

Increasing Exposure at Home to Improve Literacy Skills at School

Patricia A. Gormley

A Project Submitted to the
Graduate Elementary Program
The School of Education
University of Alaska, Fairbanks

June, 2014

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Education

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dr. Richard Burmeister

Dr. Diane Kardash

Dr. Don Peterson

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this project was to help the home literacy environment by supplying materials for families that are an expansion on what students are learning in the classroom with weekly take-home book bags. Research shows that students who become good readers stay good readers. The bags include a selection of books for families to read together along with audio recordings of each of the books to allow the student to make full use of the books without assistance. For families for whom English is not a first language or for families who have limited time for parent-child interactions, the recordings may be especially helpful so that students can interact with the materials independently. Overall, the additional time spent focusing on literacy will have a positive impact on reading skills and help build a strong school-to-home connection for future years.

INTRODUCTION

On average, in an extended day kindergarten classroom, a teacher has about an hour of instruction time for reading and writing. As a kindergarten teacher, I have found that this is not enough time for many students. Strikingly, children who have difficulty reading in first grade are more likely to have greater difficulty in other school subjects later on, and are more likely not to complete high school or pursue their education beyond high school (Martini & Senechal, 2012). This shows how important it is to build a strong foundation during the first years of school. An option to help improve reading skills, such as letter recognition and phonemic awareness, is increasing literacy in the homes of the children. This option is to create a school-to-home connection. The focus of this research project was to create a reading program to help the home literacy environment by supplying materials for families that are an expansion on what students are learning in the classroom using weekly take-home book bags. Each bag has an appealing theme with books that help a child practice certain literacy skills such as phonological ability, alphabetic knowledge, concepts of print, and vocabulary. In addition to the books, the bags contain audio recordings of all of the books on an mp3 device and a consumable decodable book for the child to keep. These additions allow a child to make use of the bags without assistance. Overall, additional time spent focusing on literacy positively impacts reading skills and helps build a strong school-to-home connection for future years.

RATIONALE

As a kindergarten teacher, I have watched as new standards push increasingly more requirements to the kindergarten level. In June 2012, the state of Alaska adopted new K-12 state standards in language arts and mathematics. What was once a year where a child would explore academics and focus on learning the social skills needed to succeed in school, it has become more academically vigorous with little time left to explore and play. In addition, “more than one third of children in the United States enter school with significant differences in language, early literacy skills, and motivation to learn that place them at considerable risk for developing long-term reading difficulties” (Carter, Chard, & Pool, 2009). According to the *Alaska English/Language Arts and Mathematics Standards*, students are now expected by the end of kindergarten to read (p.28-29), write a complete thoughtful sentence (p.31-32), and do addition and subtraction (p.93). All this is expected of students in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District during an extended day setting. In an extended day schedule, students attend in small group for about 4 ½ hours a day, overlapping with another group for about 2 ½ hours. This has allowed me as a teacher to focus on core standards for two hours a day. The standards that are now expected of the students were once taught during a full day first grade, which ran for a full 6 ½ hours.

As a kindergarten teacher, it has been a challenge to find ways to help my students practice skills being taught in the classroom outside the classroom. It has been said for many years, “a child’s first teacher in the parent.” As the teacher, I wanted to take advantage of this.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to offer the materials to enrich the home reading environment of kindergarten age children and to provide additional practice of early literacy skills outside of the classroom. To do this, I created take home book bags to be utilized by my class families during the weekdays. Additional purposes of this project are to bridge a positive relationship between school and families, to enhance the school experience for a child for years to come, and to supply parents with the skills or techniques to help their child develop early literacy skills. Lastly and most importantly, this project will also foster a positive, enjoyable relationship with book reading for children.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As the expectations for kindergartners continues to grow, research has looked at what can be achieved outside of the classroom. The idea is the “extended” school (Feiler, et al. 2008). This idea is nothing new. Researchers have looked at multiple ways to reach and provide support to families outside of the school day (Walbart, Meyers, & Meyers, 2006; Gilliam, Gerla, & Wright, 2004; Lacour, McDonald, Tissington, & Thomason, 2013). Having a strong relationship between parents and teachers, schools can create school-to-home and home-to-school connections. Teachers can send home activities for parents to complete with their child that supports learning in the classroom and increases the parents’ knowledge of how they can positively impact their children’s learning at school. This responsiveness and support of home is the strongest predictor of child language and literacy development (Roberts, et al., 2005). “The more children grow up in a literate

environment, where books and talk are a part of their daily lives and where their parents interact with them through oracy and literacy experiences, the better their chances for success in school” (Gilliam et al., 2004).

Impact of Home Literacy Environment

This idea of improving the home literacy environment has been supported in various publications. As Zeece, P., & Wallace, B. (2009) found in their own researching of the topic, even modest literacy-promoting interventions can meaningfully enhance a young child’s early literacy environment thus significantly impacting the child’s developing literacy and language skills. With the use of shared reading techniques such as encouraging the child to follow along in the text or identify letters and word he or she recognizes, it allows the child to collaborate with others, increasing self-regulation and self-confidence, and thus, increasing the appeal of reading (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002).

Simply exposing a child to literature has positive impact as Mol, S. E., & Bus, A. G. showed in 2011. In preschool and kindergarten, “print exposure explained 12% of the variance in oral language skills, in primary school 13%, in middle school 19%, in high school 30%, and in college and university 34%” (Mol & Bus, 2011).

The impact can be seen in all children. Ricci, L.L. in 2011 surveyed parents of typical students and students with Down syndrome to determine the home literacy environment. The author found that parent-child shared reading accounted for 8% variance in emergent literacy and reading achievement in both student categories (Ricci, 2011).

In 2008, Evans and Shaw looked at key activities of the home environment provided by parents to young children that are predictive of reading development in general and,

more specifically, of aspects of emergent literacy skills contributing to word recognition skill—phonological ability, alphabetic knowledge, concepts of print, and vocabulary. One of those activities was reading rhyming books, such as nursery rhymes, to their child and allowing the child to fill in the rhyme. In addition, young children’s letter knowledge, both names and sounds, before school entry and in the early primary grades, is in itself predictive of future reading achievement (Evans & Shaw, 2008).

Approaches to Reading

Other research has shown that taking a formal as well as an informal approach to reading with a child can have an impact not only oral language but also on literacy skills. As Martini, F., & Sénéchal, M. (2012) study revealed many parents reported that they adopted a very active instructive role in their young child’s early literacy. The study looked at two forms of at home literacy. The informal model was the child is being read to but the focus is not the print. The formal model has child and parent interaction with the text. For example as the parent reads, letters are pointed out to the child. Through Martini, F., & Sénéchal, M. research, correlation has been found between the informal model and oral language but not literacy skills. The formal method of interaction with the print, letter recognition, etc. had greater impact on early literacy skills.

Internationally research has recognized this approach to reading but has identified the informal approach as dialogic reading and the formal as print referencing (Sim & Berthelsen, 2014). In a recent research project published in Australia, researchers Sim and Berthelsen (2014) taught caregivers, depending on group, seven dialogic reading and/or

eight print-referencing strategies previously identified by Sim in 2012. Table 1 and Table 2 identify these strategies with examples below (p.51-52).

Table 1. Strategies illustrated in the video of dialogic reading (Sim, 2012)

Dialogic-reading strategies	Examples
1. Discussing the title of the book.	Mum started reading by saying aloud the title of the book.
2. Asking open-ended questions such as 'What, Where, When, Who'.	Mum asks Joshie a lot of 'Wh' questions. One of them is 'Who did he know that has the name "Zack" before?/What do you think Zack is doing?/What do you see in his mouth?/Do you remember when the last time you were naughty was?'
3. Following child's answers with a question.	Mum follows Joshie's answer with a question, 'Who do you have in your family?' Joshie replies that he has a sister. Mum asks Joshie, 'Who is your sister?' 'She is ...'.
4. Repeating and expanding what the child says.	Joshie says that Zack is a baby. Mum repeats what child says and asks if Zack is crawling?
5. Giving praise and encouragement.	Mum always gives praise such 'Good boy' or 'Very good Joshie' when Joshie answers her questions.
6. Following the child's lead and interest.	Mum asks Joshie what he likes to play with after she says that Zack likes to play with ball. Joshie says that there might be sharks there. Crocodiles too. Mum comments and says that she does not know if there are sharks and says to Joshie that he has a good imagination.
7. Having fun.	Mum smiles and is having fun reading with Joshie.

Table 2. Strategies illustrated in the video of print referencing (Sim, 2012)

Print-referencing strategies	Examples
1. Discussing the title of the book.	Dad points to the title as he reads it. Dad also comments that the illustration is done by that lady.
2. Making comments about the words and letters on the page.	For example, you can point to the letter that is the same letter of your child's name or your name.
3. Posing questions about the words and letters.	Dad asks 'What letter is this?' Mum asks 'Which one starts with the sound "s"?'
4. Pointing to the words when talking about the story.	Dad points to the words when reading the story to the children.
5. Tracking the words when reading.	Dad tracks the words when reading the book.
6. Commenting about rhyme.	Dad is stressing the sound of the letter 'S' when reading aloud to the children. Also stressing the letter 'C' when saying 'Chitter chatter'.
7. Commenting that some words start or end with the same sound.	For example, 'Peter, Patter, Pick a Pickle'.
8. Talking about the letters.	Mum points to the letters of the alphabet and says what each letter stands for.

Results from Sims & Bertheslen (2014) showed dialogic-reading alone or with print-referencing positively impacted a child's expressive vocabulary, rhyme, and concepts about print.

To take a more formal approach to reading, parents often need instruction. Several research projects have included implementing a reading program within a school. For example, one study created a program called ROAR: Reach Out and Read (Gilliam, Gerla, & Wright, 2004). The program was created in a primarily Hispanic school to create activities for parents interested in improving literacy and success in school. In their research, they found that the earlier parents begin reading to their child, the higher the emergent reader skills of their child by the end of kindergarten (Gilliam, Gerla, & Wright, 2004). Throughout the project the researchers had ten sessions to discuss reading at home, reading with puppets, literacy games, etc. Overall, the program was a success. Many reported that their children enjoyed reading after participating. Some other positive outcomes from the program were building stronger relationships within the families and with the school and community.

Formal and informal approaches do not need to be divided. Books can be read to children for enjoyment as well as for print focus. While reading, the child can be asked to find letters he or she knows and eventually high frequency words the child has learned. (Evans & Shaw, 2008) When studies showed gain in vocabulary, some combination of the following were found: same books read at least 3 times, multiple occurrences of the word, the words were well illustrated and important to the text, the word were mostly nouns, and the child was asked to retell the story or tell something related to the vocabulary word (Evans & Shaw, 2008).

Book Type

Certain types of children's books have shown to have high impact on early literacy, particularly alphabet books. These contain few words with pictures often accompanying the words. For example "A is for apple" or "apple" with a picture of an apple. It has been observed that with alphabet books, parent comments were more likely naming letters and helping the child recognize sounds in words (Evans & Shaw, 2008).

Storybooks have also shown to be important to early literacy. Shared reading of storybooks has shown to stimulate receptive language development and allow children to be active participants in reading. Shared storybook reading has also been linked to vocabulary development as well as phonemic and phonological awareness (LaCour et al., 2013).

Shared Reading

Just taking time to read to a child makes a difference. Shared reading during preschool years accounted for 7% variance in emergent literacy skills at entry to school and 8% variance in reading achievement from kindergarten to 3rd grade (Roberts, et al., 2005). It is also important to listen to the child read. Studies have shown that children who were listened to while reading scored higher on reading tests. This may be due to increased time on task and coaching that occurs from the listener in ways such as helping to decode words (Evans & Shaw, 2008). In conclusion, to help a child succeed in reading, time is needed to read with a child along with referencing print. Every little bit can make a difference in a child's life.

STATEMENT OF BIAS

As a teacher, I thought it was important to select appropriate, appealing books for my kindergarten students. In addition, the books in the bags were chosen with all Alaskan students in mind. Despite Fairbanks having a larger population for Alaska, it still has a different culture from the continental United States. For example, many students in Fairbanks and rural Alaska have never seen such common urban sights as an escalator. Furthermore, Alaskan culture tends to focus more on outside adventures such as flying or snow machining, rather than going to the mall or the beach. All books selected were chosen with Alaskan kindergarten students' prior knowledge and possible experiences in mind.

CONSTRUCTING BOOK BAGS

Within this project, there are nine take-home book bags. Each bag consists of five books, an mp3 player with headphones, a consumable decodable, crayons, and the tips for reading at home handout for parents created by All Students SHIINE blog. The bag itself is canvas labeled with the theme of the bag. Of the five books, at least one is Alaskan and at least one is nonfiction.

Theme

To create each bag, first a theme is established. As mentioned above, there are nine themes across the bags. A few things were taken into consideration when picking themes: interest to students, diversity in topics, cultural awareness and occurrence within

curriculum at Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. Once a theme was established, books related to the topic were then selected.

Book Selection

Several considerations were taken when selecting appropriate books for each bag. When initially picking for theme, books selected either were about the theme or had the theme throughout. For example, within the animal bag, *The Mitten* is a fictional story about animals crawling into a child's lost mitten while *Alaska's Babies* is a nonfiction informational book about animals living throughout Alaska. After theme, the content of the book was considered. Some questions asked when considering a book were as follows:

1. Is the reading level appropriate?
2. Is it visually appealing to students?
3. Is it culturally responsive to Alaskan students living in both urban and rural environments?
4. What prior knowledge will a student need to understand both the content and language?

Additionally, to open up new avenues for students to explore on their own, popular authors or series, along with award winning books were selected. Lastly, consideration was given to the audio availability of each book selected.

In order to make this project easy to replicate, books were purchased from three main resources. The most valuable resource was Scholastic, Inc. A majority of the books included in the book bags, along with their recordings, were purchased through book orders from the Scholastic, Inc Book Clubs. As a teacher, I find Scholastic a very valuable

resource for not only building book bags but also building a class library. Often books can be purchased for a few dollars or with points saved from previous purchases. For books that were published years ago, such as with the popular authors or Caldecott winners, Amazon.com was useful. These were less likely to have recordings available and often would cost more than if purchased through Scholastic. Lastly, a majority of the Alaskan themed books was purchased locally at Gulliver Books in Fairbanks. I found this local bookstore has an amazing collection of books published about Alaska and by Alaskans.

Audio Recordings

Once books were selected, audio recording were then collected. A majority of the audio recordings was purchased as CDs, along with the book, from Scholastic. Books that were not available from Scholastic but were professionally made were purchased from iTunes and Audible. Audible purchases were in a file format unable to be played by generic mp3 players so files were then converted to an mp3 format to be usable by all devices.

For the Alaska theme books and several others, audio recordings were not available for purchase. To create recordings, several tools were used: a Samsung CO1U microphone, software program Garageband, and the book. After the recording was completed in Garageband, it was exported directly into iTunes.

Once all files were collected into iTunes, many corrections to labels were needed. All audio files were labeled with title, author as artist, and book cover as album cover. Taking the time to organize and correctly label the files has made them considerably more user friendly. All books were then placed in a playlist to help separate them from any music on iTunes. From here, additional playlists were made for each book bag. Many

books purchased from Scholastic had multiple recordings: one with page turn signals, one without page turn signals and one with comprehension questions. These were also placed in the correct playlist but unselected so as not to appear on the mp3 players. This allows modifications to be made for each child, adapting to his or her preference or ability.

For this project, two types of audio devices were used: iPods and a Craig 4G mp3 player. The iPods were considerably easier to use due to the compatibility with iTunes.

Copyright

A large concern when creating these bags was whether making audio recordings of the books would be a copyright violation. According to Circular 21, *Reproduction of Copyright Works by Educators and Librarians*, published by the United States Copyright Office, copyright was not violated. According to this document, a limited number of copies of a publication may be made for educational use as long as it is not a “consumable,” is not for commercial use, and most importantly it is not a substitute for the purchase of the work. Before creating any audio recording, extensive amount of time was spent determining if audio recordings were already available for purchase.

Consumable Reader

Each bag also contains a consumable paper book. They may be printed in black and white or in color depending on availability of a color printer. Many of the consumables are line drawings that a child can color. All the consumables are meant for the student to keep and build his or her own collection of readers. These books are downloaded from the following website: <http://www.readinga-z.com/>. Books came from a wide range of

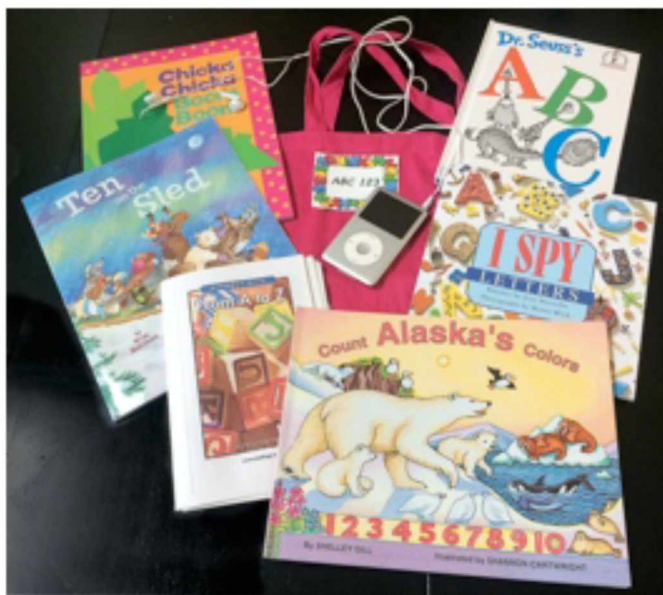
categories including but not limited to fiction, non-fiction, alphabet books, decodable, high-frequency word, and leveled reading. All the consumables are all beginning levels created for ages 4-6 reading at a kindergarten level.

Reading A-Z is a membership education website with over 2500 downloadable books in three languages along with a plethora of other educational resources. A year membership costs \$99.95. From here, books are downloaded as a PDF file that can easily stored and printed for future use.

THE BOOK BAGS

There are nine complete book bags, each with a different theme. Listed below is each theme with a description of each of the five included books.

Book Bag: ABC 123



Martin, B., Archambault, J., Ehlert, L., & Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers (Firm). (1989). *Chicka chicka boom boom*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom is an alphabet rhyme/chant that relates what happens when the whole lower-case alphabet tries to climb a coconut tree. The audio was purchased from Scholastic.

I selected this book because of its use in the classroom. I, and many of my coworkers, use this book as to introduce the alphabet. Along with classroom use, the rhythm of the book along with strong images allows for a high level of interaction with any beginning reader.

Seuss, . (1963). *Dr. Seuss's ABC*. New York: Beginner Books.

A classic children's author, Dr. Seuss introduces students to initial letter sounds for each letter of the alphabet with the use of some quirky creatures. The audio recording for this book was purchased from Audible.

I chose this book as an introduction to a favorite author along with its use of initial letter sounds. Dr. Seuss is a favorite among all children and imaginative drawings are very appealing to children.

Norman, K., & Woodruff, L. (2010). *Ten on the sled*. New York: Sterling.

One moonlit night ten animals pile together on a sled. One by one, each animal falls off until one caribou remains. The audio recording was purchased with the book from Scholastic.

This book fit perfectly with not only the theme of the bag but also the relevance to Alaska. I also chose this book for its counting. Even though students may not be able to read the book alone, as they read with an adult, they can count the animals on the sled each time, slowing counting backwards to one.

Gill, S., & Cartwright, S. (1997). *Count Alaska's colors*. Homer, Alaska: Paws IV Pub.

Count the colorful, wild animals of Alaska from one black bear to twelve yellow warblers. Students are introduced to the concept of plus one/minus one as they count their way to twelve and back down. I created the audio recording for this book.

This book is part of the bag because it is full of skills practiced by kindergartners. Students are introduced not out to counting with pictures, but also number formulas. In addition, they learn about colors and shapes, along with learning about Alaskan animals.

Marzollo, J., & Wick, W. (2012). *I spy letters*. New York: Scholastic.

I Spy Letters has text that invites the reader to find hidden objects representing the letters from A to Z. A popular series among beginning readers, the series continues to grow with books with holiday themes and more. No audio recording was created due to the type of book.

I selected this book for its focus on finding letters. This can assist beginning readers with developing letter identification. I also selected it as an introduction the *I Spy* series in hope that students will enjoy this book and seek out on their own more of the series.

Consumable Book: *From A to Z* by Craig Frederick. Students read a repeating phrase that identifies each letter and something that begins with that letter. For example, “C is for cat.”

Book Bag: Animals



Downey, L., & Firehammer, K. (2000). *The flea's sneeze*. New York: Holt

One night as all the animals sleep in the barn, they are suddenly awoken by a flea with a sneeze, in need of a tissue. Audio recording was purchased from Scholastic.

I chose this book for the bag for its rhyming patterns and the repeating of familiar animal names.

Brett, J. (1989). *The mitten: A Ukrainian folktale*. New York: Putnam.

Little Nickie insisted on white mittens until he loses one in the snow. Soon creatures are moving into the mitten. As the animals moving in get bigger in size, the mitten stretches to fit them. They are all snuggled in until a bear sneezes. The audio recording was previously purchased from Scholastic.

I chose this book because it is a classic folktale often used in kindergarten classrooms with art activities.

Martin, B., & Carle, E. (1992). *Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?*. New York: H. Holt.

Children see a variety of colorful animals each looking at another until seeing them all. This book has a repetitive pattern that allows children to “read” along. The audio was downloaded from Audible.

Similar to choosing Dr. Seuss, I selected this book not only for its pattern but to introduce students to Eric Carle. Many of his books are commonly used in kindergarten and preschool classrooms including *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Head to Toe*.

Votaw, C. J., & Banta, S. (2005). *Good morning, little polar bear*. Minnetonka, Minn: NorthWord Books for Young Readers.

Colorful illustrations and rhymes introduce students to Arctic animals as the sun rises on a beautiful day. The audio was produced by Harcourt for its Storytown curriculum.

I selected this book for two reasons. First, it is about Arctic animals making it relevant to all Alaska students, and secondly this book is part of the Storytown reading program used by the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

Jecan, G., & Vanasse, D. (2005). *Alaska animal babies*. Seattle, WA: Sasquatch Books.

Alaska has an abundance of animals on land and in the sea. This book looks at the lives and habitats of many from eagles to bears to orcas. I created the audio recording to accompany this book.

This book was chosen because it is a well-written nonfiction book about animals throughout Alaska. Along with the text on each animal is an adorable photograph of a baby in its environment.

Consumable Book: *Animal Sounds* by Ned Jensen. This is a “level B” leveled reader. Students can decode the two words on the page using the picture on the page. For example, “Dogs bark.”

Book Bag: Family



McCloskey, R., Viking Press., & Robert Teller Sons & Dorner. (1948). *Blueberries for Sal*. New York: Viking Press.

Little Sal and Little Bear are not paying attention to where they are at and end up both lose their mothers while picking blueberries while almost ending up with the other's mother. The audio recording was purchased from Audible.

Blueberries for Sal is a Caldecott Honor from 1949. The Caldecott Medal and Caldecott Honor are awards that recognize the most distinguished American picture books for children. Despite black and white illustrations, students are still captured by this classic. In addition, blueberry picking is an adventure just about any Alaskan child can relate to.

Rylant, C., Gammell, S., Bradbury Press., & Juvenile Collection (Library of Congress).

(1985). *The relatives came*. New York: Bradbury Press.

The relatives are coming and the house is going to be full. There will be lots of hugging, food and, of course, laughter and love. I created the audio recording to accompany this book.

Anyone can relate to having visitors coming and staying at your home. I chose *The Relatives Came* because students can relate and enjoy the beautiful illustrations. This is also a Caldecott Honor from 1986.

Wood, A., & Wood, D. (2010). *The napping house*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

On a raining day, everyone from grandma to the cat settle in for a nap until a flea disturbs the quiet with a little bite. The audio recording came from Audible.

Everyone can relate to a rainy day and just wanting to snuggle in for a nap. I chose this book for the way it builds on the story with adding more characters to the bed. This is a common occurrence in many books for beginning readers.

Joose, B. M., Lavallee, B., Eno, B. R., & Chronicle Books (Firm). (1991). *Mama, do you love me?*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

A child living in the Arctic learns that a mother's love is unconditional whether you make a mistake or turn into a bear. The audio recording was made available through Audible.

Every child has asked a parent at least once if he or she does something wrong will the parent still love them. As children grow, they test boundaries. I chose this book because it put that experience into words beautifully and with an Alaskan theme.

Skutch, R., & Zarrinnaal, L. N. (1995). *Who's in a family?*. Berkeley, Calif: Tricycle Press.

Times have changed and nuclear family no longer consists of the stereotypical mother, father, and children. This book looks at the different make-ups of families. Despite each being different, they are all beautiful. I produced the audio recording to accompany this book.

This book was a late addition to this bag. One day I was doing a writing activity with my students and the discussion of families and who makes a family came up. Out of eleven students, only three lived with both birth parents who were married. Several lived with grandparents or split time between parents.

Consumable Book: *My Family* written by Cheryl Ryan and illustrated by Nora Voutas. A “level aa” leveled reader. Students read two-word pages, using the pictures to help figure out the words. For example, “My sister.”

Book Bag: Community



Shannon, D. (2000). *The rain came down*. New York: Blue Sky Press.

An unexpected rain shower causes quarreling among the members of a small community until the sun returns. Scholastic has produced the audio recording for this story.

I chose this book as an introduction to the author, David Shannon. I also selected it for its use of cause and effect. The chain of events is nicely done throughout the book.

Buehner, C., & Buehner, M. (2012). *Snowmen at work*. New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers.

What happens when the people are asleep? A young boy wonders what snowmen do when night comes. Do they clear the snow and play games? Do they have a community of their own? The audio recording is available through Scholastic.

I selected this book because it is part of a series used by Storytown. Storytown includes the book *Snowmen at Night*. In addition to continuing the series, the books have beautiful busy illustrations with hidden pictures. So much of the story is told beyond the words in the illustrations allowing beginning readers to read deeper into the story.

Mayer, Mercer (2009). *This is my town: Little critters*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Children's Books.

Little Critter takes the reader on a tour of his town from the fire station to the school and more. I produced the audio recording to accompany this book.

I selected this book, as it is part of a very popular series by Mercer Meyer. Little Critters books have been around for nearly 40 years. As students become readers, this series is age appropriate and deals with many issues young students deal with such as sharing with siblings.

Stihler, C. B., & Trammell, J. (2003). *The giant cabbage: An Alaska folktale*. Seattle, WA: Sasquatch Books.

Moose has grown an enormous cabbage, sure to win a prize at the fair, but he can't move it on his own. As neighbors pass by, the volunteer to help load the cabbage onto

Moose's truck to get it to the fair. This is an Alaskan version of a Russian folktale. I created the audio recording to accompany this book.

I chose this book for the beautiful illustrations and the wonderful representation of Alaska. It is easy for students to relate to the story of the giant cabbage and getting it to the fair.

Kottle, Jan. (2000) *A Day with Police Officers*. New York, NY: Rosen Book Works, Inc.

Kottle, Jan. (2000) *A Day with Firefighters*. New York, NY: Rosen Book Works, Inc.

The first book is a decodable book about things police officers do from helping people cross streets to working with police dogs. No audio recording was created for this book.

Part of the same series as *A Day with Police Officers*, the second book shows the life of firefighters, primarily in large cities. Again, no audio recording was created for this book.

I chose to add both of these decodables because of their presentation of factual information. The new Alaska State Standards for kindergarten are pushing towards students reading more nonfiction and being able to gather information from this material. I felt these books presented well and can be a great conversation starter for families. Despite taking place primarily in large cities, all students have some concept of what firefighters or police officers do.

Consumable Book: *Look at Me* written by Bill Dinardo and illustrated by Maria Voris. A high-frequency word book focusing on words such as look, me, and other pronouns. Students read about people in different jobs using images to help decode.

Book Bag: Food



Seuss, . (1960). *Green eggs and ham*. New York: Beginner Books.

Sam I am tries to convince the character in the hat to try green eggs and ham with a series of rhymes. The audio recording was purchase from Audible.

I selected this Dr. Seuss classic because children often experience trying new things and food. In addition, the illustrations are useful for figuring out the rhyming words allowing the student to be more engaged in the book.

Child, L. (2000). *I will never not ever eat a tomato*. Cambridge, Mass: Candlewick Press.

Lola, a picky eater just won't try any food until Charlie, her brother, convinces her that mash potatoes are all crazy things like cloud fluff from Fuji or carrots are orange twiglets from Jupiter. I created the audio recording for this book.

I selected this book for its creative style and content along with the topic of trying new foods. Often kindergarten is the first time a child is away from home cooking and exposed to new foods.

Pelham, D. (1991). *Sam's sandwich*. New York: Dutton Children's Books.

While supposedly helping his sister Samantha make a delicious sandwich, Sam sneaks bugs in while Samantha isn't looking. Each page features flaps to find the hidden additions to the sandwich. I created the audio recording to accompany this book.

I choose this book for its interactive features. Many beginning readers enjoy engaging with the book beyond the words. I also selected it because the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District has a cloth interactive version of this book available from Media Services. My idea was to introduce the book in the classroom with the district version and then students could retell the story at home with families using the book bag.

Ehlert, L., Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, & Tien Wah Press Sdn. Bhd. (1989). *Eating the alphabet: Fruits and vegetables from A to Z*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

From A to Z, students see fruits and vegetables from around the world. Some more familiar than others, after students can learn a little about each by reading the appendix with an adult. I produced the audio recording for this book. I did not record the appendix section.

I choose this book for its simple use of initial sounds of fruits and vegetables. I hope the appendix will promote learning and sharing opportunities between students and families.

Bugni, Alice. (1999). *Moose racks, bear tracks, and other kid snacks*. Seattle, WA: Sasquatch Books.

Students can create over 25 kid-tested snacks. All snacks are Alaskan themed and easy for children to make with their families. No audio recording was created for this book.

I selected this book for students to make a snack with their families. A great way for families to incorporate reading in the home is reading recipes together. In addition, when students cook, they practice math skills such as measuring and number recognition.

Consumable Book: *I Like* by Bill Dinardo and illustrated by Signe Nordin. In this high-frequency word book students read about two children's favorite food and practice high frequency words such as pronouns and "like."

Book Bag: Weather and Seasons



Gibson, A., & Björkman, S. (2012). *Split! Splat!*. New York: Scholastic Press.

When a little girl ventures out into a spring rain with her dog, singing a rain song, and her neighbors soon join her for some muddy-day fun. I created the audio recording to accompany this book in the bag.

I selected this book for its fun simple word usage and content. Students can participate as phrases are repeated throughout. Also due to its sing-song nature in writing, as students repeat this book and remember phrases, it can help them learn new sight words.

Rogers, P., & Kazuko, . (1990). *What will the weather be like today?*. New York:

Greenwillow Books.

As the sun rises on a new day the animals ask, “What will the weather be like today?” Will it be wet for the frog in the bog or will it snow for the kids on the sled? This weather looks at weather around the world. This book contains beautiful bright simple illustrations of weather with people and animals below. The audio was produced by Harcourt for its Storytown curriculum.

I chose this book for the connection to Storytown. I think it is important to make connections to what is read in the classroom and allow students to practice books they may have already heard.

Rawlinson, J., & Beeke, T. (2007). *The fox and the falling leaves*. New York: Scholastic.

Oh no! Fletcher the fox's favorite tree is losing leaves. His mom tells him not to worry that it is only autumn but he wants to help. More and more leaves are falling and he just cannot keep them on the tree. The audio recording was purchased from Scholastic.

I selected *The Fox and the Falling Leaves* because of the engaging story. Despite having a high number of words, the story is well written and accompanied by beautiful illustrations.

Vanasse, D., & Trammell, J. (2005). *Under Alaska's midnight sun*. Seattle: Sasquatch Books.

After waiting so long it is finally the summer solstice and a little girl is very excited. She is so excited she is going to stay up all night and enjoy the midnight sun. I created the audio recording to go with this book.

This book was a perfect fit to represent Alaska within the weather/seasons bag. All Alaskans, children and adult, understand the celebration of the longest day of the year. In addition, the illustrations incorporate several Alaskan animals.

Eckart, E. (2004). *Watching the seasons*. New York: Children's Press.

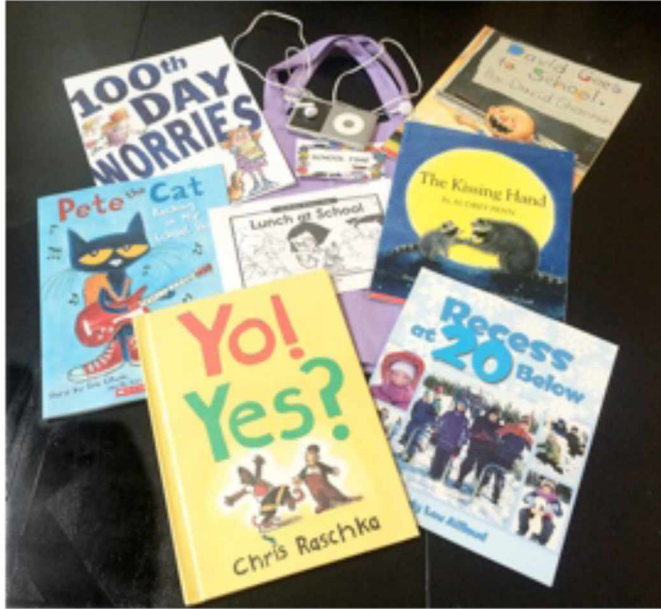
Simple informational text introduces students to the four seasons. I did not create an audio recording for this book because it is a low-leveled reader.

I chose this book for its presentation of information about weather. As I have mentioned in previous books, students are required to seek out more nonfiction material and I felt like this was a good choice for seasons.

Consumable Book: *Winter Fun* by Katalina Page. This is a “level B” leveled reader.

Students read about winter gear and practice the phrase, “this is.”

Book Bag: School



Penn, A., Harper, R. E., & Leak, N. M. (1993). *The kissing hand*. Washington, D.C: Child Welfare League of America.

It is time for Chester Raccoon to go to school but he is nervous to leave his mom. It can be scary trying something new but Mrs. Raccoon has a secret: the kissing hand. Any time Chester may feel lonely or missing home, all he has to do is press his hand to his cheek and remember, “Mommy loves you.” Scholastic produced the audio recording that accompanies this book.

The Kissing Hand is part of this bag because it represents how students often feel the first day of kindergarten. Many of my colleagues and I chose to read this to our students on

the first day of school and use it for writing or art activities. I added this book to the bag to allow students to reconnect with the story.

Shannon, D. (1999). *David goes to school*. New York: Blue Sky Press.

David is off to school but is having difficulty following school rules, such as “no chewing gum” and “walk in the hallways.” The audio recording was purchased from Scholastic.

I selected this book because it is written so well for kindergartners. Author David Shannon has written the story from a child’s point of view and in a child’s writing. With colorful illustrations, this is a great book for students to begin to read on their own.

Cuyler, M., & Howard, A. (2000). *100th day worries*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

As the 100th day of school approaches students have the assignment to bring in 100 objects. Jessica is a bit of a worrier and now she is worried about what to bring. As the day approaches and other students bring in their objects, Jessica is at a loss. On the morning of the 100th day, Jessica is in tears until her family steps in to help.

I chose this book to represent one of the most exciting days of kindergarten. In addition, the illustrations allow students to practice their counting skills by counting the objects.

Litwin, E., & Dean, J. (2011). *Pete the cat: Rocking in my school shoes*. New York: Harper.

Pete the Cat is off to learn in his rocking school shoes. Follow along with this singsong story as Pete tours the school. Each location gives clues to where Pete might be headed next. Scholastic produced the audio recording for this book.

Pete the Cat books have become a huge hit among beginning readers. The singsong story is easy for students to learn and the guessing of the next location creates a high level of interaction with the student.

Aillaud, C. L. (2005). *Recess at 20 below*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Books.

It is 20 degrees below zero in Alaska and it is time to go out for recess. *Recess at 20 Below* is written from the point of view of the students who live in this arctic environment. Readers learn about the dark days, dry snow, and more. I produced the audio recording to accompany this book.

I selected this book as it represents what my students experience every winter living in Fairbanks. The images and student point of view make for an enjoyable read for kindergartners and families.

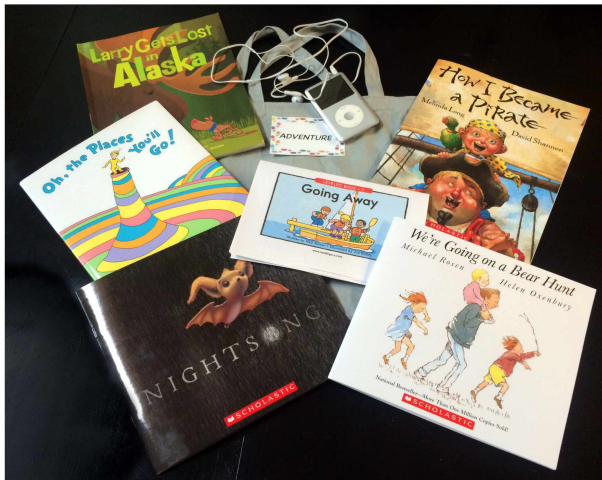
Raschka, C. (1993). *Yo! Yes?*. New York: Orchard Books.

Two lonely characters, each of different ethnicity, meet on the street. With simple one or two word exchanges, these two quickly become friends. *Yo! Yes?* is a 1994 Caldecott Honor recipient. The recording was produced by Scholastic.

I chose this book for how the story is told with few words. Students can develop confidence reading a story all on their own.

Consumable Book: *Lunch at School* written by Bev Osborn and illustrated by Andrea Zuill. This is a “level aa” leveled reader. Students read about a student showing her friends what she has for lunch.

Book Bag: Adventure



Berk, A., & Long, L. (2012). *Nightsong*. New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

It is time for the little bat, Chiro to venture out on his own one night. Worried about the dark, his mother reminds him to sing his night song and have faith in the song that the world returns. With a little confidence, Chiro sees a whole new world awaits. The audio recording was made available from Scholastic.

I selected this book for how easily students will be able to relate to Chiro. His fear of the unknown and lack of confidence to try something new is very similar to what kindergartners experience in school.

Seuss, Dr., (1990). *Oh, the places you'll go!*. New York: Random House.

A Dr. Seuss classic, readers learn about making the best out of an adventure even if things do not go as planned. The audio recording was purchased from Audible.

I chose this book partially due to the increase in popularity with all ages. In recent years, it has become a collector for parents to have all their child's teachers sign. This is also a book I personally choose to read to my students each year, as it has my maiden last name in it. It is such a hook for students to tell them my last name is in this book and to have them find it. Luckily, it is on the last page. I have had so many students check the book out and take it home to show to their families, so its place in a book bag is very appropriate.

Long, M., & Shannon, D. (2004). *How I became a pirate*. New York: Scholastic.

Jeremy Jacob is at the beach with his family when he joins Braid Beard and his pirate crew. He then learns about pirate life including pirate language, pirate manners, and more. The audio recording for this book was purchase from Scholastic.

This book is part of the adventure bag because pirates are a very popular choice among young children. In addition, the use of repeated phrases throughout the book allows students to participate in the reading.

Rosen, M., & Oxenbury, H. (1989). *We're going on a bear hunt*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books.

Through the tall grass, a big dark forest, and more, a group is off on a bear hunt. It's a beautiful day and they aren't scared. Will they find a bear? A singsong story, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* was produced by Scholastic.

I selected this book because it is a wonderful story written like a song. The repeating phrases and pattern to the story allow students to participate in the book. I also selected this book because the music teacher at our school teaches it as a song to the students. It is a great opportunity for a cross curriculum connection.

Mullin, M., & Skewes, J. (2011). *Larry gets lost in Alaska*. Seattle, WA: Sasquatch Books.

Larry the dog is off on an adventure with best friend Pete and family to Alaska. With so much to see, Pete gets distracted when Larry follows his nose. Soon Larry is lost and in for an adventure of his own. From floatplanes to the Iditarod Race, will Larry find his way across Alaska back to Pete? I created the audio recording of the story to accompany this book. This book includes factual notes about Alaska on each page, but I did not record these.

I chose this book as it shows so much of the popular parts of Alaska throughout Larry's adventure and the tidbits allow for interaction between the adult reader and student as they learn more about the different places and activities.

Consumable Book: *Going Away* written by Ned Jensen and illustrated by Joe Boddy. This is a "level C" leveled reader. Students read about three students who escape on adventures

in multiple ways from putting on shoes to run from a bear to using a rocket to fly to outer space.

Book Bag: Transportation



Rinker, S. D., & Lichtenheld, T. (2011). *Goodnight, goodnight, construction site*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

As the sun sets on the construction site, Crane Truck, Cement Mixer, Dump Truck and more finish one last task before settling in for the night. Audible produced the audio recording for this book.

I select this book as a bedtime type story. A popular time to read to children is at bedtime and this is a wonderful story to encourage this habit with male children. In addition, the text contains a rhyme pattern on many pages that students could work with an adult to decode easily.

Stein, P., & Staake, B. (2011). *Cars galore*. Somerville, Mass: Candlewick Press.

Fast cars, slow cars, cars snoozing, cars cruising. This book is full of imaginative illustrations and rhymes, engaging the readers in a silly world of cars. I created the audio recording to accompany this book.

I chose this book to be part of the bag because of its predictable yet silly rhymes. As students read along with an adult they can often anticipate the rhyme to come through listening to the words and using the colorful illustrations.

Harper, C. M. (2014). *Go, Go, Go, Stop*. Random House Children's Books.

Little Green knows one little word, "Go!" and soon everyone is working but soon there is too much go and things are not going smoothly. Then Little Red rolls into town and soon there is too much, "Stop!" Together Little Green and Little Red must work together to help the trucks finish the construction project. I produced the audio recording for *Go! Go! Go! Stop!*

This book was chosen for its creative way of introducing students to red and green lights. I also selected it for how the text is presented. As an adult reads along, a child can read parts too as the words go and stop are in color, creating a shared reading experience.

***Mega rescuers*. (2008). Gosford, N.S.W: Scholastic.**

Full of facts, *Mega Rescuers* introduces readers to a wide variety of rescue vehicles. Beyond the typical red fire truck, readers learn about fireboats or ice breakers. They learn not just about helicopters but also about off road vehicles used for rescuing skiers. This

book covers rescue vehicles used from the water to mountains to the sky. There is no audio recording to accompany this book.

Despite having a lot of text, I chose this book for variety of vehicles and short paragraphs on each one. This is a great book to promote curiosity and conversation between an adult reader and child. As they read through this book learning together and often seeing many extreme rescue vehicles used right here in Alaska.

Thomas, K., Lloyd, G., & Vaccaro, G. (2008). *Grandpa's airplane*. Anchorage, AK: Publication Consultants.

From rescuing hikers to hauling supplies to remote places, Grandpa flies all over Alaska in otter plane. Told from the view of his grandchildren, who like to say when they seem him fly by, "There goes Grandpa." As you read, learn all about the different ways grandpa uses his plane to help others across Alaska. I produced the audio recording for this book.

I selected this book for its representation of so many Alaskans. Children across the state can relate to grandpa or grandma, uncle or aunt, or even their parents being a bush pilots. This book has also presented the text in a large clear format making it easy for beginning readers to identify letters and follow along as it is being read aloud.

Consumable Book: *Going Places* by Chuck Garofano. This is a "level A" leveled reader. Students practice the phrase, "you can go" while reading about different forms of transportation from horse to school bus to boat.

CONCLUSION

I do not see this as a conclusion of this project but more of the beginning of what can be a great take-home reading program that could be developed within any school. Through my research on the topic of the home literacy environment, I learned that even the littlest influence I may have on the home could have a huge impact on a child's learning.

With nine complete bags, I would like to create duplicates to allow more students to take home bags. I would also like to create more bags to build the collection. As I build a library to support the take-home bags, I will also be able to adapt bags to better meet the needs of students.

To make the bags a successful part of my classroom, I would also like to develop a family night with instructional videos to help teach parents and other caregivers how to make the most of their time spent reading with their child. Many parents already read to their child using an informal approach but they know little about how to promote interactions that would assist their child's literacy skills development. With a short presentation modeling some easy techniques and allowing parents to ask questions, I can have a positive impact the home literacy environment.

Beyond my own classroom, I can easily share my project with my peers in many ways. I do believe the book bags can be used in either kindergarten or first grade and would like to share with whoever may be interested. To reach teachers across Alaska and beyond, I would like to make my PowerPoint presentation available on a website I am creating. As I adapt and create more bags, I will be able to update the information easily. I would also like to share book bags with my colleagues as an inservice presentation or

through grade level planning presentations. If I can assist other teachers in reaching more children, I would consider my book bag project successful.

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Appendix A

Parent Reading Tips
By All Students Can SHINE Blog

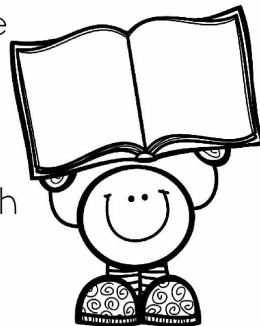
Reading At Home...

Can Make A HUGE Difference!



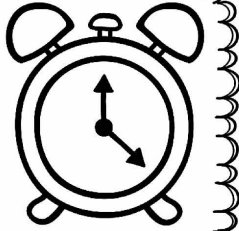
Choose Books That Are At An Appropriate Reading Level For Your Child

- ☐ Use the five finger rule. Open the book to any page and ask your child to read. Put up a finger every time your child does not know a word. If you have put up more than five fingers before the end of the page, this book is too hard for your child.
- ☐ Choose books that match your child's likes and interests.



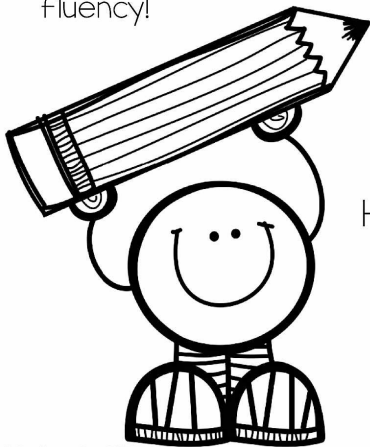
Keep plenty of reading materials in your home: books, magazines, newspapers, and comic books. Children enjoy having a variety of reading materials!

15-20
minutes is
plenty for
a beginning
reader!



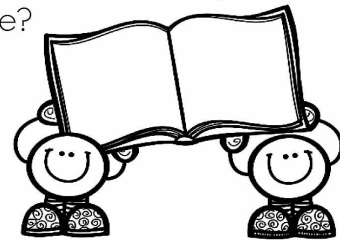
How To Read With A Beginning Reader:

- Encourage your child to use his/her finger to point to each word.
- Read a sentence and have your child repeat it.
- Take turns reading a sentence each or a page each.
- Talk about the story as you read it. What do you think will happen next? What does this story remind you of? How do you think this character feels?
- Don't be afraid to read the same book again! Repeated reading helps build reading fluency!



Check For Understanding

- ✓ Start the book by making predictions. What do you think will happen in this story?
- ✓ Ask questions and make comments during the reading process.
- ✓ After reading a book, have your child tell you the events from the story in the correct order.
- ✓ What was the problem in this story?
- ✓ How did the character feel when...?
- ✓ Encourage your child to make connections. Does this story remind you of another book you read, an event in your life, a movie?



Read Books Online!

There are many fun and interactive websites for literacy.

Here are a few FREE online resources:

www.starfall.com

www.speakaboos.com

www.spellingcity.com

www.wegivebooks.org

<http://interactivesites.weebly.com>

Appendix B

PowerPoint Presentation

INCREASING EXPOSURE AT HOME TO
IMPROVE LITERACY SKILLS AT SCHOOL

Patricia Gormley

A Project Submitted to the Graduate Elementary
Program

The School of Education

University of Alaska, Fairbanks

June, 2014

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Education

* Abstract

The focus of this project was to help the home literacy environment by supplying materials for families that are an expansion on what students are learning in the classroom with weekly take-home book bags. Research shows that students who become good readers stay good readers. The bags include a selection of books for families to read together along with audio recordings of each of the books to allow the student to make full use of the books without assistance. For families for whom English is not a first language or for families who have limited time for parent-child interactions, the recordings may be especially helpful so that students can interact with the materials independently. Overall, the additional time spent focusing on literacy will have a positive impact on reading skills and help build a strong school-to-home connection for future years.

* Does reading at home really have an impact?

- * Children who acquire successful initial reading skills tend to remain good readers, while children who experience difficulty in learning to read tend to continue to have problems in reading throughout the school years. (Roberts et al., 2005)
- * In preschool and kindergarten, print exposure explained 12% of the variance in oral language skills, in primary school 13%, in middle school 19%, in high school 30%, and in college and university 34%. (Mol & Bus, 2011)

* Informal Reading vs. Formal Reading

- * Informal literacy activities are those where parent and child interact with printed materials, but during which the meaning, not the print per se, is the focus of the activity. (Martini et al., 2012, p.210)
 - * Adult reads to child where the focus is the story.
 - * Informal literacy activities show a direct relation to oral language development but not to early literacy.
- * Formal literacy activities are those where the focus of the adult-child interaction is the print.
 - * Adult points to and identifies alphabet letters or words during shared reading.
 - * Formal literacy activities such as parent teaching are directly related to early literacy but not oral language.

*Why Book Bags?

- * On average, in an extended day kindergarten classroom, a teacher has about an hour of instruction time for reading and writing. Unfortunately for many students this is not enough time spent focusing on and practicing reading.
- * Strikingly, children who have difficulty reading in Grade 1 are more likely to have greater difficulty in other school subjects later on, and are more likely not to complete high school or pursue their education beyond high school (Martini & Senechal, 2012).
- * Parent-child shared reading accounted for 8% variance in emergent literacy and reading achievement. (Ricci, 2011)
- * Research found that the earlier parents begin reading to their child the higher the emergent reader skills of their child by the end of kindergarten (Gilliam, Gerla, & Wright, 2004).

*What Is In Each Bag?

- * Carrying bag
 - * Canvas
- * Each bag consists of five books
 - * One book is Alaskan in topic
 - * One book is nonfiction
 - * Most books are have an audio recording
- * Each bag has an mp3 device
 - * Ipod
 - * Generic mp3 player
- * Decodable Book
 - * All decodables are consumables that students will color and construct themselves
 - * Crayons or markers
- * Reading at Home Tips for Parents Sheet

*The Process of Creating Each Bag

- * Develop theme
- * Book selection
- * Collecting available audio versions
- * Creating audio versions for remaining books
- * Loading mp3 players
- * Decodable selection
- * Filling the bags

*Book Selection

- * Themes
- * Content
 - * Topic
 - * Culturally Responsive
 - * Student Prior Knowledge
- * Appeal to Students
- * Popular Authors
- * Award Winning
- * Difficulty
 - * Reading Level
- * Audio availability



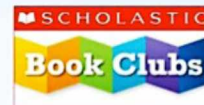
* Collecting Available Audio Versions

* Audio files were organized using iTunes

* Sources:

* Scholastic Book Club

* Purchased as CDs that were then loaded into iTunes.



* iTunes

* Purchased and downloaded right into iTunes.



* Audible.com

* Audible files required converting from .aa files to mp3 format to be compatible with non-Apple listening devices.



* Creating Audio Versions of Books

* Tools

* Samsung C01U Microphone

* Garageband

* Book



* Once recording were made they were exported as mp3 or mpeg4 to iTunes.

* ABC 123

- * *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr.
- * *Dr. Seuss's ABC* by Dr. Seuss
- * *Ten on the Sled* by Kim Norman
- * *Count Alaska's Colors* by Shelley Gill
- * *I Spy Letters* by Jean Marzollo



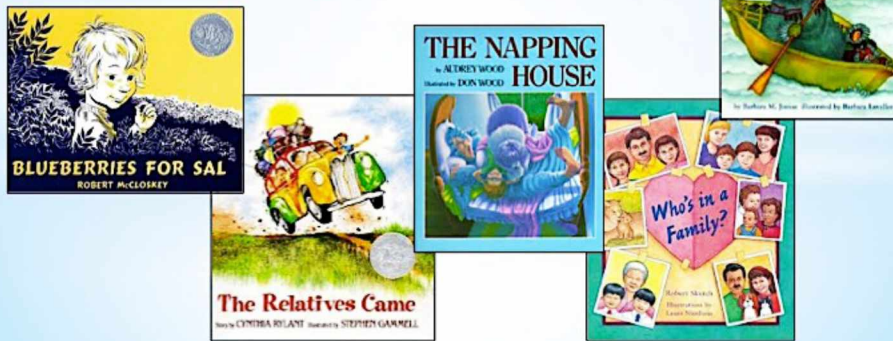
* Animals

- * *The Flea's Sneeze* by Lynn Downey
- * *The Mitten* by Jan Brett
- * *Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See?* By Eric Carle
- * *Good Morning Little Polar Bear* by Carol Votaw
- * *Alaska Animal Babies* by Deb Vanasse



*Family

- * *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey (Caldecott Honor)
- * *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant (Caldecott Honor)
- * *The Napping House* by Audrey Wood
- * *Mama, Do You Love Me?* By Barbara M. Joosse
- * *Who's In The Family* by Robert Skutch



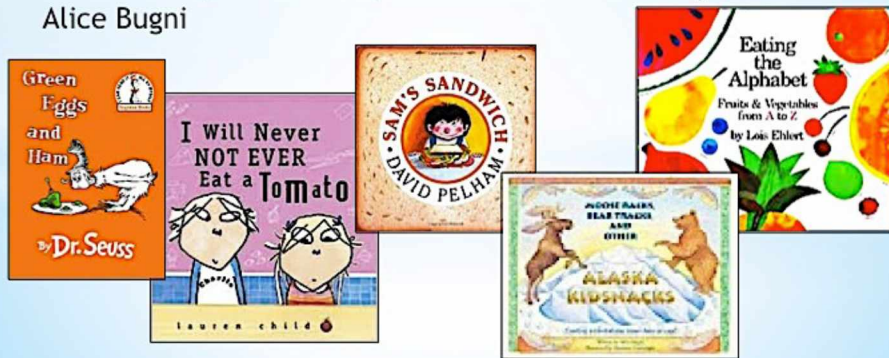
*Community

- * *The Rain Came Down* by David Shannon
- * *Snowmen at Work* by Carolyn Buehner
- * *This is My Town: Little Critters* by Mercer Mayer
- * *The Giant Cabbage: An Alaskan Folktale* by Cherie Stihler
- * *A Day with Police Officers* by Jan Kottle
- * *A Day with Firefighters* by Jan Kottle



* Food

- * [*Green Eggs and Ham*](#) by Dr. Seuss
- * [*I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato*](#) by Lauren Child
- * [*Sam's Sandwich*](#) by David Pelham
- * [*Eating the Alphabet*](#) by Lois Ehlert
- * [*Moose Racks, Bear Tracks, and Other Kid Snacks*](#) by Alice Bugni



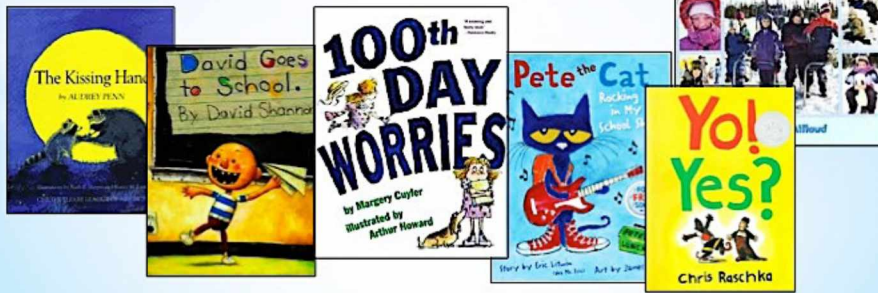
* Weather and Seasons

- * [*Split! Splat!*](#) By Amy Gibson
- * [*What Will The Weather Be Like Today?*](#) by Paul Rogers
- * [*The Fox and the Falling Leaves*](#) by Julia Rawlinson
- * [*Under Alaska's Midnight Sun*](#) by Deb Vanasse
- * [*Watching the Seasons*](#) by Edana Eckart



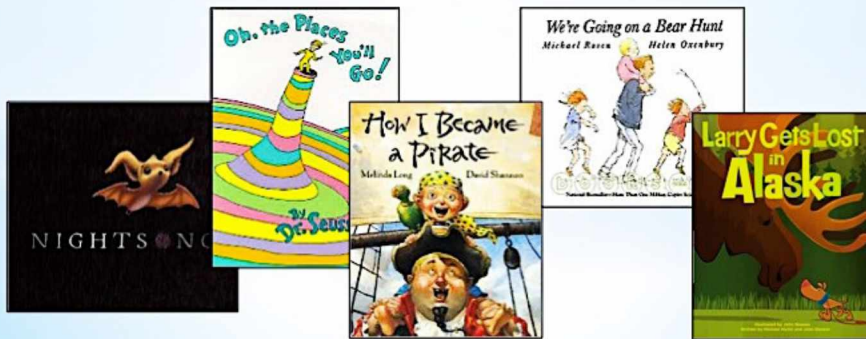
*School

- * *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn
- * *David Goes to School* by David Shannon
- * *100th Day Worries* by Margery Cuyler
- * *Pete the Cat Rocking in My School Shoes* by Eric Litwin
- * *Recess at 20 Below* by Cindy Lou Aillaud
- * *Yo! Yes?* By Chris Raschka (Caldecott Honor)



*Adventure

- * *Nightsong* by Ari Berk
- * *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* by Dr. Seuss
- * *How I Became a Pirate* by Melinda Long
- * *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rose
- * *Larry Gets Lost in Alaska* by Michael Mullin & John Skewes



*Transportation

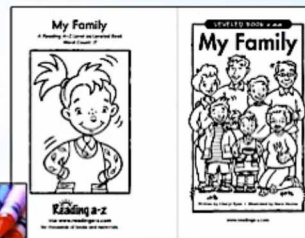
- * [Goodnight, Goodnight Construction Site](#) by Sherri Duskey Rinker & Tom Lichtenheld
- * [Cars Galore](#) by Peter Stein
- * [Go! Go! Go! Stop!](#) By Charise Mericle Harper
- * [Mega Rescuers](#) by Paul Calver & Christiane Gunzi
- * [Grandpa's Airplane](#) by Kirk Thomas



*Decodables

- * From <http://www.readinga-z.com/>
 - * Over 1200 decodable books available
- * All are at a beginning reading level but may be traded out for higher level depending on child
- * Consumable product
- * Most are colorable by the student
 - * Colors included in bag

Reading A-Z



*Time to Send Bags Home

- *Family Night
 - * Share information about the bag program
 - * Answer questions
 - * View the bags
 - * Allow parents to sign up
- *Check Out System
 - * Bags will go home on Monday and need to be returned Friday
 - * This will allow iPods to be charged and decodables restocked
 - * Check out will be recorded using a spreadsheet

*Conclusion

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">*What worked well:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Garageband with microphone* iPods*Sources:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Scholastic Book Club* www.readinga-z.com*What didn't work:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Generic mp3 player | <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Recommendations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Use iPods for all bags* Students have their own headphones at home* Select up to 3 decodables for each bag for reading levels* Upgrade the bags<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Closable* Multiple pockets* Waterproof* Parent Survey<ul style="list-style-type: none">* What was good about the bag?* Recommendations for future |
|--|---|

* Conclusion (Cont.)

- * Where to go from here:
 - * Put the bags to use
 - * Share the project with others
 - * Inservice presentation
 - * Rural school districts
 - * Build on library to create more bags and variety within
 - * Goal: A bag for each child each week
 - * Create video modeling good behaviors for Family Night
 - * Formal vs. Informal Reading Methods
 - * Create continual group activities for some bags
 - * Favorite recipe book for Food bag
 - * Letter scrapbook for ABC 123 bag
 - * Favorite animal for Animal bag

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*Available to View

- *Literature Review
- *Copyright Information
<http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ21.pdf>
- *Parent Reading at Home Tips (source: All Students Can SHINE Blog)
 - *Available to download on
www.teacherspayteachers.com

*Thank You!

- *To my committee for supporting me, guiding me, and helping me keep my expectations realistic.
- *To my Ticasuk Ptarmigans for support and sharing their wealth of knowledge and books.
- *My husband and family for supporting my dream of becoming a teacher and giving me a confidence boost whenever I felt things were getting too hard.