

THE EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON
READING ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTITUDE

MASTER'S PROJECT

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

As educators, our most important objective is teaching children how to read. (Silvern, 1985; Tchudi, 1991; Duff, 1981) Reading is most important because printed materials are a part of everyday life. In the course of a day, a person can realistically encounter print several times: transportation schedules, television/movie listings, recipes, menus, product labels, road signs, newspapers, magazines, and books. Not being able to read and understand these materials can affect the way a person functions in society.

Reading is a communication process between the reader and the writer. (Smith and Johnson, 1980; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) It involves more than just decoding printed material. It includes skills such as letter/word recognition, sequencing, predicting/drawing conclusions, vocabulary

development, main idea/details, and summarizing and paraphrasing. Sequencing refers to the ability to put story events in the proper order. According to McNeil, Donant, and Akin, "The ability to understand the sequence of events is necessary if one is to comprehend a variety of reading material" (p. 130). Predicting refers to the ability to make an educated guess about what will happen in a story. Prediction facilitates learning, for as a reader predicts, purposes are set for critical comprehension. (Foley, 1993) Vocabulary knowledge is an important component of reading comprehension. (Nagy, 1991; Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994; Smith and Johnson, 1980; Paul, 1989; Smith, 1988) The greater a reader's vocabulary is, the more likely he/she is to understand unfamiliar printed material. Summarizing refers to the ability to explain events in a brief or concise manner. In order to summarize effectively the reader needs to understand main idea and differentiate among details. The ability to summarize information is important for understanding and remembering texts. (Brown, Day, and Jones, 1983) Reading also includes strategies and thought processes

such as context clues, mapping and webbing, synthesizing, and evaluating. All of these skills and strategies allow the reader to piece together meaning from the written material. Reading is a complex process. (Shapiro and Riley, 1989; Stein, 1986)

Since formal schooling began, some form of reading instruction has been a daily part of the elementary school schedule. Reading instruction in the elementary school has basically followed one of two approaches -- traditional or modern. In the past, "The reading act was viewed as a collection of skills and subskills which were differentiated into a scope and sequence of hierarchy indicating at which grade level each skill would be taught and in what order". (Cheek, Jr., 1989) Reading instruction based on this viewpoint is known as the traditional approach.

According to the traditional approach reading is best taught when it is broken into small bits or skills. (Klesius, Griffith, Zielonka, 1991; Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994;) The skills start with letter recognition, move to word recognition, and conclude with comprehension. Comprehension has three parts --

literal, inferential, and critical. Each of these three parts has skills associated with it. Mastery of one skill must be achieved before the next skill is presented.

The traditional approach branches off in two directions in the area of word recognition -- phonics and sight words. Phonics instruction involves teaching students individual letter sounds and combinations of letter sounds with the intent of helping students sound out unfamiliar words. (Delcamp, 1987; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985; Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994) Sight word, also known as look-say, instruction involves teaching children to recognize whole words instantly. (Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994) The emphasis in both types of instruction is for the students to be able to recognize and pronounce printed words. (Tchudi, 1991)

Most reading material used in the traditional approach comes from a basal reader. Some of these stories are written expressly for the basal. The vocabulary is controlled. (Klesius, Griffith, and Zielonka, 1991) Included in a basal program are

teacher resources such as manuals, workbooks, skill sheets, tests, and visual aids. (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) The traditional approach believes that the text gives more to the student than the student brings to the text. (Strange, 1980; Cheek, Jr., 1989)

In recent years, there has been a shift from the belief that reading is based on skills and levels to the idea that reading is whole, meaningful, and relevant. (K. Goodman, 1986; Y. Goodman, 1989) It is a process that begins with the reader's prior knowledge and expectations of meaning. (Cheek, Jr., 1989; Goodman, 1976) This modern approach to teaching reading is more commonly known as Whole Language.

Whole Language focuses on teaching strategies to acquire meaning. (Klesius, Griffith, and Zielonka, 1991; Cheek, Jr., 1989) Students are taught to look at reading material as a whole. Students are expected to use previous experiences to make sense of the texts. (Goodman, 1986)

In this approach the teacher acts as a facilitator. (Eisele, 1991) The teacher provides an

environment which is conducive to children playing an active role in their learning process. In this type of classroom children are encouraged to take risks and be responsible for their learning. (K. Goodman, 1986; Y. Goodman, 1989) The teacher involves the students in decision making that affects their learning. Children are often given choices about what they want to learn. (Eisele, 1991)

The Whole Language approach views reading and writing as one. Since they are one, they must be taught together. All activities in the classroom are related to one another. This is often done through the use of thematic units in which all content instruction is based on a central theme. Reading and writing are included in activities whenever possible. Whole Language advocates believe learning to read and write is a natural process, and therefore should be taught in conjunction with each other. (Shapiro and Riley, 1989; Cheek, Jr., 1989)

Although reading instruction has experienced change in its approach, reading assessment has undergone very little change. (Heithaus, 1989; Valencia

and Pearson, 1987) Reading can be assessed by teacher observation, reading book tests, teacher created tests, and standardized reading tests. (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) Even though all of these testing formats may be used, the standardized test is most commonly used when identifying a student's reading achievement level. (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985; Levande, 1993) Standardized tests are machined scored tests that focus on measurable behaviors like word recognition, sound blending, and reading comprehension. (Levande, 1993) These tests are often considered when measuring the effectiveness of reading instruction. (Valencia and Pearson, 1987; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985; Heithaus, 1989)

Regardless of the type of instruction received, there are still children who have great difficulty with reading. (Snow, 1983; Howard, 1988) Howard (1988) found that it is not uncommon in today's classroom to find children reading one year or more below grade level. Research shows that attitude is a contributing factor to a child's reading achievement. (Henderson,

1988; Fredericks, 1982; McKenna and Kear, 1990)

According to Henderson (1988), "The key to achievement seems to lie in students' positive attitude about themselves and their control of over the environment" (p. 150). Howard (1988) states, "The way students feel about reading is closely related to their degree of success with it." This means that attitude and achievement are intertwined. Each one affects the other and plays an important role in a student's success in school. Students who have positive attitudes do well in school; conversely students who have negative attitudes do poorly in school.

Parents' attitudes about reading are passed on to their children through modeling. (Dix, 1976; Siders and Sledjeski, 1978; Demos, 1987) One way parents show their attitudes toward reading is by reading in their spare time. When children see their parents choosing to read, the children understand that reading can be fun. (Jolly, 1980; Nebor, 1986) Parents also transfer reading attitudes by reading aloud to their children. (Rasinski, 1990; Vukelich, 1984; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) Read alouds which occur on

a regular basis, are interactive, and relate to real life situations help to develop lifelong readers. When parents show an interest in their children's reading, the children realize that reading is important and has value. (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985; Auten, 1980; Smith, 1988) Becoming knowledgeable of the reading program, talking to their children and the teachers involved, and monitoring schoolwork are all ways that parents can show interest in their children's reading.

Parents are their children's first teachers. (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985; Holbrook, 1985; Wendelin and Danielson, 1988; Strickland and Morrow, 1989) Research shows that parental involvement in a child's education can effect the child's reading achievement. (Nebor, 1986; Cassidy and Vukelich, 1978; Rasinski and Fredericks, 1989; Smith, 1988; Allen and Freitag, 1988) Parents know their children and can be an asset to the teacher by providing background information that will aid the teacher in planning. Communication between teachers and parents is necessary for a strong home-school

connection. Both teachers and parents must be willing to work cooperatively by giving and receiving information about the child and his/her reading.

Many organizational methods have been tried to meet the individual needs of each student, particularly those with low reading achievement. Some of the organizational methods take the shape of:

- A) Whole Class Instruction - This insures that all students have been introduced to the concepts. This also allows all students to hear each others thoughts and get feedback on ideas.
- B) Ability Groups - These allow the teacher to focus on the needs of individual students. The students are grouped with other students of similar achievement.
- C) Individualization - Low achieving students receive the same instruction as other students, however, their assignments are adjusted to their achievement level.
- D) Peer Tutoring - Higher achieving students work with lower achieving students. The students all complete the same assignment.
- E) Resource Personnel - These are individuals such as tutors, parents volunteers, special teachers (i.e.

Chapter services) who work with the low achieving students on an individual or small group basis. They generally work on skills being taught in the classrooms.

Problem Statement

Although these classroom organizational methods produce some success, there are still students who have difficulty reading. (Snow, 1983; Gardner and others, 1983) In searching for ways to extend existing instruction and improve achievement, teachers need to look outside the school environment and consider parental involvement. (Silvern, 1985; Wendelin and Danielson, 1988) Parents are their child's first teachers. (Strickland and Morrow, 1989; Wendelin and Danielson, 1988) They convey attitudes to their children that are important to school performance. (Smith, 1990) Positive attitudes have a positive affect on reading achievement. (Henderson, 1988) Even though the responsibility of teaching reading skills shifts to the teacher when the child begins school, the parents' role is just as important and needs to

continue. Often when this shift occurs, many parents feel that their role as teacher is finished, but this is not true. Reading is difficult. As such, all children need as much support as possible from their parents. This is especially true for children with low reading achievement. In order to maximize a student's reading potential it is imperative for the home and school to work together. (Resh and Wilson, 1990; Wendelin and Danielson, 1988; Silvern, 1985) Both parents and teachers must be willing to share observations and suggestions in order for the child to benefit fully from the home-school connection.

Study Questions

The following questions emerge:

- Is it possible to develop a handbook of activities that promote reading achievement that parents will find enjoyable and use with their child on a regular basis?
- If parents use a handbook of reading activities with their child, will the child's attitude toward reading improve?
- If parents use a handbook of reading activities with their child, will the child's reading achievement improve?

Definitions

Reading -- "an active process of constructing meaning from written text in relation to the experiences and knowledge of the reader" (Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994, p. 4)

Reading Instruction -- the process of teaching reading

Phonics -- "a word-identification strategy that uses letter-sound relationships to arrive at the pronunciations of unknown words" (Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994, p. 82)

Sight Word -- "a word-identification strategy that focuses on learning words as wholes rather than by any form of analysis" (Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994, p. 82)

Whole Language -- "A style of reading instruction based on the idea that students learn best when literacy is naturally connected to their oral language" (Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994, p. 52)

Low Reading Achievement -- reading skills that are one or more years below grade level (Howard, 1988)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

According to research, learning to read is one of the most important parts of a child's education. (Silvern, 1985; Tchudi, 1991) Failure to learn to read effectively can have serious repercussions for a student later in his/her life. (Fox, 1986) Printed material is such a part of everyday life that children who are unable to read fluently will have limited opportunities for job success when they become adults. (Binkley, et al, 1988; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) For these reasons, it is imperative that parents and teachers step in and do whatever is necessary to help and encourage students as readers, especially those who exhibit difficulties with reading. This literature review will investigate four areas: achievement, contributing factors to reading achievement, attitude, and parental involvement.

Achievement

Reading achievement refers to the use of reading skills such as word recognition, sound blending, sequencing, punctuation, spelling, and comprehension. These skills are assessed in a number of ways. Teacher observation during routine classroom activities that involve reading, answering questions, and completing seatwork allow the teacher to gain knowledge about a student's reading achievement. (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) Often textbook publishers supply tests that accompany their teacher's resource materials. Teachers also create their own testing instruments to assess student progress in their classes. In addition to these testing instruments, most children's reading achievement are assessed through the use of standardized tests. (Valencia and Pearson, 1987; Levande, 1993; Heithaus, 1989; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) As defined by Levande, "standardized reading tests are machine-scorable instruments that sample reading performance on a single administration" (p.125). Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson add to this definition, "...tests

that contain a fix set of items and have uniform procedures for administration and scoring" (p. 95).

Standardized test scores are used for a variety of purposes. Results from these tests can be used to diagnose specific areas in which a child may have difficulties. These particular areas could then be targeted for further instruction in hopes of improving that child's reading. Another use for standardized test scores is for prediction of future success for a student in the next stage of education. (Heithaus, 1989) This option may be used by college and universities to determine entrance requirements for their academic programs. A third, and the most recognized use of standardized test scores is accountability. (Valencia and Pearson, 1987) Parents, administrators, and society as a whole tend to look at standardized achievement test scores as an indication of how well schools are teaching children. As stated by Valencia and Pearson, "The influence of testing is greater now than at any time in our history" (p. 727).

The focus on reading achievement has led to reports from the National Department of Education. One

of these reports indicates that the United States is at risk of not providing educational opportunities that will allow its children to become responsible, employed adults. (Gardner and others, 1983) Gardner and others lists the following as some indicators of this risk:

- Some 23 million American adults are functionally illiterate by the simplest tests of everyday reading, writing, and comprehension.
 - About 13 percent of all 17 year-olds in the United States can be considered functionally illiterate.
 - Average achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched.
 - The College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) demonstrates a virtually unbroken decline from 1968 to 1980. Average verbal scores fell over 50 points.
- (p. 8-9)

These statistics indicate that not all children are achieving at levels appropriate for their age or grade. It is clear from this evidence that not all reading instruction that occurs in schools is producing students who are functioning on their grade level.

Contributing Factors

The literature written about sequencing skills is sparse. This however does not mean that sequencing plays a minor role in the comprehension process. Sequencing refers to the ability to put story events in the proper order. Being able to sequence events gives the reader a better understanding of what occurred in the story. When readers pay close attention to the text and know the purpose for reading the selection it is much easier to pick out the important events and comprehend the entire passage. "The ability to understand the sequence of events is necessary if one is to comprehend a variety of reading material". (McNeil, Donant, and Akin, 1986, p. 130) If the reader of the story is unable to put the events in order then he/she is less likely to understand the story.

Predicting refers to the ability to make an educated guess about what will happen next in a story. In order to ensure the guess is a logical one, the reader must use the information in the story and his/her own prior knowledge. The combination of previous experiences and story clues will allow the

reader to make a sensible guess about future story events. Predicting requires the reader to concentrate on what is being read. This will lead to an increase in comprehension as well. The prediction strategy is of key importance in the comprehension process.

(Olshavesky and Kletzing, 1979, Foley, 1993) When children are making predictions they are becoming active participants in the reading process. The children begin with what they know and proceed from there. As the child is reading he/she is testing his/her prior predictions. "Prediction essentially activates a plan or cognitive blueprint to guide students during reading" (Foley, 1993, p. 166). Prediction facilitates learning, for as a reader predicts, purposes are set for critical comprehension. (Foley, 1993, p. 167)

Reading is a process of interaction between the reader and text which results in the construction of meaning. (Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994) Vocabulary knowledge is an important component of reading comprehension. (Nagy, 1991; Heilman, Blair, Rupley, 1994; Smith and Johnson, 1980, Paul, 1989; Smith, 1988;

Mezynski, 1983) Vocabulary knowledge includes figurative language (i.e. similes, metaphors), synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, analogies, and multiple meanings. (Paul, 1989) The greater a reader's vocabulary is, the more likely he/she is to understand unfamiliar printed material. Therefore vocabulary development is a necessary part of the reading process.

Summarizing refers to the ability to explain events in a brief or concise manner. "The ability to summarize information is important for understanding and remembering texts" (Brown, Day, and Jones, p. 968). A summary only contains the most important pieces of information from a selection. Readers who can effectively summarize information can sort through large sections of printed material, separate important from unimportant information, and combine the information so that the new material resembles the original. (Heilman, Blair, Rupley, 1994; Anderson and Hidi, 1988) The ability to summarize effectively is not easy. The skills involved in summarizing develop over time. Thus it is easier for an adult to summarize than for a young child. What is included in a summary

as well as omitted tells something about what a reader understood and remembered. (Garner, 1982) Readers often have difficulty in finding the main ideas of a passage whether they are explicit or implicit. The shorter the passage the easier it is to find the main ideas and write a summary. When longer passages are summarized the reader has more main ideas to incorporate into the summary. The reader also has to ask him/herself which main ideas need to be included or deleted. Students can be trained in summary writing. This training has been found to improve reading comprehension. (Gajria and Salvia, 1992; Rinehart, Stahl, and Erickson, 1986) There are many ways to teach summarizing but most summaries follow these guidelines:

Delete unnecessary or repetitive material.

Substitute general terms for lists of items such as furniture for chair, table, desk.

Select a topic sentence or create one of your own.
(Gajria and Salvia, 1992)

Attitude

Regardless of which approach to teaching reading is used, there are still children who have great difficulty with reading. (Snow, 1983; Howard, 1988) A student's success or failure in reading is linked to his/her feelings toward reading. (McKenna and Kear, 1990; Fredericks, 1982) If students experience failure after failure in reading, they begin to doubt their ability to read. (Howard, 1988) These children take on a defeatist attitude and lack the motivation to try. Attitude is strongly related to reading achievement. (Walberg and Tsai, 1985) If children develop a poor attitude, they can become caught up in a pattern of continuous failure and negative attitude. This can have a detrimental effect on their entire school performance and future job opportunities. (Binkley, et al, 1988)

There are many factors involved in a child's education, but no single factor has more of an effect than the child's family. (Henderson, 1981) The family, parents in particular, is with the child from birth. Children learn to communicate in the language of their

environment without formal training. (Hoskisson, Sherman, and Smith, 1974) Children also learn to walk and communicate nonverbally without structured lessons. All of these skills are taught through modeling. Parents teach their children how to perform these acts simply by doing them. The children watch and try to imitate their parents' actions. Through the process of mimicking the parents, the children begin to communicate and act as members of their environment. Children learn much more than how to walk and talk from their parents, however. Children also learn attitudes and expectations as well. (Henderson, 1988) These are not always taught directly by parents. Most often parents' behaviors send messages to their children. Attitudes about reading are passed on to children through modeling by parents. (Dix, 1976; Hansen, 1969; Siders and Sledjeski, 1978; Demos, 1987) Reading attitudes are shown very simply by how much parents read in their leisure time. When parents read for pleasure, children see it and realize that reading can be an enjoyable activity. (Jolly, 1980; Nebor, 1986) The type of reading material (newspapers, books,

magazines, newsletters) is not as important as the fact that children see their parents reading. (Miller, 1986)

In addition to modeling reading, parents can convey positive attitudes through reading aloud with their children. (Rasinski, 1989 and 1990; Vukelich, 1984; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) Reading aloud is not a difficult activity. (Rasinski, 1990) It requires very little preparation, yet can benefit the child immensely if it is done on a regular basis. (Romatowski and Trepanier, 1977) As little as 15-20 minutes of read aloud each night between parent and child can help establish lifelong reading habits. (Vukelich, 1984) The read aloud should be interactive. (Wepner and Caccavale, 1991) Parents need to ask questions that will cause the child to think beyond the printed word and relate story events to real life situations. (Rasinski, 1990)

Taking an interest in their child's reading and school work is another way parents can show positive reading attitudes to their children. (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985; Auten, 1980; Smith, 1988) One means for parents to show an interest

in their child's reading is by becoming knowledgeable of the school's reading program and reinforcing it in the home. (Clary, 1989; Lutz, 1986; Wendelin and Danielson, 1988) Parents can talk to teachers to find out about their child's progress and monitor schoolwork. (Demos, 1987; Binkley, et al, 1988; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985) Talking to their children about reading and what goes on at school is an easy way for parents to let children know that they value reading and education. These conversations, although simple and informal, show the children that their parents care about what they are reading and learning.

Parent Involvement

Parents are their child's first teachers. (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985; Holbrook, 1985; Wendelin and Danielson, 1988; Strickland and Morrow, 1989) The parents' role as teacher is very important and should not stop once a child begins school. (Vukelich, 1984) Literature indicates that parental involvement in a child's schooling makes a difference in the child's reading achievement. (Nebor, 1986; Cassidy and Vukelich, 1978; Rasinski and Fredericks, 1989; Allen and Freitag, 1988; Smith, 1988) Allen and Freitag noted that "Parents who facilitate and supervise at-home study, attend regular parent-teacher conferences, and communicate with school personnel regarding their children's needs create a climate conducive to their children's achievement" (p. 922). "Children whose parents are in touch with the school score higher than children of similar aptitude and family background whose parents are not involved" (p. 149) stated Henderson (1988). Several studies noted that students who had parental help showed significant improvement in achievement. (Tizard, et al,

1982; Henderson, 1981) In Tizard, et al, a study was conducted in which three groups of students were used. One group received extra help from their parents. Another group received extra help at school while the third group received no extra help at all. Tizard found that the group receiving extra help from their parents showed improvement in achievement whereas the other groups showed no improvement. In a study by Hewison and Tizard, the amount of time a mother spent listening to her child read was found to have a significant positive relationship with standardized reading tests (1980). Parents can make a difference in their child's reading achievement.

In order for parents to be actively involved in their child's learning process, teachers need to share power and responsibility with parents. (Rasinski, 1988; Auten, 1978) Rasinski says, "Parents need to be given a role in the planning and decision-making processes of parent-programs as well as the actual implementation of such programs" (p.5). He further states that "Parents can and should be informed participants and decision-makers in any parent-reading program, whether at the

school or classroom level" (p.5). Parents know their children and can provide background information that can help the teacher with his/her planning. Parents also have suggestions that teachers can use or modify to fit the needs of their students. When parents are allowed to take part in the planning and not merely the implementation of the reading program new opportunities for growth appear. (Rasinski, 1988; Rasinski and Fredericks, 1989) Rasinski asserts that "With increased parental participation in the school community it is inevitable that parent-reading programs will gain new vitality and higher levels of parent support and involvement than previously imagined" (p.7).

Communication between parents and teachers is essential to maximize the effects of the home-school connection. (Resh and Wilson, 1990) Parents must be open to giving and receiving information about their child's reading from the teacher. The teacher, in turn, must be prepared to help the parents help their children. (Smith, 1988) Teachers should have suggestions and activities that are easy for parents to understand and implement. (Wendelin and Danielson,

1988; Clary, 1988) Teachers must also be willing to explain the activities to parents. It is not enough to give them ideas. Parents need support and encouragement from teachers if they are to be effective. (Smith, 1990)

Summary

Reading is an interactive process between the reader and the text. (Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994) In order for the reader to have a successful reading experience, he/she must possess the necessary skills to comprehend the written material. These skills are generally taught and practiced in the elementary school classroom. Although instruction occurs in school, statistics indicate that not all children are achieving at levels appropriate for their age or grade. (Gardner and others, 1983) Therefore it is crucial that parents and schools work together to help the children reach and/or exceed their reading potential.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to find out if parental involvement will increase student reading achievement and have a positive effect on student attitude toward reading. The information in this chapter will be broken down into the following subcategories: Sample, Design, Instrumentation, Data Analysis, and Limitations. The sample for this study will consist of third grade students and their parents. The study is designed to span a six week period and will be divided into three phases. The instruments used in this study will be comprised of parent surveys, a student reading achievement test, and a student reading attitude survey. The data will be analyzed using simple descriptions. The limitations of this study are the parents involved, the time frame, and testing instruments. Each of these subcategories will be explained in detail.

Sample

The target population is children enrolled in third grade and their parents in public or private schools located in an urban setting. The accessible population are third grade students in enrolled in urban schools near Dayton, Ohio during the 1994-1995 school year.

This is a convenience sample because the practitioners are the teachers in these classrooms. The sample consists of two groups: two classrooms of third grade students and their parents. The first group (A) is from a private school, located in an urban setting consisting of 14 students with a variety of backgrounds and achievement levels. Some of these students come from upper socio-economic status (SES) families in which parents have completed varying levels of higher education. Others come from middle or lower SES families in which parents may or may not have some form of higher education. This group consists of the entire third grade population of the school. The second group of students (B) and their parents is from an urban public school and consists of 24 children, most of which come from a lower SES background, with very few parents having education

beyond high school. The students in this group were randomly selected from the third grade population of the school.

The reading achievement scores of Group A as reported by the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test taken as a pretest in the winter of 1995 range in percentiles from 12 to 99 with a mean of 71. Reading achievement scores of Group B as reported on the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test taken as a pretest in the winter of 1995, range in percentiles from 1 to 74 with a mean of 15.

Design

This descriptive study will consist of three phases. Phase One will involve the administration of three instruments. The first instrument will be a parent survey of their reading knowledge and attitude. The information from this survey will give the practitioners background information about the parents' reading habits and attitudes. The second instrument, the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, will be given to the students. This survey will help the practitioners understand how the students feel about reading in school and reading for pleasure. The third instrument, the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test, will be

administered to the students to establish a baseline reading achievement measure.

Phase Two will be the treatment period. This period will last six weeks. At the beginning of this period, parents will be given a handbook and instructions for its use. (See Appendix A) The handbook will contain activities that promote reading achievement. It will be compiled through a search of journals, books, teachers, and the practitioners' own experience. The activities chosen for the handbook will support classroom reading instruction and be easily implemented.

The handbook will begin with a section of general suggestions for parents regarding environment and read aloud. See Figures 1 and 2 for examples.

Figure 1

Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select a comfortable and quiet location which will create a pleasant atmosphere.• Set aside a regular time each evening for a reading activity.	

Figure 2

Read Aloud

- Set aside a regular time each day for reading to and with your child. This is especially important for chapter books in order to maintain continuity of the storyline. Frequent readings will also allow your child to become fully involved in the story.
- Start with picture books and build to storybooks and novels. If you're having difficulty choosing a book to start with you can choose one of your favorites as a child or select one of the books from the list that follows.

The remainder of the handbook will be organized by topic. The topics will be color-coded and include: sequencing, predicting, vocabulary development, and summarizing. See Figure 3, 4, 5, and 6 for examples.

Figure 3

Sequencing

- ABC Order -- Use any of the following items in the home for alphabetizing: grocery coupons, cereal boxes, soup cans, games, library books, videos, grocery list, or anything with words or titles.
- Photographs -- Find photos of your child at various ages. Have your child put the photos in chronological order. Your child could write captions for each photo or tell something that he/she was able to do at the age.

Figure 4

Predicting	
•	<u>Book Reading</u> -- Before sitting down to read or listen to a story, have your child look at the title and the illustrations. Ask your child what he/she thinks the story is going to be about.
•	<u>Sense Bag</u> -- Put an item in a paper bag. Allow your child to use his/her senses to predict what is in the bag. Your child is to use one sense at a time. Some items that could be put in a bag are: a piece of fruit or vegetable, school supplies, small toys, or jewelry.

Figure 5

Vocabulary Development	
•	<u>Rhyming Words</u> -- Give your child a word and have him/her write down as many words that rhyme. Be sure to point out the similar spelling in the rhyming words for example: bear, tear, wear.
•	<u>Describing Words</u> -- Give your child a word and have them describe it as vividly as possible. Some words that could be used are sun, home, and friend.

Figure 6

Summarizing

- Daily Journal -- Keep a journal at home so that your child can write about his/her daily activities. Help your child to pick out the most important events of that day. Your child is to use those events to write a paragraph summarizing his/her day.
- Puppets -- After reading a story have your child create puppets of the characters to use in a retelling of the story. Old socks or lunch bags can make great puppets.

The parents will be asked to do at least three activities with their child each week. The activities chosen should come from different sections of the handbook. This means parents will be asked to work on a minimum of three different reading activities with their child each week. Parents will also be asked to fill out an Activity Checklist and an Activity Log. See Figures 7 and 8 for examples.

Figure 7

Activity Checklist										
Activity	Date									
Book Reading										
Riddles										
Poetry										
Cartoon Strips										

Figure 8

Activity Log	
Activity:	Date:
Comments:	

Phase Three will involve the readministration of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test to the students, to determine any change in student attitude toward reading and/or student reading achievement. The parents will also be asked to complete a satisfaction survey of the handbook and their use of it. All of the information gathered

to this point will be used to determine the effects of parental involvement on student reading achievement and student attitude toward reading.

Instrumentation

The first instrument to be administered will be a parent survey. This survey contains questions about parents' knowledge of and attitude toward reading. This survey was developed by Karla Hawkins Wendelin and Kathy Everts Danielson (1988). Their rationale for developing this survey was to gather background information about the home reading environment. "By determining what parents know and believe about their children's reading instruction teachers might be able to identify strategies that could be used at home to reinforce skills taught at school" state Wendelin and Danielson (p.265). This survey was chosen because it will provide the necessary information about parent-child interaction pertaining to reading. For the purpose of this study, the survey was modified by the addition of a demographic question regarding the parents' educational level. Figure 9 exemplifies the types of questions found on the survey. The complete survey can be found in Appendix B.


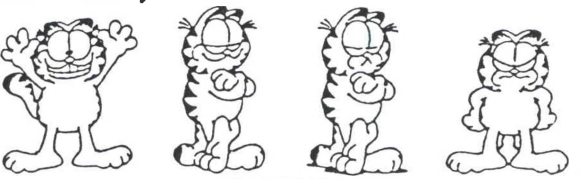
Figure 9

Parent Reading Survey	
•	When your child reads at home, what kind of help do you usually give when he/she comes to a word that he/she doesn't know?
_____	ask him/her to sound out the unknown word
_____	tell the child the word
_____	encourage him/her to look for clues to the unknown word in the sentence
•	How would you rate your child's reading ability?
_____	My child is a very good reader.
_____	My child reads adequately enough to complete school assignments.
_____	I wish my child could read better.

Another instrument used will be the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey developed by Michael C. McKenna and Dennis J. Kear (1990). This survey will be given to the students both before and after the treatment period. This survey was developed to be used by any teacher wishing to estimate a student's reading attitude level. A pictorial format with four options was chosen because it would be easy for children to understand and complete. The comic strip character Garfield was selected because it was thought to be more

readily recognizable by children than any other character. McKenna and Kear created questions that address attitudes toward both academic and recreational reading. Each area can be scored separately and percentiles derived. The scores from the two areas can also be added together to arrive at a full scale score. Reliability and validity were based on a national sample of over 18,000 children in grades 1 - 6. This survey was chosen because it is a proven source to identify students' attitudes toward reading. A sampling of questions from this survey appear in Figure 10. The complete survey appears in Appendix C.

Figure 10

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey	
<p>10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?</p>	
<p>11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?</p>	

The third instrument to be used in this study is the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test developed by Walter H. and Ruth K. MacGinite (1989). This test assesses students' vocabulary and comprehension. The vocabulary test is a test of word knowledge. The students read a phrase and then chose a synonym for the test word from a list of four choices. The comprehension test requires the students to read short passages and answer multiple choice questions about the passages. A nationwide field test was done in order to choose the test items. Consideration was given to race, gender, and nationality groups for examining possible elements of bias.

The final instrument to be used in this study will be a satisfaction survey given to the parents. The Satisfaction Survey was developed for this study and was formulated based on the study questions. A four point Likert-scale was chosen to avoid a central, neutral category. The survey was created in order to receive feedback from the parents regarding the handbook and its use. This survey has not been tested for reliability or validity. See Figure 11 for sample questions. The entire survey appears in Appendix D.

Figure 11

Satisfaction Survey				
•	I found the handbook easy to use.			
	4	3	2	1
•	I feel my child benefited from our use of the handbook.			
	4	3	2	1

Data Analysis

The data gathered from each instrument used will be analyzed through simple descriptive statistical methods for Group A and Group B and an omnibus or overall measure. The results of the parent survey will be reported by the frequency of responses. The results of the Satisfaction Survey will be presented using means and anecdotal comments and responses. Raw scores will be tabulated from the students' responses on the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and reported in percentiles using a table provided by the survey authors. The results of the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test will be reported using the mean of raw scores and percentile ranks of the students. The results of the pretest, posttest, and any increase in score on the

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test will be reported.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this study. The limitations are the subjects themselves, time frame, and testing instruments.

The parents will be self reporting on the attitude survey, their use of the handbook, and the Satisfaction Survey. This is a limitation because of a lack of control over the accuracy of the parent responses. Additionally, the parents will be asked to use a handbook in the study. The limitation associated with this is that the parents will not receive any training on the use of the handbook. The third limitation related to parents is a lack of control over the number of times the parents use the handbook. Some parents may not use the handbook at all, while others may use it more or less than the three times requested per week.

This study will take place over a six week period. The time frame may not be sufficient to achieve growth in achievement or in attitude.

Finally, the students will be given the same reading test both before and after the treatment period because a second form of the test is not available. If growth occurs in reading achievement it could be because the students have been sensitized to the test since the pretest and posttest is the same test and administered twice within a relatively short period of time.

Summary

This study is designed to determine the effects of parental involvement on student reading achievement and attitude toward reading. The subjects will be third grade students and their parents. They will be involved in three phases which will include pretesting, a treatment period, and posttesting. Data gathered during the study will be analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. The limitations to the study are the control over parents involvement, the time frame, and the reading achievement test.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine if parental involvement will increase student reading achievement and have a positive effect on student attitude toward reading. The chapter will be organized around the following four areas: background, enjoyment and use of handbook, change in student attitude toward reading, and change in student reading achievement. First, background information gathered regarding the parents' educational levels and the home reading environment will be reported along with frequency of responses. Then, each of the following research questions will be addressed:

- 1) Is it possible to develop a handbook of activities that promote reading achievement that parents will find enjoyable and use with their child on a regular basis?

- 2) If parents use a handbook of reading activities with their child, will the child's attitude towards reading improve?
- 3) If parents use a handbook of reading activities with their child, will the child's reading achievement improve?

The results of question 1 will be assessed using the Satisfaction Survey and will be reported as a mean score. The results of question 2 will be analyzed using the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey and will be reported in mean scores of raw scores, percentiles, and improvements. The results of question 3 will be assessed using the Gates-MacGinire Reading Test and will be reported in the same manner as the results of question 2. Specific results for the background information and each study question will be addressed below.

Background

The parents' educational levels ranged from completion of eighth grade to completion of a doctorate

degree. In Group A, 95% of the parents had completed high school or beyond. In Group B, 88% of the parents had completed high school or beyond. See Table 1 for a complete listing of the educational levels of the parents involved in the sample.

Table 1
Parents' Educational Levels

Highest Level of Education Completed	A		B	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
8th Grade	1	0	2	2
High School	3	2	10	10
Vocational/Trade	0	4	4	3
Bachelor's Degree	6	1	1	0
Master's Degree	1	1	0	0
Ph.D.	0	0	0	1

The home reading environment was analyzed using two questions. The first question asked parents what kind of help they give their child when he/she encounters an unknown word when reading. Using both Groups A and B as an omnibus, 82% of the parents

responded that they have their child sound out the unknown word. In the omnibus, 9% of the parents indicated that they tell their child the word, and 9% of the parents encourage their child to look for clues. The second question asked parents how often they read to their children. In the omnibus, 77% of the parents replied that they read to their children occasionally or frequently. Twenty-three percent of the parents in the omnibus indicated that they do not read to their children. See Tables 2 and 3 for complete findings.

Table 2

Help Given to Child When Encountering Unknown Words

School	Sounding out Word	Telling Word	Looking for Clues
A	10	1	2
B	18	2	1
Omnibus	28	3	3

Table 3
Read to Children

School	Frequently	Occasionally	No, Not Much	No, Not Since Child Learned to Read
A	3	4	1	3
B	6	10	1	0
Omnibus	9	14	2	3

Question 1 - *Is it possible to develop a handbook of activities that promote reading achievement that parents will find enjoyable and use with their child on a regular basis?*

Ninety-six percent of the parents in the omnibus stated that they enjoyed the activities in the handbook. The omnibus mean score on the Satisfaction Survey was a 3.4 out of a possible 4.0 for the statement pertaining to the level of enjoyment of the activities in the handbook. Anecdotal comments by parents regarding the handbook's activities include:

- *My child loved this book, it was very helpful.*
- *The activities were enjoyable for the entire family.*

- *Nice activities for parents and child to do together.*
- *It was the first time in a long time that we have read together. We really enjoyed it.*
- *It has opened many new possibilities for reading.*

During the treatment period, parents were asked to work with their child at least three nights per week. The mean score of 2.4 out of a possible 4.0 for the statement regarding working with their child the designated time indicates that parents generally did not consistently implement the handbook during the treatment period. Comments from parents indicated the major reason for inconsistent use was busy schedules during the school year. Anecdotal comments relating to this statement include:

- *With two working parents and many outside activities time was not easily found.*
- *I found with my heavy schedule that I could only do this two times per week.*
- *These activities will enhance summer reading.*
- *This book would be ideal for summer use when there are less outside demands.*

Other information was gathered that does not relate to the research questions. This information appears on Table 4 along with the data analyzed above. See Table 4 for the complete breakdown of parents' responses to the Satisfaction Survey.

Table 4
Parent Satisfaction Survey
by Means

School	N	Found Activities to be Enjoyable	Worked w/Child 3 Times a Week	Handbooks Ease of Use	Child Gained from Handbook	Child's Attitude Improved
A	11	3.0	2.2	3.0	2.8	2.5
B	16	3.6	2.6	3.1	3.4	2.9
Omnibus	27	3.4	2.4	3.1	3.2	2.8

*N=Number of responses

Question 2 - *If parents use a handbook of reading activities with their child, will the child's attitude toward reading improve?*

Group A received a mean raw score of 58 and a mean percentile rank of 51 on the pretest of the Elementary

Reading Attitude Survey. After the treatment period, the mean raw score for Group A was 57 and the mean percentile rank was 48. This shows a change in mean raw score of -1 and a change in mean percentile rank of -3. Before the treatment period Group B attained a mean raw score of 55 and a mean percentile rank of 41 on the same test. On the posttest Group B achieved a mean raw score 52 and a mean percentile rank of 31. This shows a change in mean raw score of -3 and a change in mean percentile rank of -10. An omnibus change of -3 in the raw score and -10 in the percentile rank was achieved during the treatment period. See Table 5 for complete results of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey.

Table 5
Reading Attitude
by Means

School	N	Pretest		Posttest		Change	
		Raw	%	Raw	%	Raw	%
A	13	58	51	57	48	-1	-3
B	24	55	41	52	31	-3	-10
Omnibus	37	57	48	54	38	-3	-10

*N=Number of students

Question 3 - *If parents use a handbook of reading activities with their child, will the child's reading achievement improve?*

Group A was pretested on the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test and attained a mean raw score of 72 and a mean percentile rank of 71. After the treatment period Group A achieved a mean raw score of 77 and a mean percentile rank of 88. This shows a change in mean raw score of +5 and a change in mean percentile rank of +17. Group B was given the same pretest and attained a mean raw score of 40 and a mean percentile rank of 15. On the posttest Group B attained a mean raw score of 46 and a mean percentile rank of 24. This shows a change in mean raw score of +6 and a change in mean percentile rank of +14. An omnibus raw score change of +6 and a percentile rank change of +14 were attained during the treatment period. See Table 6 for complete results of the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test.

Table 6
Reading Achievement
by Means

School	N	Pretest		Posttest		Change	
		Raw	%	Raw	%	Raw	%
A	13	72	71	77	88	+5	+17
B	24	40	15	46	24	+6	+9
Omnibus	37	51	34	57	48	+6	+14

*N=Number of students

Summary

This study was designed to determine if parent involvement in a child's reading would increase the child's reading achievement and have a positive effect on the child's attitude toward reading. Background information about the parents' educational level and the home reading environment was gathered through the use of a parent survey. It was found that 95% of the parents in Group A and 88% of the parents in Group B had at least a high school education. Of the parents in the omnibus, 77% indicated that they read to their children at home. The parents were given a handbook of activities that were generally reported as enjoyable,

but were not used on a regular basis. The children showed a negative change in reading attitude and a positive change in reading achievement during the treatment period.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Over the years a variety of approaches and organizational methods have been used in the teaching of reading. Regardless of the approach or organizational method used, some students still have difficulty with reading. It is apparent that teachers need to turn to sources outside the school environment in order to extend the existing instruction. The obvious choice is the parents of the students. Parents play an important role in their child's education. They instill the attitudes that are important for school performance. A partnership between parents and teachers needs to be formed so that information about the child's reading and ideas for enhancing his/her reading can be shared.

The purpose of this study was to find out if parental involvement would increase student reading achievement and have a positive effect on student

attitude toward reading. To facilitate the parents working with their child, a handbook of reading activities was compiled. This handbook was given to the participants of this study for use during the treatment period. The students involved in the study were given pretests and posttests in reading achievement and attitude toward reading. The parents were also asked to complete surveys relating to the home reading environment and their satisfaction with the handbook.

The information gathered from the initial parent survey indicated that most of the children come from a supportive home reading environment. The overall change in percentile rank in reading attitude for the omnibus was -10. The overall change in percentile rank in reading achievement for the omnibus was +14. Parent responses to the Satisfaction Survey suggested that generally the parents were pleased with the handbook but did not use it on a consistent basis.

Conclusions

This study addressed three questions. Each question and its results will be discussed separately.

Question 1 - *Is it possible to develop a handbook of activities that promote reading achievement that parents will find enjoyable and use with their child on a regular basis?*

The results of the Satisfaction Survey indicate that parents found the activities in the handbook to be enjoyable. This is most likely due to the fact that activities were purposefully chosen to be fun. Activities were easy to use and promoted parent/child interaction while at the same time enhancing reading. Although parents enjoyed the activities, they found it difficult to work with their child on a regular basis. Parents indicated that heavy work schedules and student involvement in extra-curricular activities hampered the ability to use the activities on a regular basis. Some parents did not respond to any of the surveys. This leads to the conclusion that those parents did not want to be involved with their child in this project.

Throughout their years of teaching, the authors have had many parents ask them for activities, ideas, and suggestions of ways they can help their child become better readers. From these many inquiries the authors decided to compile a handbook of activities that they could offer parents to use with their child. It was hoped that the parents would welcome these suggestions with enthusiasm and implement them in their home. This was not the case in most households. From this experience the authors can only conclude that even when given concrete activities that will help their child, many parents cannot or do not find the time to work with their child.

Question 2 - *If parents use a handbook of reading activities with their child, will the child's attitude toward reading improve?*

The results showed that the attitude in Group A had a change of -3 in percentile rank. This is not a significant change in attitude. Based on classroom observations, the children's attitudes are generally consistent from day to day. These children do not seem

to be greatly influenced by outside factors. They usually aim to do their best in the classroom. Apparently their attitudes were not affected by the use of the handbook. The result of Group B showed a change of -10 in percentile rank. This negative change could be due to the fact that attitude is very situational. Based on classroom observations these children are extremely effected by school events and peer/teacher interaction. When their day is going as they expect, attitudes are fairly positive. Conversely, if their day is not going as they expect, attitudes are fairly negative. When this project began the children were excited about being involved. As time went on, they began to feel that the project was just more work. With these children, anything that originates from school or has the appearance of schoolwork must be work and cannot possibly be fun. This could explain their negative change in attitude. The omnibus change was -10 in percentile rank. This was due in part to Group B's comparable change in attitude.

As stated earlier, Group A was from a private school and Group B was from a public school. This

could partially explain the differences in attitude. The parents whose children attend the private school are paying a considerable amount of money for their child's education. The teacher in this class has observed that these parents generally place a high value on education and stress its importance to their children. That could be why these children usually strive to do their best. The parents with children attending the public school do not have as great a financial investment in their child's education and generally do not participate in school functions. Teacher observations indicate that these parents want the teacher to do most of the work in educating their child. This apathetic attitude toward education and its importance is certainly passed on to the children and could possibly explain the negative attitudes displayed by these children.

Neither group showed a positive change in attitude. This can only suggest that the activities were not as exciting as the authors had thought. Perhaps the authors should have surveyed the children

in advance of compiling the handbook as to the types of reading activities the children would enjoy.

Question 3 - *If parents use a handbook of reading activities with their child, will the child's reading achievement improve?*

Both groups showed a positive change in reading achievement. Group A had a +17 percentile change and Group B had a +9 percentile change. The possible reasons for these changes are threefold. The first reason the children may have improved is because they were given the same test both before and after the treatment period. It is quite possible that some of the children could have remembered the test material. It is also possible that familiarity with the test allowed the children to feel less anxious and led to better scores. Another reason for the improved scores could be that the children had had six more weeks of classroom instruction. It is possible that the children had matured academically during this period. A final reason for the improved achievement scores is the use of the handbook. It is possible that the

children's reading skills improved because their parents used the handbook with them.

From this experience, the authors have learned that it is difficult to determine the exact cause of an increase in reading achievement during the school year. In addition to the opportunity to use the handbook, the children were also receiving classroom reading instruction. It is expected that children will show some academic growth throughout the school year. Perhaps it would be easier to determine the effects of the handbook through an experimental study or conducting this research during a period of time when school is not in session.

Recommendations

If this study were to be repeated, there are several changes the authors would recommend in the areas of design, instrumentation, and participation. The recommendation in design would be to make this into an experimental study with the following hypotheses:

- Children's attitudes toward reading will improve when parents use a handbook of activities that promote reading achievement with their children.
- Children's reading achievement will improve when parents use a handbook of activities that promote reading achievement with their children.
- Parent involvement can be enhanced when encouraged to use a handbook of reading activities provided by the teacher.

Making this into an experimental study will allow future researchers to gather more specific information on the effects of parental involvement.

There are a few recommendations the authors would make in regards to instrumentation. It is suggested that the questions of the Parent Reading Survey be revised so that the answers are calibrated the same. This will allow the researchers to analyze the data more easily. Further, it is strongly recommended that two versions of the achievement test be used. This would eliminate the possibility of student familiarity leading to gains in achievement. In addition, the

attitude survey could be given a various times throughout the treatment period. This would allow the researchers to gather attitude data over time and hopefully eliminate the effect of school events and peer/teacher interaction. Finally, the authors would recommend that the students be given some type of satisfaction survey. This would give the researchers insight from the child's perspective.

The authors would make the following suggestions in the area of participation. Before beginning the project, it is suggested that the parents be invited to a meeting in which the entire project is explained. At this meeting the parents should be made aware of the benefits of the project and be allowed to ask questions. To encourage participation throughout the project, it is recommended that activity logs be turned in weekly. An incentive could be given to each child who turns in the weekly log.

These recommendations should allow future researchers to gather more specific and valid information regarding parental involvement in enhancing the reading process.

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APPENDIX A

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GENERAL INFORMATION

This handbook is a compilation of suggestions and activities that promote reading enjoyment and achievement. It is organized into six color-coded sections. The first two sections contain basic information regarding reading environment and reading aloud. These are suggestions that can be used in conjunction with all of the other activities in the handbook. The remaining four sections contain specific activities that will promote growth in the following reading skills: sequencing, predicting, vocabulary development, and summarizing/paraphrasing. Many of the activities contain ready to use examples. Please feel free to cut out and/or write on any of these pages.

Please begin using this handbook on January 9. We ask that you do at least three activities each week with your child. We also encourage you to read aloud with your child in addition to using the specific activities. We would like you to choose three different activities from three different sections each week. Feel free to do more than three activities each week.

In order to keep track of which activities are used and how these activities are received, please record the activities you complete and your reactions to them on the Activity Checklist and Activity Log provided in this

At the end of the six week period, February 17, we ask that you fill in the Satisfaction Survey which appears at the end of this handbook. As with the other parent survey you received earlier, this is an anonymous survey. . Please fill the survey out carefully including any comments you wish to make, and return it to your child's teacher without your name on it. Also return the Activity Checklist and Activity Log at this time.

Thank you once again for your participation in this project. It is our strong belief that parents can have a significant, positive impact on their child's reading attitude and achievement. We hope these activities will make it easier for you to work with your child on his/her reading. We appreciate your strong sense of commitment to your child's education.

ACTIVITY LOG of _____

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

ACTIVITY LOG of _____

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

ACTIVITY LOG of _____

Activity:

Date:

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Comments:

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

ACTIVITY LOG of _____

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

Activity:

Date:

Comments:

ACTIVITY CHECKLIST of _____

READ ALOUD

Activity	Date							
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								
Title:								

CHECKLIST - PREDICTING

Activity	Date										
Book Reading											
Riddles											
Poetry											
Cartoon Strips											
Sense Bag											
20 Questions											
Television											

ENVIRONMENT

The following is a list of suggestions that will help create an environment conducive to reading.

1. Select a comfortable and quiet location which will create a pleasant atmosphere.
2. Set aside a regular time each evening for a reading activity.
3. Be sure to let your child see you reading for pleasure as well as for information.
4. Be a good listener. Listen to your child read without correcting or criticizing every mistake. This should be a pleasant activity.

READ ALOUD

Reading aloud refers to the parent reading to the child. Reading aloud to a child is the most important thing a parent can do (Rasinski and Fredericks, 1990). As children enter school, parents often stop the read alouds they began when their children were very young. All children can benefit from read alouds regardless of their age. There are many values to reading aloud to children. Reading aloud enhances their understanding of written language, expands their listening and language skills, introduces them to exciting books, and expands their range of experience (Jolly, 1980; Trelease 1985). Children need a constant exposure of books at home as part of their daily life in order to associate reading with pleasant, happy times. It is also important for children see their parents reading for pleasure or information (Smith, 1988). A few simple suggestions for a successful reading experience are:

- 1) Set aside a regular time each day for reading to and with your child. This is especially important for chapter books in order to maintain continuity of the storyline. Frequent readings will also allow your child to become fully involved in the story.
- 2) Start with picture books and build to storybooks and novels. If you're having difficulty choosing a book to start with you can choose one of your

favorites as a child or select one of the books from the list that follows.

- 3) Vary the length and subject matter of your readings.
- 4) Allow time for discussion before, during, and after reading. Some stories invoke feelings that need to be dealt with right away.
- 5) Use plenty of expression when you read. Try to change your voice with the dialogue.
- 6) Connect read alouds to family experiences such as berry picking or trips to the zoo.

**It is especially important for young boys to hear and see their fathers reading (Trelease, 1985).

SUGGESTED READING LIST

Single Session Books

The Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Andersen

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day
by Judith Viorst

The Big Orange Splot by Daniel Manus Pinkwater

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs by Judi Barrett

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

Where the Sidewalk Ends by Shel Silverstein (Poetry)

A Light in the Attic by Shel Silverstein (Poetry)
Something Big Has Been Here by Jack Prelutsky (Poetry)
The New Kid on the Block by Jack Prelutsky (Poetry)
Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney
The Napping House by Audrey Wood
Sylvester and the Magic Pebble by William Steig
Thy Friend, Obadiah by Brinton Turkle
The Whingdingdilly by Bill Peet
Wilfred Gordon MacDonald Partridge by Mem Fox
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears by Verna Aardema
Where the Forest Meets the Sea by Jeannie Baker
Tuesday by David Weisner
The Patchwork Quilt by Valerie Flourney
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe
Knots on a Counting Rope by Bill Martin Jr.
Saint George and the Dragon by Margaret Hodges
The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry
Chicken Sunday by Patricia Polacco
Mirette on the High Wire by Emily Arnold McCully

Multiple Session Books

Amelia Bedelia series by Peggy Parish
Frog and Toad series by Arnold Lobel
Ramona series by Beverly Cleary
Boxcar Children series by Gertrude Chandler Warner

The Little House series by Laura Ingalls Wilder
Martin's Mice by Dick King-Smith
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl
Superfudge by Judy Blume
Charlotte's Web by E.B. White
Mr. Popper's Penguin by Richard and Florence Atwater
Chocolate Fever by Robert K. Smith
Wanted, Mud Blossom by Betsy Byars
Sarah, Plain and Tall by Patricia MacLachlan
Indian in the Cupboard by Lynn Reid Banks
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson
Encyclopedia Brown series by Donald Sobol
Bunnicula by Deborah and James Howe
How to Eat Fried Worms by Thomas Rockwell
The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles by Julie Edwards
Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt
Number the Stars by Lois Lowry
Souder by William Souder
Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls
The Cricket in Times Square by George Selden
The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

What else can they read?

- ♦ comics and magazines connected with their hobbies
- ♦ notes that you write to them
- ♦ shop sign, advertisements, and notices when out shopping
- ♦ the directions on the shampoo bottle
- ♦ the T.V. listings from the TV Guide or newspaper
- ♦ the recipe for what you are cooking or baking
- ♦ the newspaper for news, the weather forecast, comics, sales, TV listings, sports information, captions under pictures
- ♦ travel brochures or travel pamphlets
- ♦ the telephone book for friends or relatives phone numbers
- ♦ catalogues and sales flyers from stores
- ♦ the Yellow Pages from the phone book to find out about different businesses and services available that are only a phone call away
- ♦ bus, train, and airline schedules
- ♦ highway signs and street signs to know about speed limits, passing, loading, hospital, and school zones; road hazards and geographic location (street or town)
- ♦ mall directories or store signs to determine store and restaurant locations

- ♦ store directories or store signs to determine where me instructions, model instructions, kit instructions to determine how to play a game or put something together
- ♦ directions from a recipe card or cookbook to know ingredients needed and the porper order of mixing
- ♦ instructions on medicine bottles or cleaning products (with an adult's presence)
- ♦ junk mail

Where can reading materials be found?

- ♦ the local pulic library - be sure to ask the librarian for suggested titles for your children
- ♦ the school library - encourage your children to check out books and bring them home if they are allowed
- ♦ book stores, school book clubs, and school book fairs watch for special prices and visits from authors and illustrators
- ♦ garage sales - books can be purchased very inexpensively

How can books be shared?

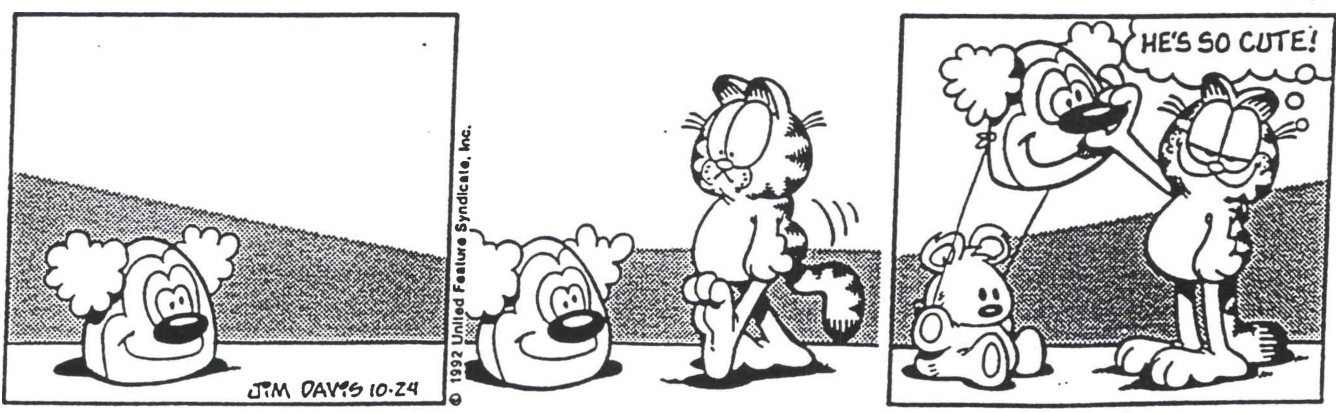
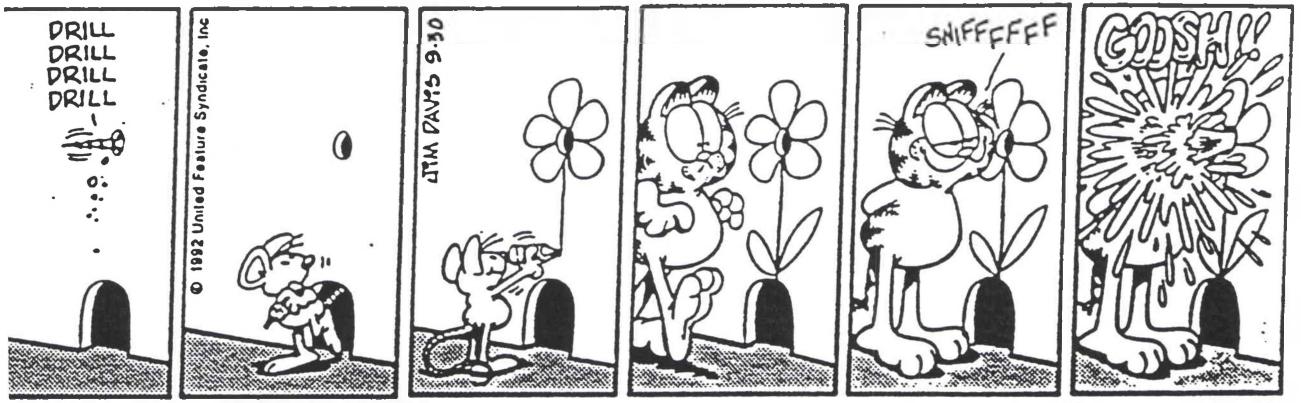
- ♦ gifts - parents can give their children books as birthday and holiday gifts and can encourage other relatives to do the same
- ♦ donations - children can be encouraged to donate used books to shelters or programs for the less fortunate
- ♦ retirement communities - children can share reading experiences with residents

SEQUENCING

Sequencing refers to the ability to put story events in the proper order. Being able to sequence events gives the reader a better understanding of what occurred in the story. Building a reader's sequencing skills will increase his/her reading comprehension.

Comic Strip

Use comic strips from your local newspaper or those found below.¹ Cut each comic strip into individual frames and place the pieces in an envelope. Give them to your child to arrange in order to tell a story.



Recipe

Choose a simple recipe to prepare. Have your child follow the directions in the recipe to prepare the dish. Here is a recipe that we have found easy to make. See appendix for more simple recipes.²

Cherry Orchard Dumplings

Serves 8

Book Title/Author

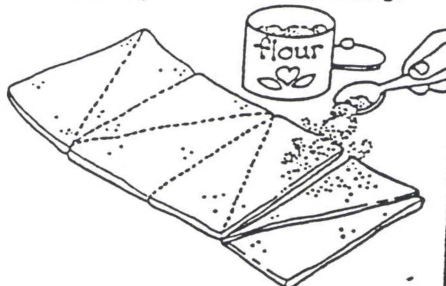
The Boxcar Children

Gertrude Chandler Warner

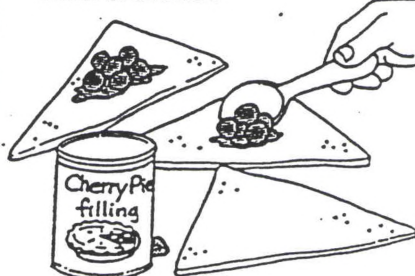
1. Gather the ingredients.

- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 tube crescent rolls
- 1 can (12 oz.) cherry pie filling
- 4 teaspoons sugar

2. Separate the crescent rolls and sprinkle with flour to prevent them from sticking.



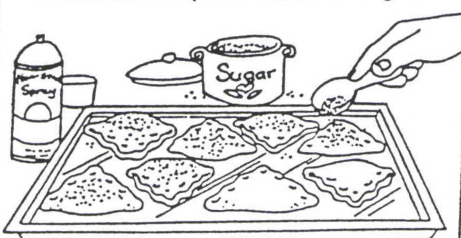
3. Put one tablespoon of pie filling in the center of each roll.



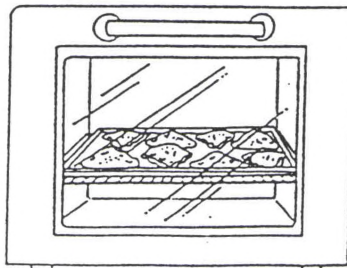
4. To seal each dumpling, bring one side over and pinch them together.



5. Spray the cookie sheet with nonstick baking spray. Place the dumplings on the cookie sheet. Sprinkle them with sugar.



6. Bake the dumplings at 400° for 15–20 minutes, or until golden brown.



Sentence Scramble

Write sentences on strips of paper or use the ones below. Cut each sentence apart and place its pieces in an envelope. Have your child arrange the pieces in order to create a correct sentence. A variation of this activity would be to cut out words from a magazine or newspaper to construct a complete sentence.

The little green frog jumped into the deep, cold water.

The farmer plowed his fields with a large tractor.

We ran around the block screaming until we were exhausted.

Mr. Jones likes to eat radishes on his pepperoni pizza.

Twenty-four black crows were sitting on the telephone wire.

Story Scramble

After reading a story with your child, write down five or six important events from the story. Write them on strips of paper. Scramble the strips. Have your child put the strips in an order that makes sense. More stories can be found in the appendix.³

Ballet — A Story of Dance



Ballet dancers can tell a whole story just by dancing. They seem to float gracefully through the air, sometimes on the very tips of their toes. But ballet dancing is not easy. Dancers must study and practice hard to be good enough to get jobs in the ballet.

People start learning to be dancers when they are very young. Children may go to a special school for young dancers. There they learn that a dancer's legs are the most important part of his or her body. So the children begin to make their leg muscles strong. They do special bending and stretching exercises. Then they learn to move their legs and feet in special ballet steps. Finally, after a few years, they learn to do simple ballet dances. But they do not yet dance on the tips of their toes. The bones in children's toes are too soft to hold up their bodies. Young dancers must wait until they are twelve years old for their bones to be strong. Then the dancers put on the special slippers that let them dance on their toes. The day a dancer wears toe slippers for the first time is a very proud day.

After many years of practice, a dancer may get a job with a ballet group, or company. Now a dancer must learn dances from many different ballet stories. Each dance is different, and a dancer must remember them all. Ballet dancers may practice for ten hours every day. They must also do all the exercises they learned when they were children because they must keep their legs strong.

Ballet dancers train as hard as football or basketball players. But when they spin and leap through the air, they look like they're not working at all.

They learn special ballet steps.

They get jobs with a ballet company.

A dancer gets toe slippers.

Ballet dancers learn special exercises.

Children go to a special school for young dancers

ABC Order

Use any of the following items in the home for alphabetizing: grocery coupons, cereal boxes, soup cans, games, library books, videos, grocery list, or anything with words or titles.

Photographs

Find photos of your child at various ages. Have your child put the photos in chronological order. Your child could write captions for each photo or tell something that he/she was able to do at that age.

Picture Books

Find and/or purchase inexpensive picture books that can be taken apart. Separate the pages of the book. Have your child put the pages of the book together in the proper order.

Time Line

Have your child create a time line of his/her life and use the events to tell a story. A variation of this activity would be to create a time line of a story that he/she has read.

Story in Pictures

Have your child read a story and retell the story by drawing pictures of the main events. The pictures can be taped together and attached to paper towel tubes to create a scroll.

Have your child read the instructions on how to play a game. Then have your child explain to someone else how to play before playing the game. Your child could also read the instructions on how to put something together such as a model airplane or car. Let your child help in assembling toys or furniture.

Calendar

Find a calendar and write down all the major holidays (New Years Day, Valentine's Day, Presidents' Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas). Have your child put the holidays in the correct order. A variation would be to have your child put the months in the correct order.

PREDICTING

Predicting refers to the ability to make an educated guess about what will happen next in a story. In order to ensure the guess is a logical one, the reader must use the information in the story and his/her own prior knowledge. The combination of previous experiences and story clues will allow the reader to make a sensible guess about future story events. Predicting requires the reader to concentrate on what is being read. This will lead to an increase in comprehension as well.

Book Reading

Before sitting down to read or listen to a story, have your child look at the title and the illustrations. Ask your child what he/she thinks the story is going to be about.

Riddles

Give your child descriptions of games and ask him/her to predict which game is being described.

Example: This game is played by two teams of nine players each.

It is played on a field with four bases.

The players hit the ball with a bat and run around the bases.

The team that scores the most runs is the winner.

This game is called _____.

This game is played by two teams on a large field.

There is a goal at either end of the field.

The players score points by getting the ball into the goal of the other team.

The players can kick the ball or hit it with their heads, but they cannot touch it with their hands or arms.

The player guarding the goal is called a goalie.

This game is called _____.⁴

Poetry

Give your child a copy of a simple poem in which some of the key words have been taken out. Your child is to predict what the missing words are in the poem. Choose a poem from one of the books on the suggested reading list.

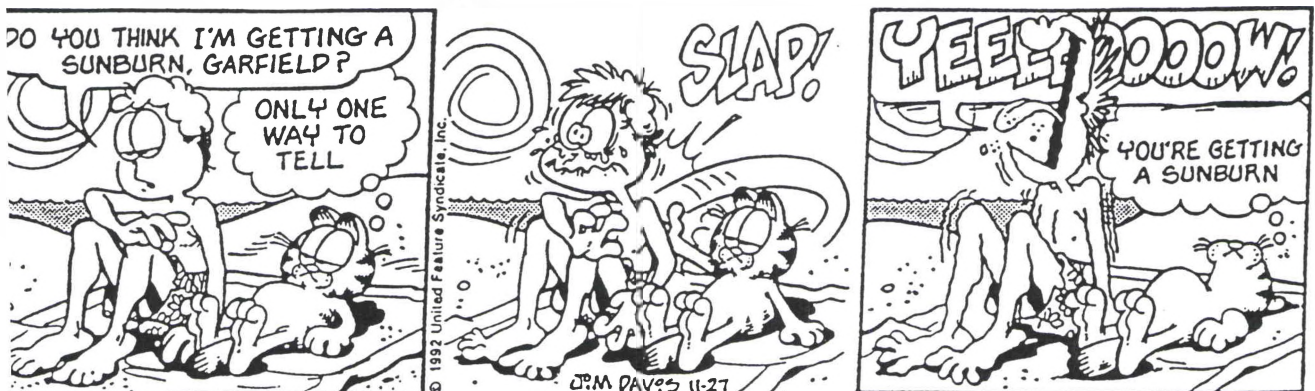
Example: "Alligators Are Unfriendly"

Alligators are unfriendly,
they are easily upset,
I suspect that I would never
care to have one for a _____. (pet)
Oh, I know they do not bellow,
and I think they do not shed,
but I'd probably be nervous
if I had one in my _____. (bed)

Alligators are not clever,
they are something of a bore,
they can't heel or catch a Frisbee,
they don't greet you at the _____, (door)
for their courtesy is lacking,
and their tempers are not sweet,
they won't even fetch your slippers
... though they just might eat your _____. (feet)⁵

Cartoon Strips

Use a cartoon strip from the local newspaper or those below.⁶ Cover up the speech from any frame of the strip. Have your child fill in the missing words(s), thought, or conversation. A variation for this activity would be to separate the cartoon strip into frames. The speech in each frame needs to be covered. Your child is to put the frames in order based on the pictures. Once your child has put the frames in order uncover the speech to check.



Sense Bag

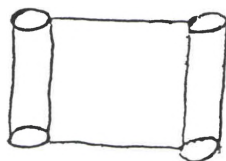
Put an item in a paper bag. Allow your child to use his/her senses to predict what is in the bag. Your child is to use one sense at a time. Some items that could be put in a bag are: a piece of fruit or vegetable, school supplies, small toys, or jewelry.

20 Questions

Think of a noun (a person, place, or thing). Your child is to ask questions that can be answered with yes or no in order to guess what which noun has been chosen. Your child may only ask 20 questions. Any question that cannot be answered with yes or no is not answered or counted as one of the 20 questions. If after 20 questions your child has not guessed the noun, your child should be told the correct answer.

Television

While watching a television program or movie, ask your child to predict what he/she thinks is going to happen next. Commercial interruptions are a great time for this activity. Another option is to predict different endings. After the program is over, turn the television off and have a family discussion about the program.

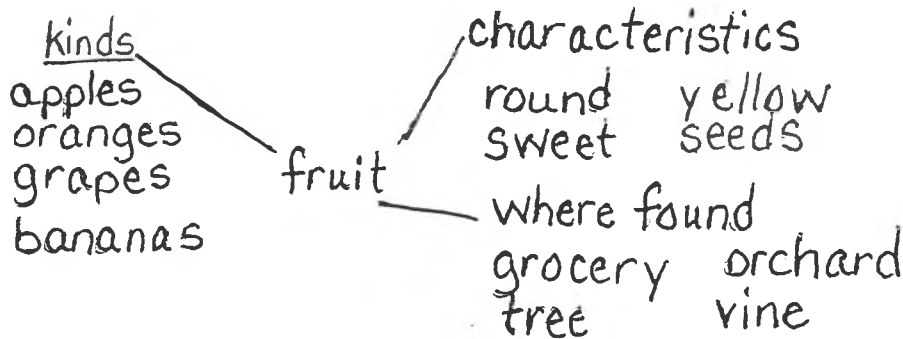


VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Reading is a process of interaction between the reader and text which results in the construction of meaning (Heilman, Blair, and Rupley, 1994). The ability to recognize words and know their meanings is fundamental to reading comprehension. The greater a reader's vocabulary is, the more likely he/she is to understand unfamiliar printed material. This means that developing your child's vocabulary is vital to helping him/her become a better reader.

Categorizing

Give your child a topic such as fruit and have your child list as many words as he/she can that are associated with the topic. A variation of this activity would be to use the generated word list to create a web in which the topics can be divided into subtopics (see diagram below).



Your child can also be given items to put into categories for example cans, boxes of food, mail, money, photographs. Your child will have to label the categories and explain his/her reasoning for the categories.

Rhyming Words

Give your child a word and have him/her write down as many words that rhyme. Be sure to point out the similar spelling in the rhyming words for example: bear, tear, wear.

Describing Words

Give your child a word and have them describe it as vividly as possible. Some words that could be used are sun, home, and friend.

Crossword Puzzles

Have your child complete simple crossword puzzles on his/her own, or do a more difficult one together. These crossword puzzles can be found in children's magazines or books of crossword puzzles can be purchased at department or drug stores. See appendix for more puzzles.⁸

Skill: Compound Words

Lighthouse

Name _____

Use the Word Bank to work the puzzle.

Across

1. Opposite of downstairs
4. An orange-yellow fish
5. A room in a school
6. What a spider weaves
9. Place to store a boat
11. A bird that lives near the sea
12. Lands that are low
13. A book in which you write notes
14. To walk very quietly

Down

2. Coastline
3. Work to be done at home
5. Someone who works on a ranch
7. A place to bathe
8. Forest
10. The covering of an egg
11. A boat moved by the wind

Word Bank

cobweb	upstairs	tiptoe	cowboy	eggshell	seagull
boathouse	woodland	bathtub	goldfish	notebook	lowlands
		seashore	sailboat	homework	classroom

Story Starter

Create a story of your own being as descriptive as possible. Then have your child continue the story adding more details. Turns can be taken until the story is completed. Below is a list of possible ideas for stories.

- Last night I was walking down the street and I found a magic ring...
- I heard on the radio that the zookeeper left the cages open and all the animals escaped...
- On a hot summer night I looked into the sky and saw...
- The other day I was sitting on the couch reading a book when suddenly...
- When I was eight years old, I was riding my bike near the park when all of the sudden I heard...
- I saw the cutest puppy in the pet store window...
- When I came home from the store I noticed my pet bunny was not in her cage...
- One day my mom opened the front door and, standing on our porch was...
- I can't wait until the snow falls. The last time it snowed...
- One stormy Saturday night I was so bored I decided to...

All Day Word

Together you and your child pick a word. Then, during the day, each of you keep track of how many times you encountered that word. At the end of the day, get together and talk about where you came across the word, whether it was heard or read.⁹

Word of the Day

Your child can pick a Word for the Day from the newspaper or magazine. (It should be one he/she doesn't know.) Using the dictionary, he/she looks up the word, then uses it three times in sentences.¹⁰

Concentration

Concentration is a memory game in which words and their definitions are written on separate cards. The cards are scrambled and placed face down on a table. Your child chooses two cards and looks to see if he/she has chosen a word and the correct definition. If so he/she keeps the pair and continues choosing. Once an incorrect pair is chosen your child returns the cards to their original place and the turn ends. This game continues until all correct matches have been made. The person with the most pairs wins. Words for this activity can be taken from spelling lists, reading vocabulary, and the Word of the Day.

mountain range	a group of mountains
peninsula	a piece of land that sticks out into water with water almost all the way around it
ocean	a very large body of salty water

river	a long, narrow body of water
desert	land where little rain falls and few plants grow
lake	a body of water with land all around it
plain	flat land
island	a body of land with water all around it

Facial Expressions

Ask your child to imitate your facial expressions - happy, sad, angry - and together discuss synonyms (words with similar meanings) for these words. Put all the words on cards; then have your child pick a card, say its word, and try to make the appropriate facial expression.¹¹

Collecting Words

Start a collection of words about your child's favorite sport, hobby, food, and so on. He/She writes them on cards and uses them to discuss or write about this favorite topic.¹²

Alphabet Salad

Make a salad to eat consisting of foods that start with each letter of the alphabet. Try to use as many letters of the alphabet as possible. Foods exist for at least 23 letters. (To use the letters x, u, and z, here are some hints - u=utensils, x=something with x-tra flavor, and z=you can tell them to eat with zest.)¹³

Name Game

Use the letters in a child's name or just their initials and have the child create lands or places that exist by use of products, machines, etc..., that only begin with these letters. For example, John Smith would create a place such as "J Land", where everything only began with the letter "J". They would eat jelly and jam and do jumping jacks there. The same could be done with the "S". The map of "J Land" could also be drawn and its geography could be included.¹⁴

Walks

Take a walk with your child around the neighborhood. Identify all street, yield, stop, signs. Discuss anything that is seen or heard such as trees, birds, cars, sirens.¹⁵

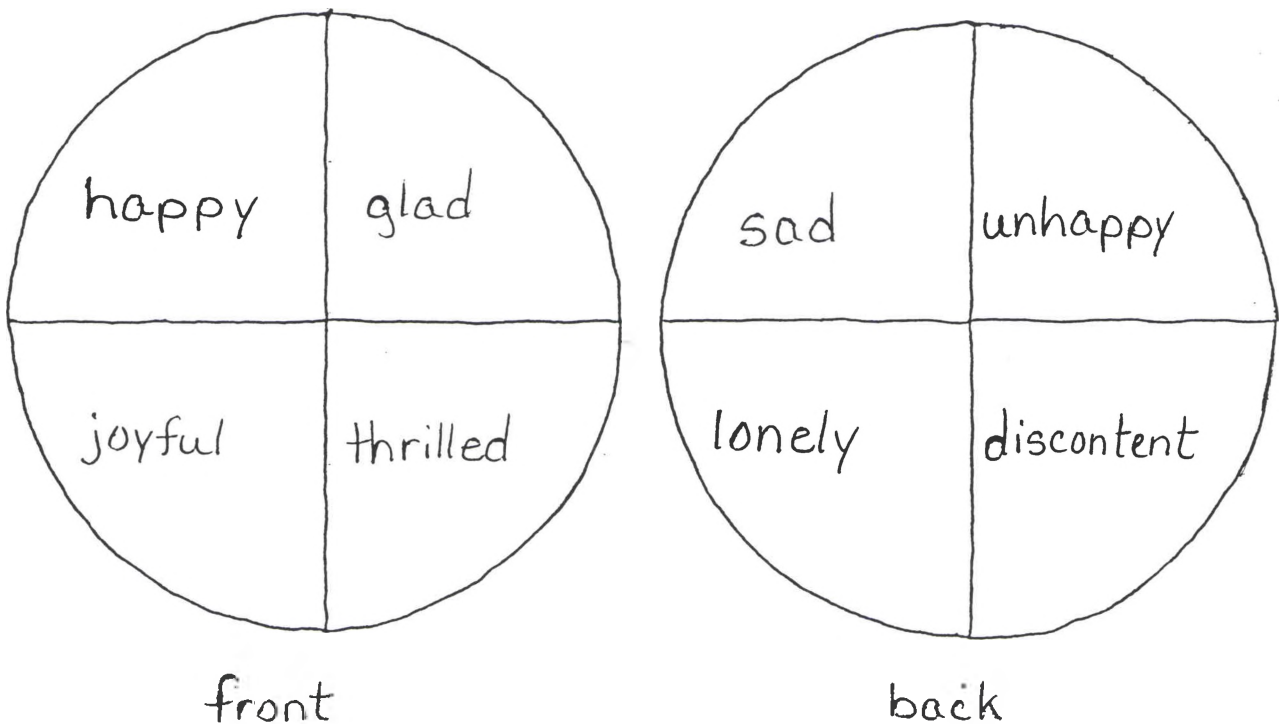
Pass the Plate

Each person must write a word on a paper plate and pass it to the next person. Game continues until someone cannot think of a word to write on the plate or until you run out of space. This game increases in difficulty if the words must rhyme or start with the same letter.¹⁶

Synonym/Antonyms

Your child will need a paper plate for each word pair. Each side of the plate should be divided into four parts. On one side of the plate write a word like happy, then have your child fill in the remaining three sections with synonyms (words with similar meanings) for the word happy. On the other side write the antonym (word with opposite meaning) of happy. In the remaining three sections write antonyms for the other words on the synonym side. See appendix for lists of synonyms and antonyms.

Example:



SUMMARIZING/PARAPHRASING

Summarizing refers to the ability to explain events in a brief or concise manner. Readers who can effectively summarize information can sort through large sections of printed material, separate important from unimportant information, and combine the information so that the new material resembles the original (Heilman, Blair, Rupley, 1994). Paraphrasing is closely related to summarizing. It refers to the ability to retell events in one's own words. Paraphrasing can help increase a reader's comprehension, concentration, and interest in the text (Shugarman and Hurst, 1986). Summarizing and paraphrasing are excellent ways to build and check for understanding.

Summarizing and paraphrasing can be easily incorporated into read aloud. Before a read aloud session your child can retell what has happened in the story prior to this session. During a read aloud session, your child can explain events as the story unfolds. After a read aloud session, your child can summarize what was read in the session.

Book Jackets

After your child has finished reading a book, encourage him/her to make a creative book jacket. Use a plain piece of paper that is longer than the book. Fold the paper around the book. Use the excess paper as flaps that are folded inside the front while summarizing the book on the flaps. Put the jacket around the book for easy reference anytime.

Daily Journal

Keep a journal at home so that your child can write about his/her daily activities. Help your child to pick out the most important events of that day. Your child is to use those events to write a paragraph summarizing his/her day.

Special Events

After a special outing (trip to zoo, concert, movie, museum, etc.) Have your child summarize the trip. Help your child to select the most important happenings. Then have your child tell someone else about the event. A variation of this activity would be to have your child draw a picture of each important happening. Then your child would have a small book to remember the special event.

Puppets

After reading a story have your child create puppets of the characters to use in a retelling of the story. Old socks or lunch bags can make great puppets.

Somebody Wanted But So

This activity is good for fairy tales. After reading the fairy tale your child is to retell the main parts using the words somebody, wanted, but, and so.

Example: Somebody: Cinderella

Wanted: to go to the ball

But: the stepmother and stepsisters wouldn't let
her

So: Cinderella's fairy godmother helped her to go
to the ball.

After reading a story your child needs to answer four questions about the story. The four questions are: Who are the main characters? Where and When does the story take place? What is the problem? and How is it solved? Each of the questions should be answered in a complete sentence.

Example: Charlotte's Web by E.B. White

Who: This story is about a spider named Charlotte and a pig named Wilber.

Where This story takes place on and Mr. Zuckerman's farm when Wilber is a

When: a young pig.

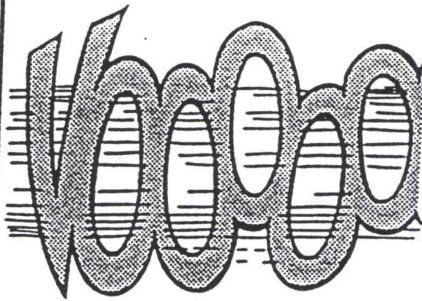
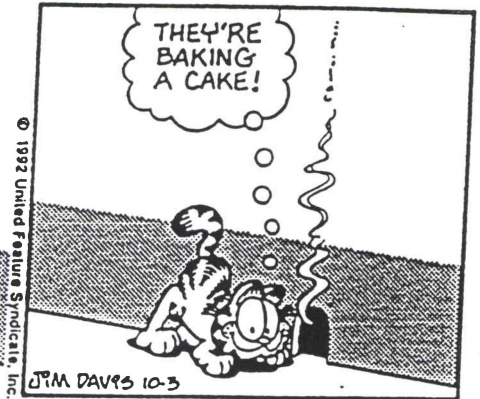
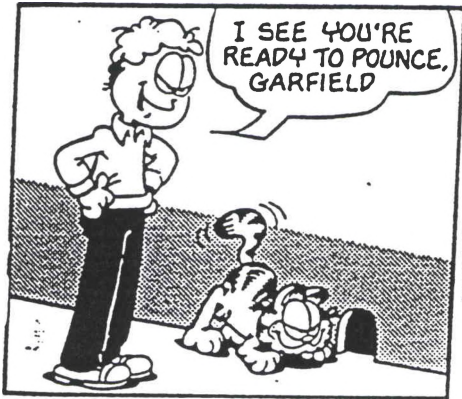
What: Mr. Zuckerman wants to have Wilber killed.

How: Charlotte convinces Mr. Zuckerman not to kill Wilber by spinning messages in her web.

Games

Present your child with games, instructions, and rules and ask him/her to rewrite this material for younger children. Some games with simple instructions are: Dominoes, Checkers, Go Fish, Crazy Eights, Slap Jack, War, and Connect Four.

Use a comic strip from the local newspaper or one of those below.¹⁷ Have your child rewrite the speech bubbles in his/her own words without changing the original meaning.



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Recipes

Sarah's Braided Bread

Serves 6

Book Title/Author

Sarah Plain and TallPatricia MacLachlan

1. Gather the ingredients.

- 1/2 package yeast
- 1 cup warm water
- 1/2 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups flour
- 1/4 cup butter

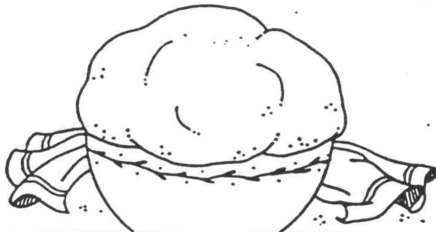
2. Dissolve the yeast in warm water. Let it set for 5 minutes.



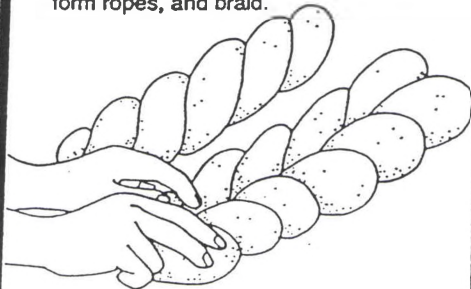
3. Add the water, sugar, salt, and flour. Knead the dough in a floured bowl.



4. Place the dough in a greased bowl. Cover. Let the dough rise until it doubles (about 1-1/2 to 2 hours). Punch the dough down and let it sit until it doubles again.



5. Divide the dough among the students, form ropes, and braid.



6. Brush with melted butter. Bake at 400° for 30 minutes.



Sweet Charlotte

Serves 1

Book Title/Author

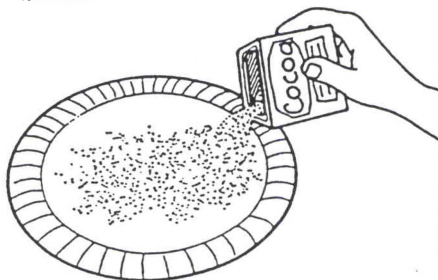
Charlotte's Web

E. B. White

1. Gather the ingredients.

- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar
- 8 chow mein noodles
- 1 tablespoon cocoa

2. Sprinkle the cocoa on a paper plate and set it aside.



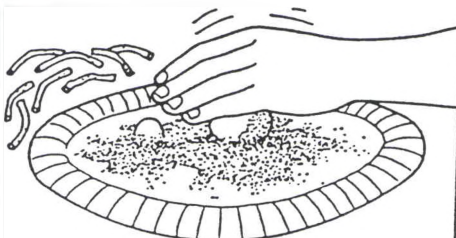
3. Mix the peanut butter and the powdered sugar together.



4. Form two balls, one for the head of the spider and the other for the body.



5. Gently roll the spider in cocoa.



6. Use chow mein noodles for the legs.



The Fastest Mail in the West



Today when you drop a letter to a friend into a mailbox, you know that your letter will arrive at your friend's house in a few days. Trucks and airplanes carry mail quickly from place to place. But in the United States in the 1850's, there were no trucks or airplanes. If you wanted to send a letter to a friend across the country, you mailed the letter and let the stagecoach carry it with the rest of the mail. But the stagecoach was slow. The letter would take weeks or even months to get to your friend. What if the letter had important news? There was no way to get important mail from place to place quickly.

Then in 1860, the United States government started the Pony Express, the fastest mail service in the country. The route ran from St. Joseph, Missouri, to California, across high mountains and through hot, dry deserts. With the mail in a saddlebag, a young rider would gallop off alone from St. Joseph on a fast horse. Fifteen miles farther on, he would come to a little station. There a fresh horse would be waiting, and the rider would jump on the new horse and keep riding. Each Pony Express rider would ride a hundred miles, changing horses every fifteen miles. Then another rider would take over. Stopping only to change horses, the Pony Express team could carry the mail over 1,000 miles in only ten days.

The Pony Express was one of the most famous services in United States history. But it lasted for only one year. In 1861 the telegraph, which could send messages in minutes, connected the East and the West. And the Pony Express disappeared forever.

Fifteen miles later he would come to a little station.

A new rider would take over.

The rider would ride for one hundred miles.

A rider would gallop off alone from St. Joseph.

There the rider got a fresh horse.

The Big Bird with the Big Bill



An old rhyme goes, "A wonderful bird is a pelican; its bill will hold more than its belly can." The person who wrote that rhyme was right. A pelican has a big pouch under its bill. The pouch will hold more than three gallons of water, far more than a pelican can hold in its stomach.

North America is home for two kinds of pelicans. The white pelican lives around lakes in the western United States. The brown pelican lives near the ocean in California and around the Gulf of Mexico. Both kinds of pelicans are big birds. Whites weigh twenty pounds, or 9 kilograms, and are five feet, or 1.5 meters, long. Browns are smaller. They weigh only half as much as the whites and are a little shorter. Both pelicans eat fish. But they don't go fishing in the same way.

Brown pelicans like to fish alone. They fly over the water looking for fish far below. When they see a fish, they dive into the water and scoop it up in their bills.

White pelicans like to fish together. They also fly high above the water looking for fish. But when these pelicans find a group of fish, they land on the water. Then they form a half circle and start beating their wings on the water. The frightened fish swim to the middle of the circle, and the pelicans start their tasty meal.

For a while it seemed that only one kind of pelican might be left. Almost all the brown pelicans died because of dirty, unsafe water in the Gulf of Mexico. But people began to clean up the water in time, and now the number of brown pelicans is growing again. So when you see this bird that carries its own shopping bag in its bill, remember that his bill really will hold more than his belly can!

They land on the water.

They beat their wings on the water.

They eat the fish.

White pelicans fly high above the water.

The fish swim to the middle of the circle.

Analogies

1. begin : start :: end : _____ (finish)
2. glad : happy :: mad : _____ (angry)
3. below : above :: far : _____ (near)
4. shower : bathroom :: oven : _____ (kitchen)
5. light : dark :: love : _____ (hate)
6. cow : calf :: lion : _____ (cub)
7. scissors : cut :: broom : _____ (sweep)
8. lamp : light :: furnace: _____ (heat)
9. house : roof :: head : _____ (hair)
10. United States : country :: Texas : _____ (state)
11. thread : needle :: key : _____ (lock)
12. Thanksgiving : November :: Christmas: _____
(December)
13. engine: car :: light : _____ (bulb)
14. paint : brush :: draw : _____ (pencil)
15. potato : vegetable :: grape : _____ (fruit)
16. few : many :: always : _____ (never)
17. baby : weak :: gorilla : _____ (strong)
18. pig : farm :: tiger : _____ (jungle)
19. bicycle : tricycle :: two : _____ (three)
20. perfume : nose :: music : _____ (ears)

Skill: Suffixes en and able

Laughable Fellow

Name _____

Use the Word Bank to work the puzzle.

Across

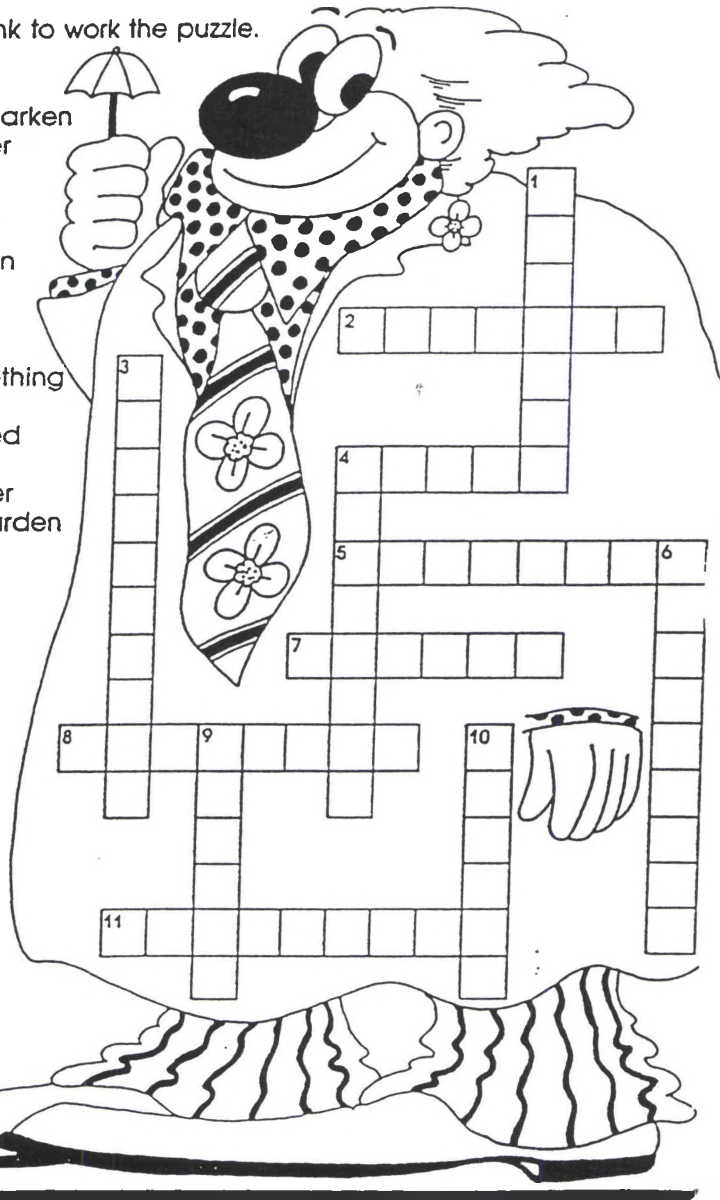
- 2. Opposite of darken
- 4. To make wider
- 5. Can be sunk
- 7. To make hard
- 8. Can be read
- 11. Can be broken

Down

- 1. Put in writing
- 3. To make something not crooked
- 4. Can be washed
- 6. A lot of fun
- 9. To make darker
- 10. Opposite of harden

Word Bank

- breakable
- widen
- readable
- sinkable
- harden
- lighten
- soften
- washable
- darken
- enjoyable
- written
- straighten



Skill: Words Containing scr, spl, str, squ or spr

Stretch!

Name _____

Use the Word Bank to work the puzzle.

Across

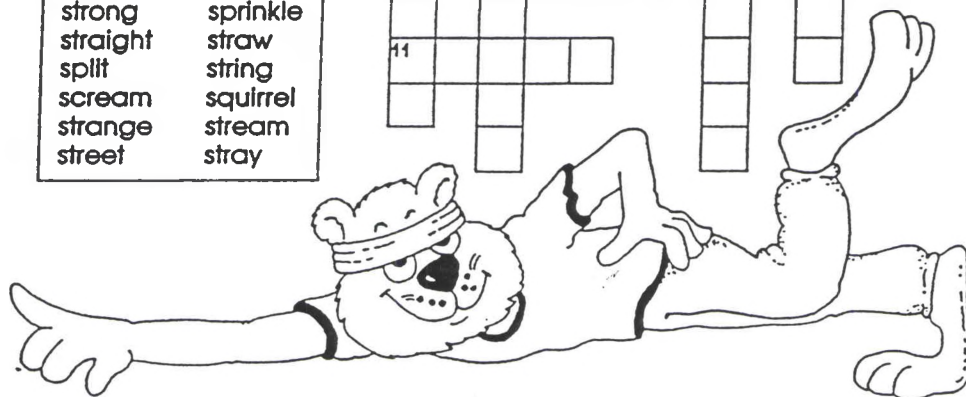
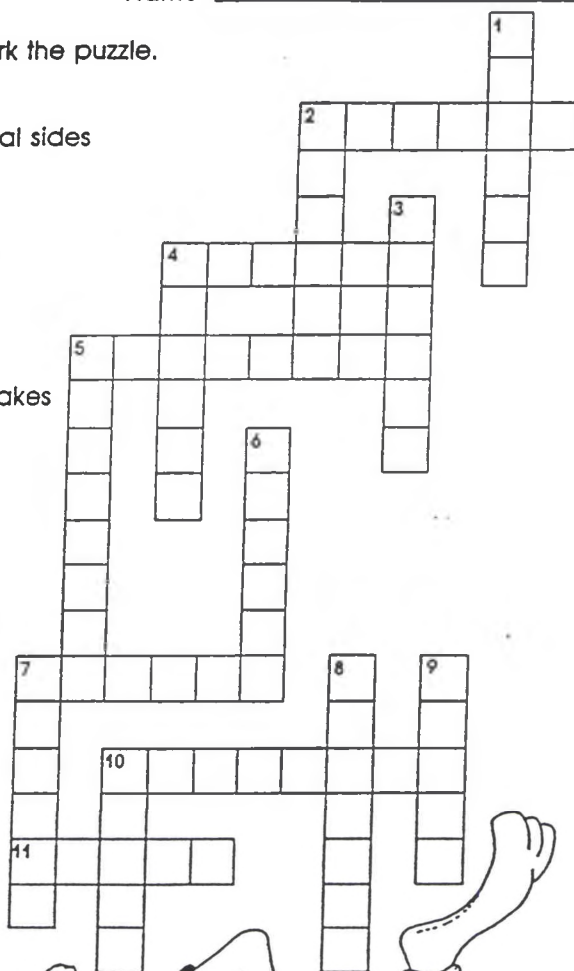
2. A shape that has equal sides
4. A road
5. To scatter little pieces
7. Light-weight rope
10. A bushy-tailed animal
11. Stalk of grain

Down

1. Opposite of weak
2. The sound a mouse makes
3. A small river
4. Yell
5. Opposite of crooked
6. A season of the year
7. To throw water
8. Very odd
9. To separate
10. A homeless cat or dog

Word Bank

splash	spring
squeak	square
strong	sprinkle
straight	straw
split	string
scream	squirrel
strange	stream
street	stray



Synonyms

relax - rest
hard - difficult
cost - price
happy - jolly
present - gift
tidy - neat
friend - buddy
quick - fast
slash - cut
start - begin
simple - easy
little - tiny
carpet - rug
large - huge
sick - ill
blend - mix
near - close
center - middle
pretty - beautiful
thin - slim
penny - cent
coat - jacket
jewel- gem
woods - forest
bashful - shy
mistake - error

Antonyms

bottom - top
weak - strong
friend - enemy
brave - afraid
shut - open
little - big
buy - sell
night - day
awake - asleep
straight - curly
front - back
play - work
first - last
near - far
stop - start
in - out
wet - dry
under - over
smile - frown
empty - full
short - long
early - late
dull - sharp
rise - fall
lead - follow
soft - hard

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APPENDIX B

Check only ONE answer to the questions below.

1. Do you listen to your child read: Yes _____ No _____
If your answer is Yes:

(a) About how often?

_____ every day
_____ 2 or 3 times a week
_____ once a week
_____ 2 or 3 times a month
_____ every once in a while

(b) When you listen to the reading, from what does your child read most often?

_____ reading book from school
_____ library book
_____ books from other school subjects
_____ magazines or newspapers
_____ other (list) _____

2. When your child reads at home, what kind of help do you usually give when he/she comes to a word that he/she doesn't know?

_____ ask him/her to sound out the unknown word
_____ tell the child the word
_____ encourage him/her to look for clues to the unknown word in the sentence

3. How would you rate your child's progress in reading?

_____ My child is making progress at a rate higher than others at his/her grade level.
_____ My child's progress is similar to most of the children in his/her grade level.
_____ My child's progress is slightly behind others at his/her grade level.
_____ I'm not really sure about my child's progress in reading.

4. Do you read to your children?

Yes, frequently

Yes, occasionally

No, not much

I used to when they were younger, but not since they learned to read.

5. How would you rate your child's reading ability?

My child is a very good reader.

My child reads adequately enough to complete school assignments.

I wish my child could read better.

6. Which statement below best describes your interest in reading?
(Check one for mother and one for father.)

	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
I enjoy reading books and read as often as time permits.	_____	_____
I enjoy reading, but prefer magazines or newspapers to books.	_____	_____
Reading is not something I have ever enjoyed much.	_____	_____

7. What is the highest level of education completed?

Mother

8th Grade

High School

Vocational/Trade School

Bachelor Degree

Master's Degree

PhD.

Father

8th Grade

High School

Vocational/Trade School

Bachelor Degree

Master's Degree

PhD.

APPENDIX C

ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

School _____ Grade _____ Name _____

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1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?



JTM DAVIS

2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?



3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?

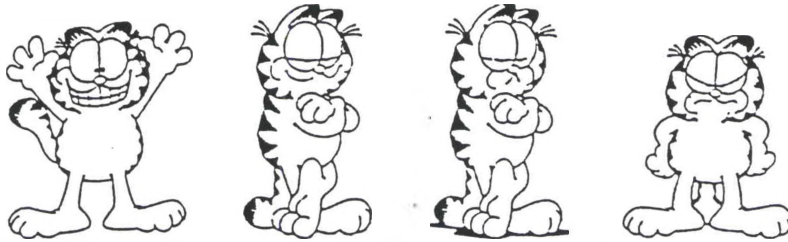


4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

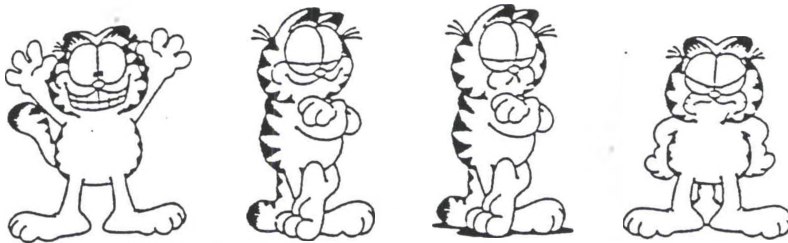


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5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?



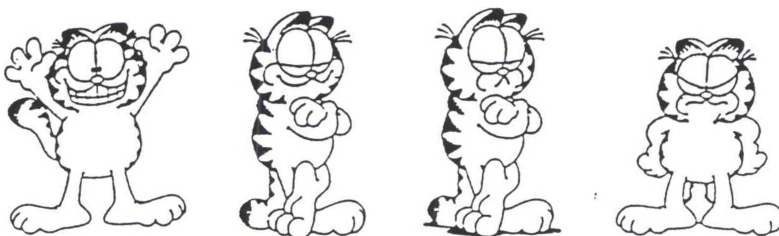
6. How do you feel about starting a new book?



7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?



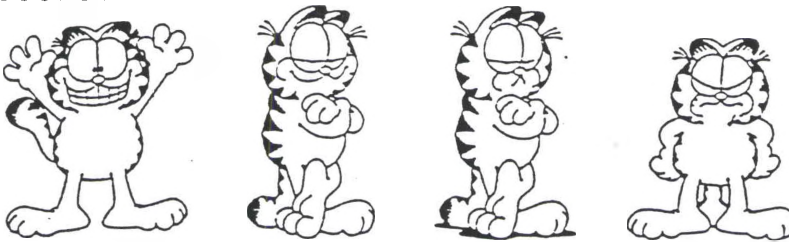
8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?



9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?



10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?



11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?



12. How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?



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13. How do you feel about reading in school?



14. How do you feel about reading your school books?



15. How do you feel about learning from a book?



16. How do you feel when it's time for reading class?



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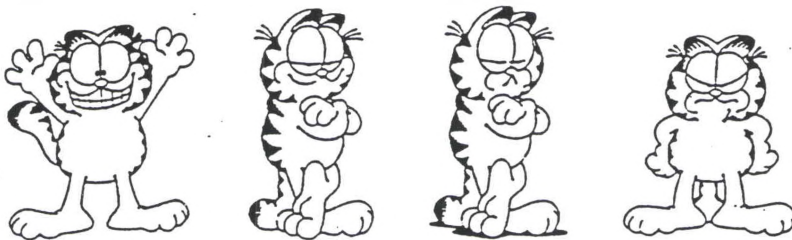
17. How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?



18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?



19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?



20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?



Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Scoring sheet

Student name _____

Teacher _____

Grade _____ Administration date _____

Scoring guide

4 points	Happiest Garfield
3 points	Slightly smiling Garfield
2 points	Mildly upset Garfield
1 point	Very upset Garfield

Recreational reading

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Raw score: _____

Academic reading

11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Raw score: _____

Full scale raw score (Recreational + Academic): _____

Percentile ranks

Recreational

Academic

Full scale

APPENDIX D

SATISFACTION SURVEY

Please circle one of the following answers to each question:

- (4) Strongly agree
- (3) Agree
- (2) Disagree
- (1) Strongly disagree

Additional comments would be greatly appreciated.

1. I found the handbook easy to use.

4 3 2 1

Comments _____

2. I worked with my child 3 nights a week.

4 3 2 1

Comments _____

3. I feel my child benefited from our use of the handbook.

4 3 2 1

Comments _____
