

University of Northern Iowa  
**UNI ScholarWorks**

---

Graduate Research Papers

Student Work

---

1999

## Parental and community involvement in reading education

Rhonda S. Johnstone  
*University of Northern Iowa*

Copyright ©1999 Rhonda S. Johnstone

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#)

*Let us know how access to this document benefits you*

---

### Recommended Citation

Johnstone, Rhonda S., "Parental and community involvement in reading education" (1999). *Graduate Research Papers*. 921.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/921>

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uni.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uni.edu).

---

## Parental and community involvement in reading education

### Abstract

Research shows the effects of parental involvement in reading education to be beneficial to students, parents, teachers, and schools. Parental involvement can aid students in keeping up with (and possibly catching up with) grade level reading, learn to appreciate books, and about the various ways of communication in real life situations. Parent involvement helps parents gain the understanding of their children's strengths and weaknesses in literacy acquisition and the opportunity to assist in their development. Teachers may gain an insight into students, and their literate activities outside of school, which might help with curriculum development. At the same time, schools save money and individual instruction time by alleviating the need for more specialized in-school instruction.

Parental and Community Involvement  
In Reading Education

A Graduate Project  
Submitted to the  
Division of Reading Education  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Education  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Rhonda S. Johnstone

July 28, 1999

This Project by: Rhonda S. Johnstone

Titled: Parental and Community Involvement in Reading Education

has been approved as meeting the research requirement of the Degree of Master of Arts  
in Education.

August 16, 1999  
Date Approved

**Deborah Tidwell**

Graduate Faculty Reader

August 16, 1999  
Date Approved

**Rick C. Traw**

Graduate Faculty Reader

August 16, 1999  
Date Approved

**Rick C. Traw**

Head, Department of Curriculum  
And Instruction

Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 5

Methodology ..... 13

The Project ..... 14

Schedule of Workshops ..... 16

Workshop #1  
     Research Overview and Opening the Lines of Communication ..... 17

Workshop #2  
     Ongoing Communications ..... 21

Workshop #3  
     Inviting Parental Involvement ..... 25

Workshop #4  
     Community Involvement Programs ..... 29

Workshop #5  
     Classroom-to-Home Activities ..... 33

Workshop #6  
     Recap of the year’s events ..... 38

Conclusion ..... 41

Appendix A  
     Sample Calendar ..... 46

Appendix B  
     Parental Involvement Attitudes Survey ..... 53

Appendix C  
     Research Overview ..... 55

Appendix D  
     Home-School Communications Worksheet ..... 58

Appendix E  
     Home Visits ..... 59

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Appendix F  |    |
| Tell me about your child                            | 61 |
| Appendix G  |    |
| As a Teacher: Survey                                | 62 |
| Appendix H  |    |
| Dialogue Journals                                   | 63 |
| Appendix I  |    |
| Newsletters   | 64 |
| Appendix J  |    |
| Positive Communication Moments                      | 66 |
| Appendix K  |    |
| Parental Involvement Resources                      | 67 |
| Appendix L  |    |
| Home Literacy Ideas                                 | 70 |
| Appendix M  |    |
| Strategy for Helping Students find the “Right” Book | 72 |
| Appendix N  |    |
| How to Choose the Best Books for YOU                | 73 |
| Appendix O  |    |
| Ways to Help Your Child Read at Home                | 74 |
| Appendix P  |    |
| Very Important Person Program                       | 75 |
| Appendix Q  |    |
| Community Tutors                                    | 77 |
| Appendix R  |    |
| Business Adoption Program                           | 78 |
| Appendix S  |    |
| Lending Library                                     | 79 |
| Appendix T  |    |
| Writing Briefcase                                   | 80 |

## Introduction

Research shows the effects of parental involvement in reading education to be beneficial to students, parents, teachers, and schools. Reynolds (1992, p. 442) defines parental involvement as “any interaction between a parent and a child that may contribute to the child’s development or to direct parent participation with a child’s school in the interest of the child”. Parental involvement can aid students in keeping up with (and possibly catching up with) grade level reading, learn to appreciate books, and about the various ways of communication in real life situations. Parent involvement helps parents gain the understanding of their children’s strengths and weaknesses in literacy acquisition and the opportunity to assist in their development. Teachers may gain an insight into students, and their literate activities outside of school, which might help with curriculum development while schools save money and individual instruction time by alleviating the need for more specialized in-school instruction.

Studies have shown that second-grade students who have been read to a lot as very young children out-performed those who had only looked at books, only colored or drawn, or had only made attempts to write. A two-year study by Hewison, Schofield, & Tizard (1982) looked at the effects of parental involvement compared to in-school special help for students. Students who were helped by their parents with special instruction from the school performed better on standardized reading tests than those who received in-school help or were tutored by parents with no direction from the school. These studies also indicated that regardless of the socioeconomic status of the family, parents were very willing to help their children however they could. Parents wanted to be involved in their

children's education but felt ill prepared, and were apprehensive about the ramifications of their actions when attempting to assist in the child's literacy development. Guidance and direction by the teacher would encourage the parent to support a positive outcome.

It is clear, "that parental involvement can improve student performance more efficiently and effectively than extra small group reading time at school" (Fitton & Gredler, 1996). Students in this study also exhibited a higher level of interest and improved behavior in school as well as increased family alliance.

Fine and Robinson (1994) discuss barriers that can hinder positive school-parent collaboration. One factor may originate from various types of communication. In the past, notes or calls about student's academic or behavioral performance from schools to parents has been of a negative nature. Consequently, any communication parents receive from the school is perceived as unfavorable news and hinders open lines of communication. Communication from teachers can also be confusing to parents. One example given by Fine referred to a note sent home to parents that "seemed to be stressing simultaneously the need for independent efforts by the children and the need for parents to pay attention to their children's attempts" (p. 11). This note justifiably confused the parents. Instead of contacting the teacher to find out what was meant by the note, parents talked with each other, allowing the frustration to develop into an unfavorable attitude towards the teacher, further building barriers between parent and teacher. Communication from teachers can also contain educational jargon with which parents are unfamiliar, placing the parents in an inferior position. On the other hand, if a teacher tries to use too simplistic a dialogue, the teacher seems to be talking down to the parents, making them feel inadequate or intimidated. All of these types of



communication, although intended for a positive purpose, could widen the gap between teacher and parent collaboration. Parents' negative experiences of being in school themselves can also hinder any positive aspects of their children's education. Teachers and administrators need to be aware of whom they are talking to, communicating in clear, easy to understand terms, taking time to listen to parents' points of view, promoting positive home-school communication.

According to Graybill (1992), negative communication factors can steer parents to private learning centers where they feel they are in control of their children's education because they are employing tutors (Graybill, 1992). Often parents have great difficulty obtaining the opportunity to speak with teachers and/or principals. When they do finally get the chance to express their feelings, parents often feel that nothing was ever done to improve the situation. Learning centers provide parents with someone who will listen to and validate their point of view. They are businesses run for profit, accommodating the parents' request with little regard toward educational theory and ethics. If the centers teachers do not live up to the parent's standards, they will be fired. This fosters a close collaboration between tutor and parent. Learning centers are also used as an educational counseling center. The number of clients always increases immediately after report cards and parent teacher conferences. Some consultations are simply to find out about certain schools and teachers or to vent various anxieties about them when the teachers and administrators would not listen.

It is estimated that there are about 4,500 private learning institutions to which parents pay approximately \$875 million each year to supplement their children's education for as many as 25 million hours of tutoring each year (Graybill, 1992). These

estimates include the United States and Canada. Parents and guardians bring students to private learning centers for many reasons ranging from “guilt to genuine fear of the classroom teacher or school principal” (p.19). One thing all of these parents have in common is their concern for the children’s education. Thirty percent of the students participating in private learning center programs tested above grade level on evaluation tests. Parent concerns brought to the attention of teachers and administrators were seldom acted upon except for a response that said their children were doing fine, and not to worry. Sixty percent were at or below grade level, leaving parents feeling their children’s abilities surpassed that which was shown in the report cards and progress reports.

Another issue is the great amount of change seen in the schools, family, and society from a few decades ago (Johnston, 1994). The mobility of today’s society has resulted in educators not knowing everyone in their communities and schools. Schools have grown larger or merged to withstand economic situations. New languages, cultures, and child-rearing practices have emerged. Families have evolved into two-working-parent families or single parent families. Only 19% of families have children in school today compared with 67% in 1960. According to Johnston (1994), people do not readily give of themselves to help others, even when they see the need. All of these changes in society have brought about the idea that it is the parent’s responsibility to raise their children and the school’s responsibility to educate them, that no one should cross these lines into the other’s domain. “Too many schools have adopted the same stance: How can we be expected to teach if the parent’s don’t do their job?” (p. 7) But the problem is not that simple Johnston uses the analogy of dancing, implying that schools and parents need to be like dance partners. They move in the same direction and assist each other along the

way. They also think of their relationship as a fun and pleasurable one, having no prescribed blueprint to follow in order to reach a common goal, educating children. Without this dancing partnership, parents will continue to harbor ill feelings about schools and school systems continuing to rely on outside help from learning centers where they feel their concerns are being heard.

Educators need to take the initiative to address these negative feelings and ideas revolving around the public school system. P. Beed (personal communication, April 17, 1998) addressed the aspect of only negative communication coming from the schools when she told about one of her popular elementary students who befriended an unpopular student in front of the entire class. Beed was so impressed with this action that she called the parent and expressed how proud she was of the way her student had acted. The mother broke down in tears, stating this was the first time anyone had expressed anything positive about her child.

Most parents want to help with their children's education, but they do not know how, or do not feel confident in their abilities to help them (i.e. Enz, 1996; Fitton & Gredler, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) include the component of whether or not the parent(s) believes that parental involvement would be beneficial to their child's success in school. In speaking with parents regarding parental involvement in their child's education, the researchers realized that most people might not even realize that they could be helping. They think it is the school's responsibility to teach the children and do not see where they should be involved.

Only one of five parents contacted recently by the author could remember any attempts at communication with parents regarding something positive. One parent could recall two instances of positive communication. In the first case, a kindergarten teacher made a home visit prior to the start of the school to get acquainted with the child and family, with no follow-up contacts. The second time was when the mother received a note from a high school teacher stating that her son had done very well on a test. Both of these instances made the parent feel as though these teachers cared about her sons. It also brought great pride to the sons. Another parent told about her daughter's teacher sending home a book every night that was to be read with her daughter. The parent was directed to make positive comments on the child's reading if it was a trade book, or about what was liked about the book if it was student-made. The parent complained that she never knew what to write and that she felt like she was using the same statement repeatedly. She also felt that she did not know what was expected of her while reading with her child. She relied totally on "sounding out the words."

Most of the literature on parental involvement agrees that schools need to initiate the involvement of parents in educating children (e.g. Erickson, 1995; Fine & Robinson, 1994; Reynolds, 1992; Routman, 1991; Routman, 1996; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993). Teachers need to convey positive aspects of student's academic and social achievements at school to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Teachers also need to listen to what parents have to say about their children, both positive and negative. Learning how to communicate on each parent's level with genuine concern is imperative to promoting positive parental involvement. Providing a rationale for becoming involved and persuading parents that it will be beneficial to their children is very important. Teachers not only need to teach

parents how to work with children on school-like activities, but also show them the benefits of everyday literacy activities.

“It takes a whole village to educate a child” (Enz, 1996, p.578). To foster the involvement of the entire community, Enz (1996) has provided four programs that include a variety of people from the community. VIP’s is where different people from the community are invited to visit the classroom to read their favorite children’s book or one about their occupation. Next they would talk about the different literate activities involved with their job, and or daily living. In business adoption programs, where a business adopts a school, money is given to the schools for purchasing books and writing materials. Community tutors are volunteers from the surrounding area, especially retired persons, who come to the school and read with or to children. Buddy reading programs involve older students who may or may not receive class credit for working with younger students on literacy activities.

In speaking with B. Enz (personal communication, April 23 1998), she shared the idea that educated as well as uneducated parents have trouble “being parents.” She said that education does not carry over into the realm of raising children. The example she shared was about her sister-in-law, a Ph.D. at Cornell University in the business department. She became a parent in her mid-to-late 30s and had no idea on how to raise a child. Enz suggested that she read to the child. The sister-in-law went and got the book *Last of the Mohicans*, and was disappointed that the eight-month-old child only wanted to chew on it. It was taken for granted that because the mother was a very educated person, she would know what type of book to use. This is not always the case. “For some parents, it is embarrassing and scary not to know what to do. We cannot take anything for granted.

We need an open line of communication so that we can all help each other.” Enz is ‘religious’ with her weekly newsletter. She stated, “It does not have to be anything fancy; it could be handwritten! That’s the way I did it before computers and word processors. I put in practical ideas that I get from parents and I tell who’s idea it was.”

Time constraints on today’s families also play a role in parental involvement. “We need to give parents ideas that fit into their schedules. Make them see connections of everyday activities to literacy development. Give them ideas for activities to do in the car while they are driving the kids to wherever they might be going, at the grocery store, during daily chores at home” (Enz, personal communication, April 23, 1998).

Shockley (1994) wrote about beginning of the year *Tell me about your child* communications with parents. In *Tell me about your child*, parents were given the opportunity to write openly, without risk, about their children for the teacher to read. An adaptation of Shockley’s *Tell me about your child* might be to have face-to-face conferences that allow the teacher to listen while the parent(s)/guardian(s) talk. Lazar & Weisberg (1996) discussed dialog journals to keep the communication lines open. This made the parents feel like a positive attribute in their child’s education. Only 60% of the parents in Lazar & Weisberg’s program participated in the dialogue journal project; hopefully the percentage would increase as parents see it as a beneficial endeavor.

There are many ways to promote positive parental/community involvement in the school. Teachers need to take the initiative to communicate in a clear and concise manor without technical jargon, suggesting ideas for interacting with children with genuine concern, sharing the good, not only the bad, listen to and validate parent beliefs and ideas, show the benefits their involvement can achieve, educate parents on the

procedures for working with their children, and involve the entire community in education. Everyone has beneficial contributions to make and educators need to make use of them. In Fine and Robinson's words, "In each type of parent involvement the school needs to be ready to offer workshops, consultation, parent education, and whatever other support and information services are needed to prepare parents for that kind of participation" (1994, p. 12).

### Methodology

During my undergraduate work, I began to be aware of the benefits of parental involvement through discussions in many of my classes. As I worked in several schools as a substitute teacher, I rarely saw parents who were involved in their children's education. This caused me to ask the questions, "Why are parents not involved" and "What could be done to involve parents in education?" As I completed a six-week long-term substitute position, the realization hit me that none of the parents had tried to contact me once. This prompted me to ask other teachers if parents had been in contact with them. Only one out of five teachers questioned had been contacted by a parent other than during conferences and this was due to an illness rather than academics.

My search to answer these questions about parental involvement began as I used the UNISTAR system at the University of Northern Iowa to locate information on parental involvement in reading education. My search began by using various combinations of the descriptors 'elementary,' 'reading,' 'parental,' 'involvement,' 'home,' 'school,' and 'partnerships.' I then searched the Internet using the same descriptors as above, along with addresses found in the printed resources already located,

and found several sources of information. The International Reading Association and Reading Is Fundamental sights provided lists of books for specified ages and described activities for parents to involve their children in literate activities. I also used old textbooks and the references from the articles I had retrieved to locate additional resources. This provided me with a wealth of references to gather information for my project.

To develop the project, I first outlined essential ideas presented in the research and then gathered information on each key topic. I then used these key topics in outline form to develop specific sections.

Instructional design/planning also followed the same procedures. I outlined the important elements, then developed each section separately. The summary was developed after the completion of the full project. For the summary, I reviewed and reflected before developing a summary outline followed by full summary development.

### The Project

This project has been designed as a year long set of 6 workshops (See Table 1) for elementary teachers (K-6) and parents to initially inform them of the benefits of working collaboratively with parents for improving students' literacy acquisition followed by specific ideas for actions to foster literacy in children. I chose to do this project in order to compile activities that teachers can use to involve parents in reading education. Most teachers know of the benefits of parental involvement, but they do not seem to know how to go about initiating it. Parents do not realize that they can be helping their children's



literacy acquisition, or do not feel prepared to do so. This will be a hands-on project to guide teachers and parents in steps to gain parental involvement in reading education.

The first workshop, in which I will present an overview of research and ways of opening the lines of communication, would be held prior to the beginning of the school year so that the teachers can begin communicating with the parents of their students before the school year starts. This would create positive communication with parents from the very beginning of the upcoming year. The following five sessions will be held as follows: three monthly workshops in the Fall semester and two in the Spring semester (See Table 1). The last workshop will be a recap of the years' events and to decide what worked and what will be changed for the following year. These workshops will give teachers a chance to implement various techniques and have a chance to discuss what worked and what did not work with the rest of the teachers, allowing them to fine tune the techniques to enhance literacy. Discussion groups will also be scheduled between workshops to provide the opportunity for teachers to analyze the progress and air their concerns in reference to the parental involvement project to that point. A sample calendar has been provided (See Appendix A). Suggestions for building a professional library will be provided for teachers to find ideas to use with specific students and parents.

The activities provided will offer teachers a variety of choices to foster participation on various levels of active parental involvement, to meet the needs of individual parents and students. These choices will include ideas for everyday activities that need little or no extra time to accommodate busy schedules as well as school-like activities for those who can afford the time needed. Various techniques of

communication will be implemented to foster the involvement of parents/guardians who live on rigid or unwieldy schedules.

Table 1 Schedule of Parental Involvement Workshops

| Workshop | Topic   | Held                                      |
|----------|---|---|
| #1       | Research Overview and Opening the Lines of Communication  | prior to the beginning of the school year |
| #2       | Ongoing Communications                                    | September                                 |
| #3       | Inviting Parents' Involvement                             | October                                   |
| #4       | Community Involvement Programs                            | November                                  |
| #5       | Classroom to Home Activities                              | February                                  |
| #6       | Recap of the Years Events:<br>what worked and what didn't | April                                     |

**Workshop #1:  
Research Overview and Opening the  
Lines of Communication**

**Purpose:**

This workshop is to provide an overview of parental involvement in reading education. The overview will lead to initial methods of communicating with parents/guardians, creating positive communication between home and school.

**Objectives:****The teachers will:**

- ◆ gain an understanding of the dynamics of parental involvement in reading education from recent research
- ◆ reflect on past practices and beliefs on parental involvement and relate them to present research
- ◆ learn ways to initiate positive communications with parents
- ◆ design a plan of action to implement initial communications with parents/guardians

I will begin workshop #1 by giving each teacher a survey on parental involvement practices and beliefs to “assess how they feel about collaboration with parents” (Berger, 1991) (See Appendix B). This will be followed by a discussion of these practices to continue teacher thinking and reflection. An overview of the recent research on parental involvement will then be provided to show the dynamics of parental involvement (See Appendix C). Appendix C will be made into an overhead, as well as a handout for the teachers to follow along and make notes.

Communication, a very essential aspect of parental involvement, will then be looked at using a worksheet on the various types of parental involvement teachers have

previously used, followed by a discussion of these practices (See Appendix D). This is intended to get the teachers thinking about what patterns of communication they have used in the past, leading to the introduction of the two initial communication techniques to be used in this project: home visits (See Appendix E) and an adaptation of *Tell me about your child* (See Appendix F). Both techniques of initial communication begin with a telephone call to introduce yourself, describe what will be taking place, and answer any questions.

After hearing about the two techniques of initial communication, home visits and *Tell me about your child*, the teachers will decide which format they wish to act upon and divide into small groups according to the desired technique. In these groups, the teachers will create a plan of action to initiate positive lines of communications with parents. Each group will then be asked to share their plan of action to the entire group.

These small groups will be used throughout the remainder of the project to create manageable sized workshops. The Home Visits group will be known as Group A and the Tell me about your child group will be known as Group B from this point on.

To allow the teachers to discuss the project further, I will invite them to share some refreshments. As the teachers are adjourning to the refreshments, I will hand out the *As A Teacher I...* survey for further personal reflection on parental involvement (See Appendix G). The completed surveys will be kept by the teachers as their own reference point for where they would like to go.

## Workshop #1 Agenda

1. Have teachers fill out the survey on their personal beliefs of parental involvement as they arrive at the session. (See Appendix B)
  - a. Discuss results of survey.
2. Present an overview of parental involvement. (See Appendix C)
3. Have teachers fill out Home-School Communication worksheet. (See Appendix D)
  - a. Discuss some of the types of communication the teachers have listed and whether they include one, two, or three-way communication.
  - b. Ask for suggestions of ways to foster two-way communication with parents.
4. Introduce initial communication techniques
  - a. initial telephone call
  - b. Home visits (See Appendix E)
  - c. *Tell me about your child* (See Appendix F)
5. Divide the teachers into groups according to the initial communications technique they want to accomplish. These groups will create a plan to initialize communications with parents/guardians.
6. Groups will report their plan of action to the entire group.
7. Handout *As A Teacher I...* survey. (See Appendix G)
8. Refreshments and further discussion

## Workshop #2: Ongoing Communications



**Purpose:**

This workshop has been designed to give teachers methods of keeping open the lines of communication that began as a result of workshop #1.

**Objectives:**

The teachers will:

- ◆ understand the dynamics of ongoing communications.
- ◆ learn methods to promote continued, positive communications with parents.
- ◆ design a plan of action for implementing ongoing communications with parents/guardians.

Workshop #2 will be held according to the groups designated at the end of workshop #1, and involve teachers only.

I will begin this workshop by asking teachers to share stories of what happened while initiating positive communications. Collaboratively, we will talk about the positive and negative aspects, and try to come up with ways to fine-tune the process of initiating communication with parents/caregivers. This will lead to the introduction of the importance of keeping the lines of communication open. To do this, I will refer back to the research overview from workshop #1 (See Appendix B) and point out that ongoing communications validate parents' ideas, creating an equal partnership, allow parents to better understand what their children are doing in school, and give parents the opportunity to be involved in the educational process. Good communication allows

teachers to gain an overall picture of their students, and their families to help them teach what the children need.

Three techniques of ongoing communication will be discussed: journals, newsletters, and positive communication moments through telephone calls, and personal notes (See Appendixes H, I, & J respectfully). I will discuss each one individually as I hand out written explanations of each. Then the teachers will be given time to talk with colleagues about how they want to act upon each one.

The last part of the workshop will allow time for the teachers to reflect on the experiences from initiating communication, and the information presented in this workshop. The teachers will be grouped according to grade levels to design a plan of action to begin using the techniques of ongoing communication presented in this workshop. Volunteers will be asked to explain their plan of action to the rest of the group.

In preparation for workshop #3, I will ask for volunteers from both Group A and Group B, to present strategies at the next workshop. These strategies will be the school's three recommended reading strategies used by the teachers. Routman's (1991) *Strategy for Helping Students find the "Right" Book*, Tompkin's (1998) *How to Choose the Best Books for YOU*, and Radencich's (1993) *Ways to Help Your Child Read at Home*.

Before the workshop is dismissed, I will hand out the bibliography (See Appendix K), and show the resources that have been collected for the teachers to draw ideas from. To allow teachers time for further discussion on a more informal basis, I will invite them to stay for refreshments.

## Workshop #2 Agenda

1. Discussion of progress and concerns teachers have up to this point.
2. Importance of ongoing communications
3. Introduce journals (See Appendix H)
  - a. time for teacher to design a plan of action
4. Newsletters (See Appendix I)
  - a. time to design a plan of action
5. Positive communication moments (phone calls and notes) (See Appendix J)
  - a. time for teachers to design a plan of action
6. Volunteers to share their plan of action
7. Show resources, and handout bibliography for, to draw ideas for activating parental involvement (See Appendix K)
8. Refreshments and further discussion

**Workshop #3:  
Inviting Parent Involvement**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of workshop #3 is to educate parents on literacy activities that can foster literacy growth for their children.

**Objectives:****The parents will:**

- ◆ learn the positive outcomes of reading to and with children
- ◆ realize that everyday literacy activities promote literacy development
- ◆ learn techniques to use with their children before and during reading

Workshop #3 will be presented separately to grades K-1-2, 3-4, and 5-6. Prior to workshop #3, I will have asked for volunteers from each of the grade level groups to demonstrate the use of Routman's (1991) *Strategy for Helping Students find the "Right" Book*, Tompkin's (1998) *How to Choose the Best Books for YOU*, and Radencich's (1993) *Ways to Help Your Child Read at Home* for parents during the workshop.

Teachers will be asked to arrive a half-hour before the specified time for the parents. This will accommodate discussion and time for the teachers to voice their concerns about what has taken place this far in the parental involvement project. This will give them some time to fine tune problematic areas.

Both teachers and interested parents will be involved in this workshop with parents joining the group their child's classroom teacher is involved in. This workshop

will be held in a classroom so that we will have the classroom library available for demonstrations.

Once teachers and parents are together, I will show the video, *Read to Me*, (Dreamer & Douglas, 1991) to provide a rationale for reading to and with their children. I will then ask parents to share stories of times they have spent reading to and/or with their children. Next I will ask parents to volunteer ways they foster literacy at home. Literacy will be defined as, “the ability and willingness to use reading and writing to construct meaning from printed text based on the particular social context” (Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1995, p. 21). I will provide and go over a handout entitled Home Literacy Ideas (Enz, 1996) (See Appendix L). This will lead into the three strategies to help parents become involved in their child’s reading.

A packet containing the three strategies will be handed out. I will go over the first one, Routman’s (1991) *Strategy for Helping Students find the “Right” Book*, followed by a demonstration using the classroom library (See Appendix M). Parents will then be given the chance to comment and ask questions. The same procedure will be used to present *How to Choose the Best Books for YOU* (Tompkins, 1998), and *Ways to Help Your Child Read at Home* (Radencich, 1993) with teachers presenting the strategies (See Appendix N & O respectfully). These demonstrations will be videotaped for parents to borrow at a later date, should they choose to do so.

In closing, everyone will be invited to share refreshments, allowing parents and teachers time to discuss the materials that have been presented.

## Workshop #3 Agenda

1. Introduce myself and the other teachers
2. Show *Read to Me* video
3. Ask parents to share stories of home reading practices
4. Home Literacy Ideas (See Appendix L)
5. Go over handout of *Strategy for Helping Students find the “Right” Book* (See Appendix M)
  - a. demonstrate *Strategy for Helping Students find the “Right” Book*
  - b. allow time for parents to comment and ask questions
6. Go over handout of *How to Choose the Best Books for YOU* (See Appendix N)
  - a. demonstrate *How to Choose the Best Books for YOU*
  - b. allow time for parents to comment and ask questions
7. Go over handout of *Ways to Help Your Child Read at Home* (See Appendix O)
  - a. demonstrate *Ways to Help Your Child Read at Home*
  - b. allow time for parents to comment and ask questions
8. Refreshments and time for everyone to discuss the project

**Workshop #4:**  
**Community Involvement Programs**



**Purpose:**

This session is to inform teachers and parents on how to involve a variety of people from the community in the educational process. Involving members from the community shows students that literacy is important to everyone. This in turn will show students how reading, writing, listening, and speaking impact everyone's life. Having a community member to work with will help compensate for those parents/guardians who can not afford to spend the needed time with their children.

**Objectives:**

The participants will:

- ◆ understand the dynamics of involving the community in the educational process
- ◆ learn about programs to involve the community in literacy development
- ◆ design a plan of action to involve community members in the educational process

The first few minutes of this workshop will be used for discussion of the accomplishments and areas of concern in the teachers' communication efforts so far.

To begin the community involvement portion of the project, I will provide a rationale for enlisting members of the community. I will discuss the fact that all members of the community use literate acts in their lives, and can be wonderful literate role models for children. Seeing people's use of literacy can have a positive effect on student attitudes toward literacy. For example: If a student wants to become a fireperson, hearing a 'real

life fireperson' read a story and talk about how he/she uses literacy, that student might be motivated to take literacy more seriously.

This rationale will lead to the introduction of the Very Important Persons (VIPs) program. I will hand out the information/worksheet on the VIPs program and talk about it (See Appendix P). I will then have the participants group according to grade levels to devise a plan of action to implement the program. After giving the groups time to design their plan, volunteers will be asked to share their ideas and receive feedback from the remainder of the participants. I will follow the same format in working with the *Community Tutors* program (See Appendix Q). The same procedure will be used for the *Business Adoption* program, except we will work as one large group (See Appendix R). To end this session, I will ask for any questions and/or concerns regarding the implementation of the community programs.

The participants will then be invited to share in refreshments. This will allow further discussion on an informal basis.

This workshop is pivotal in developing community support for future school-to-home programs. This will involve a series of meetings with interested teachers to develop partnerships that will provide support. During this workshop, teachers will develop a plan of action to establish those connections.

### Workshop #4 agenda

1. Discussion of positives and concerns of the project so far.
2. Rationale for involving community members
3. Introduce the Very Important Persons (VIPs) program
  - a. go over handout (See Appendix P)
  - b. form grade level groups and design a plan of action
  - c. ask volunteers to share their plan
4. Introduce Community Tutors program
  - a. go over handout (See Appendix Q)
  - b. form grade level groups and design a plan of action
  - d. ask volunteers to share their plan
5. Introduce Business Adoption program
  - c. go over handout (See Appendix R)
  - d. work as a large group to design a plan of action
6. Refreshments and further discussion

**Workshop #5**  
**Classroom-to-home activities**

## Preface

This workshop occurs after the teachers have completed a plan of action for community support which leads to the financial and material support for the following workshop.

**Purpose:**

Workshop #5 is to provide literate activities for the children to take home, fostering literacy development. These programs ensure that students have materials in the home that enable them to read and write. These activities also show parents the importance of engaging in literate activities at home.

**Objectives:**

The participants will:

- ◆ learn about activities the school can provide to foster literacy growth in the home
- ◆ understand the dynamics of providing reading and writing materials for use in the home
- ◆ create a plan of action to implement reading and writing programs between school and home

The first few minutes of this session will be used for discussion of the progress and concerns made in the Community Involvement programs covered in workshop #4. I will then inform the participants that we are going to look at reading and writing activities that can be sent home with students that can be financed through the business adoption program initiated in the previous workshop.

I will first introduce the Lending Library and give the following rationale for it. A Lending Library is beneficial for the following reasons. First, not all children have books of their own at home to read every night. Secondly, most classes visit the school library,

but only once a week and, not all children have the opportunity to visit the public library as often as needed. Providing books to be checked out of the classroom ensures that every student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) have at least one book every night to read. I will then go over the handout on the Lending Library (See Appendix S). Time will then be given for the participant to design a plan of action to implement a Lending Library.

Next, I will introduce the Writing Briefcase by giving a rationale for providing writing materials. First, not all students have access to writing materials at home. Secondly, some students will be more apt to utilize these writing materials simply because they were brought from school, creating a 'special' feeling about it. I will then provide a handout (See Appendix T). I will go over the handout and provide the participants time to create a plan of action to implement the Writing Briefcases.

In closing, I will invite the participants to share refreshments. This will allow the teachers and parents to discuss the presented materials further on a more informal basis.

**Workshop #5 agenda**

- 1. Discussion of progress and concerns anyone has up to this point**
- 2. Discuss the importance of sending reading and writing activities home with students**
- 3. Introduce Lending Library**
  - a. go over handout (See Appendix S)**
  - b. create a plan of action to initiate a lending library**
- 4. Introduce the writing briefcase program**
  - a. go over handout (See Appendix T)**
  - b. create a plan of action to initiate the writing briefcase program**
- 5. Refreshments and further discussion**



**Workshop #6**  
**Recap of the year's events**

**Purpose:**

This workshop is to provide time for reflection and discussion of the events that have taken place in the parental involvement project. We will explore the overall reaction to what has taken place, and then look back at each component to identify the pros and cons of the project.

**Objectives:**

The participants will:

- ◆ reflect on the overall impact of the parental involvement project
- ◆ reflect on each component of the project
- ◆ identify the pros and cons of the project
- ◆ discuss possible changes for the future
- ◆ begin to create a parental involvement plan of action for next year

Everyone would be asked to bring all of the handouts from the parental involvement project to this workshop so we can look at each one during our discussion and decide whether things worked the way they were done, or need to be modified to obtain better results.

This workshop will begin with opening discussion of the overall reaction of what has taken place throughout the year in relation to the parental involvement project. Once we determine our reaction to the project as a whole, we will look back at each component and decide what we would do again, and what needs to be changed.

This session will end as we celebrate the program with thanks to all for the hard work that people have put into this project and refreshments.

**Workshop #6 agenda**

1. Opening discussion on the overall impact of the parental involvement project
2. Look back at the techniques used for initial communication in workshop #1
  - a. discuss what went well and what might be changed
3. Look back at the techniques for ongoing communications in workshop #2
  - a. discuss what went well and what might be changed
4. Look back at the techniques used in workshop #4 – Inviting Parents Involvement
  - a. discuss what went well and what might be changed
5. Look back at the classroom to home activities in workshop #5
  - b. discuss what went well and what might be changed
6. Ask for other ideas and activities that teachers might want to incorporate
7. Thanks to all and refreshments.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Involving parents in the educational arena takes a lot of time and energy, but as Hewison, Schofield, & Tizard's (1982) study showed, involving parents can be beneficial to everyone involved. "Regardless of the reasons why parents may not engage in literacy activities with their children, it is our responsibility as educators and child advocates to help parents fulfill their role as their child's first and most important teacher" (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997, p.419).

The six workshops provided in this project are intended to guide teachers and parents along the road to positive parental and community involvement by providing initial and ongoing communication techniques, strategies for parents to use in home literacy activities, soliciting personal and financial support from the community, and school-to-home activities that ensure that students, and parents, of having materials in the home to foster literacy development.

Techniques alone will not foster positive involvement of parents/guardians. Each teacher needs to show genuine concern and communicate on a level that each parent/guardian can relate to - do not use technical jargon, or too simplistic a language. Teachers also need to listen to parent concerns and ideas for parents to feel like a valid component in their child's education.

This project takes for granted that the parents and guardians of the students are high level readers. This may not be the case. Teachers need to be aware of this concern and make adaptations to accommodate such situations. One adaptation is to use a tape recorder or telephone conversations for journalling. It is also recommended that a

parent/adult literacy program be developed and implemented parallel to this program. As Enz discussed. "We cannot take anything for granted" not all people know how to be parents (personal communication, April 23, 1998). For this reason, a parallel parenting class could also be advantageous.

Time constraints can pose a problem for many parents in today's ever-changing society. Teachers need to realize that everyone has obligations that take attention away from children and try to provide ideas to interact with their children in a variety of levels, ranging from school-like activities to everyday literate behaviors.

Childcare can be a dilemma for parents of young children who want to attend these workshops. To eliminate this obstacle, it is suggested that volunteer high school students be enlisted to provide childcare during the workshops. These high school students could possibly be earning credit for classes such as Married Life or Parenting while assisting in the parental involvement project simultaneously.

"Strong parent involvement is not a question of 'Should we?' but rather a question of 'How should we?' (Routman, 1991. P. 485).

### References

- Berger, E. H. (1991). Parents as partners: The school and home working together. New York: Macmillan.
- Christie, J., Enz, B., & Vukelich, C. (1997). Teaching Language and literacy: Preschool through the elementary grades. USA: Longman.
- Dreamer, R. (Producer), & Douglas, J., & Martin, P. (Directors). (1991). Read to me. [Videotape]. (Available from the International Reading Association, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139)
- Enz, B. J., & Searfoss, L. W. (1996). Expanding our views of family literacy. The Reading Teacher, 49(7), 567-579.
- Erickson, L.G. (1995). Supervision of literacy programs: Teachers as grass roots change agents. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Fine, M. J., & Robinson, E. L. (1994). Developing collaborative home-school relationships. Preventing School Failure, 33 (1), 9-15.
- Fitton, L., & Gredler, G. (1996). Parental involvement in reading remediation with young children. Psychology in the Schools, 33 (4), 325-332.
- Fredricks, A., & Rasinsky, T. (1990). Involving the uninvolved: How to. The Reading Teacher, 43 (4), 424-425.
- Fuller, M. L., & Olsen, G. (1998). Home-school relations: Working successfully with parents and families. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon
- Hewison, J., Schofield, W., & Tizard, J. (1982). Collaboration between teachers and parents in assisting children's reading. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 52, 1-15.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (1995). Parental involvement in children's education: Why does it make a difference. Teacher's College Record, 97 (2), 310-331.

Graybill, J. O. (1992). When parent want more. The Executive Educator, 14 (8), 18-20.

Johnston, J. H. (1994). Home-school partnerships: Shall we dance? Schools In TheMiddle, 4 (2), 5-8.

Johnston, P. (1997). Knowing literacy: Constructive literacy assessment. York, ME: Stenhouse.

Lazar, M. L., & Weisberg, R. (1996). Inviting parents' perspectives: Building home- school partnerships to support children who struggle with literacy. The Reading Teacher, 50 (3), 228-237.

Radencich, R., Beers, P., & Schumm, J. (1993). A handbook for the K-12 reading resource specialist. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Readence, J., Bean, T., & Baldwin, R. (1995) Content area literacy: An integrated approach. Debuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Reynolds, A. (1992). Comparing measures of parental involvement and their effects on academic achievement. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 7, 441-462.

Rhodes, L. & Dudley-Marling, C. (1996). Readers and writers with a difference: A holistic approach to teach struggling readers and writers. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routman, R. (1991). Invitations: Changing as teachers and learners K-12. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Routman, R. (1996). Literacy at the crossroads: Critical talk about reading, writing, and other teaching dilemmas. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Shockley, B. (1994). Extending the literate community: Home-to-school and school-to-home. The Reading Teacher, 47, 500-502.

Springate, K. W., & Stegelin, D. A. (1999). Building school and community partnerships through parent involvement. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Tompkins, G. (1998). 50 strategies: Step by step. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Weinstein, C., & Mignano, A. (1993). Elementary classroom management: Lessons from research and practice. New York: McGraw-Hill.



**Appendix A**  
**Sample Calendar**

# August

1999

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i>   | <i>Tue</i>   | <i>Wed</i> | <i>Thu</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|------------|--|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>1</b>   | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>   | <b>4</b>   | <b>5</b>   | <b>6</b>   | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>8</b>   | <b>9</b><br>workshop #1<br>overview & initial<br>communications<br>teachers only | <b>10</b>  | <b>11</b>  | <b>12</b>  | <b>13</b>  | <b>14</b>  |
| <b>15</b>  | <b>16</b>  | <b>17</b>  | <b>18</b>  | <b>19</b>  | <b>20</b>  | <b>21</b>  |
| <b>22</b>  | <b>23</b><br>informal discussion<br>group A<br>teachers only                     | <b>24</b><br>informal discussion<br>group B<br>teachers only | <b>25</b>  | <b>26</b>  | <b>27</b>  | <b>28</b>  |
| <b>29</b>  | <b>30</b>  | <b>31</b>  |            |            |            |            |

# September

1999

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i>  | <i>Tue</i>  | <i>Wed</i> | <i>Thu</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|------------|---|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|            |   |   | 1          | 2          | 3          | 4          |
| 5          | 6   | 7   | 8          | 9          | 10         | 11         |
| 12         | 13 workshop #2<br>Group A<br>ongoing communica-<br>tions<br>teachers only | 14 workshop #2<br>Group B<br>ongoing communica-<br>tions<br>teachers only | 15         | 16         | 17         | 18         |
| 19         | 20  | 21  | 22         | 23         | 24         | 25         |
| 26         | 27<br>informal discussion<br>Group A                                      | 28<br>informal discussion<br>Group B                                      | 29         | 30         |            |            |

# October

1999

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i>  | <i>Tue</i>  | <i>Wed</i>  | <i>Thu</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|------------|---|---|---|------------|------------|------------|
|            |   |   |   |            | 1          | 2          |
| 3          | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7          | 8          | 9          |
| 10         | 11 workshop #3<br>parents involvement<br>teachers & parents<br>grades K-1-2 | 12 workshop #3<br>parents involvement<br>teachers & parents<br>grades 3-4 | 13 workshop #3<br>parents involvement<br>teachers & parents<br>grades 5-6 | 14         | 15         | 16         |
| 17         | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21         | 22         | 23         |
| 24         | 25<br>informal discussion<br>grade K-1-2<br>teachers only                   | 26<br>informal discussion<br>grade 3-4<br>teachers only                   | 27<br>informal discussion<br>grade 5-6teachers<br>only                    | 28         | 29         | 30         |
| 31         |   |   |   |            |            |            |

# November

1999

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i>  | <i>Tue</i> | <i>Wed</i> | <i>Thu</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|------------|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|            | 1   | 2          | 3          | 4          | 5          | 6          |
| 7          | 8<br>workshop #4<br>community programs<br>all teachers and par-<br>ents | 9          | 10         | 11         | 12         | 13         |
| 14         | 15  | 16         | 17         | 18         | 19         | 20         |
| 21         | 22<br>informal discussion<br>all teachers                               | 23         | 24         | 25         | 26         | 27         |
| 28         | 29  | 30         |            |            |            |            |

# February

2000

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i>  | <i>Tue</i>  | <i>Wed</i> | <i>Thu</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|------------|---|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|            |   | 1   | 2          | 3          | 4          | 5          |
| 6          | 7 workshop #5<br>school -to-home<br>activities<br>teachers and parents<br>Group A | 8 workshop #5<br>school -to-home<br>activities<br>teachers and parents<br>Group B | 9          | 10         | 11         | 12         |
| 13         | 14  | 15  | 16         | 17         | 18         | 19         |
| 20         | 21<br>informal discussion<br>Group A<br>teachers only                             | 22<br>informal discussion<br>Group B<br>teachers only                             | 23         | 24         | 25         | 26         |
| 27         | 28  | 29  |            |            |            |            |

# April

2000

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i>  | <i>Tue</i> | <i>Wed</i> | <i>Thu</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|------------|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|            |   |            |            |            |            | 1          |
| 2          | 3   | 4          | 5          | 6          | 7          | 8          |
| 9          | 10 workshop #6<br>recap years events<br>all teachers and<br>parents | 11         | 12         | 13         | 14         | 15         |
| 16         | 17  | 18         | 19         | 20         | 21         | 22         |
| 23         | 24  | 25         | 26         | 27         | 28         | 29         |
| 30         |   |            |            |            |            |            |

**Appendix B**

|   | As a Teacher<br>I...     |                          |                          | As a Teacher<br>I Believe That<br>I Should... |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
|   | Always                   | Some-<br>Times           | Never                    | Essential                                     | Not<br>Important         |
| 1. Listen to what parents are saying.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Encourage parents to drop in.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Give parents an opportunity to contribute to my class.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Have written handouts that enable parents to participate in the classroom. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Send newsletters home to parents.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Contact parents before school in the fall.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Listen to parents 50% of the time during conferences.                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Contact parents when a child does well.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Allow for differences among parents.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Learn objectives parents have for their children.                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Learn about interests and special abilities of students.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Visit students in their homes.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Show parents examples of student's work.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Enlist parent volunteers for my classroom.                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Accept differences among parents.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Encourage both mother and father to attend conferences.                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |



- |  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 17. Make parents feel comfortable coming to school.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Include parents in educational plans for their children.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. Try to be open and honest with parents.                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Send notes home with children.                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Include students along with parents during conferences.            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Let parents set at their child's desk during back-to-school night. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Keep both parents informed if parents are separated.               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Consider parents as partners in the educational process.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Berger, E.H. (1991). Parents as partners in education: The school and home working together. (p. 125.) New York: Macmillan.

## Appendix C

### Overview of Recent research of Parental Involvement

Studies show that children do much better in school when their parents help them along the way. These same studies show that parents want to be involved in their children's education. So, why are parents not involved in their children's education?

1. Benefits of parental involvement
  - a. Students:
  - b. Parents:
  - c. Teachers:
  - d. Schools:
  
2. various communication barriers:
  - a. teachers and administrators are too busy to listen or validate parents concerns
  - b. past communications have only been of a negative nature
  - c. communication contains educational jargon which parents do not understand
  - d. too simplistic a language makes parents feel inferior

(Fine & Robinson, 1994)
  
3. Parents may have negative memories of being in school themselves that carry into the present situation.
  
4. negative communications can lead parents to learning centers because:

- a. learning centers are a business run for profit, this causes tutors to listen and respond to what the parents want for their children
- b. learning centers are concerned with the finances; therefore they do not follow educational theory or ethics

(Graybill, 1992)

5. Societal changes have changed peoples' point of view to whose responsibility it is to raise and educate children.
- a. mobility has created communities where people do not know their neighbors
  - b. mobility has also created new languages, cultural beliefs, and child-rearing practices to emerge
  - c. two-working-parent and single-parent families

(Johnston, 1994)

6. Most parents are very interested in their children's education no matter their nationality or socioeconomic status. Parents are not involved because:
- a. they do not realize that they can help
  - b. they do not feel competent and worry about negative repercussions
- ( Enz, 1996; Fitton & Gredler, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993)

7. What do teachers need to do to involve parents in their child's literacy development?
- a. initiate and open positive lines of communication
    - 1. Listen to what parents have to say about their children.  
Active/empathetic listening
    - 2. Talk on a level that parents can understand.

3. Treat parents as partners in education on an equal level.
4. Inform parents on what is happening in the classroom.
5. Give parents suggestions on what to do with their children to foster literacy acquisition.
6. Communicate with parents on **positive** aspects of their children with either a telephone call or a note.

(Erickson, 1995; Fine & Robinson, 1994; Reynolds, 1992; Routman, 1991; Routman, 1996; Weinstein & Mignano, 1993)

## Appendix D

### Home-School Communications

In the first column, please list some practices you have used in the past to involve or communicate with parents. In the second third and fourth columns, indicates whether the practice was one-way communication, two-way communication, or three-way communication.

| Practice  | <u>One-way</u>   | <u>Two-way</u>              | <u>Three-way</u>                        |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| (Specific technique used to communicate with parents) | (School to home) | (Between school and parent) | (Between school, parents, and students) |
| 1.  |                  |                             |   |
| 2.  |                  |                             |   |
| 3.  |                  |                             |   |
| 4.  |                  |                             |   |
| 5.  |                  |                             |   |
| 6.  |                  |                             |   |

## Appendix E

### Home Visits

Home visits allow teachers, children, and parents to meet on the parent's home ground where parents might feel more comfortable and open to discussion. Teachers can share information on classroom procedures and techniques, and give parents the opportunity to ask questions. Parents and teachers can exchange ideas of the child's reading and writing development and talk about the child's literate activities.

Some parents do not feel comfortable having the teacher come into their home, so teachers might want to give parents the choice on where to meet. It might be possible to meet at a nearby restaurant or other public place. Home visits are very time consuming, but the benefits are well worth it. Twenty minutes is the suggested block of time for home visits (Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1996).

Berger (1991, p.277) offers some guidelines for home visits:

- ◆ Be a good listener.
- ◆ Be flexible.
- ◆ Be prompt.
- ◆ Dress appropriately and comfortably.
- ◆ Be confident.
- ◆ Be yourself.
- ◆ Respect cultural and ethnic values.
- ◆ Monitor your own behavior - the parent is observing you.
- ◆ Don't impose values.

- ◆ What do I want to find out?
- ◆ What questions might I want to ask?
- ◆ What will I share with the family?

## Appendix F

### Tell me about your Child

“On the first day of school I sent home a two-sentence request that read ‘Welcome to the first grade. Please tell me about your child.’ The parents responded by writing heartfelt description of their own children” (Shockley, 1994, p. 500).

An adaptation of *Tell me about your child* would be to hold a face-to-face conference to allow a more personal touch. In the initial telephone call, teachers could try to schedule a time to meet in the classroom face-to-face. In this conference, the teacher would listen to what the parents have to say about their child, rather than doing most of the talking. This would allow the parents/guardians to begin the conversation while the teacher learns more about the family, their views on literacy, and style of communication. If schedules do not allow for a face-to-face conference, the teacher could request that the parents write about their child as shown above.

Do I want a face-to-face conference or a written response?

What do I want to find out?

What questions could I ask to elicit the desired response?



### Appendix G

|  | How You<br>See<br>Yourself |                          | How You<br>Wish You<br>Were |                          |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | Yes                        | No                       | Yes                         | No                       |
| <b>As a Teacher I...</b>   |                            |                          |                             |                          |
| 1. Feel that parents are more work than help.  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Tense when parents are in my room.  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Prefer to work alone.   | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Compare brothers and sisters from the same family.  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Feel threatened by parents.   | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. View parents as a great resource.   | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Believe that low-income children have parents who do not care.                                      | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Enjoy working with several outside persons in the classroom.  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Have prejudiced feelings about certain groups.  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Feel that parents let children watch too much television.  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Feel parents are not interested in their children.   | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Work better with social distance between the parent and myself.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Believe parents who let their children come to school in inappropriate clothing are irresponsible. | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Feel that a close working relationship with parents is necessary for optimal student growth.       | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Am pleased when all parents are gone.  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Anticipate parent conferences with pleasure.   | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Feel that parents have abdicated the parental role.  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

---

Berger, E.H. (1991). Parents as partners in education: The school and home working together. (p. 124.) New York: Macmillan.

## Appendix H

### Dialogue Journals

“A dialogue journal is a written conversation between two people” (Radencich, Beers, & Schumm, 1993, p. 114). The dialogue journal in this instance is between teacher and parent. It might be valuable to invite the children to take part in the journal project too. This will give the student a place to talk about what has been learned or areas of concern.

It is not physically possible to journal with the parents of each student every week, but on a rotating basis, each family could be contacted once a month. For example, if you have twenty students in your classroom, five families could be contacted one week, five more the next, and so on. This would enable you to contact each family nine times throughout the year.

#### Sample Dialogue Journal Starter

Dear Parents,

Each week your child will come home with this journal. This is a place where you and I may correspond with one another. You can use this journal to tell me about your child’s reading at home or to ask me a question. Perhaps your child has had an interesting conversation with you or you see a change in attitude toward his or her reading or writing. Your thoughts and input will be very helpful to me. I will respond to your writing each week.

Lazar, M. L. & Weisberg, R. (1996). Inviting parents’ perspectives: Building home- school partnerships to support children who struggle with literacy. The Reading Teacher. 50 (3), 228-237.

## **Appendix I**

### **Newsletters**

According to Springate and Stegelin (1999), newsletters have four objectives:

1. Keeping parents informed about activities conducted in the classroom
2. Giving parents insight into the educational purposes underlying activities
3. Enhancing children's and parent's abilities to communicate with each other
4. Reinforcing and extending school learning into the home, especially in the area of language development

(p. 58)

Newsletters should be no more than two pages so that busy parents will not be too overwhelmed to read it (Fuller & Olsen, 1998). A newsletter can contain many items, for example:

- ◆ Samples of students' work
- ◆ Relevant quotations from students
- ◆ Announcements
- ◆ Requests for needed materials
- ◆ Special community announcements
- ◆ Reprints of short articles that might be of particular interest to parents
- ◆ Suggestions of things that parents and children can do together
- ◆ Thank you notes to parents who have in some way helped the class
- ◆ Suggestions for age-appropriate books for your students and books dealing with education, parenting, etc. for parents
- ◆ Welcomes to new class members and their families

- ◆ A brief synopsis of what is being studied in class
- ◆ Articles or notes from parents for other parents (p. 115)

Christie, Enx, & Vukelich (1997) suggest that a two or three-column format be used and include regular features such as; “Dear Teacher, Parent Partnerships, Curriculum Overview, and Monthly Calendar” in each issue (p. 426).

## **Appendix J**

### **Positive Communication Moments**

#### **Phone Calls**

When communication with parents over the telephone, the bad news stigma must be overcome (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997). “Successful teachers have found that brief, positive, and frequent telephone conversations help to establish a strong partnership with parents” (Fredricks & Rasinski, 1990). A teacher’s enthusiasm toward a student, upcoming event, or project can lead to good rapport and increased involvement in classroom activities.

#### **Happy Grams**

Efforts to keep families aware and involved in developmental accomplishments or a happy event using spontaneous written communication serve to build bonds among everyone involved (Springate & Stegelin, 1999). Simply written on a sheet of paper stating the positive event or action along with an eye-catching clipart helps parents feel as though they are involved, and aware of the accomplishments of their children.

It is not physically possible to contact the parents of each student every week, but on a rotating basis, each family could be contacted once a month on a positive note. For example, if you have twenty students in your classroom, five families could be contacted one week, five more the next, and so on. This would enable you to contact each family nine times throughout the year.

## Appendix K

### **Suggested items for professional resources in parental involvement.**

Simple things you can do to help all children read well and independently by the end of third grade. (1997). U.S. Department of education.

Cullinan, B. & Bagert, B. (1997). Helping your child learn to read with activities from infancy through age 10. U. S. Department of Education.

Fredricks, A.D. & LeBlanc, E.P, (1986). Letters to parents: Over 200 ideas for building reading skills. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman

<http://webster.stjohns.K12.fl.us/parents/Readingwksp.html>

[http://www.ala.org/alsc/raise\\_a\\_reader.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/raise_a_reader.html)

<http://www.aspensys.com/eric/resources/parent/parent.html>

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs>

<http://www.ed.gov/Family/RSRforFamily/>

<http://www.ed.gov/Family/RWN/Activ97/begin.html>

<http://www.ed.gov/Family/RWN/Activ97/readlist.html>

<http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/ReadDiff/index.html>

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamInvolve/local3.html>

<http://.ed.gov/pubs/PFIE/conparnt.html>

<http://www.familyeducation.com/topic/index/0,1304,3,00.html>

[http://www.indiana.edu/~eric\\_rec/ieo/digests/d89.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/ieo/digests/d89.html)

<http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content/improve.reading.html>

<http://www.parentsoup.com>

<http://www.reading.org>

<http://www.nea.org/readacross/rdtips.html>

<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/KidsClick>

<http://www.udel.edu/ETL/RWN/Moving.html#look>

I can read and write!: How to encourage your school-age child's literacy

development. (1999). International Reading Association.

International Reading Association. (1997). Explore the playground of books: Tips for parents of beginning readers. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1997). Get ready to read!: Tips for parents of young children. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1997). Good books make reading fun for your child. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1997). Good books make reading fun for your child study: A key to success...ways parents can help. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1998). Making the most of television: Tips for parents of young viewers. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1998). See the world on the internet: Tips for parents of young readers-and "surfers". [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1997). Summer reading adventure!: Tips for parents of young readers. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1997). Summer reading is important. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1997). You can encourage your child to read.  
[Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1997). You can help your child connect  
reading to writing. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

Swanson, B. (1991). How can I encourage my young child to read? [Brochure] U.  
S. Department of Education.

International Reading Association. (1998). You can help your child in reading  
using the newspaper. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

International Reading Association. (1998). You can use television to stimulate  
your child's reading habits. [Brochure] Newark, DE: Author.

McKee, P. (1975). Primer for parents: How your child learns to read. Houghton  
Mifflin.

[wysiwyg://70/http://www.accesseric.org:81/resources/parent/involved.html](http://www.accesseric.org:81/resources/parent/involved.html)



## **Appendix L**

### **Home Literacy Ideas**

#### **Let's go shopping**

Trips to the grocery, drug, or clothing store provide children chances to use their ever-growing literacy skills. For example, children may help parents or caregivers by

- ◆ writing items on a shopping list;
- ◆ sorting coupons in preparation for shopping;
- ◆ recognizing products while shopping; or
- ◆ reading a grocery list and helping to locate items in the store.

#### **In the kitchen**

Children find the kitchen to be a great place, full of shiny appliances, interesting tools, and a great variety of reading materials. There are many print-rich activities that parents/caregivers can encourage. For example, children may help

- ◆ put food products away after shopping;
- ◆ find specific food items from refrigerator or pantry;
- ◆ read or recognize words on recipe cards and cookbooks; or
- ◆ follow directions on recipes and make or bake food.

#### **That's entertainment**

Games like Scrabble™ and Monopoly™ offer children many choices to entertain themselves by using literacy skills. A few more examples of this type of print fun include

- ◆ having chalk talks – children may draw and label chalk villages, castles, or forts on small chalkboards, sidewalks, or driveways;
- ◆ singing songs from songbooks;
- ◆ reading storybooks, magazines, and TV guides; or
- ◆ reading comics and movie sections of the newspaper.

**To and from**

Parents and caregivers are always running errands and driving from one activity to the another. This time can be used to

- ◆ converse with one another – find out what happened at school today and tell them what happened in your life;
- ◆ read traffic signals and signs, billboards, and street signs;
- ◆ play first letter alphabet game, “I see the b in basketball”; or
- ◆ have children read to you (in public transport particularly).

**Stay in touch**

It’s great fun to send and receive mail. Parents and caregivers can support children’s efforts by

- ◆ encouraging children to write brief, informal notes to relatives;
- ◆ provide paper and crayons to create their own cards for birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, etc.;
- ◆ giving children interesting junk mail to read and play with; or
- ◆ writing and reading FYI notes to and from parents and siblings.

**Let’s pretend**

Dramatic play offers children many choices to be store clerks, bankers, parents, babysitters, teachers, firefighters, etc. All careers use reading and writing. Parents and caregivers may support literacy play by providing

- ◆ blank deposit slips or canceled checks for playing bank;
- ◆ coupons and empty food containers for playing store;
- ◆ menus, writing pads, and empty food containers for playing restaurant; or
- ◆ books, chalkboard, and paper for playing school.

Enz, B. J., & Searfoss, L. W. (1996). Expanding our views of family literacy. The Reading Teacher, 49(7), 567-579.

## Appendix M

### Strategy for Helping Students find the “Right” Book

Have you been to a bookstore lately? Bookstores in the 1990s are lively, colorful, exciting places that offer thousands of choices of what to read. But many people still say, “I don’t read because it’s boring.” It may well be that such people just haven’t found the **RIGHT BOOK!!!**

How do people find the **RIGHT BOOK**? We’re not talking about the **RIGHT BOOK** for a book report or the **RIGHT BOOK** to please your teacher. We’re talking about the **RIGHT BOOK** to please you!

Start with your interests. Are you interested in music, antique cars, hairstyles, skiing?

No **RIGHT BOOK**? Then move on to your current needs. Maybe you need to learn about how to play golf, redecorate your room, learn more about Colorado for an upcoming family vacation.

No **RIGHT BOOK** yet? Think about your favorite TV show or movie. Think about the type of TV show or movie you like. Do you like comedies? Mysteries? Horror shows? Science fiction? History? Biographies? Fantasies? Others? Try to find a book that has a similar focus to that of your favorite programs and shows.

No **RIGHT BOOK** yet? Then start with magazines. Find a magazine article you *really* like, and then ask the librarian if he or she knows of a book that is similar to the article you read.

Still no **RIGHT BOOK**? Then talk to your friends, an adult that you respect or share common interests with, or even your librarian. They might have some leads.

Radencich, R., Beers, P., & Schumm, J. (1993). A handbook for the K-12 reading resource specialist. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

## Appendix N

### How to Choose the Best Books for YOU

#### “Too Easy” Books

1. The book is short.
2. The print is big.
3. You have read the book before.
4. You know all the words in the book.
5. The book has a lot of pictures.
6. You are an expert on this topic.

#### “Just Right” Books

1. The book looks interesting.
2. You can decode most of the words in the book.
3. Mrs. Donnelly has read this book aloud to you.
4. You have read other books by this author.
5. There’s someone to give you help if you need it.
6. You know something about this topic.

#### “Too Hard” Books

1. The book is long.
2. The print is small.
3. There aren’t any pictures in the book.
4. There are a lot of words you can’t decode.
5. There’s no one to help you read this book.

Tompkins, G. (1998). *50 strategies: Step by step*. Upper Saddle River, NJ:

Merrill

## Appendix O

### Ways to Help Your Child Read at Home

#### Setting the Atmosphere

Help your child find a quiet, comfortable place to read.

Have your child see you as a reading model.

Read aloud to your child. Reread favorite stories.

Read with your child.

Discuss the stories you read together.

Recognize the value of silent reading.

Keep reading time enjoyable and relaxed.

#### Responding to errors in reading

Based on the way most of us were taught to read, we have told the child to “sound it out” when he comes to an unknown word. While phonics is an important part of reading, reading for meaning is the primary goal. To produce independent readers who monitor and correct themselves as they read, the following prompts are recommended *before* saying “sound it out.”

- ◆ Give your child wait time of 5 to 10 seconds. See what he attempts to do to help himself.
- ◆ “What would make sense there?”
- ◆ “What do you think that word could be?”
- ◆ “Use the picture to help you figure out what it could be.”
- ◆ “Go back to the beginning and try that again.”
- ◆ “Skip over it and read to the end of the sentence (or paragraph.)  
Now what do you think it is?”
- ◆ “Put in a word that would make sense there.”
- ◆ “You read that word before on another page. See if you can find it.”
- ◆ “Look at how the word begins. Start it out and keep reading.”
- ◆ Tell your child the word.

Most important, focus on what your child is doing well and attempting to do. Be loving and supportive. When your child is having difficulty and trying to work out the trouble spots, comments such as the following are suggested:

- ◆ “Good for you. I like the way you tried to work that out.”
- ◆ “That was a good try. Yes, that word would make sense there.”
- ◆ “I like the way you looked at the picture to help yourself.”
- ◆ “I like the way you went back to the beginning of the sentence and tried that again. That’s what good readers do.”
- ◆ “You are becoming a good reader. I’m proud of you.”

Routman, R. (1991). Invitations: Changing as teachers and learners K-12.

Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

**Appendix P**  
**Very Important Person Program**  
(VIPs)

“Community members of all types - secretaries, politicians, lawyers, construction workers, computer programmers, maids, chefs, firefighters, flight attendants, store clerks, doctors, farmers, and professors-may be invited into the classroom. When they arrive they may read their favorite childhood story or perhaps an appropriate story that provides information about their career. After the VIPs read the stories, they may wish to tell how they use reading and writing in the performance of their job. Children are always fascinated and sometimes surprised to hear how all types of jobs require literacy” (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997).

Who could we ask to be a VIP?

Who will contact these people?

Will this be done for each classroom, grade level, or other arrangement?

## **Appendix Q**

### **Community Tutors**

Retired persons or anyone from the community are enlisted to volunteer time each week to come into the school/classroom. "Classroom tutors regularly volunteer time each week to listen or read to beginning readers or to take dictation from young writers" (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997). Older children can be read to or have the tutor listen to them read. Individual teachers should instruct the volunteers on the procedures that should be taken during reading. (e.g. SWAT or discussion of the story)

Who can we contact for community volunteers?

When would be a good time for the volunteers to work with students?

What type of activities would you like the volunteers to perform?

Will they need training?



## **Appendix R Business Adoption Program**

“In this type of community involvement program, the school/classroom is adopted by a business in the community. Businesses may provide some financial support for the purchase of books or writing materials” (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997).

Will this be done by classroom, grade level, or for the entire elementary?

Who can we contact for financial support for buying books and writing supplies?

Who will contact these people?

How will we contact prospective supporters?

What books do we want?

What supplies do we need?

## **Appendix S**

### **Lending Library**

Most libraries only allow children to check out one or two books a week. Classroom lending libraries can be established to enable every child to check out at least one high quality book every night. This ensures that all parents will have the opportunity to read to/with their child daily. To begin a lending library, it is only necessary to have one book for each student. The books can be rotated with each student having a chance to check each book out. The ideal classroom lending library should “contain five to eight books per child. According to these guidelines, a class of twenty five students would require at least one hundred and twenty five books” (Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1997).

Will the lending library be set up for each classroom, each grade level, or the entire elementary?

Where will the library, or libraries be housed?

Who will work in the library/libraries?

When will the library/libraries be open?

Do we have books that we can use to start the lending library/libraries?

What books do we want?

## Appendix T

### Writing Briefcase

A Writing Briefcase is a briefcase is: “a briefcase (or other suitable carryall) containing various supplies for use in various writing activities. The briefcase can be an inexpensive plastic carrying case or canvas portfolio. Inside the briefcase, the teacher may provide writing paper, colored construction paper, markers, pens and pencils, glue, tape, a small stapler—anything that might stimulate a child to write a story, make a greeting card, design a book cover, or create whatever the child can imagine. Depending on the size of the class, teachers may have seven or eight writing briefcases—enough so that four or five children may check out the materials each day, and two or three extras so that the teacher has time to replenish the briefcase supplies frequently and conveniently. The briefcases are numbered, and each has a library pocket and identification card. The checkout procedures follow the same routine as the library.”

Christie, J., Enz, B., & Vukelich, C. (1997). Teaching Language and literacy: Preschool through the elementary grades. USA: Longman.

Will the writing briefcases be set up for each classroom, grade level, or the entire elementary?

Will the writing briefcases be house in the library/libraries?

What materials do we want in the writing briefcases?

How many briefcases do we want?

Who will find the prices?

How much will everything cost?

Who will do the shopping?

Who will put the writing briefcases together?

Who will replenish the writing briefcases?

Where will the extra materials be housed?