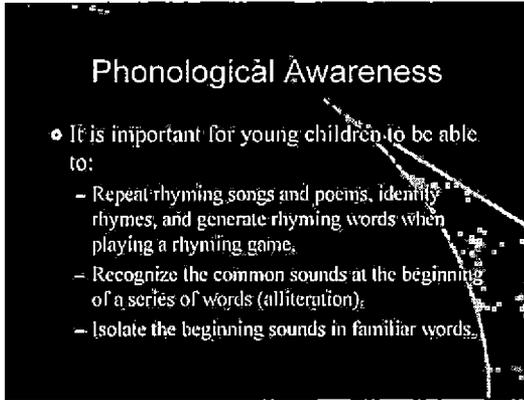
Literacy development is nourished by social interactions with caring adults and exposure to literacy materials.

Their continuing literacy development, their understanding of literacy concepts and the efforts of parents, caregivers and teachers to promote literacy influence children's growth from emergent to conventional literacy.

Research shows (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2002) that how quickly children learn to read often depends on how much phonological awareness and vocabulary they have been exposed to early in life.

Session I

Visual Aid 10: Phonological Awareness



Narrative:

Children who are exposed to sophisticated vocabulary in the course of interesting conversations learn the words they will later need to recognize and understand when reading.

Infants learn vocalization in the crib gives way to play with rhyming language and nonsense words.

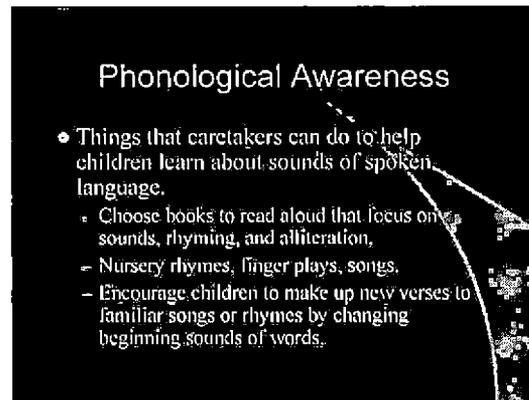
Toddlers find the words that they use in conversations and objects they represent are depicted in books—that the picture is a symbol for the real object and that writing represents spoken language.

Small Group Activity: Break into groups of three to five. Choose a recorder, and a reporter. List three types of activities for each age group that will promote phonological awareness in infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. You have five minutes to complete this project then be prepared to report back to the group.

Additional types of activities to do with young children:

- Labeling games: “Where is your nose?”
- Encourage child to label objects and events helping him or her with vocabulary and pronunciation.
- Conversations during bathing, dressing, eating, driving the car.
- Make time for “talk time.”

Visual Aid 11: Phonological Awareness



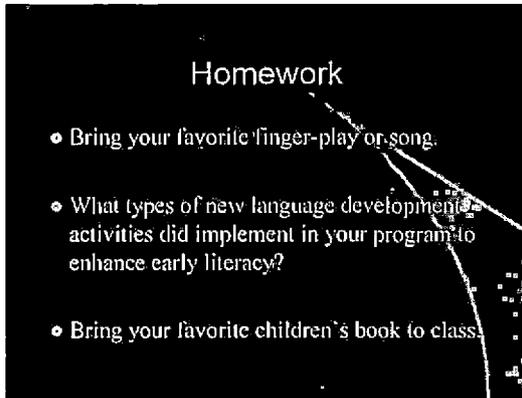
Narrative:

During the preschool years, most children gradually become sensitive to the sounds, as well as the meaning, of spoken words. They demonstrate this by noticing rhymes and enjoy poems and rhyming songs; they make up silly names for things by substituting one sound for another (e.g. bubblegum, bubbleyum, bubblemum); they break long words into syllables or clap along with each syllable in a phrase; they notice that the pronunciations of several words (like “cat”, “coat”, “cookie” all begin the same way. Preschoolers rarely pay attention to the smallest meaningful segments

Session I

(Phonemes) of words, gaining awareness of these phonemes is a more advanced aspect of phonological awareness.

Visual Aid 12: Homework



Narrative:

As caregivers you bring a large amount of experiences and knowledge with you. One of the best experiences you can give your co-workers and classmates are sharing some of your knowledge and experiences.

Your homework assignment for this session is:

Bring your favorite finger-play or song to class. Please take the time to write it out or make a copy of it.

Please be prepared to share what new language development activities that you implemented in our program to enhance early literacy. Did it make a difference in the literacy environment?

Please bring your favorite children's book to class with you next time. We will be using it in our activities during the next session. We will be learning the art of shared and Dialogic reading.

Debriefing:

Can you share with the class something from Session I that was new to you?

What did you learn from your group sessions that you could implement in your literacy environment?

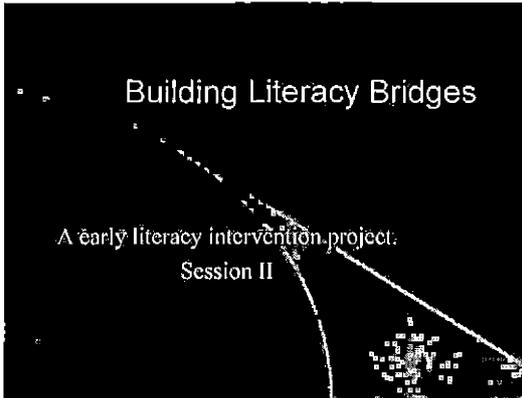
Are there questions you have about the material that we covered that were not addressed?

Session II

Narrative:

Welcome back to Session II of the Building Literacy Bridges intervention project.

Visual Aid 13: Building Literacy Bridges



development begins long before children start formal education.

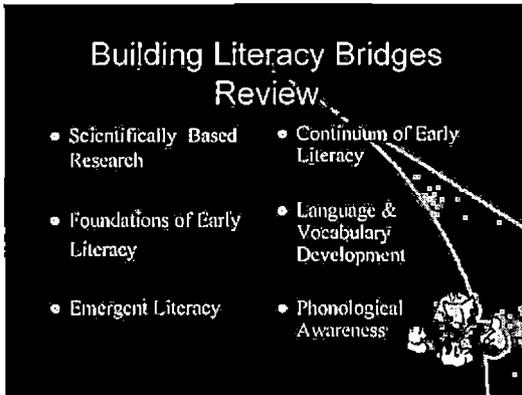
It is through a continuum that children develop early literacy skills. This continuum develops over time in a fairly sequential manner.

Emergent Literacy refers to the development precursors of formal reading that have their origins early in the life of a child.

Language and vocabulary development is essential for children to become successful readers. Children who have strong language skills and a wide vocabulary are far more successful in literacy in elementary school than those who have minimum skills.

Phonological awareness refers to activities that require sensitivity to, manipulation of, or use of sounds in words.

Visual Aid 14: Building Literacy Bridges Review



Narrative:

We begin Session II with review of Session I main concepts and foundations for early literacy.

Scientifically based research uses clear step-by-step methods of gathering data involving careful observation and measurements. It is through this process that we are able understand that literacy

Homework:

Everyone had three assignments of homework from our last session. For the time being we are going to review the first two assignments. The third assignment we will address later in this session.

Break into groups of two for paired sharing. Choose an A and a B. B's will go first. You have three and one half minutes each for this activity. You have a new child in your care and you are going to teach that child the favorite finger-play. After three and one half minutes A's will teach B's their favorite finger-play.

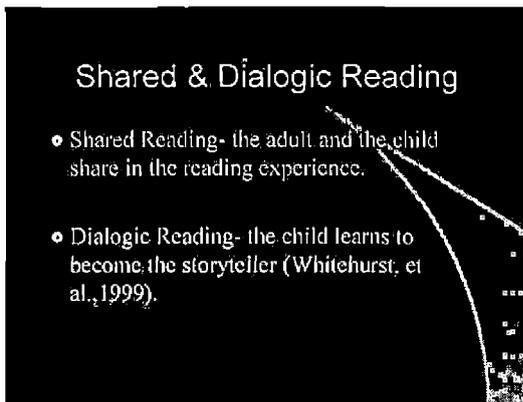
Second Activity- Break into groups of four. Choose a recorder and a reporter. Discuss what types of language development changes you implemented in your program from the last session. Choose one or two changes made by your group to report to the class.

Session II

Facilitators Goal:

Caregivers will have a clear understanding of the concepts of shared reading and dialogic reading and the importance of engaging children while reading.

Visual Aid 15: Shared & Dialogic Reading



Narrative:

There have been a number of interventions developed to enhance children's oral language and reading skills. There are two reading interventions that have had consistent positive results. These interventions are called shared reading and dialogic reading.

During shared reading experiences the child plays in active part in the reading with the adult or reader. For example, the adult and the child take turns reading, or the book has been adapted in order for the child and the adult to take alternate turns reading. By adapted we mean the actual text of the story has been changed in order for the child to successfully read at his or her level. Research has confirmed that there is a degree of emotional bonding that takes place during these sessions if it is a mutual positive experience (Crain-Thoresen, 1999, Whitehurst et al., 1988, Rush 1999).

Parents and caregivers who start to read early may evoke children's interest toward books and literacy, which is sustained throughout the developing years. Research by Adriana G. Bus, Belsky, van Ijzendoorn & Crnik (1997) reveal that parents and caregivers who actively involve children in reading results in children who show more interest in books.

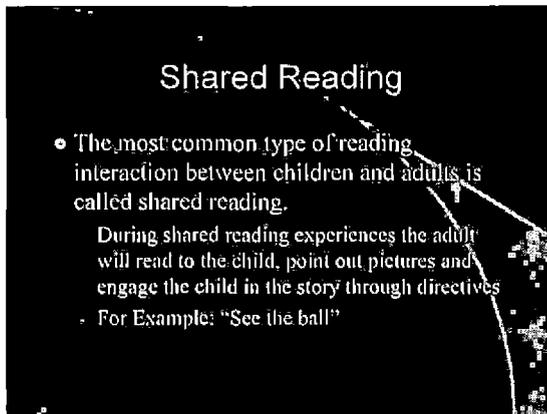
During dialogic reading the adult assumes the role of active listener, asking questions, adding information, and prompting the child to increase the sophistication of descriptions of the material in the picture book.

A child's responses to the book are encouraged through praise and repetition, and more sophisticated responses are encouraged by expansions of the child's utterances and by more challenging questions from the adult reading partner.

From experimental research it can be derived that dialogic parent/caregiver book reading stimulates children's vocabulary (Whitehurst et al., 1998).

Session II

Visual Aid 16: Shared Reading



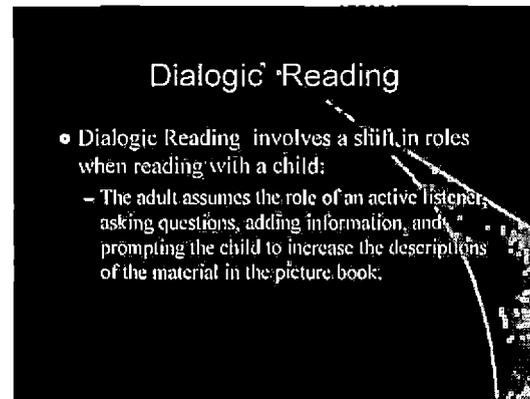
Narrative:

Children of all ages love the intimacy of reading with an adult or caregiver, either one-on-one or with only a few other children. Caregivers should seek out daily opportunities to read with every child. Because regular reading at home with parents is a potent force for promoting children's literacy, caregivers need to encourage parents' reading with children and help them to understand the substantial long-term benefits from reading with their child.

According to the Commission on Reading, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, 1985 in its landmark review, reading aloud to children is "the single most important activity for building knowledge required for success in reading". The best time to begin reading books with children is when they are infants-babies as young as six weeks enjoy being read to and looking at pictures.

During shared reading, the most common type of reading interaction between adult and child, the adult will read to the child, engage the child somewhat in the pictures and content through directives. For example, they will point out pictures, give the child names of objects and read directly from the text.

Visual Aid 17: Dialogic Reading



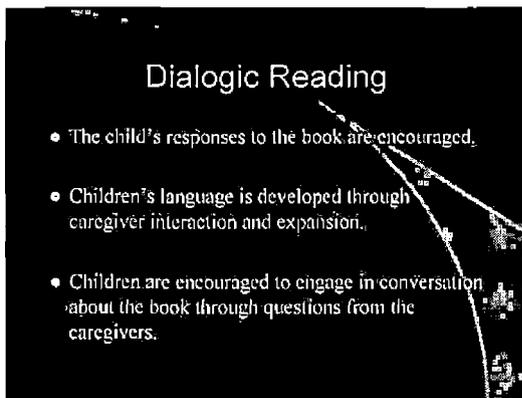
Narrative:

Dialogic reading is the most widely researched and validated of the shared reading interventions (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). In this intervention program the child plays is an active participant in the reading of the book.

The adult enhances the reading experience by asking open-ended questions and promoting critical thinking skills in the child.

Session II

Visual Aid 18: Dialogic Reading



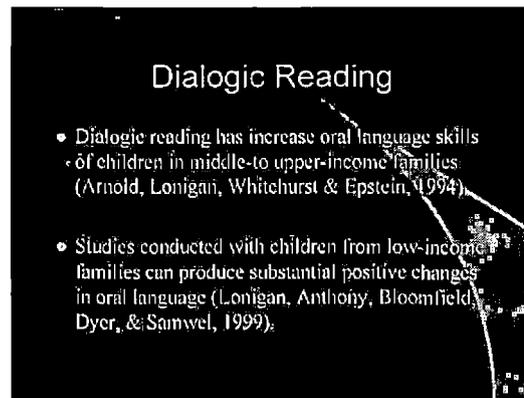
Narrative:

Again, using dialogic reading the child's responses to the book are encouraged through praise and repetition. The child's language skills are enhanced through expansion of the child's utterances with the adult or caregiver encouraging vocabulary and more challenging questions from the adult or caregiver.

For children ages 2 to 3-years of age the caregiver will ask questions about individual pages in the book, asking the child to describe objects, actions, and events on the page.

For 4 to 5-years of age questions increasingly focus on the narrative as a whole or relations between the book and the child's life. For example, "Have you ever seen a bird sitting in a tree?" "What was it doing?". "What do you think it will do next?"

Visual Aid 19: Dialogic Reading



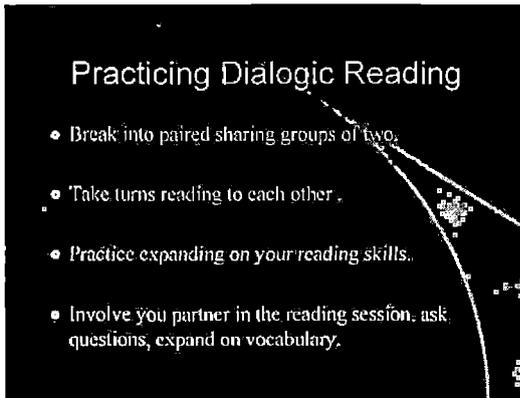
Narrative:

Dialogic reading has produced larger effects on the oral language skills of children from middle-to-upper income families than a similar amount of typical picture book reading (Arnold, Lonigan, Whitehurst & Epstein, 1994; Whitehurst et al., 1998).

Studies conducted with children from low-income families attending childcare demonstrate that childcare teachers, parents, or community volunteers using a 6-week small-group center-based or home dialogic reading intervention can produce substantial positive changes in the development of children's language as measured by standardized and naturalistic measures (Lonigan, Anthony, Bloomfield, Dyer, & Samwel, 1999; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992; Whitehurst, Arnold et al., 1994) that are maintained 6 months following the intervention (Whitehurst, Arnold et al., 1994).

Session II

Visual Aid 20: Practicing Dialogic Reading



Activity:

Please break into paired sharing groups. You will bring your favorite children's storybook from your homework assignment with you. Choose A and B, for this activity A's will go first. Practice reading to each other using the dialogic reading process, remember to expand involve your reading partner by expanding your reading skills by asking questions, commenting on or repeating your partners vocabulary, etc. This is a 10 minute activity, after the first five minutes, B's will then read their book practicing dialogic reading.

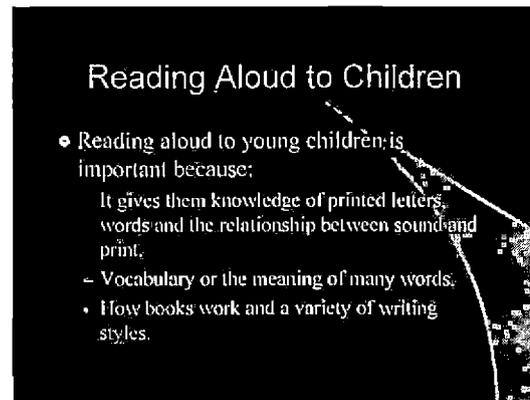
After 10 minutes of practicing dialogic reading have the group come back together. Involve the group in large discussion on dialogic reading.

Prompting questions could be:

1. "How did you feel when expanding you reading to include your partner?"
2. "Were you comfortable using dialogic reading?"

3. "Did your partner become more involved in the story when you included him/her?"
4. Is this process of reading different that you normally use?"

Visual Aid 21: Reading Aloud to Children



Narrative:

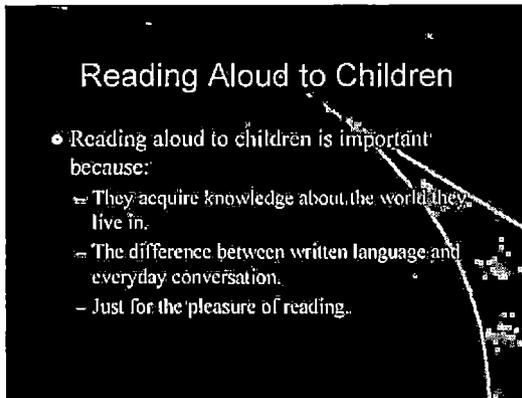
Reading aloud is important to children of all ages. During read aloud sessions it's important to refer to the print, the direction of printed letters, how we read from left to right, etc. Children will begin to recognize letters, especially those in their names and family names.

It's important to refer to how books work. How we turn pages, how sentences can possibly go from one page to the next. Children need to understand books have titles, illustrators, what and illustrator does, etc.

While reading aloud, refer to the meaning of words. Children love to learn new words, the bigger the better. When reading refer to the new word in context. Ask the child to guess the meaning of the new word.

Session II

Visual Aid 22: Reading Aloud to Children



Narrative:

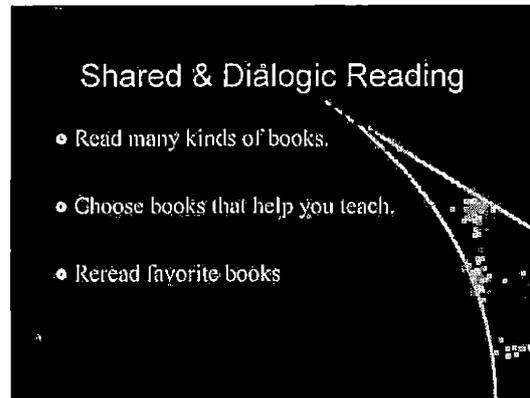
When choosing books for young children remember to find topics the child can understand, have an interest, and be able to relate.

Children need to understand that their words can become stories and reading can take you on many fun and interesting journeys.

Read to the children in your care several times a day. Establish regular time for reading during the day and find other opportunities to read.

Help children to learn as you read by offering simple explanations, and help children notice new information. Explain words they may not know. If the stories take place in an historic era or in an unfamiliar place, give children some background information so they will better understand and enjoy the story.

Visual Aid 23: Shared & Dialogic Reading



Narrative:

Children should be read many different kind of books. Storybooks help children to learn about times, cultures and peoples other than their own; stories help them to understand how others think, act, and feel.

Informational books help children to learn facts about the world around them.

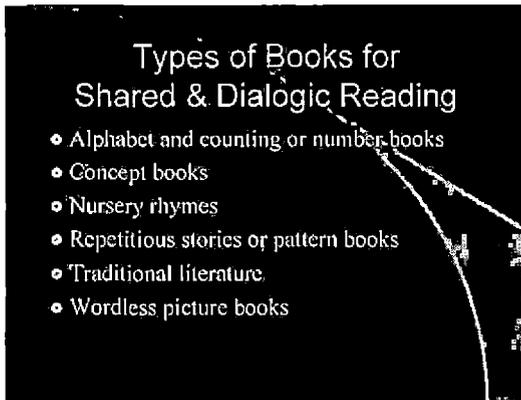
Books also introduce children to important concepts and vocabulary they will need for success in school.

Read those books to children that relate to the child's backgrounds, their experiences, cultures, languages, and interests as well as books with characters and situations both similar and dissimilar to those in the children's lives.

Children love to hear their favorite books over and over again. Hearing books several times helps children to understand and notice new things. For example, they may figure out what unfamiliar word means or they may notice sound patterns.

Session II

Visual Aid 24: Types of Books for Shared & Dialogic Reading



Narrative:

Alphabet books that feature upper and lowercase forms of letters on each page and one or more pictures representing something that begins with the most common sound that letter represents.

Concept books that present one number and show corresponding number of items. Concept books are designed to teach particular concepts that children need to succeed in school. They may teach colors, shapes, sizes or opposites or focus on classifying concepts (farm or zoo animals, etc.).

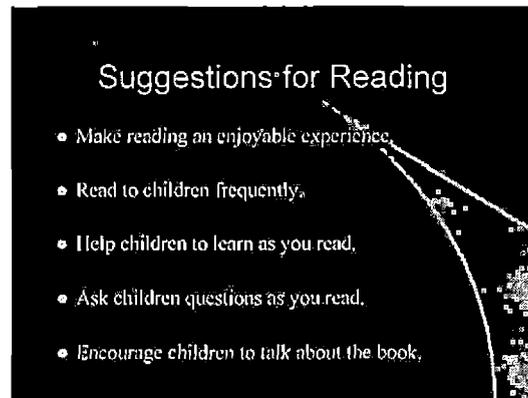
Nursery rhyme books contain rhymes and repeated verses, which are why they are easy to remember, recite and why they appeal to children.

Repetitious predictable books have a word or a phrase that is repeated throughout the story, forming a pattern. After a few pages, child may be able to read along because they have learned the pattern. This ability lets them experience the pleasure of reading and builds confidence.

Traditional literature includes fairy tales, folktales, fables, myths and legends from around the world or across the ages and cultures of time.

Wordless books tell stories through pictures without using words. Wordless books give children an opportunity to tell stories themselves as they “read”, an activity most children enjoy. In telling their stories children develop language skills and get a sense of the sequence of events in stories.

Visual Aid 25: Suggestions for Reading



Narrative:

Choose a comfortable place where children can sit near you. Help them to feel safe and secure, be enthusiastic about reading. Show children that reading is an interesting a rewarding activity.

Read to children in your care several times a day.

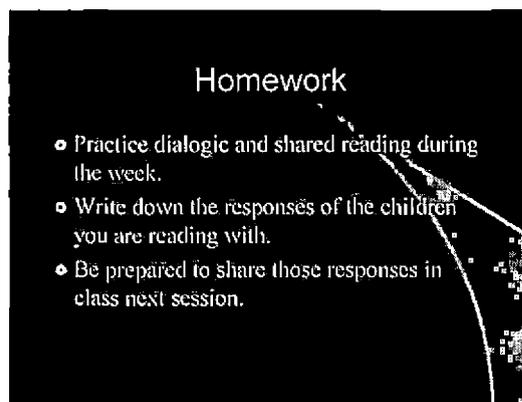
Session II

Offer explanations, make observations, and help children to notice new information. Explain words they may not know, point out pictures in the book that relate to the story, talk about the characters' and feelings.

Ask questions that help children connect the story with their own lives or that help them to compare the book with other books they have read. Ask questions that help children notice what is in the book and ask them to predict what will happen next.

Have a conversation with children about the book you are reading. Answer questions, welcome conversations, observations, and add to what they say. Continue to talk about the books after you have read it, ask them to recall and talk about their favorite parts and encourage them to tell the story in their own words.

Visual Aid 26: Homework



Narrative:

Your homework for the next session will be to practice dialogic and shared reading during the week.

Write down the responses of the children and be prepared to share their responses at our next session.

Debriefing:

Can someone share something they learned today that was a complete surprise to them?

Has anyone in the room been practicing shared and dialogic reading but didn't really understand that there was a word or title for this type of reading?

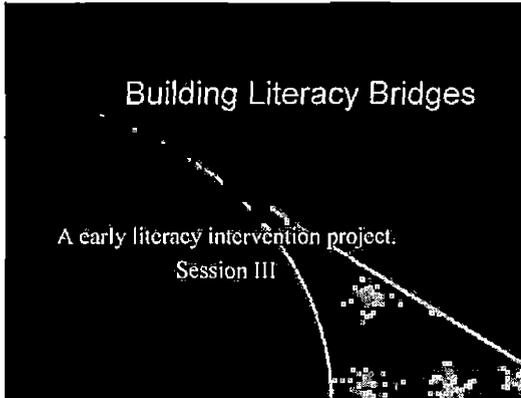
Did you find the practice session of reading to your peers uncomfortable, but still an interesting experience?

Session III

Facilitator's Goal:

Caregivers will have an understanding of how children develop the concepts of print awareness and the continuum of emergent writing.

Visual Aid 27: Building Literacy Bridges



Narrative:

Welcome back to Building Literacy Bridges session III. In this session we will learn to understand how children develop the concepts of print awareness and learn the continuum of how children develop emergent writing.

First let begin session III with a review what we have learned to date.

Visual Aid 28: Building Literacy Bridges Review



Narrative:

To date we have learned:

1. The importance of scientifically based research and that it uses clear step-by-step methods.
2. Foundations of early literacy that include emergent literacy; the precursors of formal reading.
3. The continuum of early literacy; how children develop literacy on a gradual continuum.
4. Language development, the importance of language experiences in quantity and well as quality.
5. Phonological awareness, the ability to hear syllables, sounds, rhymes.
6. Dialogic and shared reading, the importance of reading aloud with children while expanding their involvement to include questions, explanations, and enhancement of their vocabulary.

Session III

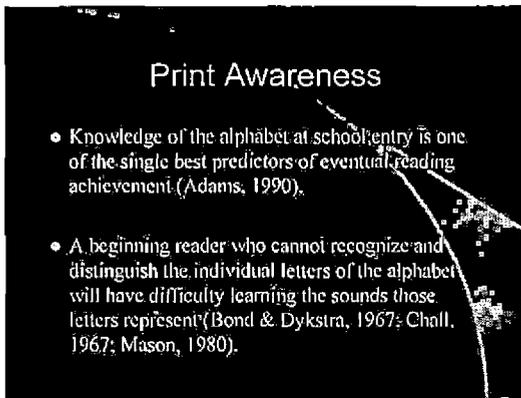
Homework Activity:

Break into groups of three in order to share your experiences with shared and dialogic reading from the last session.

In your group choose a recorder and a reporter. Each person should share their experiences positive or negative with shared reading or dialogic reading with the children in their care. This will be a 5- minute activity after which we will report out to the whole group.

At the end of the 5 minutes each group will report out to the whole group for discussion.

Visual Aid 29: Print Awareness

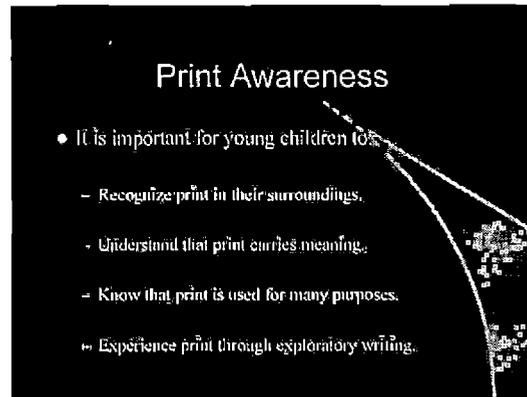


Narrative:

During this session we will discuss how children develop print awareness and the continuum of emergent writing. As in all developmentally appropriate practice it is the role of the parent, caregiver and teacher to observe and understand the levels and cues that children give when teaching print awareness.

Well-known researcher Marilyn Adams tells us, "Knowledge of the alphabet at school entry is one of the best predictors of eventual reading achievement."

Visual Aid 30: Print Awareness



Narrative:

From the time children are born, print is a part of their lives.

Words decorate their blankets, sheets and pajamas.

They appear on poster, pictures and decorate their walls.

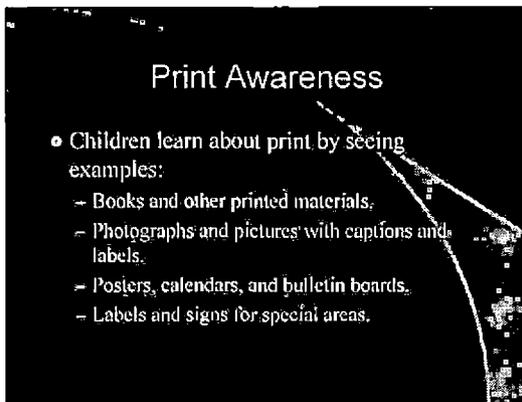
They are on the blocks they play with, toys and in the books that are read to them.

Although printed words are around them, young children are not often aware of them nor do they yet understand the role printed words will play in their lives.

As caregivers it is our job to point out words, explain what they mean, and help children understand that print conveys meaning.

Session III

Visual Aid 31: Print Awareness



Narrative:

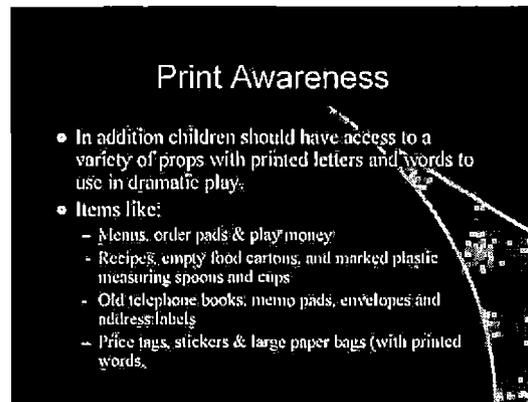
These are just some of the examples of the types of materials that children should be exposed to become print aware:

- Books and printed materials such as magazines and catalogs.
- Photographs and pictures with captions and labels.
- Posters, calendars and bulletin boards.
- Labels and signs for special areas.
- Street signs and sign for commercial businesses.

Activity:

Engage the group to share other ideas of items that children are exposed to become print aware.

Visual Aid 32: Print Awareness



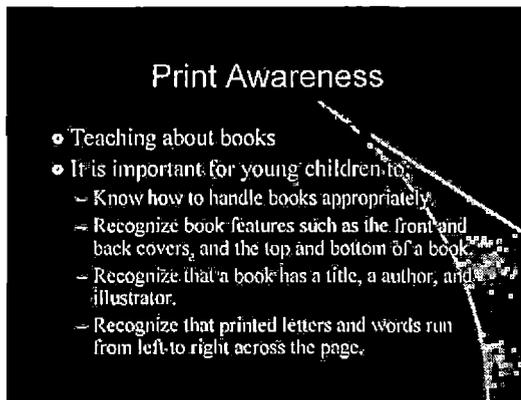
Narrative:

In addition to the above other things that caregivers and teachers can do for children to help them be aware of the print around them. Show children that there is print around them by reading examples from everyday life, for example:

- Read the child's T-shirt.
- Read the signs on doors or above doors, "exit signs."
- Have children help you make signs and labels for projects or special areas of the room.
- Have signs outdoors that include stop signs, gas station signs, garage repair signs.
- Label items outdoors, such as patio, garage, swings, sandbox, etc.
- Point out items as you travel with children such as commercial business, fast food stores, etc.

Session III

Visual Aid 33: Print Awareness



Narrative:

As adults we take for granted the routine features of books and book handling forgetting that children need to be taught the correct way to look at books.

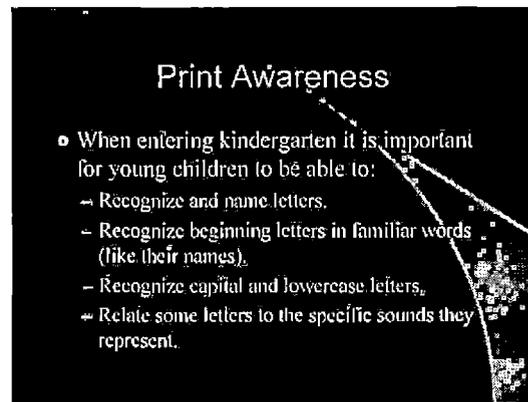
We know that in English, we read from left to right and from the top of the page to the bottom of the page.

Words are separated by spaces and sentences begin with capital letters and end with some kind of punctuation mark.

We forget that children have to learn these things. As you read to children you should occasionally talk about the direction in which we read print by pointing to the first words on a line and running your finger beneath the words as you read from left to right and from top to bottom.

You should also be aware of children in your care whose home culture and language may differ from English and this may not be how they are being read to in their homes.

Visual Aid 34: Print Awareness



Narrative:

Children who enter kindergarten knowing many letter names tend to be more successful when learning to read than those children who have not accomplished these skills.

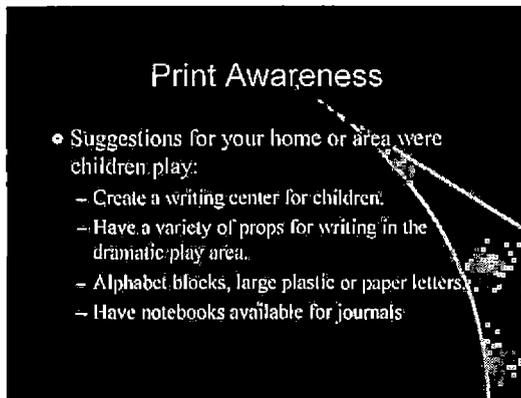
It is unreasonable to believe that children will be able to successfully learn to read until they can recognize and name a number of letters.

To be able to read, children need to recognize letters and know how to connect them-and sometimes combinations of letters- with the sounds of spoken words.

As you plan your day take responsibility to make sure children in your care have many opportunities to learn to identify letters, to write letters using many mediums, and to find out how letters function to represent the sounds in words.

Session III

Visual Aid 35: Print Awareness

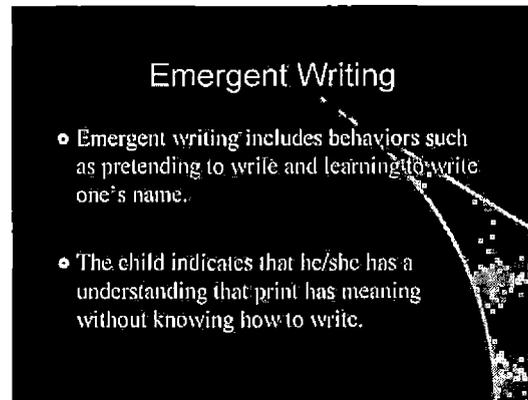


Narrative:

There are many types of things and areas that you can create to encourage print awareness. You can:

- Create a writing center with all types of medium that children can experiment with to create letters, such as yarn, shaving cream, play-dough, pipe cleaners, rice, etc.
- Have a variety of props in the dramatic play area such as notepads for taking food orders or creating bills of sale.
- Encourage children to write with letters by tubs of plastic magnetic letters, or rubber letters. Experiment with writing their names using the letters.
- Play games using line segments to see if children can guess which letter you are forming.

Visual Aid 36: Emergent Writing



Narrative:

When we address print awareness it is impossible to ignore emergent writing because they go hand-in-hand.

What is emergent writing and how do we know the child is showing interest in writing?

As children begin to recognize that by writing they can make real things happen, their interest soars.

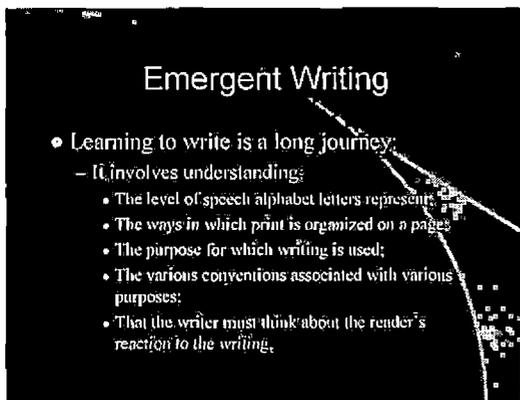
Children learn writing when they see it displayed in their environment and when they see adults use writing in a variety of ways.

By age 3 years, children will try to create and organize marks to look like writing, however it takes several years for children to learn how to make their individual marks closely resemble standard letters.

Long before their writing takes on conventional characteristics of the alphabet, children write in their own unique way.

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Visual Aid 37: Emergent Writing



Narrative:

Learning to write involves much more than learning to form alphabetic letters on a page.

It involves the above concepts (Read the power point slide).

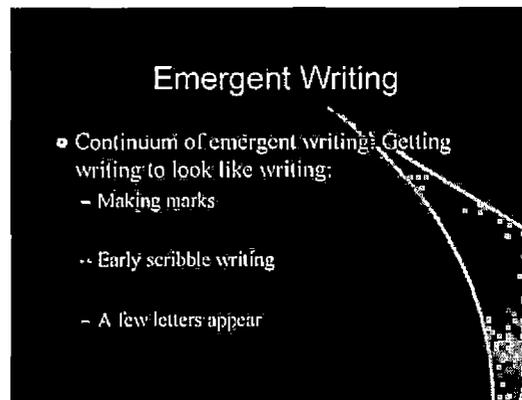
All of these understandings involve sophisticated and complex things, much of which is way beyond a preschooler's abilities.

Learning about styles and conventions in writing will occupy children during most of their elementary years.

Learning to write is a journey for children that will take many years.

During the few slides we will review how children develop and travel along a writing continuum of print and writing awareness.

Visual Aid 38: Emergent Writing



Narrative:

Children who are provided with marking tools and a surface will make marks at an early age. Case studies have found that children begin to explore with a pencil or crayon as early as 18 to 24 months. Early markings are experiments, the child will watch closely the lines resulting in the movement of the marker on the surface, and watch the relationship between finger movements and lines and deliberately vary their actions.

Eleanor Gibson (1975) suggests that although "scribbling seems to be its own reward...it furnishes an unparalleled opportunity for learning the relationship between finger movements and guide the tool and the resulting visual feedback." Lines are lines no matter the purpose and early scribbling tutors children and aides in their writing (see examples from appendix C, Fig. 5-1).

In early scribble writing children create many kinds of scribbles, some are organized as to resemble pictures, others to look like writing. Children use these organizational characteristics to create

Session III

their first writing and they use the same characteristics to decide whether visual displays they are shown are writing as opposed to pictures (Lavine, 1997).

Scribble writing lacks many of the characteristics in conventional writing, but there is something very print-like rather than picture-like about it.

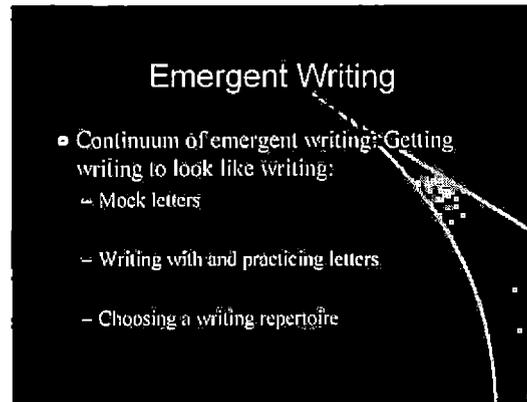
Children distinguish between pictures and print and therefore drawing and writing. I am going to share with you examples of this from the book *Much More than the ABC's, The Early Stages of Reading and Writing*, by Judith Schickendanz (See Appendix C. Fig. 5-2, 5-3, & 5-4).

As children gain experience with writing they begin to write actual alphabet letters, or close approximations of them, even though they will scribble most of the time. Usually the first letter of the child's name will appear within the scribbles (See Appendix C Fig., 5-5, 5-6, 5-7, & 5.8).

Activity:

Break into paired sharing partners. Choose A or B. B's will go first. Share with your partner observations that you have seen with children in your care of using this continuum of emergent writing. This is a five-minute activity, after 3.5 minutes A's will share the same observations.

Visual Aid 39: Emergent Writing



Narrative:

As children gain more knowledge lines can be combined to form letters, their writing contains fewer scribble marks and more marks that are *mock letters* (letter-like forms) (Clay, 1975).

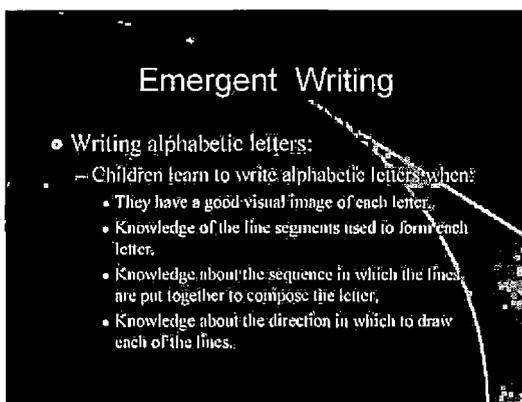
Mock letters are not actual letters, but look like them because they are made from the same set of line segments. Writing samples of mock letters often contain a few letters within the contents of the writing (See Appendix C Fig 5-9,5-10, & 5-11).

Letters appear but usually contain characteristic errors. Orientation of letters, the number of lines used in letters and the accuracy in making lines touch one another re yet to be under complete control. Control over these features occurs as the child makes use of interventions and suggestions from caregivers, teachers and parents. Some children work actively to perfect various letters while others only work to perfect a few. All children should have the time to decide which letter is the one they wish to be perfect.

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Even after children are able to produce writing that resembles letters they often use scribble or mock writing. This may be done when the child is imitating an adult or want to produce a lot of writing, usually cursive writing. This behavior is typical, young children do not discard earlier forms of writing altogether when they become capable of creating more mature forms. Usually for a while they produce them all, selecting from among their expanding repertoire the kind of writing that serves them best (See Appendix C Fig., 5-12, 5-13 & 5-14).

Visual Aid 40: Emergent Writing



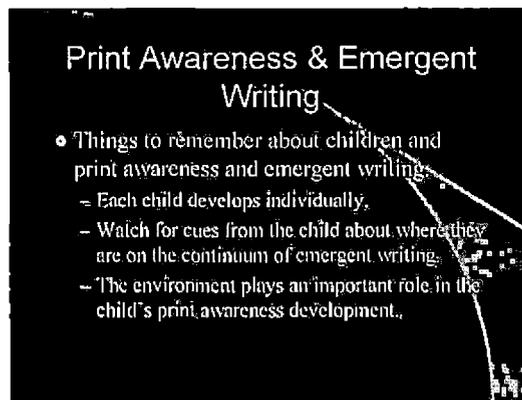
Narrative:

The smart or wise teacher and caregiver will be reluctant to provide formal instruction in handwriting to groups of preschool children.

Instead the caregiver/teacher will provide paper, pencils, crayons, markers and tools for children to explore writing.

The thoughtful caregiver/teacher takes advantage of opportunities to demonstrate writing and help individual children as the need arises. This is called scaffolding.

Visual Aid 41: Print Awareness & Emergent Writing



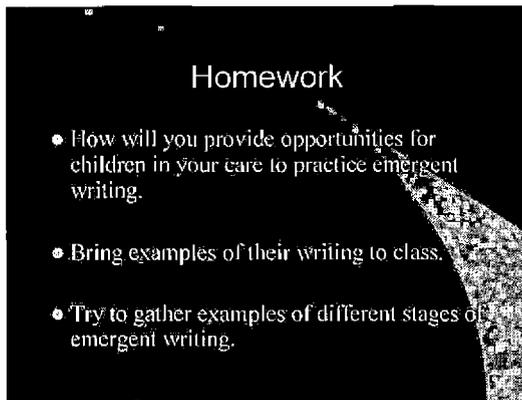
Narrative:

Points to keep in mind as we work with children in early literacy, whether it is with phonological awareness, emergent reading or writing.

1. The caregiver needs to be aware of where the child is cognitively and developmentally.
2. The caregiver must watch for cues for the child.
3. The caregiver needs to understand what is developmentally appropriate and what they as a caregiver/teacher can bring to the child's environment to help them to become successful.

Session III

Visual Aid 42: Homework



Narrative:

The homework assignment for this session is to review your print awareness and emergent literacy environment. Please bring examples of the children's writing to the next session. Try to gather examples of different stages to share with the group.

Debriefing:

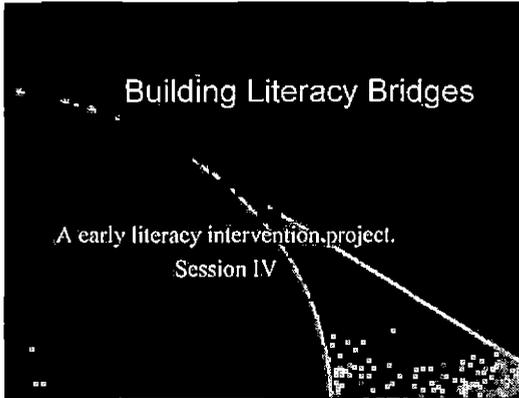
Before attending the session on emergent writing were you aware of a difference in children's scribbles between the children's art work and their emergent writing?

Previous to session III did you believe that children's emergent writing was a continuum?

As you reflect on your environment at home or in the classroom will you be making changes to reflect a positive print awareness and emergent writing environment?

Session IV

Visual Aid 43: Building Literacy Bridges



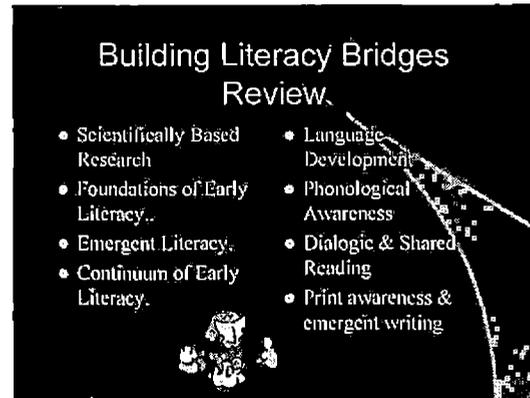
Narrative:

Welcome back to our fourth and final session of Building Literacy Bridges Intervention Project.

During this session we will be learning what research tells us are optimum environments for children to be successful in early literacy.

As we begin this fourth and final session I would like to remind you that beginning in infancy and continuing throughout childhood, children may learn from those around them that in language and literacy there is much value, enjoyment, and sheer power. If they do not develop such an interest in reading and writing- an eager desire for initiation into print's mysteries and skills- children's progress toward literacy is uncertain (Neuman, Copple, & Bredecamp, 2000).

Visual Aid 44: Building Literacy Bridges Review



Narrative:

Let's begin our last review by the group informing me what the foundations for early literacy include.

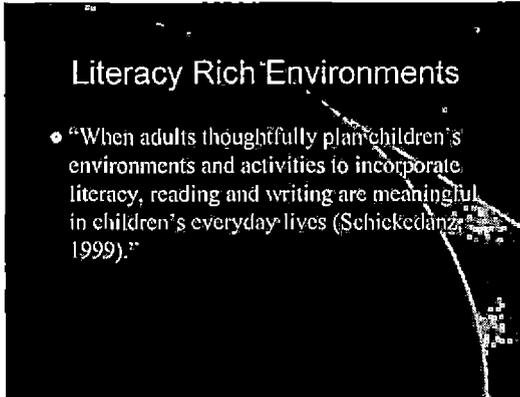
Activity:

Have the class as a whole give the definitions or explanations of each foundation.

1. Scientifically Research Based
2. Foundations of early literacy
3. Emergent literacy
4. Continuum of early literacy
5. Language Development
6. Phonological Awareness
7. Dialogic & Shared Reading
8. Print Awareness & Emergent Writing

Session IV

Visual Aid 45: Literacy Rich Environments



Narrative:

We will start off with a quote from the book by Judith Schickendanz’s *Much More than the ABC’s, The Early Stages of Reading and Writing*.

In this last session we will be covering the importance of children’s literacy environments. How literacy rich environments can influence early literacy skills, how to incorporate early literacy play, and how to encourage early literacy activities within your programs.

Environmental psychology is a relatively new research area that studies the behaviorism of people in different environments. For example, if you are attending church is your behavior different than if you are attending a football game? Environments no doubt have a strong influence in how we behave. The environment also has a strong influence in how children play, behave and learn. Read quote.

Visual Aid 46: Early Literacy Environments & Play



Narrative:

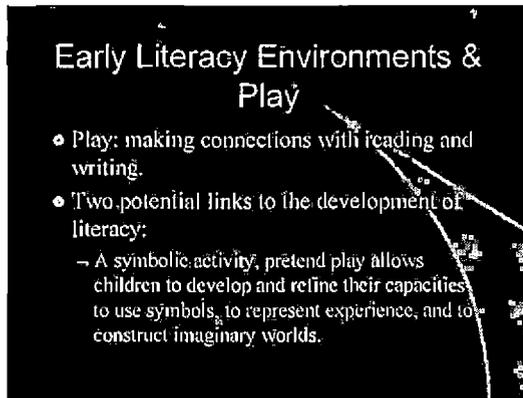
Play researchers have observed that children’s play behaviors become more complex and abstract as they progress through early childhood (Owocki, 1999).

The three types or kinds of play which develop roughly in sequence are:

1. Exploratory-which predominates between birth and three, but remains important throughout early childhood.
2. Constructive play-which begins early (using blocks to represent a road and smaller blocks to represent cars) and increases in frequency as children move from toddlers into preschool.
3. Dramatic play- in which children use objects, actions and language to create roles and situations is characterized by mental transformation of object-an old keyboard becomes an astronaut’s rocket ship panel.

Session IV

Visual Aid 47: Early Literacy Environment & Play



Narrative:

According to Owacki, (1999):
Play consumes most of every young child's time and energy. Play is where writing and reading begin.

Play is the arena in which children make connections between their immediate and personal world and activities that are important in the larger social world of family and community.

Play is also the context in which a child will find ways to make culturally valued activities part of their own personal experience (McLane & Mc Namee, 1991).

Vigotsky (1978) explains that when children transform the meaning of objects or actions they change a usual meaning into something imaginary. They take a concrete object and interpret it in an abstract way. In order to be able to read or write they must do something similar. They must be able to understand that those black marks on paper carry meaning.

Visual Aid 48: Early Literacy Environments & Play



When a child plays with reading and writing, they are actively trying to use and understand as well as make sense of reading and writing long before they can actually complete these tasks.

As a child creates an imaginary situation in pretend play, they invent and inhabit "alternative" worlds.

This is similar to what they do when listening to storybooks, and to what they do when they read or write stories themselves.

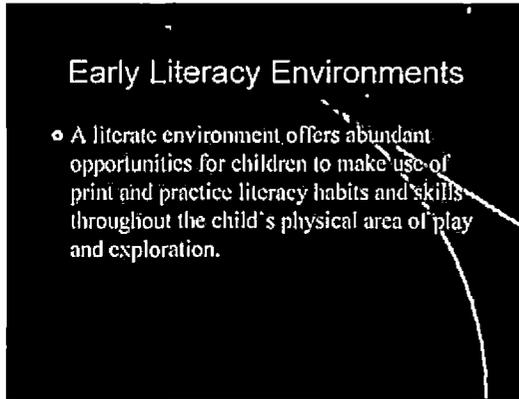
Homework Activity:

Break into groups of 4 to 5. Choose a reporter and a recorder. Compare samples of writing from your children that you brought to share.

Choose a sample from each person that aligns itself with the writing continuum from Judith Schickendanz's samples in *Much More than ABC's, The Early Stages of Reading and Writing*. See if your samples compare in age group to the samples from the book.

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Visual Aid 49: Early Literacy Environments



Narrative:

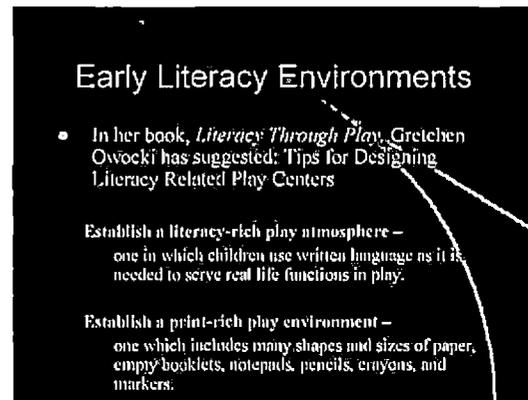
Read the slide. Given the potential that play influences early literacy we need to look at the environments in which children play.

Activity:

Break into groups of three. Choose a recorder and a reporter. You will have 10 minutes to complete this activity. Using the chart paper provided for you design a perfect early literacy environment. Cost is not an issue so you can spare no expense in your design.

Be prepared to share your perfect environment with your colleagues at the end of the 10 minutes.

Visual Aid 50: Early Literacy Environments



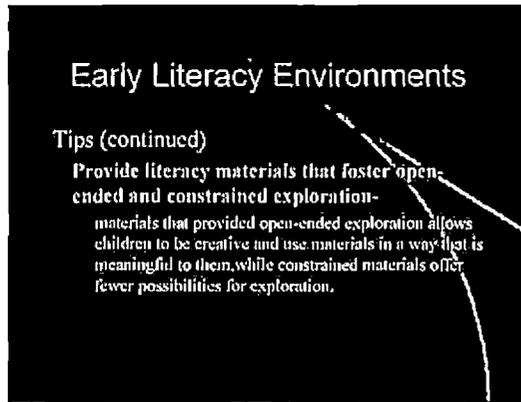
Narrative:

The design of the play environment is important because it influences how engaged children will become and how constructively they will use the materials. If the children are able to contribute materials and ideas from their own perspective it helps to ensure that the area is meaningful to them. The caregiver contributes materials and ideas from the adult perspective, helping the children to expand their thinking and develop new understandings.

1. Children will become more involved in reading and writing if you can create with them a literacy-rich play atmosphere. Unless children see that reading and writing serve a function in play, they will have little reason to use them.
2. Children will more likely read and write in an environment containing familiar, useful reading and writing materials. Children should have access to the above materials during the day. All kinds of books need to be available, play centers should include all types of print that would be found in, for example, a restaurant, post office, grocery store, etc.

Session IV

Visual Aid 51: Early Literacy Environments



Narrative:

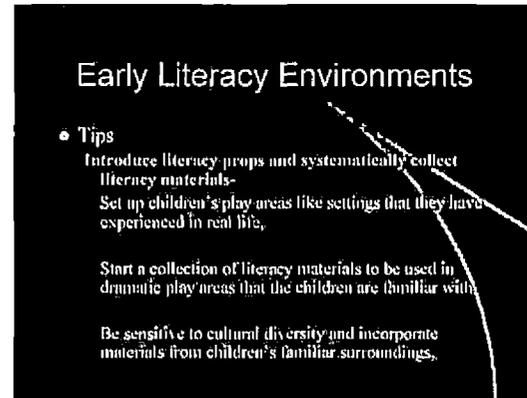
A blank piece of paper and a box of markers offers several open-ended possibilities for exploration.

Children can use them to support their play in a variety of ways.

Open-ended materials help children to build on what they know.

Just as important are materials that have fewer possibilities for exploration. A medical record with fill in the blanks and check boxes is designed for a specific function, by interacting with conventional materials; children will make discoveries about the real-life features of written language.

Visual Aid 52: Early Literacy Environments



Narrative:

If children play in settings similar to those they have experienced in real life, they may have a good idea of how to use literacy props in those settings. For example, children familiar with grocery stores may have an idea how to use grocery lists.

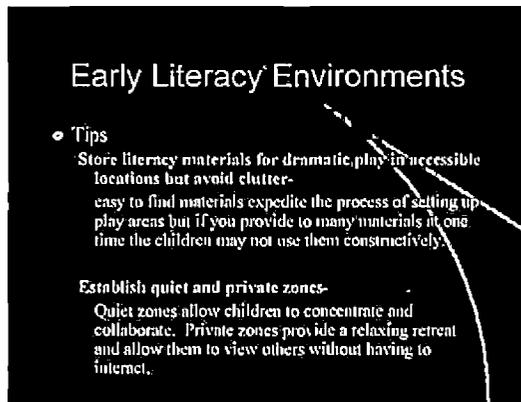
However, a child who has never had experiences with a veterinary clinic would not be familiar with props from the veterinary office and the literacy experience may not be as meaningful.

To enrich your literacy home-living area, think of all the literacy materials that might be found in your children's homes and start collecting.

When putting together a collection of literacy items for a play area, make a visit to a real-life setting. Visit the dentist office, the hair saloon, or the hardware store. At first people think they don't have anything appropriate to donate, but once they get the hang of it they find all kinds of materials.

Session IV

Visual Aid 53: Early Literacy Environments



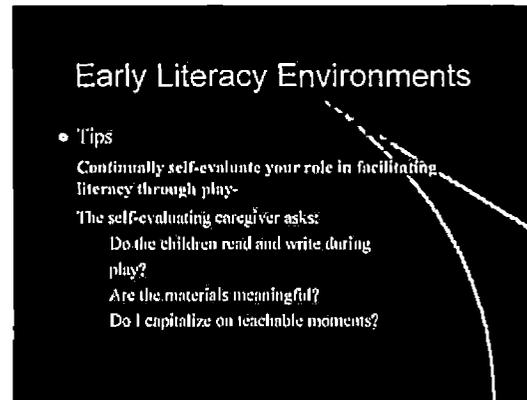
Narrative:

Easy access to materials helps to set up to take advantage of those spontaneous moments in play to introduce or model a use of written or oral language. If you provide too many materials at once the children may not use them constructively.

Select a few literacy materials at a time and help children to use them in meaningful ways. If they are not using the materials appropriately, or they find it difficult to pick-up and organize materials when playtime is over, think about whether the area is overloaded with materials

Quiet zones are not without talk, but they provide an atmosphere for the kind of thinking, discussion, and listening that would be required while playing with puppets, reading, or writing. Children also appreciate the opportunity to spend some peaceful time by themselves. Crowded conditions, interaction continuously and frequent interruptions can cause fatigue and frustration. A private zone with room for only one child could be the perfect retreat.

Visual Aid 54: Early Literacy Environments



Narrative:

As a caregiver/teacher it is important that you regularly assess your own behaviors as well as the environment that you provide for children in your care. These tips help us to take a close look at the environment and ourselves. Read slides #54 and open the questions for discussion with the group.

Session IV

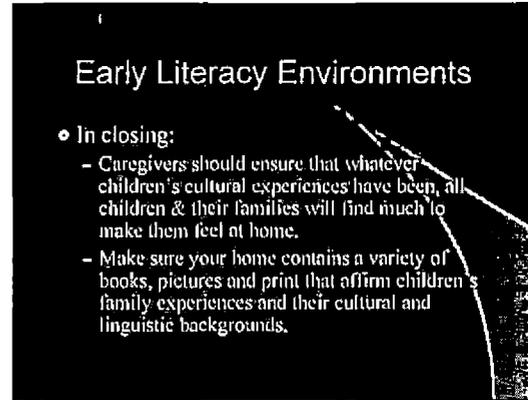
Visual Aid 55: Early Literacy Environments



Narrative:

Read the slide and open to the large group for discussion.

Visual Aid 56: Early Literacy Environments



Narrative:

In closing the responsibility of a caregiver for encouraging, providing and ensuring that children have environments that facilitate successful early literacy skills is one of choice. I am hoping that being a part of this intervention project will help with your understanding how important that choice is.

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