

Spring 2007

# The Importance of a Good Home Literacy Environment

Colleen Vaughan  
*Regis University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://epublications.regis.edu/theses>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Vaughan, Colleen, "The Importance of a Good Home Literacy Environment" (2007). *All Regis University Theses*. 268.  
<https://epublications.regis.edu/theses/268>

This Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by ePublications at Regis University. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Regis University Theses by an authorized administrator of ePublications at Regis University. For more information, please contact [epublications@regis.edu](mailto:epublications@regis.edu).

**Regis University**  
School for Professional Studies Graduate Programs  
**Final Project/Thesis**

**Disclaimer**

Use of the materials available in the Regis University Thesis Collection ("Collection") is limited and restricted to those users who agree to comply with the following terms of use. Regis University reserves the right to deny access to the Collection to any person who violates these terms of use or who seeks to or does alter, avoid or supersede the functional conditions, restrictions and limitations of the Collection.

The site may be used only for lawful purposes. The user is solely responsible for knowing and adhering to any and all applicable laws, rules, and regulations relating or pertaining to use of the Collection.

All content in this Collection is owned by and subject to the exclusive control of Regis University and the authors of the materials. It is available only for research purposes and may not be used in violation of copyright laws or for unlawful purposes. The materials may not be downloaded in whole or in part without permission of the copyright holder or as otherwise authorized in the "fair use" standards of the U.S. copyright laws and regulations.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD HOME  
LITERACY ENVIRONMENT

by

Colleen Vaughan

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

REGIS UNIVERSITY

April, 2007

## ABSTRACT

### The Importance of a Good Home Literacy Environment

The ability to read is the most valuable and important skill for a child to acquire. A child who is an accomplished reader will be a good student and successful adult. Teachers spend countless hours teaching children to read, but without cooperation from parents or caregivers, children may still not become proficient readers. Practice reading needs to happen at school *and* in the home. Therefore, it is imperative that every child has a good home literacy environment. The purpose of this project was to develop a handbook for a child to take home to his parents or caregivers to convince them to provide a home literacy environment so the child will become a proficient reader and see it as an enjoyable activity. The child-friendly handbook was created in a coloring book style and was made to be an interactive tool between parents or caregivers and their children. It gives parents or caregivers ideas such as: (a) questions for parents or caregivers to ask as they read to the children; (b) places to read to their children; (c) places to have books; (d) different genres and types of books; (e) favorite picture books and novels; (e) where to get books; (f) local library locations; (g) educational websites and computer games; and (h) reading programs for extra help. In addition, the handbook has pictures for the children to color along with reading logs and activities.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Statement of the Problem . . . . .	1
Purpose of the Project . . . . .	2
Chapter Summary . . . . .	2
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
Reading and its Importance . . . . .	4
Home Literacy and Its Importance . . . . .	6
Begin Early . . . . .	8
Oral Communication . . . . .	9
Read Aloud . . . . .	10
Abundance of Books . . . . .	11
Set an Example . . . . .	11
Establish Reading Time . . . . .	12
Visit the Library . . . . .	12
Cooperation between Parents and Teachers . . . . .	13
Factors that Affect Home Literacy . . . . .	15
Parents . . . . .	15
Socioeconomic Status . . . . .	17
Ethnicity . . . . .	18
Extracurricular Activities . . . . .	19
Television, Computers, and Video Games . . . . .	19
Chapter Summary . . . . .	20
3. METHOD . . . . .	21
Target Audience . . . . .	21
Goals and Procedures . . . . .	22
Assessment . . . . .	23
Chapter Summary . . . . .	23
4. PARENT HANDBOOK . . . . .	24
Introduction . . . . .	24
Parent Handbook . . . . .	25
Chapter Summary . . . . .	61
5. DISCUSSION . . . . .	62
Resolution of the Original Problem . . . . .	62
Experts' Review . . . . .	63
Limitations of the Study . . . . .	64
Suggestions for Further Study . . . . .	65
Chapter Summary . . . . .	65

REFERENCES ..... 67

APPENDICES

A. Handbook Survey for Parents ..... 70  
B. Handbook Survey for Educational Professionals ..... 71

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

To convince a child to put down a video game, turn off the television, and pick up a book to read can be one of the hardest things for parents or caregivers to do, yet it is one of the most valuable gifts that can be granted to the child. Reading is one of the most important skills if a child is to develop into a good student and become a successful and prosperous adult.

School staff and teachers spend more and more of instruction time teaching students to read but, without literacy support at home, they will fall behind their peers who have a good home literacy environment. Often, parents and caregivers do not understand that, for a child to become a skilled reader, he or she needs much practice in reading, not just at school, but also at home. As Prescott (1965, as cited in Trelease, 2001) wrote, "Few children learn to love books by themselves. Someone has to lure them into the wonderful world of the written word; someone has to show them the way" (p. 60).

#### Statement of the Problem

The ability to read is an essential skill that students need in order to: (a) perform well in school, (b) find a job, and (c) become a productive member of society. Many people place the blame of a child's inability to read on the teacher. However, no matter how hard the teacher may work, often, he or she may not be successful because of the lack

of reading support at home. Therefore, it is an absolute necessity that parents or caregivers read with their children. Children with a good home literacy environment have a notable advantage over those who do not; they have higher levels of achievement, not only in reading, but in all other subjects as well.

### Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project will be to develop a handbook for students to give to their parents or caregivers to explain the value of a good literacy environment at home. In this handbook, the author will provide tips on: (a) how to interest children in reading; (b) how to read with children; (c) where to get free or inexpensive books; (d) how to identify favorite children's books; and (e) types of books, such as books on tape, picture books, graphic novels, and the like. The children will be able to customize this handbook with writing, drawing, or coloring. They will be able to write a list of their favorite books as well as books they want to read in the future. When children can personalize their handbooks, it is hoped that they will convince their parents or caregivers of the importance of reading with them at home.

### Chapter Summary

Skill in reading is the source of success in school and society (Hall & Moats, 1999). Children, who grow up to be functionally illiterate, are more likely to be poor, unemployed, or commit crimes. The failure of the school system and parents or caregivers to teach a child to read is a failure that can be prevented by cooperation between the two. The intent of this project will be to involve parents or caregivers in the building of their child's future through reading instruction at home.



In Chapter 2, Review of Literature, the background on reading and its importance in everyone's life will be presented . Information will be provided on home literacy, the necessary elements for good home literacy, and the factors that may affect it. In Chapter 3, Method, the procedures for the development of this handbook to be used by parents or caregivers and their children to establish an ideal home literacy environment will be detailed.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading is a skill that must be developed at birth and continue to be expanded throughout one's lifetime; it is not sufficient to wait until a child enters kindergarten and solely rely on a teacher's instruction on how to read. Parents and caregivers must be involved in a child's literacy development by building a good home literacy environment. A child who is read to and conversed with at an early age, provided with numerous books, and taken to the library learns to read sooner and develops a lifetime enjoyment for reading.

However, many parents or caregivers cannot or do not become involved in the literacy education of their child. There may be factors beyond their control such as being a single parent or having to work to provide for their children. They may not know how to foster their child's reading abilities or understand that reading is better than watching television or playing video games. To help parents or caregivers overcome these obstacles and understand how important it is to help their child become highly skilled readers, a handbook will be developed that will provide tips on how to have a good home literacy environment.

#### Reading and Its Importance

Reading is a vital skill for all people; rich or poor, African, Hispanic, or Anglo American, business professionals or blue collar workers. The ability to read is critical in

order to become a successful student and adult. According to Trelease (2001), “The knowledge of almost every subject in school flows from reading” and “reading is the single most important social factor in American life today” (p. xxiv).

The acquisition of good reading skills begins early in childhood and continues throughout life (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005). A child, who is a good reader in school, continues to do well as he or she grows older. A child, who struggles in reading, will continue to have problems for the rest of his or her school years and, perhaps, lifetime.

While test scores indicate that overall reading achievement is improving, there is much to be gained. According to the staff of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading Report Card (1998, as cited in USDE, 2001), 38% of fourth grade students in the U.S. read below the basic reading level; that is, they lack mastery of reading skills that are needed to work proficiently at each grade level. By eighth grade, 26% of the students continue to read below the basic reading level, and by twelfth grade, 23% of the students remain below basic reading levels. These data do not take into account the students who dropped out of school because of their lack of proficiency in reading. Students with poor reading abilities may be the ones who struggle later in life.

A person with poor reading skills or who is illiterate is more likely to be unemployed, poor, or in trouble with the law (USDE, 2001). According to the National Institute for Literacy (1998, as cited in USDE, 2001), 43% of people who are illiterate or

have low literacy skills live in poverty and 70% of prisoners cannot read at a proficient level. To a lesser extent, students who have difficulties with reading tend to be: (a) less social, (b) join fewer extracurricular activities, (c) terminate their education before their career aspirations are realized, and (d) less likely to have many interests and involvements (Hall & Moats, 1999).

The ability to read has never been more important than it is today (IRA/ NAEYC, 1998). A person with poor reading skills will have an extremely hard time to find employment because jobs require more reading and writing than in previous years because of technological advances. As technology improves, computers and other technologies, good reading skills are requisite, and their use has replaced many manual tasks, lowering the availability of jobs for poor readers. In addition, communication used to be conducted by telephone, but now it is consistently being done on computers, the Internet, and by facsimile; all three require reading and writing skills.

Although the citizens of the U.S. are no worse at reading than in past generations, and the U.S. is not a nation of illiterates, the world has become more complex (Trelease, 2001). Many more people are college graduates, but for those who cannot read well or those who are illiterate, job opportunities are bleak because of technological advances that require good literacy skills (USDE, 2001). Therefore, to give all people a better chance at a successful adulthood, teaching children to read must be a priority in school and at home.

#### Home Literacy and its Importance

In order to stimulate a child's interest and build strong reading skills, a good home literacy environment is essential. According to Carter (2000), reading is not only a skill

and ability but, also, it should be a desire. Children should not want to read just to pass classes in school, they should be taught that reading offers something marvelous and purposeful, that books can provide a means of escape and a way to uncover information about their interests. Parents or caregivers are the first step toward that love of reading through a good home literacy environment.

Researchers (Edwards, 1991; Saracho, 1997; Storch & Whitehurst, 2001; Teale, 1984; all cited in Saint-Laurent & Giasson, 2005) have found that family involvement in the development of a child's reading skills influences a child's reading achievement in a positive way. A child's reading achievement depends on the development of good literacy activities at home which, in turn, increases reading achievement in school.

According to Hill-Clark (2005), there are many facets to a good home literacy environment: (a) parents or caregivers must begin to read to the child early, (b) parents and caregivers must use meaningful communication with children, (c) parents and caregivers must read aloud often to their children, (d) parents and caregivers must keep an abundance of books within the house, (e) parents and caregivers must set an example, (f) parents and caregivers must establish time for reading activities, and (g) parents and caregivers must visit the library with their children. In addition, cooperation between teachers and parents will bolster and strengthen family reading activities.

### *Begin Early*

The ability to read is not developed naturally (IRA/NAEYC, 1998). The development of a child's reading skills must begin at birth. The parents or caregivers of a child must begin to communicate verbally and expose him or her to books as soon as possible.

Previous understandings about how the brain works and how children learn has changed in recent years (Shore, 2003). It used to be believed that the experiences in the first 3 years of life had minimal impact or did not affect later development. However, it is now held that early experiences have a significant impact on the brain. During the first 3 years of life, brain synapses, the junctions in the brain used for communication between neurons, develop at amazing speed, and for the next 10 years are twice as active as those in adults' brains. Thus, the early experiences of a child affect the way the brain is wired and, in turn, the brain development and the nature and extent of adult capacity. So, according to Shore (1997, as cited in USDE, 2001), as children's brains grow, it is important for parents or caregivers to read, talk, and sing to them so that the brain synapses that link neurons are strengthened.

It is especially important to talk, sing, and expose a child to literature from birth through 8 years of age, or third grade; failure to do so may limit the a child's achievement levels in reading and writing (IRA/NAEYC, 1998). A child's first step toward literary achievement occurs before reading and writing in school. At home, he or she begins to understand the basic concepts of literature through symbols, pictures, and play. At school, literacy concepts and skills are reinforced and strengthened. By the time the child reaches

fourth grade, he or she should be able to read with ease for learning because academics become more difficult, and the child must be able to use his or her reading skills for mathematics, computer, social studies, and science (USDE, 2001).

### *Oral Communication*

Oral language plays an important role in learning to read because it exposes the child to more words, and the more words the child knows, the better the literacy skills he or she has (Strickland & Shanahan, 2004). Parents or caregivers and teachers should engage children in oral activities, such as singing, discussions, and book reading, at an early age and as often as possible. Children who hear sounds in language are more likely to read at an earlier age and at a higher level. Also, the use of oral activities expands background knowledge and vocabulary. The more extensive a child's background knowledge and vocabulary, the easier it is to read.

In a study of 42 families, Hart and Risely (1995) found an enormous gap in the difference in the early word exposure of children according to their socioeconomic status. A child in a professional family heard 2,153 words per hour, a child in a middle class family heard 1,251 words per hour, and a child in a welfare family heard only 616 words per hour. By extrapolating the average words heard per hour, the researchers figured that by the time the children were 4 years old, the child in the professional family had been exposed to 45 million words, 19 million more than a child in a middle class family, and more than 30 million more than a child in a welfare family. This is an enormous gap in vocabulary for children when they enter kindergarten, but with considerable help from parents or caregivers who engage in conversation with them, the gap can be narrowed.

### *Read Aloud*

Trelease (2001) cited the Commission on Reading (1985) report titled, “Becoming a Nation of Readers,” and stated, “The single most important activity for building knowledge required for the eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children” (p. 2). Not only does reading aloud with a child impact language and literacy development, but also it provides a positive environment in a home, encourages a closeness and caring attitude between parent or caregiver, and the child and helps in school by an increase in the attention span (Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005).

Reading aloud to a child exposes him or her to books and, consequently, reading concepts. At a young age, it teaches a child that letters correspond with words and that words are read from left to right (Hall & Moats, 1999). The child begins to: (a) build vocabulary and background knowledge, (b) understand the meaning of the print, and (c) know that reading is fun and pleasurable. In addition, other literacy skills are learned: (a) story structure, (b) title, (c) characters, (d) setting, (e) problem, and (f) resolution.

A child who is read aloud to is more prepared to enter school than a child who is not. According to Adams (1990, as cited in Rashid, Morris, & Sevcik, 2005), it is estimated that a child who is read to at least 30 minutes per day will acquire at least 1,000 hours of print exposure by the time he or she enters kindergarten. This immense amount of print exposure enables the child to be prepared to identify letters and learn to understand language structure.

However, a child who was not read to at a young age can catch up with a lot of hard work and extra effort. If he or she is continuously read to and reads silently, he or



she may be able to close the gap with peers (Trelease, 2001). Reading aloud aids children in hearing correct grammar; it allows them to hear correct word and sentence usage, which is especially helpful for children who learn English as a second language.

### *Abundance of Books*

According to the NAEP Report Card (1998, as cited in USDE, 2001), students with higher reading scores were more likely to have access to encyclopedias, magazines, newspapers, and at least 25 books. A good home literacy environment consists of a house filled with these types of reading materials. The books should be placed throughout the house, in the kitchen, bedrooms, living room, bathroom; anywhere a child may sit down for a minute and be tempted to pick up something to read (Leonhardt, 1997). Also, since more people drive and eat out in the current mobile world, it is a good idea to leave books in the car for trips and to take into restaurants.

### *Set an Example*

Parents or caregivers have a great influence on a child's interests and motivation to read and do well in school; therefore, parents or caregivers must set an example (Reeder & Sowers, 2002). Parents should set high expectations for a child to excel in reading and academics. A child needs to observe a parent or caregiver reading and writing in order to know what reading and writing should look like and that it is an enjoyable activity (Strickland & Shanahan, 2004). An adult who shows the child that reading is exciting and fun displays an enthusiasm that children are sure to follow.

It is especially important for fathers to be role models because they can have an enormous impact on their boys (McFann, 2004). Frequently, boys are slower to develop

and tend to struggle with reading. Many boys lag behind girls because they find reading boring and would rather play sports or do other activities, whereas girls find reading more rewarding than boys. Fathers need to show their boys that reading is enjoyable and valuable while by reading aloud to them and let their sons see them reading rather than playing or watching sports on television.

#### *Establish Reading Time*

Time should be set aside everyday in order to allow for reading activities, whether it is silent reading or reading aloud (Hall & Moats, 1999). Good reading habits can be established when: (a) time is set aside to read, (b) the television is turned off, and (c) distractions, such as video games and computers, are removed. In addition, the provision of extra time for reading at bedtime is another incentive for the child to read. When a child is given a choice at bedtime to stay up to read or go to sleep, he or she will usually choose reading.

#### *Visit the Library*

Visiting the library is a critical part of a good home literacy environment (Hill-Clark, 2005). At the library, *any* child can obtain free books. At the library, there is something for everyone, and it does not matter whether they are able to read. There are books on any subject, books on tape, picture books, magazines, encyclopedias, etcetera. One of the most unused resources is the librarian. The librarian can help parents or caregivers to develop a home literacy environment and they can: (a) help in the choices of books, (b) provide reading support, and (c) read aloud for story time (USDE, 2001).

### *Cooperation between Parents and Teachers*

Many people think that it is solely the teacher's duty to instruct a child in how to read. However, teaching a child to read and achieve academically is a shared responsibility between the parents or caregivers and the teacher (Hill-Clark, 2005). The amount of time a teacher has with a child in comparison to a parent or caregiver is very small. At the end of kindergarten, a child has been in the classroom a total of 700 hours, yet during that same time, the child has been at home a total of 52,000 hours (Trelease, 2001). Therefore, the parents or caregivers must spend time at home reading to their child.

Children benefit immensely when parents or caregivers and teachers cooperate to reinforce the same concepts and ideas (Darling, 2005). In a study of a collaborative reading program between the school and parents by Kelly-Vance and Schreck (2002), the researchers found that, in families where parents increased reading time at home with their child, the reading and accuracy rate increased significantly ( $p < .05$ ) over other children whose parents did not increase their reading time.

The cooperation between a teacher and parents or caregivers is especially beneficial to those children who are considered at risk (USDE, 2001; as cited in Darling, 2005). In a study of third, fourth, and fifth grade students in 71 schools in high poverty areas, 50% of the children, whose parents were involved in a cooperative outreach program between the schools and home, showed a higher reading growth than their peers whose parents were not involved.

Parents or caregivers and teachers must communicate with each other to know what is going on in or outside of the classroom. Teachers need to use the parents or caregivers as a resource to help a child attain the best education possible (Nistler & Maiers, 2000) . The parents or caregivers can give the teacher vital insight into a child's academic abilities and attitudes. Also, teachers may call upon parent's or caregiver's talent and energy as a valuable resource in the classroom.

School staff can positively affect a child's reading achievement when they support the parents or caregivers as educators (Barbour, 1998; Berger, 1995; Dever, 2001; all cited in Dever & Burst, 2002). However, sometimes, parents or caregivers do not know how or what to teach their child. The teacher can send suggestions home about how to read with the child; for example, what questions to ask, how to help a child with unfamiliar words, and how to choose books. The teacher can assist the parents or caregivers and supply them with literacy activities that can be done in the home, such as family literacy bags and family read nights. Therefore, the responsibility of teaching a child to read and achieve high standard of literacy is a shared effort between parents, teachers, and the community (IRA/NAEYC, 1998).

Sometimes parents or caregivers who do not speak English as their first language find it hard to read to their children, and some parents or caregivers of Hispanic American descent believe that the teacher is the ultimate authority and do not understand that they need to assist the teachers in reading to their children (Dever & Burts, 2002). The teacher must work with these parents or caregivers and teach them they need to be involved in the

education of their children. The teacher can support them by sending home books in Spanish and books on tape.

Some students' parents or caregivers may be poor readers or illiterate (Trelease, 2001). In such case, the teacher can suggest that the parents or caregivers use wordless books, predictable books, and books on tape or compact disc. Then the parents or caregivers are able to help their children with reading skills and, perhaps, become better readers themselves.

#### Factors that Affect Home Literacy

It is crucial for parents or caregivers to know that they can foster their child's literacy development, and it is their responsibility to assist their child to become a good reader (Nistler & Maiers, 2000). There are many factors that may positively or negatively affect a good home literacy environment including: (a) parents; (b) ethnicity; (c) socioeconomic status; (d) extracurricular activities; and (e) television, computers, and video games.

#### *Parents*

There are many factors that affect parents' or caregivers' ability to provide a good home literacy environment. These factors may or may not be the fault of the parents or caregivers. One of the most notable factors that affects a child's reading abilities is his or her mother's literacy level (Educational Testing Service, 1995, as cited in USDE, 2001). Mothers with a higher education are more likely to read to their children than those mothers with only a high school education. Although the difference in time spent reading to a child between mothers who work or and those who do not is insignificant; for

example, 54% of mothers, who work full time, read to their children daily, while 59% of mothers, who do not work or work part time, read to their children daily.

In addition, the children of mothers who have a high level of speech attain a higher number of vocabulary words than those whose mother's speech level is lower (Ramsey, 1999). The difference in the number of vocabulary words known by the children whose mothers have a high level of speech and those whose mothers do not, increases over time.

Finding the time is another excuse used by parents or caregivers for not reading to their children. According to the National Household Education Survey (1996, as cited in USDE, 2001), only 61% of households with two parents or caregivers and 46% of single parent households reported that they read daily to their children.

However, in two parent households, both parents spend more time with their children than a single parent can (USDE, 2001). In a dual parent household, where the mother stays home, 22 hours per week are spend engaged with the children. It is not much different for a household in which both parents work; 19 hours per week are spent with the children. However, unfortunately, in a single parent household, only 9 hours per week are spent by the parent or caregiver directly engaged with the children (Hofferth, 1998; as cited in USDE, 2001).

In addition, some parents and caregivers are intimidated by the school and may not know how to teach their children (Devers & Burt, 2002), since the parents or caregivers may have had a bad experience at school themselves. It is hard for some parents or caregivers to teach a child at home because they do not have the knowledge about literacy

skills or know how to read to their children. They may even be illiterate or poor readers and, because of this, do not provide books or reading material in their homes.

### *Socioeconomic Status*

Children, who live in poverty stricken homes, are loved as much by their parents or caregivers as those children from middle or high income homes (Trelease, 2001).

However, sometimes, parents or caregivers cannot spend the time to be involved with their children at school or in the home because they work. They cannot afford to take time off from work because they need money to provide the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter for their children (Dever & Burts, 2002).

Often, low reading ability or illiteracy in families persists from one generation to the next (USDE, 2001). There are many factors that contribute to this problem. Often, in poor households there may be a lack of access to books or reading material. Without reading material, children are not able to practice reading, which can lead to: (a) shorter attention span, (b) low reading abilities, and (c) poor academic achievement.

Second, many parents or caregivers in at risk families do not know that the best method to educate their children would be to read to their children (Trelease, 2001). They may think that it is good, if the children are happy as they watch television, whereas a parent or caregiver from a middle or upper class family may tell their children to turn off the television and pick up a book.

Finally, another contributing factor to insufficient reading skills among families in a low socioeconomic areas is the school system (Slavin & Madden, 2001). Frequently, the

preschools and schools are insufficiently funded and have poorly trained or less qualified teachers, which results in an inefficient education and low academic achievement.

However, with extra effort and access to books, children from poor households are not doomed to being low level readers or illiterate (Trelease, 2001). In the West, Denton, and Germino-Hausken (1998) study of 22,000 kindergartners, the researchers found that 6% of children, who lived with single mothers who were high school dropouts, performed at the highest reading levels. Also, 6% of college students, who grew up in a low socioeconomic family, earned a 4 year college degree (Gladieux & Swail, 2000). Although these percentages do not seem very high, there is a hope for a way to break the poverty cycle.

### *Ethnicity*

Ethnicity, by itself, does not seem to have an impact on home literacy practices. However, when ethnicity is combined with socioeconomic status and/or the inability to speak English, it has been found that the reading skills of African and Hispanic American students are lagging behind Anglo American students (USDE, 2001). The difference in reading scores between fourth and eighth grade Anglo American and Hispanic and African American students on the tests administered for the National Assessment of Educational Progress causes concern among educators. According to the results from these tests, also called the Nation's Reading Report Card, only 13% of African and 16% of Hispanic American fourth grade students scored at or above the proficient level in comparison to 41% of their Anglo American counterparts (NCES, 2005). The results for eighth grade



students are not any better; 12% of African and 15% of Hispanic American tested at or above the proficient level, whereas 39% of Anglo American students achieved that level.

### *Extracurricular Activities*

Frequently, students' participation in extracurricular activities interferes with time for reading (Leonhardt, 1997). Currently, soccer, baseball, football, and hockey practice, music lessons, and other activities leave little time for children to read. Unscheduled time is essential for children to be able to relax and enjoy reading a book. Parents should spend as much money and time on books and reading as extracurricular activities, and they need to realize that reading is much more important for the child's future.

### *Television, Computers, and Video Games*

The use of television, computers, and video games has made children want instant satisfaction and constant entertainment (Reeder & Sowers, 2002). It is easier to watch a program on television and get the whole story in an hour than read a book that may take several days or weeks. Trelease (2001) maintains that watching television: (a) fosters short attention span, (b) limits imagination, and (c) lessens socialization with family members. Even though family members may be in the same room as they watch the same show, there is less conversation, which contributes to children's lower vocabulary and less background knowledge needed for good reading skills.

The use of television, computers, and video games continues to increase daily. In the Kids & Media (1999) study of children and media use, it was found that children spend an average of more than 4 hours per day watching television and movies and playing video games or computer. This is compared to an average of reading time of only 44 minutes

per day. The average American household has 3 televisions, 1 video game player, and 1 computer. Over 30% of 2-7 year old children and 65% of 8-18 year old children have televisions in their bedrooms. Parents or caregivers do not need to eliminate the use of television, computers, and video games, they just need to limit the amount of time of use so that children have time to read.

If used conservatively, computers can help with literacy (Leonhardt, 1997). There are numerous books and reading program/software which can help hone reading skills. Many video games require reading to advance through the game, and these are fun ways to get children interested in reading and to better their reading skills.

#### Chapter Summary

A brief background of the importance of reading was presented in this chapter. A description of what a good home literacy environment entails was outlined. Further, the factors which may influence why a parent or caregiver may or may not have time to read with their children, have access to books, be a good role model, have a cooperation with their child's teacher, or visit the library was presented. Further, it was explained that parents and caregivers must begin to speak and read to a child at birth and continue throughout their school years to develop a child's reading skills. In Chapter 3, the procedures to develop a home literacy handbook for children and their parents or caregivers will be detailed.

## Chapter 3

### METHOD

Many parents and caregivers believe that, because their children begin kindergarten, their role as educators lessens or ends; however, parents and caregivers must realize that they need to continue to read with and to their children to continue to help their children become proficient readers and establish a lifetime enjoyment of reading. Through experience, first as a parent and volunteer in many elementary classes, and then as a teacher education student, this author has realized the tremendous impact and importance reading by parents or caregivers has on the literacy development of children and, subsequently, their advancement into a productive member of society. Therefore, the purpose of this project was to develop a handbook for parents and caregivers to explain to them this importance and to aid them in establishing a good home literacy environment.

#### Target Audience

This project was designed for parents and caregivers and their children in kindergarten through third grade, although it can be easily adapted for children in fourth and fifth grade. Parents or caregivers need information on how to further their child's reading development at home. In addition, it was hoped that because the children will be allowed to customize this handbook, they will take ownership for the improvement of their reading achievement and, ultimately, want to read for enjoyment.

## Goals and Procedures

The goal for this project was to provide a handbook for parents or caregivers to facilitate their involvement in improving their children's reading achievement by providing an ideal home literacy environment. This handbook compelled parents or caregivers to: (a) read to their children from birth, (b) have meaningful conversations with their children, (c) read aloud to their children often, (d) provide an abundance of books in the house for their children, (e) be good role models for their children, (f) establish time to read for their children, and (g) visit the library with their children.

In order for parents or caregivers to carry out the many facets of a good home literacy environment, the handbook gave tips for parents or caregivers on how to guide and interest their children in the reading process, questions to ask, and how to promote critical thinking skills during read aloud and silent reading. In addition, the handbook provided tips on: (a) available programs to assist the parents or caregivers in providing a good home literacy environment; (b) where to get free or inexpensive books; (c) how to help their children choose books that will be interesting; (d) use of the library and its resources; (e) favorite and award winning children's books; (f) the varieties of books, such as books on tape, picture books, graphic novels, and books in Spanish; and (g) educational reading programs for the computer. Finally, the handbook had pages for the children to customize by coloring, and they can list books they want to share or read with their parents or caregivers.

## Peer Assessment

Three educational professionals were asked to assess the handbook. Each of the educators was given a copy of the handbook and asked to provide informal feedback, recommendations, and suggestions on how the handbook could be improved, and if they would send it home with their students.

In addition, two parents or caregivers of children in kindergarten through third grade were given a copy of the handbook and were asked to read it and have their children personalize it. They were asked to provide their feedback on: (a) did the child enjoy personalizing the handbook, (b) did they find the information helpful, (c) any suggestions/recommendations for improvement, and (d) would they share it with other parents.

## Chapter Summary

Parents and caregivers have the most influence on a child's literacy achievement, and through a good home literacy environment, the children will improve their reading skills to advance their education and have a successful adult life. This project provided parents and caregivers of children in kindergarten through third grade a handbook to create an ideal home literacy environment. The handbook was presented in Chapter 4, and in Chapter 5, the feedback of the teachers and parents or caregivers was discussed.

## Chapter 4

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project was to develop a handbook to encourage parents to promote a fun, positive home literacy environment. Parents or caregivers play a critical role in helping their children become proficient, lifelong readers. The handbook was created to get the child involved in encouraging his parents or caregivers to read with him. It was designed in a coloring book style for children in kindergarten through third grade, although it can easily be changed for different age levels. The pages include illustrations for the children to color, spaces to draw pictures, and logs to keep track of their reading progress and favorite books.

The handbook contains strategies for parents or caregivers to use to encourage their children to read at home. In addition, the handbook gives: (a) questions for parents or caregivers to ask as they read to their children; (b) places to read to their children; (c) places to keep books; (d) different genres and types of books; (e) favorite picture books and novels; (e) where to get books; (f) educational websites and computer games; (g) local library locations; and (h) reading programs for extra help. The local library locations and reading programs can be adapted to the area where the handbook is distributed. Through the use of this handbook, parents or caregivers will strengthen the bond with their children coupled with boosting their reading ability.

Reading

is  
fun!

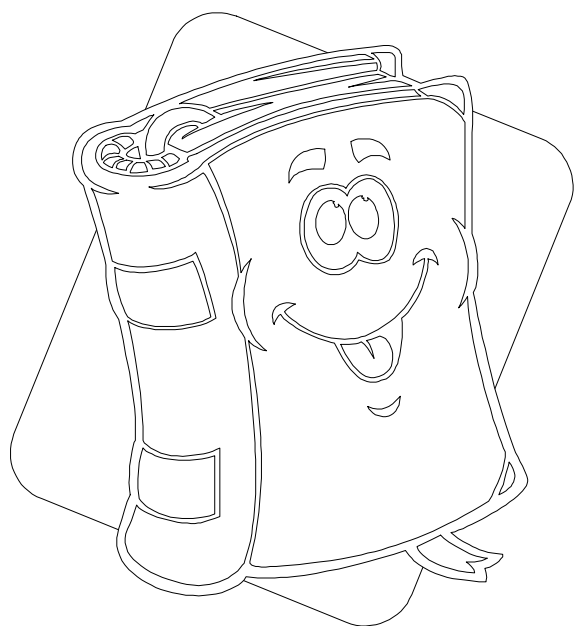


My Coloring Book  
About Reading!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I may not be very good at reading right now, but with practice at home and school I can be the **BEST** reader ever! Please read and color this booklet with me, and together we will have lots of fun reading. It's important that I do a lot of reading at home and have many books to choose from. This booklet gives us ideas on how we can read together as a family. It tells us where to get books that are cheap or free, the best types of books for me to read, and even some programs to help us.



**LET'S GET STARTED!**

**I CAN'T WAIT TO  
READ WITH YOU!**



# Let's begin with reading together!

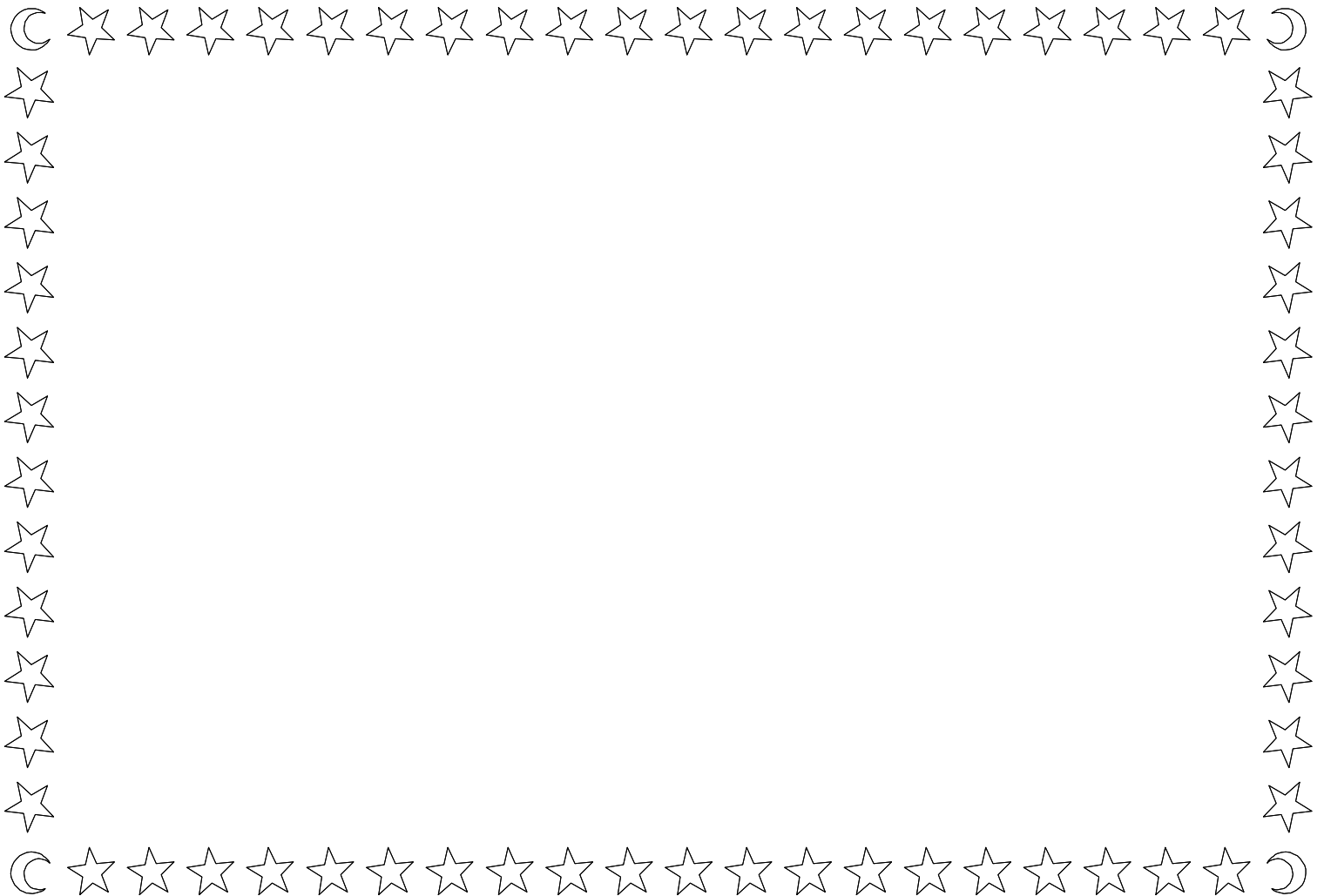
My name: \_\_\_\_\_

Who reads  
with me: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

Draw or paste a picture of you reading together.



# **First,**

**you can read aloud to me, and  
then when I learn how, we can  
take turns.**



**My age doesn't matter, I am  
never too young or old to read  
with you.**

*As we read together, you should  
ask me questions about the book:*



**Before we read a new book, ask me  
what I think the book will be about.**



**While we are reading, ask me questions  
about what I think is going to happen.**



**Ask me if I have questions about  
something the books talks about.**



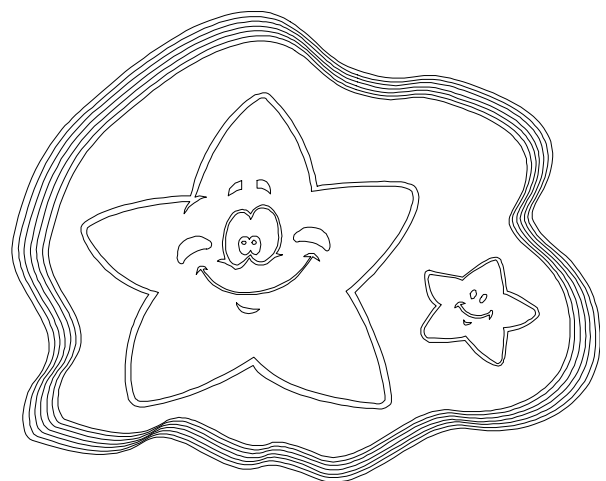
**Ask me if I have connections to the book.  
Has anything happened to me that  
happened in the book? Does this remind  
me of another book?**



**Ask me to tell you what the book was  
about in my own words.**



**Ask me about who was  
in the story (characters).  
Where did the story  
take place (setting)?**



# More Tips for Making Reading Fun!



**Sit or lay in a comfortable place!**

**Make a tent out of blankets and read with a flashlight!**

**Read books, magazines, or newspapers that are enjoyable!  
Choose a variety of books -- true, made-up, poetry, sports,  
fantasy, or things I am interested in.**

**Allow time for us to talk about the books! Don't just read  
the book fast and put me to bed.**

**It is okay for us to read the same book over and over  
again. I learn to read faster that way.**

**Set aside at least 15-20 minutes every day! Not only does  
it help me learn, but it is good because we are able to  
have some time together. See the next few pages for ways  
to keep track of our reading time together.**

# BOOKMARK

Cut out these two bookmarks and paste them together back-to-back. Use this bookmark when we read together to remember what questions to ask me.

## My Bookmark!

### **Predict**

What do you think this book is going to be about?



What do you think is going to happen next?

*I think ... because*

*I'll bet ... because*

*I think I will learn ... because*

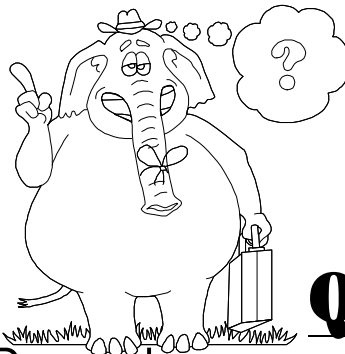
### **Connections**

Did anything in this story remind you of something that happened to you ?

Did this story remind you of another story we have read?

Did this story remind you of something that is going on in the world?

## My Bookmark!



### **Question**

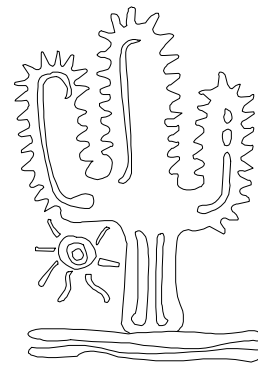
Do you have any questions about what we read?

*Who* was in the story? These are the characters.

*Where* did the story take place?

*When* did the story take place?

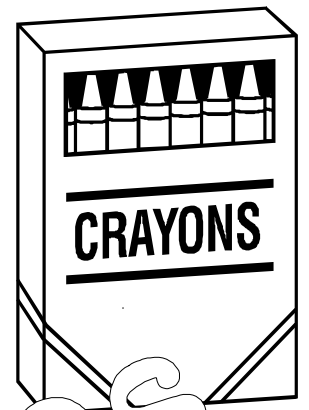
This is the setting.



### **Summarize**

In your own words, *what* happened in the story? Or *what* happened in this part of the story?

# Fun Activities

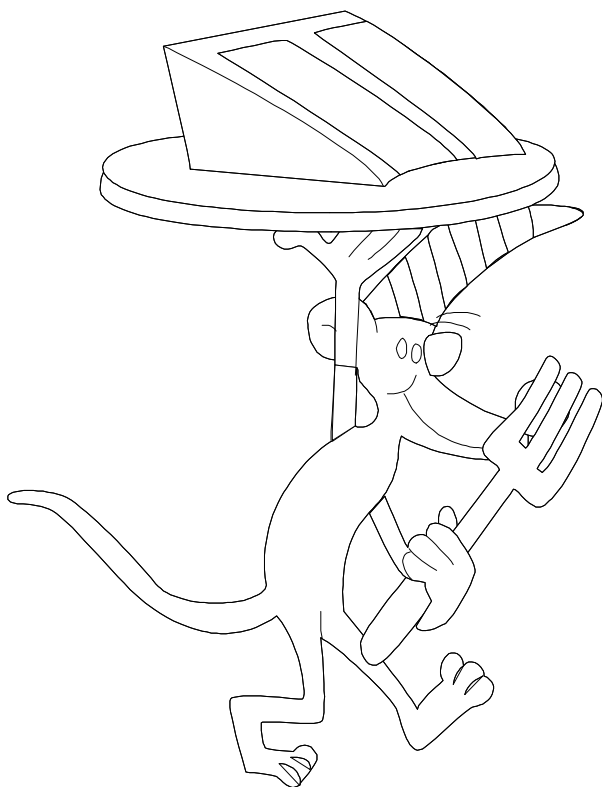


After we read a book, there are some fun things that we can do together:

We can make our own play based on the book. We dress up as the characters or we could make puppets out of old socks or brown lunch sacks.

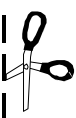
We can draw, paint, or color a picture of our favorite part of the book.

We can make our favorite characters or shape the letters of the alphabet or numbers out of clay.



If we are reading books about numbers or math, we could use counters, money, clocks, or rulers to help us learn.

If we are reading about food, we could bake together. For example, if we read "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" by Laura Numeroff, we could bake chocolate chip cookies. **Yummy!**

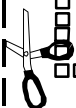


Draw a picture of your favorite character or part of the book. Put the title of the book and the author's name on it. Hang it on the refrigerator or a special place.

**Title of Book:** \_\_\_\_\_

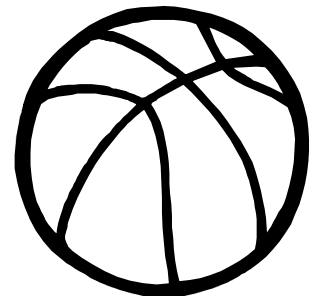
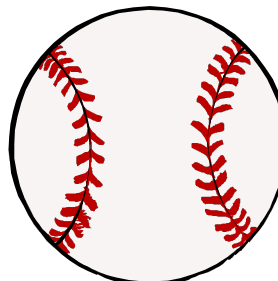
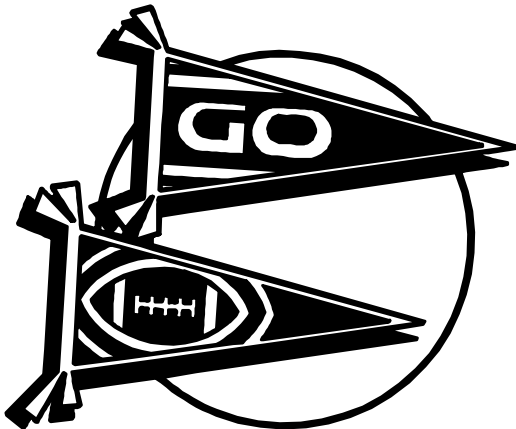
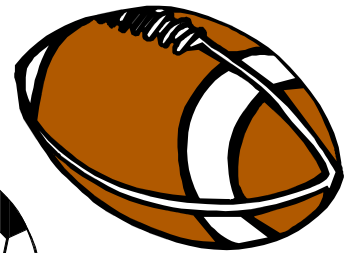
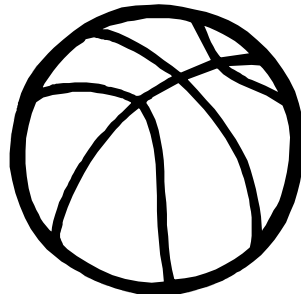
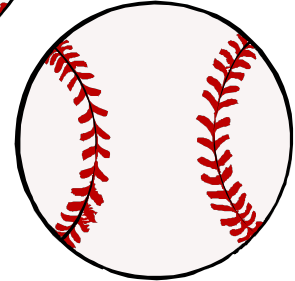
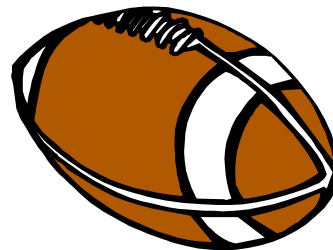
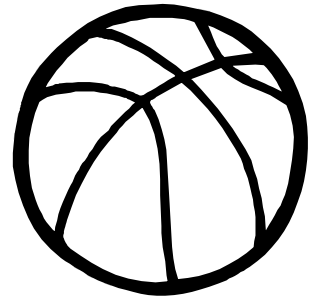
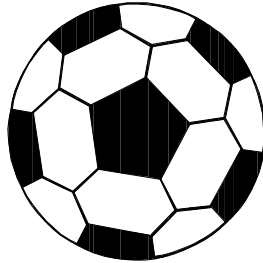
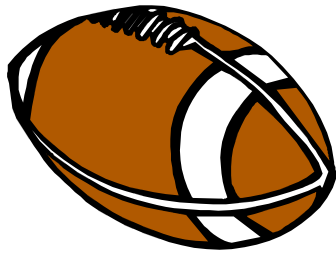
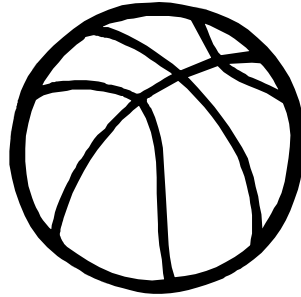
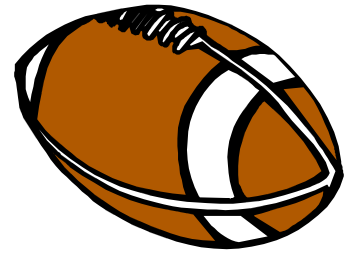
**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

Cut here



# That's the Way the Ball Bounces!

I get to color in a ball for every time we read for 15-20 minutes. After 20 days of reading together I will have scored the winning points. When I have reached this goal please give me a reward because I have been such a good reader and listener.

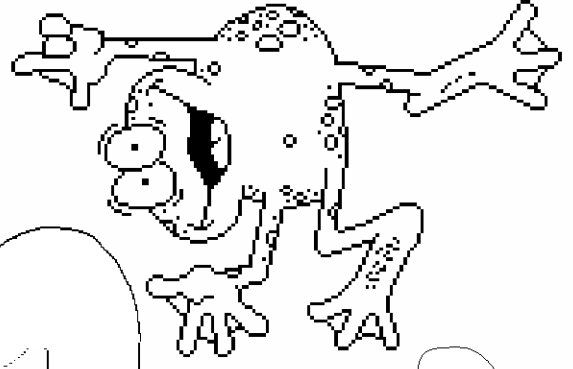
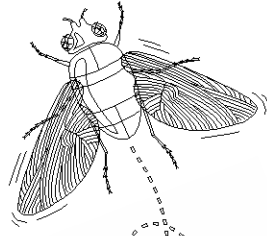






# Help the frog catch the fly!

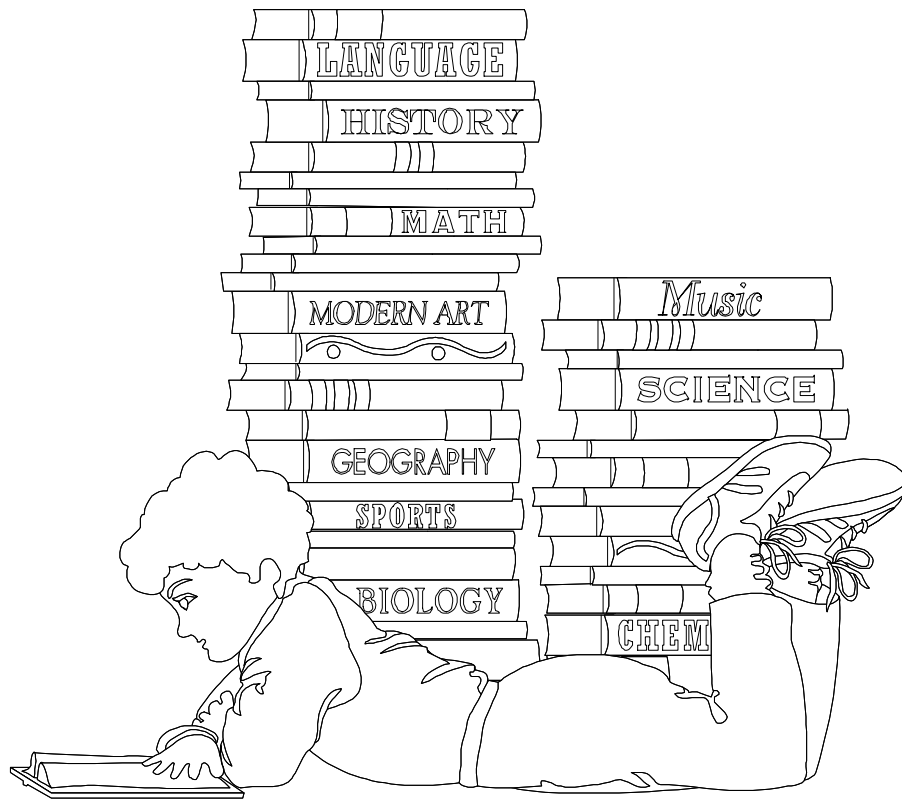
I get to color in a lily pad for every day that we read for 15-20 minutes. After 20 days of reading together the frog will be able to eat the fly. When I have reached this goal please give me a reward because I have been such a good reader and listener.



**Start here.**

# Second,

It is important to have lots and lots of things for me to read in many places.



Books, Books, and More Books!

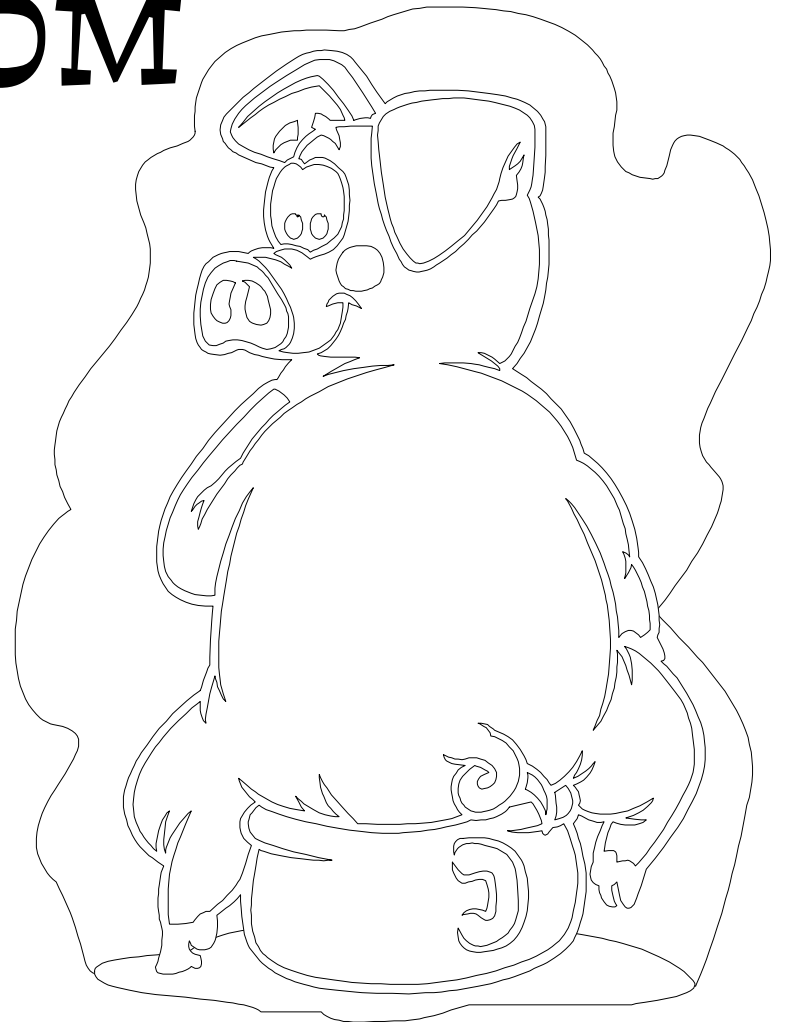
# Where should we keep books?

Don't be afraid to have them all over the house. Put them in places like the kitchen, living room, and bedroom -- anywhere I might pick up a book to read.

**SSSHHHH!** Don't tell anyone, but having a basket of books or magazines in the

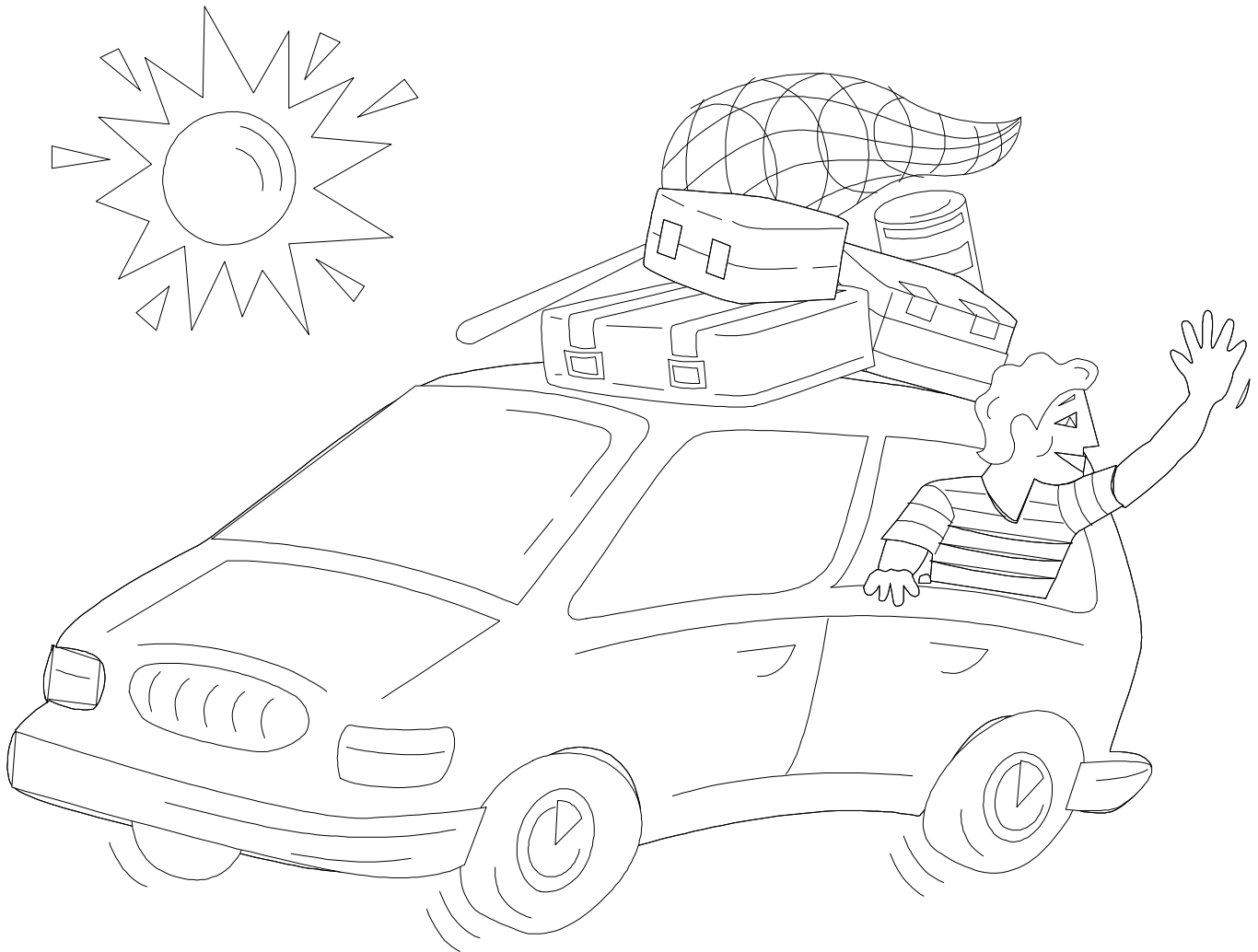
## **BATHROOM**

is a good idea, too!



It's Heigh-Ho! Heigh-Ho!  
Off on errands we go!

**Whether we are on a long vacation  
or just a short trip to the grocery store,  
I will read if there are books in the car!**



# Third,

There are so many types of books to choose from. We should read a variety of books so I can learn a lot of different things.



**Cool Cats love to read!**

# Choose from Many Different Types of Books:



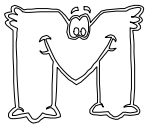
**Non-Fiction:** These are books that are true.



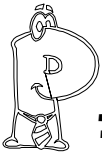
**Fiction:** These are books that are not true.



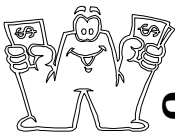
**Graphic novels:** These are kind of like comics.



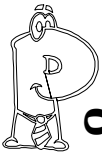
**Mysteries:** These will keep us wanting to find out what happens.



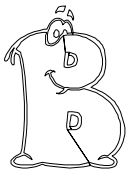
**Picture books:** These are easy to read and have wonderful pictures.



**Wordless books:** No pictures, you make up the story.



**Poetry:** These books have all sorts of poems.

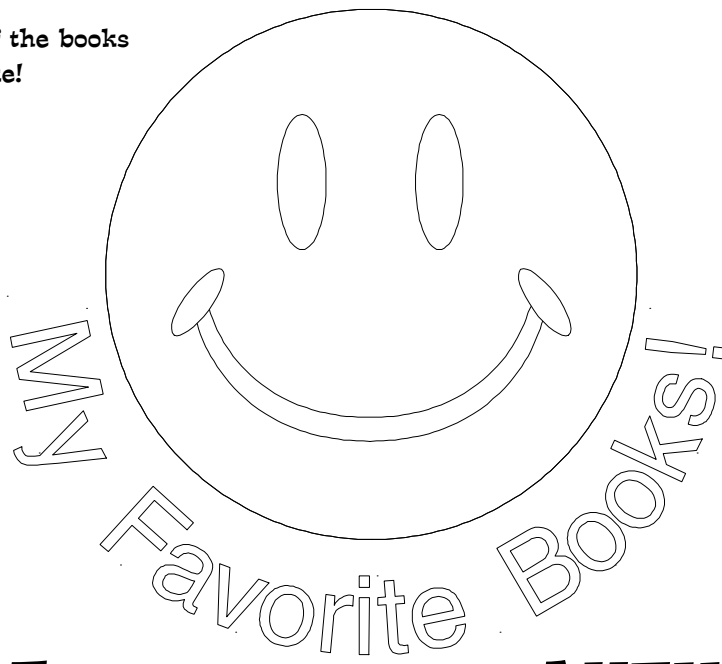


**Biographies:** These are books that are written about someone and are true.



**These are just a few. There are MANY more!**

Use this to keep track of the books  
and authors that you like!



**TITLE**

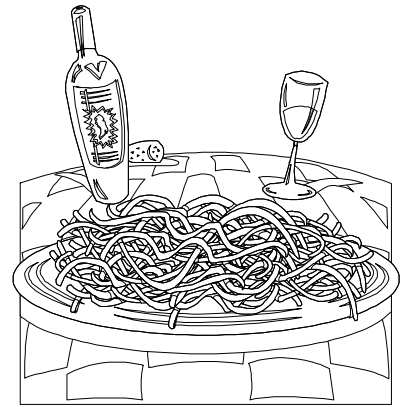
**AUTHOR**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

# FAVORITES!

## Picture books:

- **Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day** by Judith Vorst and illustrated by Ray Cruz. Everyone has a bad day once in a while, but little Alexander has the worst of all. Follow him from a cereal box to a burned-out night light.
- **Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs** by Judi Barrett and illustrated by Ron Barrett. In the fantasy land of Chewandswallow, the weather changes three times a day, giving the residents all the food they need. But, when the weather gets bad and pancakes and syrup are covering the town, what are the people supposed to do?
- **The Hello, Goodbye Window** by Norton Juster and illustrated by Chris Raschka. The kitchen window at Nanna and Poppy's house is, for one little girl, a magic gateway. Everything important happens near it, through it, or beyond it. It is also a love song devoted to that special relationship between grandparents and grandchild.
- **The Polar Express** written and illustrated by Chris VanAllsburg. A magical train ride on Christmas Eve takes a boy to the North Pole to receive a special gift from Santa.
- **Miss Nelson is Missing** by Harry Allard and illustrated by James Marshall. Miss Nelson teaches a bunch of misbehaved students. One day Miss Nelson doesn't come to school and her substitute is a mean, wicked lady and the class realizes how much they miss her.
- **Mirette on the High Wire** written and illustrated by Emily Arnold McCully. Mirette learns tightrope walking from Monsieur Bellini, a guest in her mother's boarding house, not knowing that he is a celebrated tightrope artist who has withdrawn from performing because of fear.





# FAVORITES!

## Sports Picture books:

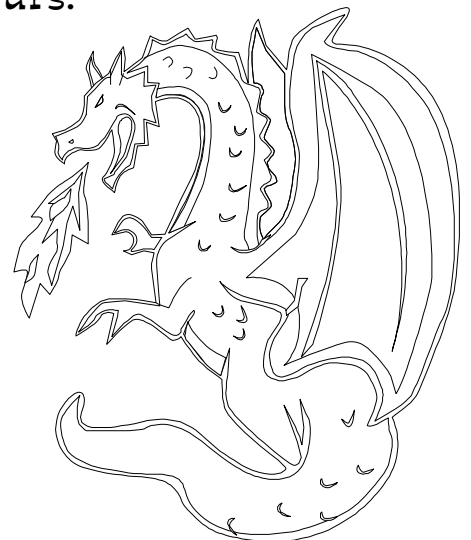
- **The Babe and I** by David A. Adler and illustrated by Terry Widener. It's 1932 and hard times are everywhere. But life isn't all bad. America still loves baseball, and Babe Ruth is the star of the game. And two boys are about to discover that with some creativity, hard work, and a little help from the Babe himself, they can do their part to help out their own team!
- **Players in Pigtails** by Shana Corey and illustrated by Rebecca Gibbon. Determined Katie makes it all the way to the big leagues and finds a sisterhood of friends and players. This is a girl-power story like no other.
- **Teammates** by Peter Golenbock and illustrated by Paul Bacon. This is the moving story of how Jackie Robinson became the first black player on a major league baseball team and how on a fateful day in Cincinnati, PeeWee Reese took a stand and declared Jackie his teammate.
- **The Greatest Skating Race** by Louise Borden and illustrated by Niki Daly. During World War II in the Netherlands, a ten-year-old boy's dream of skating in a famous race allows him to help two children escape to Belgium by ice skating past German soldiers and other enemies.
- **Jump! From the Life of Michael Jordan** written and illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Michael Jordan was once just an ordinary little boy growing up in a North Carolina suburb, trying to keep up with his older brother Larry. Michael was always good at sports, but it seemed like Larry was always going to be bigger, quicker, and luckier. But Michael never gave up, and his practicing began to pay off.



# FAVORITES!

## Novels for younger children:

- **Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus** by Barbara Park and illustrated by Denise Brunkus. Introducing Junie B. Jones, that lovable, mischievous kindergartner, in her hilarious first book, as she tells all about how she gets locked in school on her very first day! One is a series of hilarious books about Junie B. Jones.
- **Because of Winn-Dixie** by Kate DiCamillo. One summer day, Opal goes into a supermarket and comes out with a scraggly dog that she names Winn-Dixie. Because of Winn-Dixie, her preacher father finally tells her ten things about her absentee mother, and Opal makes lots of unusual friends in her quirky Florida town.
- **Charlotte's Web** written by E. B. White and illustrated by Garth Williams. The tale centers on the barnyard life of a young pig who is to be butchered by the fall. The animals in the courtyard conspire with the farmer's daughter to save the pig's life.
- **Dinosaurs Before Dark** (Magic Treehouse Series) written by Mary Pope Osborne and illustrated by Sal Murdocca. Eight-year-old Jack and his younger sister Annie find a magic treehouse, which whisks them back to an ancient time zone where they see live dinosaurs.
- **The Reluctant Dragon** written by Kenneth Grahame and illustrated by Inga Moore. The story of the last dragon on earth who is far more interested in reading and writing poetry than pillaging villages as dragons of old always did.



# FAVORITES!

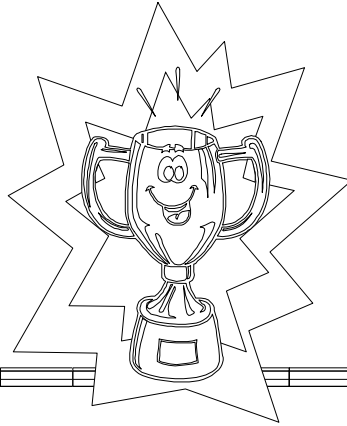
## Novels for younger children:

- **Stone Fox** written by John R. Gardiner and illustrated by Marcia Sewall and Greg Hargreaves. Little Willie hopes to pay the back taxes on his grandfather's farm with the winnings from a dog sled race he enters.
- **Wildfire** written by Elizabeth Starr Hill and illustrated by Rob Shepperson. Living with his great-grandmother in rural Florida, ten-year-old Ben looks forward to the Fourth of July celebrations, but the day becomes complicated by the presence of a new neighbor boy, a stray puppy, and local wildfires.
- **Shoeshine Girl** written by Clyde Robert Bulla and illustrated by Leigh Grant. The last thing Sarah Ida wants to do is spend the summer with her Aunt Claudia. But when her parents send her away because of problems at home, that is exactly what she has to do!



- **Shiloh** written by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor and illustrated by Barry Moser. When he finds a lost beagle in the hills behind his West Virginia home, Marty tries to hide it from his family and the dog's real owner, a mean-spirited man known to shoot deer out of season and to mistreat his dogs.
- **Homer Price** written and illustrated by Robert McCloskey and illustrated by Inga Moore. Six episodes in the life of Homer Price including one in which he and his pet skunk capture four bandits and another about a donut machine on the rampage.

# Caldecott Award Winners



The Caldecott Medal is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

## 2007 Medal Winner

**Flotsam** by David Wiesner and illustrated by Doug Cushman. A vintage camera washed up on the beach provides a young boy with a surprising view of fantastical images from the bottom of the sea. From fish-eye to lens-eye, readers see a frame-by-frame narrative of lush marinescapes ebbing and flowing from the real to the surreal.

## 2006 Medal Winner

**The Hello, Goodbye Window** illustrated by Chris Raschka and written by Norton Juster. In this sunny portrait of familial love, a little girl tells us about her everyday experiences visiting her grandparents house.

## 2005 Medal Winner

**Kitten's First Full Moon** illustrated and written by Kevin Henkes. Henkes employs boldly outlined organic shapes and shades of black, white and gray with rose undertones on creamy paper to tell a simple story of a kitten who mistakes the moon for a bowl of milk.

## 2004 Medal Winner

**The Man Who Walked Between the Towers** illustrated and written by Mordicai Gerstein. This true story recounts the daring feat of a spirited young Frenchman who walked a tightrope between the World Trade Center twin towers in 1974.

## 2003 Medal Winner

**My Friend Rabbit** written and illustrated by Eric Rohmann. Mouse shares his brand-new toy airplane with his friend Rabbit, and no one can predict the disastrous but hilarious results.

# More Caldecott Award Winners



## **2002 Medal Winner**

**The Three Pigs** by David Wiesner. The plot and form of a familiar folktale unravel as the pigs are huffed and puffed off the page and into a new world. The trio cavorts through scenes from nursery rhyme to fairy tale, liberating other characters on the fly.

## **2001 Medal Winner**

**So You Want to be President?** written by Judith St. George and illustrated by David Small. David Small employs wiry and expansive lines with an echo of political cartooning investing this personable history of the presidency with imaginative detail, wry humor, and refreshing dignity.

## **2000 Medal Winner**

**Joseph Had a Little Overcoat** written and illustrated by Simms Taback. A story of a resourceful and resilient tailor who transforms his worn-out overcoat into smaller and smaller garments.

## **1999 Medal Winner**

**Snowflake Bentley** by Jacqueline Griggs Martin and illustrated by Mary Azarian. The book takes children back to the days when farmers worked with ox and sled and cut the dark with lantern light. It introduces Wilson Bentley, a boy who loved snow more than anything in the world and is determined that one day his camera would capture the extraordinary and unique beauty of snowflakes.

## **1998 Medal Winner**

**Rapunzel**, retold and illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky. Zelinsky retells the story based on the familiar Grimm's folktale as well as earlier French and Italian sources.

## **1997 Medal Winner**

**Golem** written and illustrated by David Wisniewski. From the shimmeringly powerful hand of God to the life-giving hands of the rabbi and on through the murderously destructive hands of the Golem, the universal themes of power and redemption are reflected. Created to protect Jews in 16th-century Prague, this soulless clay giant comes to find that life is precious.

# Newbery Award Winners



The Newbery Medal is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

## **2007 Medal Winner**

**The Higher Power of Lucky** written by Susan Patron and illustrated by Matt Phelan. In *The Higher Power of Lucky*, Patron takes us to the California desert community of Hard Pan (population 43). Ten-year-old Lucky Trimble eavesdrops on 12-step program meetings from her hiding place behind Hard Pan's Found Object Wind Chime Museum & Visitor Center. Eccentric characters and quirky details spice up Lucky's life just as her guardian Brigitte's fresh parsley embellishes her French cuisine.

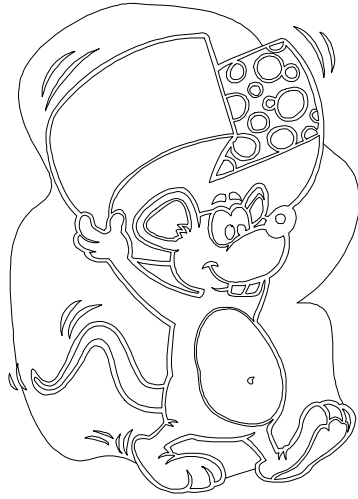
## **2006 Medal Winner**

**Criss Cross** written by Lynne Rae Perkins. *Criss Cross* follows the lives of four 14-year-olds in a small town, each at their own crossroads. This ensemble cast explores new thoughts and feelings in their quest to find the meaning of life and love.

## **2005 Medal Winner**

**Kira-Kira** written by Cynthia Kadohata. Two sisters lie on their backs, watching the stars and repeating the Japanese word for glittering, "kira-kira." Like this quiet opening scene, Kadohata's tenderly nuanced novel glitters with plain and poignant words that describe the strong love within a Japanese American family from the point of view of younger sister Katie. Personal challenges and family tragedy are set against the oppressive social climate of the South during the 1950s and early 1960s.

# More Newbery Award Winners



## 2004 Medal Winner

**The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread** written by Kate DiCamillo and illustrated by Timothy Basil Erin. *The Tale of Despereaux* draws the reader into an enchanting account of a smaller-than-usual mouse in love with music, stories and a princess named Pea. This tiny hero faints at loud noises but gathers the courage to fulfill his dreams.

## 2003 Medal Winner

**Crispin: The Cross of Lead**, by Avi is an action-filled page-turner set in 14th-century England. Astar's son is the only name the 13-year-old title character has ever known when he is suddenly orphaned and stripped of home and possessions. Accused of murder and wanted dead or alive, Crispin flees his village and falls in with a juggler, Bear, who becomes his protector and teacher. Relentlessly pursued by Crispin's enemies, the pair flees to solve the mystery of his identity and fight the injustices of feudalism.

## 2002 Newbery Medal

**A Single Shard** by Linda Sue Park. Linda Sue Park takes readers to 12th century Korea to tell a timeless story of dedication to one's dreams and art. Tree-ear, an orphan who lives under a bridge with his wise friend Crane-man, becomes fascinated with a nearby community of potters. Drawn by their exquisite craftsmanship, the adolescent boy begins to assist the master potter Min.

## 2001 Newbery Medal

**A Year Down Yonder** by Richard Peck (Dial Books for Young Readers). This linked series of carefully crafted vignettes is set in rural Illinois during the Depression, when fifteen-year-old Mary Alice leaves Chicago to spend a year with Grandma Dowdel. Her initial apprehension at life in a small town with a scheming old woman gradually gives way to admiration and love as she recognizes the warm heart behind Grandma's shenanigans.

# Fourth,

# Where can we get books?

Of course, the first place to go  
to get books for free is to the

# LIBRARY





# Local Library Locations

You can always get books at your school library, but if it is not open you can always walk, bike, ride the bus, or drive to these libraries that are near you.

**Northglenn Library**  
10530 N. Huron St.  
Northglenn, CO 80234  
303-425-7534

**Thornton Thornton Library**  
8992 N. Washington St.  
Thornton, CO 80229  
303-287-2514

**College Hill Library**  
3705 W. 112th Ave.  
Westminster, CO 80031  
303-404-5128

**Mamie Doud Eisenhower  
Public Library**  
3 Community Park Road  
Broomfield, CO 80020  
720-887-2300

**Westminster Public Library**  
7392 Irving St  
Westminster, CO 80030  
303-430-2400



**Brighton Public Library**  
575 S. 8th Ave.  
Brighton, CO 80601  
303-659-2572

**Commerce City Public Library**  
7185 Monaco St.  
Commerce City, CO 80022  
303-287-0063



# Bookmobile

**The Rangview Library District provides an Outreach Service to people who are not able to get to the library. This service provides the Bookmobile and a Home Library program.**

**The Home Library program currently visits 140 individuals and 11 senior communities.**

**The Bookmobile is a bus full of books that goes to schools all over the area once a week. It carries about 4,500 books and makes 20 stops each week. Anybody may check out books.**

**For more information call:**

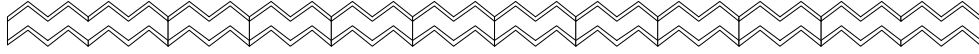
**Rangeview Library District  
8992 N. Washington St.  
Thornton, CO 80229  
303-288-2001  
TDD 303-288-8060**



**Website:**

**[http://www.rangeviewld.org/Extension\\_info.htm](http://www.rangeviewld.org/Extension_info.htm)**

# Librarians



**Librarians are the people who work in the library.**

**They know TONS of stuff about books!**

**If we need some ideas about what books we should be reading, just ask the librarian.**

**If we need to know where a book is, they can tell us.**

**They also do things like storytime and book clubs.**

**They can give us ideas for activities to go along with the books that we are reading.**



# Other Places for Cheap or Free Books!



**Used book stores**



**Neighbors, friends, or relatives**



**Garage sales**



No, no,  
no.  
Not garbage sales.  
I said

# Finally,

I know that sometimes we can't read together for many reasons. It is good for me to read silently by myself once in a while or do some other activities related to reading.

I know that sometimes maybe you aren't the best reader either, but there are still things we can do together to improve my reading (and maybe yours).

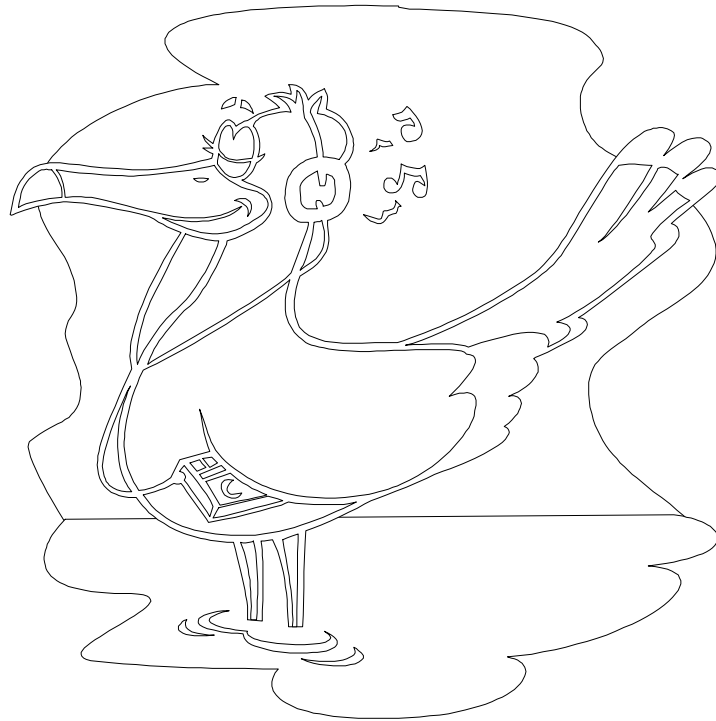
Sometimes, no matter how hard you and I try, I just have a hard time reading.

That is why on the next few pages there are some ideas to take care of these three problems if they come up.



# Need Help Reading?

**If you can't read with me because you aren't the best reader or you don't speak or read English, there are still things we can do to read together.**

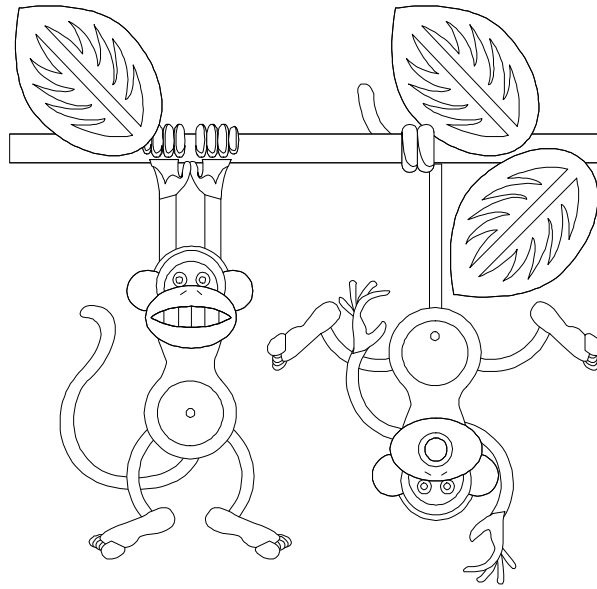


**Libraries have books on tape or CD that we can listen to with each other.**

**There are books written in Spanish for non-English speakers or readers that we can borrow from the library.**

**There are books that do not have words called wordless picture books. We just look at the pictures and make up a story to go along. That sounds fun because the story will be different every time.**

# Programs for Reading Help!



## **SYLVAN LEARNING CENTERS**

Sylvan Learning offers a fee-based service aimed at helping children read better. For more information, call 1-866-604-8313 or visit <http://reportcard.sylvan.info/campaigns/slc/161/tutoring.asp?theme=6>

## **RANGEVIEW LIBRARY DISTRICT**

Rangeview Library District has "Story Time," "Homework Helper," resources for parents, and help reading with children, including instruction in "dialogic" reading. Help is also available in Spanish.

Visit [http://www.rangeviewld.org/Thornton\\_info.htm](http://www.rangeviewld.org/Thornton_info.htm)

## **REACH OUT AND READ COLORADO**

Reach Out and Read Colorado works with pediatricians to help encourage families to read to young children. The group's website has tips on reading to children and offers other resources. Visit <http://www.reachoutandreadco.org/index.html>

## **ROCKY MOUNTAIN PBS - "READY TO LEARN"**

Rocky Mountain PBS has a program called "Ready to Learn" designed to prepare young students for school. It includes help in reading to and with children. Call 303-620-5686 or visit <http://www.rmpbs.org/content/index.cfm/fuseaction/showContent/contentID/206/navID/195.-htm>

## **READING READINESS**

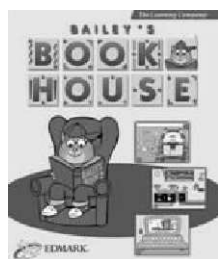
Reading Readiness is a project of the Colorado State Library to ensure that young children are ready to learn to read when they start school. Care givers read, tell stories, have puppet shows and finger plays everyday to help the children prepare to be better readers. The Reading Readiness project trains librarians to work with day care staff to conduct a variety of activities designed to help children prepare to learn to read.

Visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/libnewsletter/download/pdf/archive/cent0499.pdf>

# Computer Games

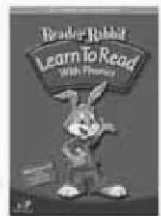
Here are some computer programs that we can buy to help me with my reading. We can buy them at the store or download them on-line.

## Bailey's Book House

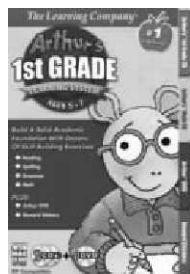


Open the door to an exciting world of learning with the newly updated Edmark House Series! Lovable characters Bailey, Millie, Sammy and Trudy will guide your children in developing critical skills and confidence with a multi-sensory environment where they can explore the fundamentals of math, reading, science and the physical world around them.

## Reader Rabbit Learn to Read with Phonics



Build confident early readers with Reader Rabbit and friends! Reader Rabbit Learn to Read with Phonics was designed by educators, curriculum specialists and reading experts to help beginning readers build skills and confidence in reading.



## Arthur's 1st Grade Learning System

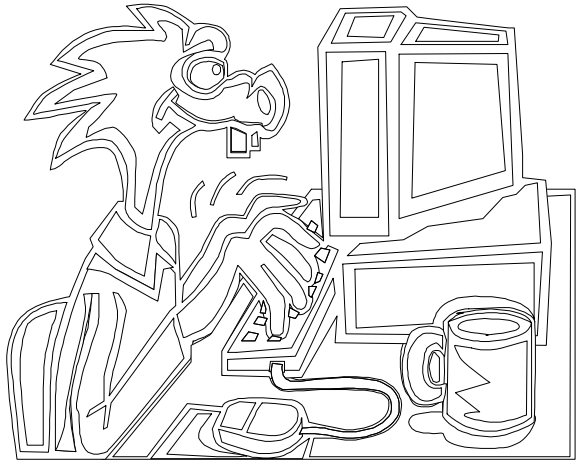
Your first-grader will love learning with Arthur! Real-life situations, fun games and challenging activities help kids practice and build on what they learn in school.



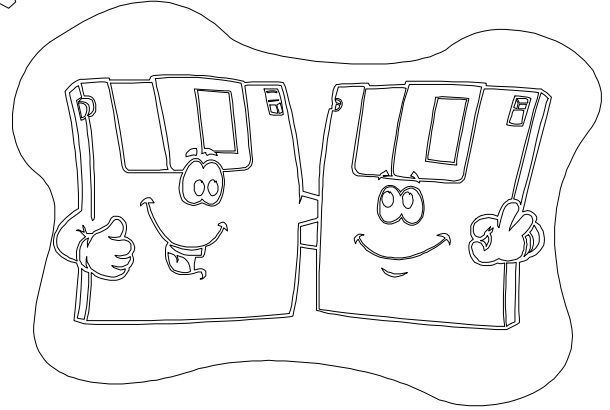
## Zoombinis 3rd Grade Learning System

Build more than 75 key third-grade skills in math, language arts, science, geography, problem solving and more!





to help with reading!



Websites

**I know that sometimes I made need some extra help and you may not have time to read to me. Here are some fun places to visit on the internet that have games for learning to read and write.**

<http://www.scholastic.com/kids/games.htm>

<http://www.janbrett.com/>

<http://www.thekidzpage.com/>

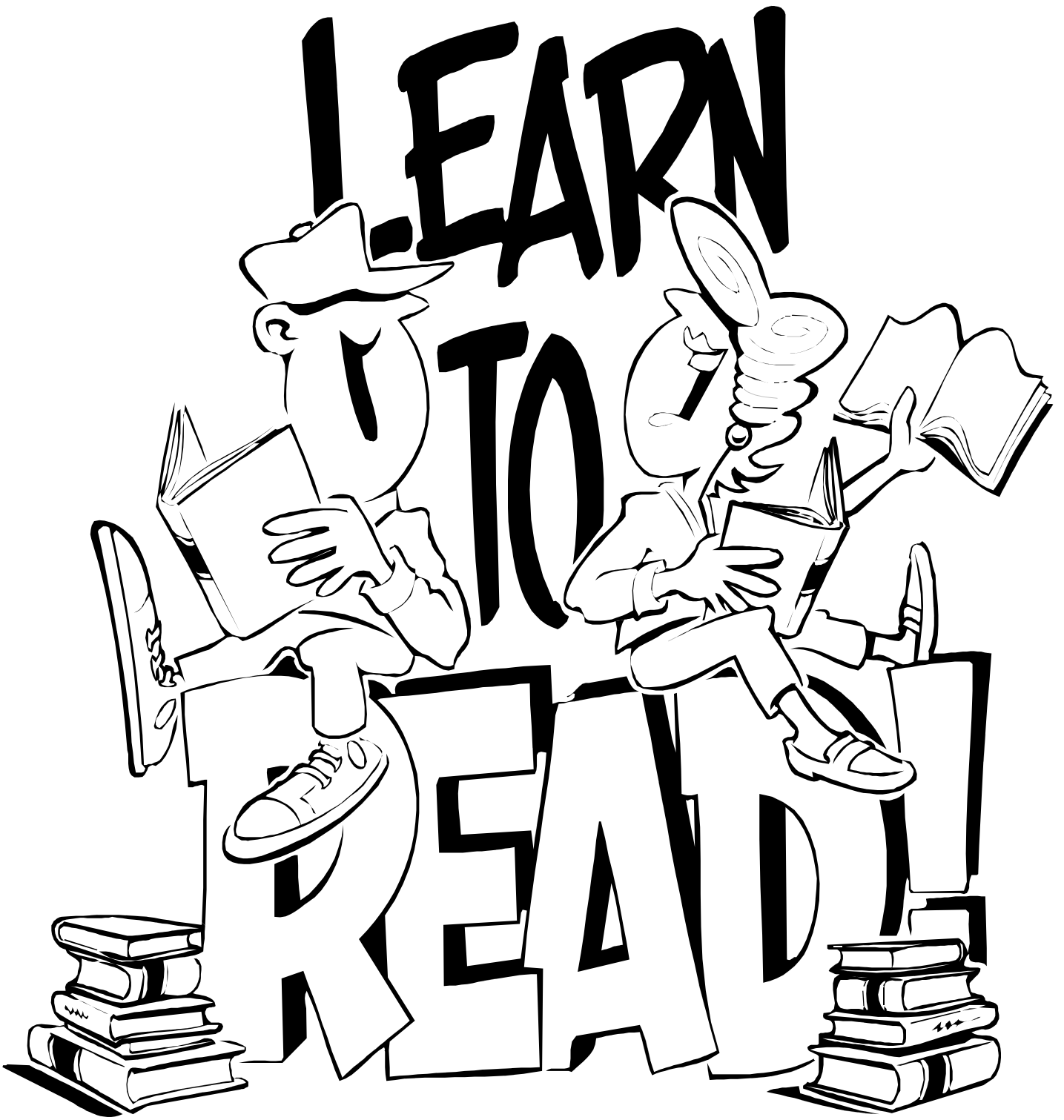
<http://www.gamequarium.com/>

<http://www.literacycenter.net/> (Website has activities in Spanish too!)

<http://www.funbrain.com/cgi-bin/getskill.cgi?A4=1>

<http://resources.kaboose.com/games/read2.html>

[http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/grammar/archive/grammar\\_games\\_index\\_page01.html](http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/grammar/archive/grammar_games_index_page01.html)



## Chapter Summary

A handbook for parents or caregivers and their children was presented in this chapter. The handbook is a tool to use to create a positive reading environment at home. The coloring book style handbook will encourage parents or caregivers and their children to spend time reading with each other. The handbook offered many valuable ideas and resources for the parents or caregivers including: (a) questions for the parents or caregivers to ask as they read to their children; (b) places to read to their children; (c) places to have books; (d) different genres and types of books; (e) favorite picture books and novels; (e) where to get books; (f) local library locations; (g) educational websites and computer games; and (h) reading programs for extra help.

Presented in Chapter 5 is feedback from three educational professionals and two parents or caregivers who were asked to assess the handbook. In addition, suggestions for improving and revising the handbook will be discussed.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

The ability to read has never been more important than in today's technologically advanced world. A child must learn to read to be a good student and become a productive member of society. Children spend time at school learning to read; however, that is not enough. Parents and caregivers must provide a good home literacy environment to supplement and strengthen their children's reading abilities.

Therefore, the purpose of this project was to provide a handbook to convince parents and caregivers to create a home literacy environment where their children would learn to read and ultimately enjoy reading. The handbook was designed as a coloring book so children will be involved in the reading process with their parents or caregivers. The handbook gave parents and caregivers strategies for reading with their children and tips on how to provide a good home literacy environment. Not only does the handbook bolster a child's reading proficiency, but it also deepens the bond between parents or caregivers and their child through the time spent together reading.

#### Resolution of the Original Problem

Many parents or caregivers feel that, once their children attend school, the responsibility to read and educate their children falls on the shoulders of the schools and teachers. However, the amount of time given to children to read and learn at school is not adequate; parents or caregivers need to understand that they need to continue to read to

their children and supply an abundance of books throughout their home. The feedback received from educational professionals and parents about the handbook was very positive and, consequently, she feels that she has accomplished her goal of creating a fun, educational handbook stressing the importance of reading at home for children and their parents or caregivers.

#### Experts' Review

The handbook was given to two parents of two boys in third grade and a girl in kindergarten. After reading the handbook, one parent commented that the handbook “is a great tool for the reader starting out, or for a kid whose parents are not engaged.” Another parent wrote that the handbook contained a lot of useful information and that she “liked the idea of where to get free books and the idea of having books all around the house.” The parents agreed that they would share the handbook with other parents, especially those whose children do not like to read. One parent said that she thought this would be “a good tool to help parents get their kids interested” in reading.

Asked if their children enjoyed the handbook, both parents concurred that their children really liked coloring the handbook and the idea of having fun places to read, “especially making a tent to read in.” The two sports-minded boys especially liked the reading tracker with balls to color in after they had read for 20 minutes.

The feedback from the three educational professionals was very encouraging and positive. All three said that they would like to use this in their classrooms and one asked if she could share the handbook with her colleagues. One kindergarten teacher said that she “liked the way it was designed for parents and children to use together.” Another teacher

said that she thought the handbook “concisely addressed many questions my parents ask and it also gives them a lot of valuable information and resources.” Two of the teachers thought that, for beginner readers, they would like to have a list of books that the children could read themselves or to their parents. Another idea from one of the teachers was that the handbook could be changed according to the literacy curriculum used by the school. For example, her school uses the Accelerated Reading Program and she would like to have a customized list of books that the children could read that are part of this program.

#### Limitations of the Study

This author feels that, although the feedback was very positive, she would like to give the handbook to other educators and parents to elicit more feedback. The three educators and two parents that were given the handbook were all from middle-class, white suburban areas. The handbook should to be given to people of different races, marital statuses, and socioeconomic levels to get a better measurement of the effectiveness.

Another constraint of the study was time. The educators and parents only had approximately two weeks to look over the handbook and give the author feedback. The author intends to distribute the handbook at the beginning of the school year and give the children and their parents or caregivers more time to use the handbook before she asks for feedback. After three months and, again, at the end of the school year, the author will ask for more specific comments on the handbook such as: (a) did your child enjoy coloring the book, (b) how many times did you refer back to the handbook for information, (c) do you read with your child more than you used to, (d) did you use the list of favorite books, (e) did you use the reading logs, (f) do you have more books in your house than you did

before you received the handbook, (g) does your child enjoy reading alone and with you more than he used to, and (h) did the handbook give you valuable suggestions about reading with your child.

### Suggestions for Further Study

Other suggestions for further study would be to customize the handbook for the specific grade level, demographic or geographic location. This handbook was designed for children in kindergarten through third grade. However, it may be beneficial to narrow the focus to one grade level or age. If the handbook were given to students of different ethnicities, another suggestion would be to change the list of favorite books to be more multicultural. Other ways to customize the handbook is to change the library locations and programs for reading help to the community in which the school is located. Another possibility would be to customize the handbook in languages other than English for those parents or caregivers and children for whom English is not their first language.

### Chapter Summary

The purpose of this project was to develop a handbook for students to give to their parents or caregivers to persuade them of the value of a good home literacy environment. The handbook was written with the children in mind and is in a coloring book format. Valuable tips were provided in this handbook: (a) questions for the parents or caregivers to ask as they read to their children; (b) places to read to their children; (c) places to have books; (d) different genres and types of books; (e) favorite picture books and novels; (e) where to get books; (f) educational websites and computer games; (g) local library locations; and (h) reading programs for extra help. The handbook was designed to be

distributed to students and their parents or caregivers at the beginning of the year or at the first parent/teacher conference. In turn, this handbook will help establish a connection between children and parents or caregivers, and parents or caregivers and teachers to improve children's reading interests and abilities.



## REFERENCES

- Carter, B. (2000). Formula for failure. *School Library Journal*, 46(7), 34-37. Retrieved March 14, 2006, from ERIC database.
- Darling, S. (2005). Strategies for engaging parents in home support of reading acquisition. *The Reading Teacher*, 58(5), 476-479. Retrieved May 23, 2006 from ERIC database.
- Dever, M. T., & Burts, D. C. (2002). An evaluation of family literacy bags as a vehicle for parent involvement. *Early Child Development and Care*, 172(4), 359-370. Retrieved July 11, 2006 from ERIC database.
- Gladieux, L. E., & Swail, W. S. (2000, May). Beyond success: Improving the odds of college success. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 688-692.
- Hall, S. L., & Moats, L. C. (1999). *Straight talk about reading: How parents can make a difference during the early years*. Lincolnwood, IL: Contemporary.
- Hart, B., & Risely, T. R. (1995). *The early catastrophe: The 30 million word gap by age 3*. Retrieved July 17, 2006, from [http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american\\_educator/spring2003/catastrophe.html](http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/spring2003/catastrophe.html)
- Hill-Clark, K.Y. (2005). Families as educators. *Childhood Education*, 82(1), 46-49. Retrieved March 9, 2006, from Academic Premier database.
- International Reading Association & National Association for the Education of Young Children (IRA/NAEYC). (1998). *Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practice for young children*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 420 052)
- Kelly-Vance, L., & Schreck, D. (2002). The impact of a collaborative family/school reading programme on student reading rate. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 25(1), 43-53. Retrieved March 13, 2006, from Academic Premier database.
- Kids & media fact sheet*. (1999). Retrieved July 27, 2006 from <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=13266>
- Leonhardt, M. (1997). *99 ways to get kids to love reading*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

- McFann, J. (2004, August/September). Boys and books. *Reading Today*, 20-21.
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2005). *National assessment of educational progress: The Nation's report card, reading 2005*. Retrieved August 2, 2006, from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2005/2006451.pdf>
- Nistler, R. J., & Maiers, A. (2000). Stopping the silence: Hearing parents' voices in an urban first grade family literacy program. *The Reading Teacher*, 53(8), 670-680. Retrieved May 17, 2006, from ERIC database.
- Rashid, F. L., Morris, R. D., & Sevcik, R. A. (2005). Relationship between home literacy environment and reading achievement in children with reading disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 38(1), 2-11. Retrieved May 17, 2006, from ERIC database.
- Ramsey, C. T. (1999). *Right from birth: Building your child's foundation for life, birth to 18 months*. New York: Goddard Press.
- Reeder, P., & Sowers, K. (2002). Family literacy: It takes a village. *Library Talk*, 15(5), 6-9. Retrieved March 9, 2006, from ERIC database.
- Roberts, J., Jurgens, J., & Burchinal, M. (2005). The role of home literacy practices in preschool children's language and emergent literacy skills. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 48(4), 345-359. Retrieved March 14, 2006, from ERIC database.
- Shore, R. (2003). *Rethinking the brain: New insights into early development*. New York: Families and Work Institute.
- Saint-Lauren, L., & Giasson, J. (2005). Effects of a family literacy program adapting parental intervention to first graders' evolution of reading and writing abilities. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 5(3), 253-278. Retrieved May 23, 2006, from ERIC database
- Slavin, R. E., & Madden, N. A. (2001). *Reducing the gap: Success for all and the achievement of African-American and Latino students*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association on April 10-14, 2001. Retrieved July 11, 2006, from ERIC database.
- Strickland, D. S., & Shanahan, T. (2004, March). Laying the groundwork for literacy. *Educational Research*, 74-77. Retrieved May 23, 2006, from ERIC database.
- Trelease, J. (2001). *The read aloud handbook* (4th ed.). New York: Penguin.

U.S. Department of Education (USDE). (2001). *How to help every child become a reader*. Indianapolis, IN: Your Domain.

West, J., Denton, K., & Germino-Hausken, E. (2000). *America's kindergartners: Findings from the early childhood longitudinal study, kindergarten class of 1998-1999, fall 1998*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Retrieved July 27, 2006, from ERIC database.

Handbook Survey for Parents

Do you think the information in the handbook was helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did your child like the book and enjoy the coloring pages? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you share this with other parents? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any comments or suggestions for improving this booklet?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Handbook Survey for Educational Professionals

Do you think the information in the handbook would be helpful to send home to parents of students in your classroom? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did you like about the handbook?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did you dislike about the handbook?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any comments, suggestions, or recommendations for improving this booklet?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_