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TRAINING PARENTS TO TEACH
THEIR PRESCHOOLERS

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

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option

by
Carol Ann Hodnett

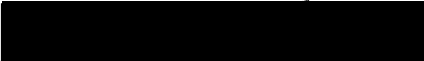
June 1997

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Approved by:


Joseph Gray, First Reader

June 10, 1997
Date


Patricia Tefft Cousin, Second Reader

ABSTRACT

This project explores the need for a parent handbook for the parents of preschool children. The literature reviewed in the research explores the literacy development of preschool children and is divided into the following six sections: (1) The processes of learning to read and write begins before formal schooling, (2) most preschool literacy development occurs naturally and informally, (3) literacy develops in the context of real life settings, (4) reading and writing develop together, (5) reading aloud to young children plays a special role, and (6) opportunities to write is an important step.

Parental involvement is a critical factor in a child's literacy development and future success. The learning environment they create in the home during the preschool years has a lasting effect on school achievement. Research shows that preschool children's literacy develops naturally under certain conditions.

The handbook will help parents: (1) understand how children develop as readers and writers, (2) know what kind of experiences and opportunities to provide that support and encourage literacy development, (3) learn how to create a literate environment that promotes reading and writing, and (4) appreciate their important and critical role as literacy-learning partners.

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally children start their formal schooling at about age six---and then they learn to read. At least this is the way it is suppose to be. Unfortunately for some students this is not what happens. Some students do not learn to read and others encounter great difficulty in becoming literate. This problem with literacy learning manifests itself even in the Kindergarten year. Some students are already struggling this early in their school career, and seem unable to catch up. In the last few years, a great deal of thought and research has gone into finding out why some children seem to learn quickly and easily at school while others do not.

Surprisingly researchers have been turning their attention from the school to the home, because the findings seem to indicate that it is the child's preschool experience and environment that makes the difference and the parents who hold the key. Butler & Clay (1982) report: "There is clear evidence that it matters more what a child brings to the task of learning to read than what the teacher has to offer" (p. 7).

The over-all learning environment of the home during the preschool years has far reaching results. Children are starting their formal school careers in two groups, one is prepared and the other is not. According to the kindergarten teachers surveyed by the Carnegie Foundation, 35 percent

of our nation's children, more than one in three, are not ready for school (Grohowsky, 1993, p. 1). Researchers have found that children need certain basic insights and specific knowledge about print in order to develop as readers. This insight and knowledge comes from immediate experience with written language (Anderson, 1985). Unfortunately, many children are entering school without the necessary background knowledge which puts them at a great disadvantage.

Literacy learning should begin in the home at an early age because according to Nicoll & Wilkie (1991), children from birth to five, can learn invaluable lessons about literacy. It is important for children to learn these lessons early because the exposure to and experience with written language in the preschool years develops a solid basis for teachers to build on and gives children a great advantage when they start school. There is an enormous amount of research that supports the view that children's early encounters with print at home have a tremendous and lasting effect on their later development at school (Butler & Clay, 1982). Ellermeier (1988) reports that two researchers (Bettelheim & Zelan, 1981), observed that "children who acquire an interest in and love for reading in their homes have an easier time reading in school and generally become good readers" (p. 40). Gordon Wells (1986), also found a strong correlation between early reading experiences, parent involvement and school achievement. Throne (1988) summa-

rized Well's findings: "The most powerful and significant predictor of school achievement was the frequency with which parents read to and discussed stories with their child during the preschool years" (p. 10). Therefore if a child comes to school without a solid foundation in literacy experiences, the teacher has to try to fill the void.

Not only should literacy learning begin early in order to build a solid foundation, but parental involvement is a critical factor in a child's future success. Parents are the first and most important teachers and the home environment is the first school. It is in the home during the formative years that the foundation is laid for future learning. Parents literally have their children's future in their own hands because so much development takes place prior to the child's entrance into school (Butler & Clay, 1982). In fact, it has been reported that a child learns about 90% of all the requisite intellectual skills by the age of five (Striker, 1986). Young children are developmentally ready to learn and are naturally curious, eager, and have the capacity to learn a great deal about their world. All children have great potential, but it is the activities, play experiences, opportunities and resources that parents provide in the early years that have a marked effect on the kind of learner the child will become (Butler & Clay, 1982).

In the years before school, parents play a vital role

as their children's first literacy teachers. According to Anderson (1985):

In a study comparing kindergarten children's knowledge, those who knew a lot about written language had parents who believed that it was their responsibility to seize opportunities to convey information about written language to their children. Parents of children who had little knowledge did not share this belief. (p. 25)

Also, Durkin (1966), shares the belief that the parents play a key role in a child's literacy development. In her landmark research of early readers, (children who learned to read naturally before formal schooling) she concluded that:

It is their mothers [parents] who play the key role in effecting the early achievement. The homes they provide, the example they show, the time they give to the children, their concepts of their role as educator of the preschool child--all of these dimensions of home life and of parent--child relationships appeared to be of singular importance to the early reading achievement described in this report. (p. 139)

Since literacy learning starts at home and parents play such a key role, parents must act in order to lay the foundation for literacy before a child starts school.

Reading instruction in the home may take a different form than it does at school (Anderson, 1985). In the home, the goal is to promote and encourage reading and writing for the sake of enjoyment and not for the sake of acquiring skills. Thus it is not necessary to directly teach skills in a teacher-pupil way. In fact, according to Anderson,

(1985), "informal instruction seems to work as well or better than formal, systematic approaches" (p. 24). With informal instruction the objective is not to push children to read too early, but to provide the opportunity for children to learn to read in developmentally appropriate ways. Parents can offer opportunities for reading and writing curiosity to occur by providing a rich and stimulating learning environment.

The best way for parents to promote literacy development in the home is to create a rich, literary environment where children are immersed in print just as they were immersed in oral language. The majority of preschool children that have home environments that are rich with books and print can learn to read and write as easily and as naturally as they have learned to talk under similar conditions. When children are surrounded with print and provided with innumerable reading and writing demonstrations, it goes a long way in their literacy development. However, a rich and stimulating home environment is not enough, children also need immediate first-hand experience with written language in order to gain the specific abilities required for reading (Anderson, 1985).

In addition to structuring the environment, it is the parent's role to look for opportunities to actively involve their children in literary experiences. Parents don't need special materials, equipment or expertise to teach their

children, but can meet the same objective through opportunities that arise informally as part of everyday activities. If parents get in the habit of involving their children in the ordinary things of life, they can encourage their children to develop as readers and writers through activities that are real and important in their lives.

The key is that children are active learners and they need to be engaged in many learning activities in which both reading and writing are necessary. Children are self-taught through exploration and experimentation and they make discoveries for themselves. Characteristically, this is the way most preschooler's literacy learning develops, naturally and informally. They learn without any direct instruction when provided with reading and writing demonstrations, materials and the opportunity to experiment and explore. Reading and writing develops naturally under these conditions.

Many parents do not act or get involved or believe that it is their responsibility to prepare their child for a variety of reasons. Some assume that teaching children to read and write is the school's job and children under six cannot and should not learn to read. Others do not realize the importance of their critical role in the child's success and they do not value their contribution and the specific educational advantages for their child. Still others sense they don't have the time or the expertise to help. However

the major concern many parents have is how to teach a child to read with no experience as a teacher and no special materials.

The goal of this project is to convince parents of the importance of the key role they play in their child's literacy development. It was also written to heighten parents awareness of the important and critical role they play during the preschool years in laying the foundation for reading and writing, and ultimately school success. Also included are many helpful suggestions, methods and techniques on how to create a literate environment that promotes reading and writing.

The two major methods recommended in this handbook are easy and natural and have proven successful to others: (1) reading aloud to children and (2) supporting and encouraging writing development. The best part is, that these two methods don't require expensive equipment, expertise, or any extra expenditure of time and should occur naturally as a part of daily family activities.

This handbook addresses writing, as well as, reading because they go together and support one another. In fact, writing is a natural developmental process that all children seem compelled to do and it plays a key role in a child's literacy development.

This handbook will explore the benefits of reading aloud and how it helps the child to acquire reading skills.

Some parents in our culture already read to their preschool children regularly and provide them liberally with books and with writing materials. However, few may recognize the stages of development in reading and writing, or value the child's attempts or realize the specific educational advantages for the child. In addition, many parents have been told that storybook reading is one of the best ways to help their child learn to read. What is not clear is how this activity directly teaches their child to read.

However, for informal teaching to be successful, parents must be aware of what their children can learn and the experiences through which such learning will occur (Anderson, 1985). Therefore, the literacy development of preschool children will be explored.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the last few years there has been a lot of research and interest in the literacy development of young children. Naturally, many of the old concepts of beginning literacy acquisition, reading readiness and other methods of beginning reading instruction have been challenged by current research. Researchers have discovered that preschool children know more about reading and writing than was previously thought. For this reason, they have shifted the focus of their inquiry from school-age children to preschool children in the home. As a result, researchers have come to appreciate the major contribution of a rich, literary, home environment and the important and critical role of the parents in facilitating literacy development.

In reviewing the literature on beginning literacy acquisition in preschool children, the findings support the new emphasis on parent involvement in the home. However, in order for parents to be successful, they must be aware of the key role they play in their child's literacy development, how children develop as readers and writers, and the experiences through which such learning occurs (Anderson, 1985). Current research provides new insight into how children develop as readers and writers based on the following beliefs:

1. The process of learning to read and write begins before formal schooling.

2. Most preschool literacy development occurs naturally and informally.
3. Literacy develops in the context of real life settings.
4. Reading and writing develop together.
5. Reading aloud to young children plays a special role.
6. Opportunities to write is an important step.

In addition to examining and discussing these 6 components of children's literacy acquisition, a seventh component on parent support and involvement has been included:

7. How to help and support parents.

The Process of Learning to Read and Write Begins Before Formal Schooling

Education doesn't begin on the first day of school; that is merely when it is taken over by strangers (Striker, 1986 p. 135).

Children have learned a tremendous amount about their world by the time they start school. Research has proven that children learn much more, much earlier, than we ever imagined (Striker, 1986). In fact, as a result of the research on the origins of literacy development it has been revealed that reading and writing start much earlier than had been expected. Nearly all children entering school have some knowledge or experience with print, although they show great variation in what they know and can do, (Jewel & Zintz, 1990). It follows then, that learning to read begins before children are first exposed to formal instruction in

school (Weaver, 1994). Literacy learning actually begins at birth since literacy involves listening and speaking, as well as reading and writing (Nicoll & Wilkie, 1991).

Young children are naturally curious, eager, and have a desire to learn. They also have an innate desire and need to acquire language skills in order to communicate with others in their environment. Oral language develops first because for the first few years children need to communicate with people close at hand. But later, after developing a sense of the functions of written language, children begin to use written language even while their oral language is still developing (Goodman, 1985).

The foundations of literacy are laid in the early years as children try to make sense out of written language just as they did with oral language. Goodman (1985) explains:

Children growing up in literate societies, surrounded by the printed word, begin to read and write long before they start school. They become aware of many of the uses of written language, they develop a sense of the written forms, and they begin to make sense of print and to experiment with communication through writing. (p. 58)

Children encounter print in their everyday lives and activities. Parents read books to them, they see signs and environmental print, they see words on the television, and they see things written down. All of this exposure to print stimulates an interest in and curiosity about whole words and a desire to make sense out of print.

Children as young as two and three have definite ideas about the functions of print and are aware of the processes of reading and writing (Sampson, 1986). Children who can turn the pages of a book and make up a story certainly know something about reading. They also demonstrate this awareness and development when; they carry a book around, ask for help in getting a library book, listen to stories, join in the reading of stories, "play" read familiar stories and notice print in their environment (Hill, 1989).

Learning to read does not begin in school but it begins when children first begin to notice and interact with print in their environment (Weaver, 1994, p. 76). Preschool children are aware of environmental print and can read "Stop" on a stop sign, "McDonald's" when shown the golden arches, and the names of products such as Coke, their favorite toothpaste, breakfast cereals and toys that they use or encounter in their daily lives (Harste, 1990). Environmental print is usually the first print children recognize. Gradually some children move on to recognizing some words and individual letters, without the colors, pictures, and shapes that surround them.

Some researchers, Masonheimer, Drum and Ehri, (as cited in Kontos, 1986) have concluded that children are probably responding as much to environmental cues (like shape, color, trademark, or logo) as to graphic cues when they 'read' the signs. This is supported by the fact that many of the

children in their study could not read the words out of context. Nevertheless, experience with environmental print is still valuable because it heightens awareness of print and its functions, facilitates an interest in print, and assists children with general knowledge about reading (Wiseman, 1984). In addition, "recognizing environmental print makes children feel successful at 'reading' and motivates them to read more" (Beeler, 1993, p. 69). As a result of encounters with print in their environment and homes, preschool children acquire a great deal of general information about written language. Children, fortunate enough to have been read to, absorb a lot of information about books before going to school. Wiseman (1984) reports that in 1982, she and Robeck identified some specific emerging reading behaviors in a study they did with some pre-school children. The researchers found that the children knew: Books were for reading, words are in books, words on the cover refer to the name of the book, one reads from left to right, and print is separate from pictures. In addition, Jeanette Throne (1988) also related examples of the type of knowledge and understandings that preschool children acquire from experience with print as they emerge into literacy:

They begin to understand that reading is getting meaning from print and become aware of the different functions and uses of written language. They begin to understand directionality (left-to-right and top-to-bottom), the one-to-one correspondence between the spoken and writ-

ten word, the functions of space, the visual and auditory aspects of print, and the concepts of a letter and a word. (p. 11 & 12)

All of these insights are things that children, depending upon their experiences with print, understand and know about reading before they go to school.

Obviously, children with a lot of book experience are often further along on the continuum of literacy development. Many of these children have begun to acquire the concepts and strategies they need to become successful readers. When youngsters tell about the pictures or "read" a familiar book from memory, they are exhibiting early reading behaviors. According to Throne (1988), "they are learning to behave like readers before they actually read" (p. 11). Still other children under certain favorable conditions, have actually learned to read at home (Durkin, 1966).

In addition to experiences with reading, many preschool children have experimented with writing. Some children exhibit awareness of the function of written language when they produce scribble marks on paper with the intent of conveying a message. Others demonstrate that they know how stories look on the page when they write their own stories with line after line of scribbles (Strickland & Morrow, 1988). Still others imitate adult writing with rows of wavy lines. Finally, some children develop sophisticated hypoth

eses about the nature of written language and demonstrate that they know the difference between writing and drawing. For instance, the marks some 3-year olds make when asked to draw pictures of themselves are quite different from the markings they make when asked to write their name (Harste, 1990). These early writing attempts reflect the written language of our culture and demonstrate that preschool children know something about print before formal schooling. On this account, it is important for parents to recognize and value children's early writing attempts as an important phase of early writing development. If parents realize their potential and give them unlimited opportunity and experience at a very early age, preschool children can absorb and internalize a great deal of knowledge about written language before school.

The Bulk of Most Pre-School Children's Literacy Development Occurs Naturally and Informally

"Many language theorists see language acquisition as a natural process which is learned in an orderly and predictable sequence without 'teaching' in the traditional sense" (Ellermeyer, 1988, p. 402). According to Weaver (1994), children are not taught directly how to talk, but they learn, by "transacting with us in a language-rich environment" (p. 61). Most parents do not necessarily set out to formally teach children to talk, read, or write. But language is learned through use. When children are immersed in

an environment where reading and writing is being used in purposeful ways, they learn naturally and easily without formal instruction.

Language is a social event, so most of what is known about language has been learned from being in the presence of others; listening to adult talk, observing grown-ups, imitating, exploring, asking questions, are all natural ways children enlarge their understandings. Ellermeyer (1988) and others describe the language acquisition process: First children hear language modeled; then as they understand its purpose and see a need for it, they have a desire to engage in it; thus they attempt utterances and experiment with producing speech sounds. Finally, they receive feedback and support for their efforts from their parents and significant others who also provide an emulative model and support. As a result, by the age of two, most children have learned to speak.

Yet Weaver (1994) cautions that children do not merely imitate adults when they are learning to speak; but they abstract patterns (on an unconscious level) based on the language they hear and construct their own rules. Consequently, young children use rules they were not taught when they say for example, "he goed to the store." Initially they use "baby talk" based on their own rules but eventually, their speech increasingly reflects that of the adult model.

Literacy too is a matter of language and shares some of the same basic characteristics as oral language. In fact, the processes of reading, writing, listening and speaking are not separate, but parallel and interrelated language processes. Language is integrated, and oral and written language go together. Thus reading and writing are considered to be naturally occurring language processes too and develops in the same natural way as spoken language when there is a favorable environment and a need and desire to communicate.

Children learn to speak when they are immersed in a favorable environment where speech is being used and there is a need and desire to communicate. Likewise, if surrounded by written language being used purposefully in the same way as oral language, children emerge naturally into literacy. Children have a basic capacity to learn and will teach themselves in a properly supportive and secure environment where parents provide a model and support they are in control of their learning. Children do not need to be taught, but are self-taught through experimentation. Children who see adults and older children reading and writing and who are surrounded by print in their environment will begin to experiment with reading and writing (Nicoll & Wilkie, 1991). Learning is natural and enjoyable.

Although print awareness and adult demonstrations of reading and writing are important in children's literacy

development, they are not enough. Children are active learners and they learn more by doing than by observing. Therefore preschool children need to be actively involved in firsthand experiences with reading and writing in order to learn. According to Bialostok (1992), "language learning occurs by doing the acts themselves: children learn to speak by speaking, to read by reading, and to write by writing" (p. 99). Young children must actively explore and experiment with written language in order to construct their own knowledge, theories, hypothesis from within.

Experimentation plays a special role in children's literacy development. Piaget believed that children do not internalize knowledge directly from the environment, but they build their knowledge from their own experimentation and explorations (Manning, Manning & Kamii, 1988). Based on these observations and explorations of written language, children construct a system of rules that make sense to them. Then they refine and enlarge their concepts about written language by playing around with writing and reading. These concepts build one upon the other as they experiment and explore. Thus children become literate by being self-motivated, actively involved in literary activities, and constructing their own rules and theories (Willert & Kamii, 1985).

Literacy Develops in the Context of Real Life Settings as a Result of Active Participation in Daily Activities

The home is the ideal setting for self-education and literacy learning. During the precious preschool years, children are in the home with parents and they are absorbing everything they see. According to Brown (1986), "Children learn through experiencing the world around them. Those who experience more, learn more, and those who experience less, learn less" (p. 67). Therefore, it is extremely important for mothers and fathers to make sure that their children frequently explore new environments. In addition, according to Butler and Clay (1992), if parents take the time to help their children investigate the ordinary things in their environment the learning will be considerable.

From a child's earliest days there are many natural opportunities for learning to occur as a part of daily family activities. In fact, the most interesting and meaningful educational experiences a child can have often occur while accompanying parents as they go about their daily lives (Striker, 1986). "Many researchers have found examples of children's literacy learning in social interactions that resemble routines" (McGee & Richgels, 1989, p. 221). As, Harste, Burke, and Woodward, wrote in a 1982 report to the National Institute of Education:

Children who were reported as always being 'drug around' on shopping trips, trips to the courthouse, trips to the

doctor's office, trips anywhere, ...seem to have an advantage. These same children who were reported as always, 'under foot,' naturally got included in cooking and setting the table, who were reported as writing out shopping lists and reading them during shopping, who were given the occupant mail to open and read while the mother opened and read the rest of the mail were seemingly at an advantage. (Butler & Clay, 1982, p. 8)

Although the activities cited were not intended to teach as far as the parents were concerned, "literacy learning arises from the social interaction between children and their parents as they participate in reading and writing activities" (McGee & Richgels, 1989, p. 221). The children involved in the study were described as having an advantage as far as literacy learning was concerned because they were immersed in the kind of environment that encourages reading and writing.

Many children accompany their parents on routine errands, however, many parents do not see these everyday experiences as learning opportunities. Hill (1989) points out that many parents fail to recognize the significance of normal, routine family activities in their child's literacy development and the important role they play in their child's reading and writing development. On this account, Hill (1989) reminds parents that the daily activities that families normally engage in--the puzzles, games, stories, outings, errands, shopping, cooking, gardening, cleaning, preparations for events and the conversations--are all

important learning times that play an integral part in a child's learning to talk, listen, read and write.

Characteristically, this is the way most preschoolers' literacy develops naturally and informally in the course of normal, everyday family life (Butler & Clay, 1982). Young children are active learners and they learn best by participating and experiencing the world directly. Children learn language by using it in real life situations. Just as children learned to talk by being immersed in oral language, they also learn to read and write by having many opportunities to participate in both (Jewell & Zintz, 1990). Preschool children need firsthand experience with print to develop as readers and writers. Normal, daily, family routines provide many learning opportunities and the firsthand experience they need.

When children are actively involved in reading and writing activities in the natural course of everyday family life, they make many important discoveries about written language. Children learn the function and purpose of reading and writing. They also learn that reading sources extend beyond books, newspapers, magazines to such things as a recipe or a set of directions on the bleach bottle. In the same way they learn that writing can be a shopping list or a note left for the trash collector (Hill, 1989). Moreover, by playing around with reading and writing children discover: how print is organized; how messages come from

marks on that page that other people have made; how print can capture human speech; and how printed marks have differences that are significant. All of these discoveries extend their knowledge and understanding of the reading-writing process and gives them the background they need to develop as readers. Thus, they are developing a solid foundation that will give them a great advantage when they start formal schooling (Butler & Clay, 1982).

Preschool children, depending upon their environment and experiences, can internalize many things about reading and writing before formal schooling. However, what they know and how much they know is dependent upon the amount and type of print experiences they have in the home (Strickland & Morrow, 1988). Goodman (1985), explains:

all children are surrounded by print in their environment, but all segments of society do not use literacy for the same purposes or to the same extent. All children experience street signs, advertisements, product logos, but not all experience books, magazines and letters to the same extent. (p. 64)

Parents play an important role in their children's literacy development by providing and exposing them to a variety of written material. However, exposure to print is not enough. According to Striker (1986) children also "need personal guidance and the interested attention of an adult who has the time to point out things, and generate interest in new things" (p. 229). Anderson (1985) too believes that parents

have an active role to play. Anderson reports that a study of kindergarten children revealed that children who knew a lot about print, had parents who perceived it was their responsibility to seize opportunities to convey information about written language to their children.

Parents do not need to help their children in a formal, structured way or to spend long hours teaching lists of skills or using a variety of sophisticated methods and techniques (Brown, 1986). In fact, Anderson (1985) believes that informal instruction is more developmentally appropriate and works as well as or better than formal approaches. All day long there are opportunities for parents to point out print to their child on signs and labels, when preparing meals, running errands, shopping, opening the mail, driving, and walking into a place of business (Beeler, 1993). Even when parents are writing--letters, shopping lists, filling out forms, or helping siblings with their homework (Clay, 1987) they have many opportunities to discuss what they are doing and to invite their children to participate.

Durkin, (1966), in her research of early readers, cited other examples of informal parental assistance which resulted in significant growth in reading development: reading to children, buying books (especially alphabet or picture books), taking children to the library, helping with printing, helping an older child while the preschooler watched, playing school, and answering questions.

This type of assistance was described as indirect but was very productive in terms of literacy development.

One of the best things that parents can do is structure an environment that encourages literary development. Jewell and Zintz (1990) describe a literate environment as one where:

- 1) the parent reads to the child or acts as a model of reading,
- 2) the parent responds to a child's need, and
- 3) reading and writing materials are present.

Preschoolers learn much about the reasons for reading as they observe other family members enjoying books, magazines and newspapers or using them as sources of information. When adults provide models, children understand the value and function of literacy (Strickland & Morrow, 1988).

Reading and Writing Develop Together and Support One Another

Children seem to involve themselves equally in reading and writing activities (Strickland & Morrow, 1989). In the early stages both processes support one another and contribute to learning about print. Both writing and reading are processes of meaning construction. In reading one is trying to extract someone else's message. In writing one is sending one's own message to another person. In reading one is constructing the meaning from print. In writing we build up the message from letters, into words, into sentences.

Some researchers have reported that many youngsters are

initially attracted to reading through writing. In Durkins' (1966) New York study, eighty-three percent of parents of early readers listed the "availability of paper and pencils" as one of the things that interested their children in learning to read. Ninety-three percent of early readers were given help with writing (how to print) and received feedback about their writing and allowed to experiment in an accepting atmosphere (Durkin, 1966). When children write for real and meaningful purposes--signs, messages, stories, dictating stories, pretend writing--they become more aware of print (Throne, 1988). Attempts at writing help to heighten children's awareness of print and focus their attention on the conventions of written language and thus contribute to their knowledge about print.

Experimentation is an important aspect in the acquisition of written language. Children use what they notice about print to explore, experiment and practice on. So, what they observe about print is reflected in their writing. According to Clay (1993):

It is in the writing that children pay attention to letter detail, letter order, sound sequences, and the links between messages in oral language and messages in printed language. The writing knowledge serves as a resource of information that can help the reader [in word analysis and word attack skills].
(p. 11)

So learning to write letters, words, and sentences actually helps the child to make the visual discriminations

of detail in print that he will use in his reading.

Writing gives children another way to enter into the world of reading (Throne, 1988). Sometimes as young children write, they want to "read" their original creation back to an attentive listener. Sharing what they have written gives a child an opportunity to read, as well as, to make the reading-writing connection. Writing also involves reading in the act of composing a message. In order to construct a composition, one must continuously read and re-read what is on the page. It is possible to read without ever having written, but we cannot write without having read (Butler & Turbill, 1987, p. 20).

Initially, writing seems to come first and supports and enhances print awareness. However, according to Clay (1993), after a while "reading knowledge tends to draw ahead of writing knowledge" (p. 11). To write effectively and progress developmentally children must be exposed to a variety of written materials and their conventions. Children need to see how words look in print and what the spelling conventions are. Not only does exposure to literature help children to improve the mechanics of the writing, but also the content. According to (Throne, 1988) when children are exposed to quality literature, their writing (content) and sense of story also improves.

Reading Aloud to Young Children Plays a Special Role in Their Literacy Development

"The desire to read is not born in a child. It is planted by parents and teachers" (Trelease, 1989).

Reading aloud to young children plays a special role in their literacy development. According to some researchers, "children who acquire an interest in and love for reading in their homes have an easier time reading in school and generally become good readers" (Ellermeyer, 1988, p. 404). There is also a high correlation between being read to, reading and school achievement. Throne (1988) reports that "the frequency with which parents read to and discussed stories with their child during the preschool years" is "the most powerful and significant predictor of school achievement" (p.10). In fact, The Commission on Reading in its 1985 report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, considers reading aloud to be "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading ..." (Anderson, 1985, p. 23). Reading aloud is one of the most effective and powerful ways for parents to help their children develop reading skills.

It is also one of the greatest gift that parents can give their offsprings because it helps create an interest in and love for reading. When parents read aloud every day, share their enthusiasm for books, and provide books and other printed material to explore, they generate positive

attitudes towards reading (Throne, 1988). One of the most important goals is to get children to want to read. According to Trelease (1989), children are not born with the desire to read, but it has to be planted. The best and easiest way to accomplish this (instill the desire) is to read aloud. Being read to gives children an enjoyable, satisfying experience with literature and fosters the desire to read as well as the ability.

There are numerous other benefits that children receive from being read to. They develop longer attention spans, and better listening skills. Story reading also extends their knowledge of the world and stimulates their imaginations. In addition, it establishes familiarity with book language, and increases their awareness that written language has different patterns and structures from oral language.

Children develop larger vocabularies in a relaxed, unstructured way by hearing words in stories used in meaningful ways. Children who are used to being read to with a lot of book experience often speak in more complex sentences (Butler & Clay, 1982). According to Trelease (1989), once children learn to talk, they will average as many as ten new words a day. Much of that pace is determined, however, by the amount and richness of the language they hear. Books are one of the best sources of rich language to expose a child to.

Reading aloud gives children insight and understanding of how reading works and builds the knowledge required for eventual reading success. The best part is that children learn about print in a natural, informal, and enjoyable way--within the context of meaningful, familiar stories. From repeated exposure to stories they become aware of the different functions and uses of written language and they begin to understand such basic principles as: Books carry messages, reading is getting meaning from print, the words of a story says the same thing every time, there is an exact match between the spoken and written word, books have their own language and say things in a particular way which differs from talk (Nicoll and Wilkie, 1991). Furthermore, books must be read from the front to the back, from top to bottom and from left to right, pictures help you to understand the words; words are separated by blank spaces; stories have a beginning, middle and end and often follow a predictable pattern. These are some of the important insights that children learn about reading as a result of being read to. Thus they begin to acquire the concepts and strategies they need to become readers, naturally and easily.

Doake suggests exposure to oral reading also leads to the emergence of reading behaviors very early (Wiseman, 1984). Children who are read to regularly will often request that a favorite book be read repeatedly. Repetition

has special significance developmentally because it is generally an avenue to experimentation and growth (Dyson, 1988). "Rereadings of the same book are particularly helpful to young children because they permit exploration of a variety of features of the book" (Teale & Martinez 1988, p. 11). It stimulates interest and it is here that children will notice details about the print.

Repeated readings are important for another reason. It is the books that are read over and over that young children will attempt to reread independently on their own (Teale & Martinez, 1988). According to Phinney (1988):

Recent research is teaching us that early readers and writers first "adopt" or take ownership of a whole piece of literature - a favorite poem or story - and then, through repeated exposure and personally directed practice, gradually refine their mastery. They pick up sight words and absorb rules and patterns as they interact with texts.
(p.14)

After requesting that a story be read repeatedly, children will often try to read the book themselves. Wiseman, (1984) reports that Holdaway calls this spontaneous approximations of adult reading, "reading-like behaviors" and Doake refers to it as "memory reading." What is significant about this word-by-word recitation of a familiar book is that it is evidence of a child's emerging reading behaviors and a growing awareness of the processes involved in reading and is a basic step toward progress in reading.

Storybook reading is an excellent way to get children interacting with books so they will learn to read.

Being read to also encourages independent reading. Stories are usually heard in a secure, warm, and cuddly atmosphere with a loving bond between participants. This creates an association between books and pleasure. Children will want to recreate this atmosphere for themselves even when adults are not available. When they make their self-selections, children usually choose books that they are familiar with to explore and experiment with. They practice the reading-like behaviors that have been modeled by mature readers. So if books are readily available and parents have fostered a love and interest in them, children will explore books on their own.

Opportunities to Write is an Important Step

Learning to write is a natural process and proceeds developmentally in young children in a predictable pattern. According to Vygotsky (as cited in Atkins, 1984, p. 3), "the seeds of writing development are present from infancy" and can be observed early in children's actions. Children seem to be born with a strong impulse to write and will find a way to satisfy this urge even without writing materials. In fact, when the impulse strikes, a young child will write on whatever is at hand, walls, furniture, and even the floor. Many parents have seen the way young babies fingerpaint with their food on the tray of their highchairs or with any

liquid spilt on the floor. Toddlers and older children often write on foggy windows, dust on the furniture, sand at the beach, or dirt in the yard to satisfy the urge to write (Striker, 1986). However, these prewriting behaviors by young children go unrecognized and unappreciated, in terms of writing development, because they don't resemble writing as we know it.

According to Cook (1995), educators believe early attempts at writing are necessary for future growth. Children's earliest attempts at writing are scribbles. Scribbling usually starts in infancy and proceed until attempts at writing become more purposeful as children gain further understandings about the functions of written language. Scribbling needs to be valued, encouraged, and supported because scribbling:

- 1) lays the groundwork for writing.
- 2) promotes cognitive development.
- 3) facilitates and enhances large and small motor development (it includes all the hand and arm movements needed in later writing and drawing).
- 4) strengthens hand-eye coordination; as a child experiments with the hand and eye movements.

In addition, young children make discoveries about writing, as they scribble, experiment and explore. It is the knowledge and experience, gained from this free exploration, that forms a solid foundation on which to build for further writing and drawing development.

As children make discoveries and go through the scribbling process their development follows a predictable progression. According to Striker (1986), the first stage of development is characterized by random, tentative scribbles, with large arm movements mostly from the shoulder. The first drawings may be accidental because babies may scribble while focusing their attention elsewhere.

However, the second stage of development (approximately 12-24 months) is characterized by more controlled rather than random linear scribbles. Toddlers begin to scribble more purposefully and are more concerned about the process rather than the product. At this stage young children experiment with different hand movements and what they can produce. They act first and then look to see what happens. Eventually, the results of exploring movements will lead to an expectancy to see certain shapes (Clay, 1987). In fact, many of the lines and shapes a child discovers now will actually be put together to form letters later on. According to Striker (1986), as many as twenty shapes and forms have been isolated and identified in children's writing as part of the scribbling process. Therefore young children should not be rushed, but allowed to continue through the scribbling process for an extended period of time.

From approximately 18 to 24 months children are still continuing through the scribbling process and discovering many of the forms and shapes for themselves. At this point

in their development children draw lots of vertical and horizontal lines. However, at 24 to 36 months, children begin to make freer circular scribbles and follow their earliest controlled scribbles with loops, whirls, and irregular circular forms. In addition, they begin to include a variety of scribble shapes in their drawings, although they do not begin making geometric shapes until later. However, now children are beginning to make some important shifts in their development.

In the first two stages of writing development, much of the activity was merely the production of large amounts of writing and was not intended as a message. Also, children were not fully aware of the connection between shapes and forms in the scribbles and realistic objects. However, in the third stage of development, approximately between 36 and 48 months, children began to make their first unorganized attempts at symbolic representation. Because of their emerging ability to retain mental images, children are beginning to make the mental connection or realize the relationship between their drawings and realistic objects.

Although children still explore and experiment first, now they begin to see some similarities to real objects and start to label or name their pictures. The lines and shapes that were explored in the scribble stage are now used by children to represent things they know in real life. However, the labels children assign to their work are not con-

stant. Up to the age of three children usually scribble, however, out of the scribble emerges a distinction between writing and drawing. Somehow the child discovers the difference.

In the fourth stage of development, there is a clear intention to put a message across in their writing and drawings. As they discover the functions of print, and are exposed to the print in their environment, many children begin to include letter-like forms and written symbols in their writing along with the scribbles. Most children have some notion of what writing is about even though they have not been formally taught. Their attempts at this point still do not resemble conventional writing as we know it, but nevertheless, exhibits many insights about print that children have discovered in their explorations.

In a literate society written language is all around. Children encounter and are aware of print at an early age. From this encounter they develop general concepts about written language which serve as a base for learning how to write (Atkins, 1984). Initially, what children glean from their observations about written language tend to be more of a general nature rather than specific. Young children tend to see writing as a whole and may not zero in on individual words or letters initially. However, as preschoolers continue to observe written language and explore and experiment with it, they make many discoveries. Marie Clay (1987)

summarized some of the discoveries about writing that children made as a result of their explorations of print:

He or she has learned some ideas about letters and the drawing\writing distinction, and has some plans for arranging letters in order. The child has learned to see differences between some letters, has mastered different movement patterns, knows that you can repeat signs, and may write all or part of someone's name, usually their own. (p. 19)

Children will teach themselves to write within a properly supportive environment as they explore print in their environment. Children want to write and do not have to be formally taught. Children are great imitators and if allowed and encouraged they will actively experiment with writing on their own. By playing around with writing children refine and enlarge their concepts about written language. These concepts build upon one another and each stage of development lays the groundwork for the next.

Piaget's theory of how children learn, support the position that children will teach themselves. According to Piaget, children learn by constructing one level after another of being wrong. We don't have to teach concepts because children will construct them on their own. They learn through their own mental activity (Kamii, 1985 p. 6). Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982), researchers in reading and writing, found developmental levels among children who had not received any instruction. In their experiment they asked children to write certain words over a period of time

and this is what they found:

Level 1 - the children wrote the same squiggles for everything.

Level 2 - the children wanted the words to look differently so they varied the order of the same letters.

Level 3 - the children made each letter stand for one syllable in a word.

Level 4 - the children made each letter stand for one sound or consonant.

Level 5 - Conventional alphabetic writing.

According to Ferreiro and Teberosky, this experiment demonstrated that the children had taught themselves based on their own hypothesis or rules. They seem to develop their own plans or rules for making forms, in that they systematically related parts to one another in a consistent way. At each level they continued to make more discoveries building on what they had learned before.

This is what Piaget meant by "one level after another of being wrong" (Kamii, 1985, p. 6). When they make a change they tend to vary only one thing at a time. Children will change their view of the world when they discover some mismatch on their own. According to Clay (1987):

Children often get a set idea about print. They seem to form strange ideas. They may cling to these ideas even when we give them examples to prove them wrong. For several weeks or months they continue to do it their way because that way makes sense for the present.
(p. 48)

Children will gradually learn more and more about writing so adults need not be overly concerned about their errors. On the contrary, it is important for adults to value and support the discoveries that children make. As they experiment with writing, children need supportive adults. They need adults to provide the tools needed for writing and the time and opportunity to use those tools. According to Atkins (1984), "the complement to child as active learner, is adult as guide and facilitator" (p. 6).

How to Help and Support Parents

The influence of the home environment as the site for children's language learning has long been recognized as significant (Cairney & Munsie, 1995). Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers because numerous studies have shown that success in learning to read is related to the child's early exposure to print, books and reading models (Jongsma, 1990). However, there are vast differences in literacy practices among families, which has a significant impact on student achievement (Cairney & Munsie, 1995). In studying the reasons for these differences, educators must reject the popular assumption that some (low-income) parents do not care about their children's education.

On the contrary, Neuman (1995) contends that many families have strong beliefs about the power of literacy and its importance in their lives, but parental roles are often

culturally defined. Therefore, many parents are willing to help with their children's education, however they don't know how to help or may have cultural practices that are not productive, or compatible for school success" (Cairney, 1995). Ruddell and Singer (1994) suggest that the cultural practices of communities and families in regards to literacy often reflect the sociocultural values and belief systems of their community. Moreover, these basic cultural influences can effect the development of children and eventually lead to school success or failure (Cairney & Munsie 1995).

One researcher, Heath, studied the literacy development of three communities, and found vast sociocultural differences in the way parents introduced their children to literacy. In one of the communities the children had little exposure to books and print, while in another community the children's interest in books was nurtured from an early age (Ruddell, Ruddell & Singer, 1994). Clearly, each of these communities was inadvertently preparing its children in different ways for schooling. Therefore, educators and schools must be aware of and responsive to the cultural diversity and literacy practices of families in their communities in terms of what it might mean in relation to literacy development and understanding of parents.

Not only must educators be aware of and knowledgeable about cultural diversity and literacy practices, but the challenge is to find a variety of ways to bring parents and

schools closer together. Undoubtedly, parents are partners in education and schools must learn to work with them because the research is clear--parents can make a difference (Rasinski & Redericks, 1989). Parent-school partnerships can also help educators bridge the gap between home and school as far as literacy practices are concerned. Since schools generally reflect middle-class, culturally defined views of literacy and the processes of its development (Cairney & Munsie, 1995), educators can help parents understand the school's view of literacy and give them ideas on how to foster it's development.

Parent-school partnerships are achievable, because opinion polls indicate that both teachers and parents favor more parent involvement. A nationwide Gallup poll revealed that many parents were willing to help and frequently asked for more information on what they could do at home (Moles, 1982). On this account, it is important for educators to seize the opportunity to accommodate parents since they are willing, and the "evidence suggests, that (they) can learn to provide an environment that fosters literacy" with assistance from school (France & Hager, 1993, p. 568). Spewock (1988) also concludes that programs which teach parents skills in educating their children are effective supplements or alternatives for preschool education.

Many programs have been developed to teach parents skills in helping their children. However, one of the most

successful programs, according to France and Hager (1993) are "programs that teach and encourage parents how to read aloud to their children" (pp. 568 & 569). Consequently, if all parents are aware of the benefits and pleasure of reading to young children and incorporate regular reading aloud time into their family routines, Jongasma (1990) declares, it would have a significant impact on the schools and their children's success. However, the challenge is to find the best and most effective way to convey the desired information to parents.

There are a variety of ways to teach parents or share information. Vukelich (1984) lists some of the most frequent suggestions, or recommendations for communicating with parents about reading: Booklets and handbooks, brochures or pamphlets, progress letters, newsletters, notes, media, booklists, activity sheets, calendar of activities, home learning kits, conferences, classroom visits, courses and workshops. These parent involvement strategies range along a continuum from "information transfer" where parents are passive recipients of information, to "interactive learning" where parents are actively involved in the educational process (Cervone & O'Leary, 1982).

The first category of parent involvement strategies, information transfer, involves one-way communication, is teacher initiated and the parents are passive recipient of information. Written information in the form of handbooks,

pamphlets, brochures, leaflets and newsletter are examples of this type of communication. However, in order to be effective, written information must be concise, compact, and not contain too much information, or jargon, avoid a patronizing tone, e.g., 'Let us help you to be a better parent,' have a good quality design and layout, and have a good method of distribution (Cairney & Munsie, 1995). Nevertheless, Enz (1995) suggests that newsletters with a question-and-answer format, using the direct response "Did You Know?," are a good way to share information about reading with parents. In addition, including a demonstration video along with the written communication (modeling the desired behavior) has also been recommended.

However, information sharing from one party to another (in the form of written information, lectures, films) has its place, but it also has certain limitations. For example, there is no opportunity for feedback, follow-up, or discussion, and communication is very limited. In addition, this type of activity "places teachers in the role of expert and the parent as recipient of their wisdom" (Cairney & Munsie, 1995, p. 12). For these reasons, Mavrogenes (1990), believes that sending home a ditto of "good ideas" tends to be ineffective. Instead, she favors parent involvement strategies that offer more active involvement, support and feedback to parents. However, strategies that encourage active parental support are in a different category at the

opposite end of the parent involvement continuum developed by Cairney and Munsie, (1995).

Parent participation strategies that feature active involvement, are in a category called "interactive learning." Activities in this category are characterized by active parent involvement, two-way communication, the sharing of ideas, reflection and discussion, and more opportunities for parent-teacher interaction. Some examples of this type of approach are parent workshops, classroom visitations and other structured programs. Cairney and Munsie (1995) feel that this is the best approach for equipping parent to support their children as learners and has the potential to lead to the greatest long-term changes in the parents' ability to support their children (Cairney & Munsie, 1995, pp. 15 & 17).

One activity in the interactive learning category that was mentioned repeatedly as a successful vehicle for training parents was workshops. Mavrogenes favors workshops because she feels that they are more helpful to parents because they offer "in-depth information through first-hand experience" (Mavrogenes, 1990, p. 5). Effective workshops include highly engaging, hands-on activities through demonstration, practice, participation, and discussion. By actively involving parents in the process, workshops enable parents to learn about the emergent literacy perspective. In addition, parents can gain insight into how their chil-

dren are becoming readers and writers firsthand, and experience directly what they can do to help their children learn at home (Enz, 1995). Enz (1995) also reminds us that workshops should be informative but not university-level lectures, should allow for questions and answers and be fun.

However, there are a number of limitations, conditions to be aware of concerning workshops. Cairney and Munsie (1995) cautions that an occasional workshop is not enough to result in significant growth in parental knowledge of literacy and in their roles as supporters of their children's learning (p. 19). In addition, Cairney & Munsie (1995) warn that participation programs, like workshops are often "ineffective and frustrating to both parents and teachers" (p. 393) because of difficulties in recruitment and erratic attendance of parents. Parents have a variety of reasons for not getting involved: conflicting family commitments and time constraints, baby sitting problems, feeling intimidated by school professionals, feeling incompetent to deal with school work, lack of understanding of how they can contribute to the learning environment, and cultural and language barriers (Mavrogenes, 1990).

Educators must understand why some parents don't participate or are reluctant to become involved and seek to establish a relationship with them based on mutual trust, respect, appreciation and understanding (France and Hager, 1993).

Moles, 1982, suggests some useful strategies in the actual development of parent participation programs:

- 1) Include parents in the development of the program to build a sense of shared ownership and a realistic assessment of needs, commitment, and resources.
- 2) Personal contact may be required to recruit parents
- 3) Special efforts may be required to accommodate diverse circumstances of parents. Evening and weekend meeting times may be necessary to reach working parents.
- 4) A basic needs assessment process should be accomplished before a program is established.
- 5) Childcare may be needed.

Cairney and Munsie (1995) suggest using all the strategies from information transfer to interactive learning depending upon the purpose or goal one is trying to achieve, but the key is to know the strengths and limitations of the various programs and activities used.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The first goal of this project is to heighten the awareness of preschool parents to the important and critical role they play in their children's early literacy development. Many parents do not realize that literacy learning starts in the home in the preschool years. Therefore, they do not appreciate the significant role they play, as their child's first literacy teachers. Parents need to be convinced of their worth and influence as learning partners, but they must also act, if their children are going to be successful.

Thus, the second goal of this project is to motivate parents to get actively involved in their child's literacy learning because their participation can have specific educational advantages for the child and ultimately contribute to school success. Conversely, if parents fail to provide proper print experiences in the preschool years, it can put children at a disadvantage when they start school.

The third goal is to inform parents and make them aware of what their children can learn, and how they learn it, in terms of literacy development. In addition, parents will be informed of the stages of reading and writing development so they will be able to assess their own children.

The fourth goal is to show parents how to set up a literate environment in the home involving reading and writing activities. Parents will also be introduced to the

two best methods or experiences that promote literacy development in the home - reading aloud and writing.

In order to inform, motivate and assist parents in promoting and supporting their child's literacy development, a series of three inservices have been developed to help educators instruct and support parents. The first inservice will address the subject of literacy development: when and how it starts, the role of the parents, and the advantages of supporting and encouraging it in the preschool years. The other two inservices will be devoted to creating a literate environment and a more in-depth look at two successful methods: reading aloud and writing development.

A variety of assessment tools, both formal and informal, will be used to evaluate the goals of this program. A self-evaluation checksheet will be administered at the beginning and end of the program to assess the first two goals: increasing parental awareness and involvement.

The third goal is to inform parents of how children learn and become literate. In assessing their knowledge of how children learn, parents will diagnose their own children in terms of the stage of their reading and writing development with the aid of a checksheet. Then they will participate in an informal sharing session where they can discuss their findings.

A checksheet will also be used to determine how successful parents have been achieving the fourth goal, creat-

ing a literate environment in the home. In addition, informal measures such as individual interviews, and photographs will provide more information. Parents will also be informally observed in class when they practice read-aloud techniques with each other. To aid in learning and evaluation, the parents will be encouraged to start a portfolio of their children's writing for purposes of reflection and discussion over time.

APPENDIX A: Parents' Handbook

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE
Preschool Literacy Inservice

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INTRODUCTION

In order to inform, motivate and assist parents in promoting and supporting their child's literacy development, a series of three inservices have been developed to help educators inform and support parents. The first inservice will address the subject of literacy development: when and how it starts, the role of the parents, and the advantages of supporting and encouraging literacy in the preschool years. The other two inservices will be devoted to creating a literate environment in the home and a more in-depth look at two successful methods: reading aloud and writing.

The parents will receive a handbook that will give a variety of suggestions on how to help young readers and writers. Parents will be invited to take notes and respond to some of the activities in the handbook. The workshop will also involve the children at selected times, so child-care will be provided. Parents will also be given activities to complete at home and share with other participants in future sessions.

WORKSHOP # 1 Parent Participation and Literacy Development

Welcome

Mixer

Script: Parent Participation

Activity: Who is Your Children's Most Important Teacher?

Script: Literacy Development

SKITS

Handouts: How to Help Your Child Get Interested in Reading
and Noticing Words in Their Environment

How do Children Learn About Words and Letters at
Home?

What helps Children Learn to Read and Write?

Break

Book Sharing - from the book list

Parents fill out Parent Evaluation Checklist

Question Box

Door prize

Book Checkout

Refreshments

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Script

Learning to read and write begins at home. From birth to five children learn many valuable things about reading and writing.

Children are surrounded by print in their environment. Almost all preschool children know something about print.

Children learn about the reasons people read and write. Children learn about the pleasure to be found in storybook reading. They learn to read signs. (Collect ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT to show).

Children under six can and do learn to read.

DEMONSTRATION: Have a preschool child read a little over the microphone or play a cassette tape of a preschool child reading.

All children have potential, but parents are the key to their learning.

What children do learn is a result of the kinds of activities, play experiences, opportunities, and things parents give them.

There is a great variation of what preschool children know about reading when they come to school.

A study of kindergarten children was done to find out why some children knew a lot about written language and others did not.

It was found that those who knew a lot, had parents who believed it was their responsibility to point out things to their children (Anderson, 1985).

Parents can't wait, because so much development takes place prior to formal schooling.

In fact, when some children come to kindergarten they are already behind.

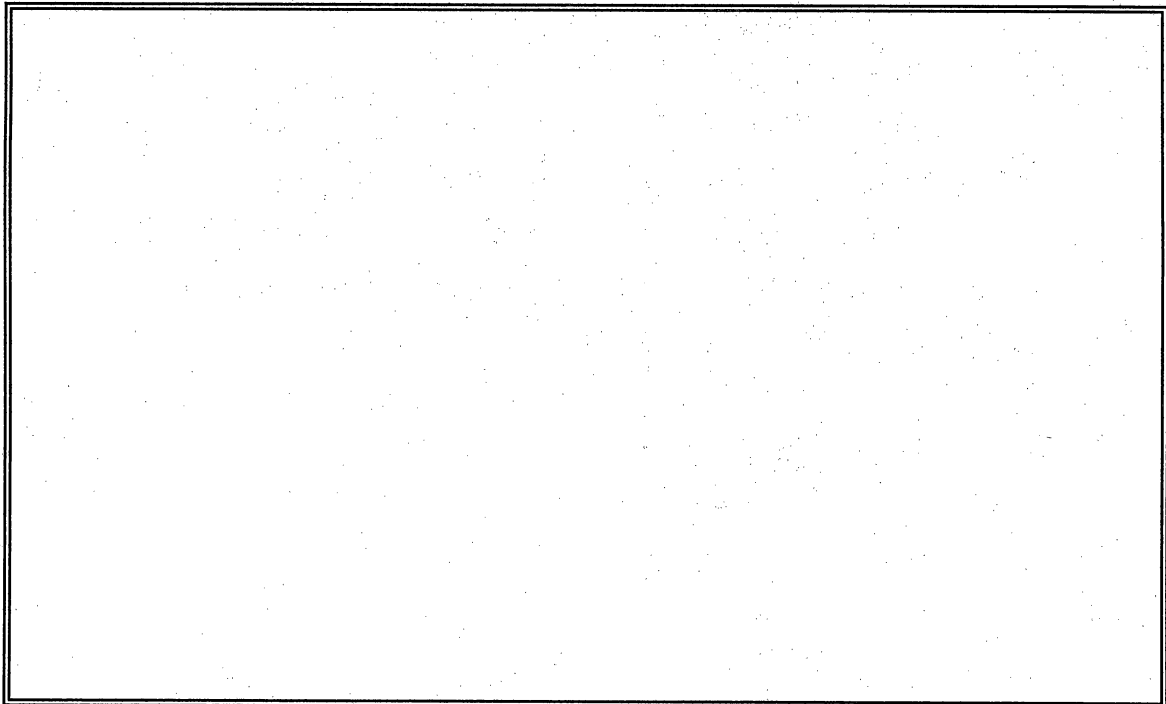
It is important for children to know something about print and be exposed to it before they go to school. It gives the teacher something to build on and the child a great advantage, when they start school.

Who is your Children's Most Important Teacher?

Who taught them to walk, to talk, to eat, for years before coming to school?

YOU DID AT HOME

**What else did you teach them?
What else did they learn?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line border, intended for the respondent to write their answers to the questions above.

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

SCRIPT

Many parents do not realize that they are their children's first learning partners. Many people assume that teaching their children to read and write is the school's job. However, children begin to develop as readers and writers before they ever come to school.

Many parents never think of themselves as being involved in their children's learning to read and write. However, the home is a rich literacy-learning center. The normal activities families engage in are important learning times, because reading and writing are involved in many of them. If parents actively involve their children in these routine reading and writing activities in the home, it would support them in their literacy development.

QUESTION: What kind of activities in the home support children in learning to read and write?

We are going to play a little game. We will observe SIX SKITS of parents and children interacting together. Please identify the activities that support children in their efforts to learn to read and write.

SKITS

Take a few minutes to think about the many ways you use print every day.

(have props available to show)

You help your children learn to use print when you:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| * make a grocery list | * write a letter |
| * read a newspaper | * write a check |
| * read the mail | * make a "to do" list |
| * look at a magazine | * read a menu in a restaurant |
| * look up a number in a phone book | |

These activities are helpful because they make your child aware of and familiar with words and letters, reading and writing. Also by watching you, children gain an understanding of what print is used for.

Watching you use print is one way children learn, however children also learn by doing. Children need to have first-hand experience actually reading and writing in order to learn. If they are given a chance to experiment and explore, they will teach themselves to write and read.

It is your job as parents to look for ways to involve your children and provide the opportunity for your children to try out reading and writing.

Here is a list of everyday tasks you could involve your children in to give them experience and exposure with print:

- * read traffic signs and store signs
- * write letters to grandparents
- * follow a simple recipe
- * make a list for chores, errands, groceries
- * look at the newspaper
- * take a trip to the library or bookstore
- * read labels on food boxes
- * write down a phone number

Handout: How to help your child get interested in noticing print

How children learn about words and letters at home

Break

Parents fill out the questionnaire for assessment: Parent Self-Help Checklist

Question Box

Parents write out questions they want answered in the course of the inservices.

Door Prize

Book Checkout

Refreshments

SKITS: demonstrating literacy learning events

Purpose:

To help parents identify literacy learning events in every day activities

To heighten parent's awareness that they are learning partners

To increase parent participation

To increase attendance

Procedure:

Selected parents and their children will be notified by mail and asked to model, or act out an everyday event that involves literacy learning. They will also be given a copy of the script to practice on at home before the meeting.

At the meeting, the other parents will be asked to decide which scenarios will help a child learn to read and write?

Skit # 1 Parents and child going shopping

Literacy event: reading signs

Props: sign from K Mart or another store

Parent: Let's go to K Mart

Here we are.

See that sign (pointing to the K Mart sign), it says K Mart.

Child: Look Mom! There's a 'K' like in my name.

Parent: Yes, you're right Katrina, your name does start with a 'K'.

Let's see if we can find anymore 'K's inside.

Skit # 2 Child receives a party invitation in the mail

Literacy event: reading

Prop: party invitation

Parent: Look, Mary here is some mail for you.

Child: What is it? Quick, open it for me.

Parent: It is an invitation to Bobby's party.

Child: Oh goody! Read it, what does it say?

Parent: Parent reads the invitation, running her finger along under the words.

Skit # 3 Mother and Child select and sign a card

Literacy events: reading and writing

Props: two birthday cards

Parent: Let's go buy a birthday card for grandma.

Child: Where are we going to get it?

Parent: Let's go to Von's. (Point out signs on the way).

Parent: Look, here's a nice card.

Child: I like this one.
What does it say?

Parent: Reads the card, pointing to the words.

Parent: When we get home, I want you to sign the card and we will mail it to grandma.

Child: Can you help me write my name? I can't remember all of it.

Parent: Here, watch me write it, K - a - r - e - n.

Skit # 4 Parent and child baking Cookies

Literacy event: reading recipes

Prop: a cookbook, (bowl and spoon - optional)

Child: What are you making?

Parent: I am making some cookies.

Child: Can I help?

Parent: Yes, but first I have to check the recipe to see how much flour to put in.

Child: Where does it say flour?

Parent: See, right here, (pointing to the word)

Child: Hey, that's Faith's letter. It's in her name.

Parent: Yes, Faith's name does start like that. That's an 'F.' When I get the cookie dough made, you can make an 'F' with the dough.

Skit # 5 Parent and child writing a grocery list

Literacy event: writing and reading

Props: pencil and paper.

Parent: I have to go shopping. I need to write a list.

Child: What are you going to get?

Parent: Let's see. I need some soap and (starts to write)

Child: I need to write a list too.

Parent: Sure. Here's some paper and a pencil. Sit right here next to me and write your list.

Child: Starts to write a series of wavy lines.
Child shows it to the parent.

Parent: That's great. What does it say?

Skit # 6 Mother goes to a meeting and occupies her child

Literacy event: reading and writing

Prop: bag with books, pencil and paper

Parent: Here Carl, take this bag and find something to do while I am in the meeting. You may read your books or draw or write, but be very quiet.

Child: (Sits down at parent's feet and begins to draw.)
Then later he taps mother on the arm and shows her the picture.

Parent: That's nice, Carl.

Child: I made it for you. How do you spell, Mother?

Parent: Here, let me write it for you.
(Writes it on the paper for the child to copy.)

How to Help Your Child Get Interested in Reading and Noticing

Words in Their Environment:

___ Provide print environment: Surround children with books, magazines, newspapers, alphabet books, signs and labels, and magnetic letters,

___ Be a model: show your child that you enjoy reading

___ Read to children (very early on)

___ Encourage retelling of stories heard
(write down your child's response)

___ Read and point out words in their environment: signs on buildings and stores, street signs, words on packages and products, mail, and in personal letters.

How do Children Learn About Words and Letters at Home?

They learn:

- * when you write their names on birthday and greeting cards and you say the names of the letters as you write.
- * when they play with letters such as magnetic letters on the refrigerator door, at their eye level.
- * from alphabet blocks
- * when you read ABC books
- * from TV programs such as Sesame Street
- * when they attempt to write
- * when they watch you write and you invite them to participate
- * when you point out letters in their name on print in the house or on signs in the neighborhood.
- * when you point out letters in books
- * when you point out words in books
- * when they play alphabet games, like alphabet bingo
- * when you label things in the house
- * when you help them make connections between letters they know personally and the written language they see around them.

They learn more when you talk with them and answer their questions about words and letters.

Oxley, Sperling, Mudre, & Blume (1991) Reading and Writing Where It All Begins: Helping Your Children At Home. Columbus, Ohio, The Literacy Connection p. 14

What helps children learn to read and write?

- * talking with them about everyday happenings
- * pointing out things to them in the environment
- * listening to what they say
- * answering their questions
- * reading to them
- * encouraging them to write
- * making sure they see people in your home reading and writing

Oxley, Sperling, Mudre & Blume (1991) p. 5

Parent Self-Help Checklist

	Yes	No
1. I read aloud to my child every day.		
2. When I read aloud, my child sits very close in a position to follow along in the book.		
3. When I read I slide my fingers along under the words.		
4. If my child asks for it, I'll read the same book aloud repeatedly.		
5. If my child attempts to reread the same story from memory, I value and applaud his/her attempt.		
6. My child has seen me read frequently.		
7. There are books, magazines, and newspapers in our home.		
8. My child has books of his\her own and a place to keep them.		
9. I take my child to the library to check out book.		
10. I point out print in our environment such as the words on signs, stores, buildings, packages and food products.		
11. Books and magazines are an important part of my gift-giving for each child.		
12. My child knows I value reading as much as I do watching television.		
13. I control the amount of time my child spends watching TV, and the types of programs.		
14. I look for opportunities to involve my child in everyday reading and writing activities.		
15. I provide plenty of paper, pencils, and crayons or a chalkboard for play activities.		
16. I encourage and support my child as he\she plays around with writing, explores hand movements and makes discoveries.		
17. I accept his inventions even when it doesn't look like "real" writing.		

WORKSHOP # 2

Topic: Read Aloud

Welcome

Mixer

Review: Small Discussion Group (or whole group)

Break up into small discussion groups. Have parents write down the points that they remember from the previous workshop on how children become literate. Then have the groups share their findings.

Stages of Reading Development

Handout: Stages of Reading Development

Video: What Does Preschool Reading Look Like?

Checksheet: Go over assessment tool

Comments, questions and discussion: From Question Box

Take a short break

Benefits of Read Aloud

Handouts: 10 Reasons to Read to Your Child

What Children Learn by Being Read to

Comments and questions

Take a short break

How to Read Aloud

Handouts

Demonstration Lesson

Story: *The Boy with Square Eyes*

Guided practice for parents

Door Prize

Book Browsing and Checkout

Refreshments

Script

Stages of Reading Development

Refer to (HANDOUT) Stages of Reading Development

The ability to read is not automatic. However, given the right environment and experiences, preschool children can learn about reading easily and naturally. All children go through recognizable stages of reading development. These stages seem to occur naturally if the right conditions are present.

Stage 1

In the first stage of reading development, children are learning about books and stories. They discover that books have ideas, and meaning; people read to get those ideas. Children also learn to listen to and enjoy stories. They learn how books work, how to handle a book and about the parts of a book. They may participate in the reading in some way, or tell the story using the pictures. They are not aware of print at this time.

Stage 2

The next stage of development is the memorization stage. A predictable behavior at this stage is that children (who are read to regularly) will often request that a favorite book be read repeatedly. This is an important phase of reading development because rereadings of the same book stimulates interest and familiarity with stories. Familiarity with stories leads to a "correction phase" where children will correct you if you leave out anything, make a mistake or vary from the story in any way.

Stage 3

The memorization stage is followed by the "rehearsal stage." In the "rehearsal phase" of reading development, it is the books that are read over and over again, that young children will attempt to reread on their own. Initially, children will retell a favorite story in their own words, using the pictures as a guide. The story is in their heads, they have memorized the "meanings." Gradually, as they engage in "reading-like behavior," and refine their mastery by personally directed practice, they recite stories almost word-for-word.

Many parents, don't value this "memory reading." They, are concerned that their children are not actually reading, but have only memorized the book. However, parents should

appreciate "memory reading" because it is a basic step toward progress in reading: It is clear evidence of a child's emerging reading behaviors and a growing awareness of the processes involved in reading.

"Memory reading" is particularly helpful to young children because it gets them interacting with books and stimulates their interest in print. It also permits children to explore a variety of features of the book and notice details about the print. Children absorb rules and patterns as they interact with text and may even pick up a few sight words. Although children may be aware of print, they are not using it.

Stage 4

The next stage of development is a significant one. The more children rehearse books, the more attention they pay to the print. As a result, children discover that the story comes from the black squiggles on the page and not the pictures. Realizing that the print has meaning and carries the message in books, they make a connection between rehearsing the book and the print (not the pictures). They become aware of the words and may try to follow along as they recite the story.

Stage 5

At this stage children begin to pay attention to print at a much more detailed level than ever before. As children gain more control of print, they become aware that there is an exact match between speech and print and begin to point to the words. They begin to recognize some of the words. They begin to realize that words carry a precise message and say the same things over and over.

Video: WHAT DOES PRESCHOOL READING LOOK LIKE?

Show video of some preschoolers of varying ability reading:

Example # 1

a child reciting a book in his/her own words using the pictures as a cue.

Example # 2

a child reciting a book from memory using the exact book language from the text (but not attending to the print).

Example # 3

a child reciting a book from memory but attending

to the print (running his finger along under the words or pointing to the words).

Example # 4

a child attending to print and reading the words.

CHECKSHEET: Stages of Reading Development

Go over the questions together in class and parents fill out as much as they can, and complete the rest at home.

ASSIGNMENT: Kid-watching: parents go home and watch their child over a period of time and check what they notice about the child's reading behavior. Bring the checksheet back to the next class for discussion.

STAGES OF READING DEVELOPMENT

Discovery Stage

- * Learns about books and reading
- * Learns what books are for
- * Learns how to enjoy books
- * Learns how to handle books

Memorization Stage

- * Requests the same story over and over
- * Memorizes their favorite books
- * "Correction phase" - child corrects the reader if they deviate from the text

Rehearsal Stage

- * Child practice "reading" the stories he has memorized.
- * The story is in his head and he uses his own words and the pictures to recite the story.
- * The story is in his head and he uses the exact words in the book to retell the story.

Print Awareness Stage

- * Discovers print has meaning
- * Discovers that the story comes from the words and not the pictures
- * Attempts to point to the words when reciting a story
- * Begins to notice the print in his world

Emergent Reading Stage

- * Recognizes some words
- * Begins to read simple text
- * Recognizes that speech and print match one to one

Adapted from: Steven Bialostok (1992), Raising Readers

Checklist

STAGES OF READING DEVELOPMENT

Please think about your child's reading behavior and answer the following questions:

Is your child aware of books and knows that books are meant to say something?	Yes	No
Does your child know that reading is an enjoyable activity and is developing a love of reading?	Yes	No
Does your child listen to stories and talk about the pictures?	Yes	No
Does your child know how to handle a book correctly?	Yes	No
Does your child try to "read" a book using the pictures and telling it in his/her own words. (but ignores the words in the story)?	Yes	No
Does your child ask you to read the same story or book over and over again?	Yes	No
Does your child correct you if you make a mistake or vary from the story in any way?	Yes	No
Does your child memorize a book and rehearse the story using the exact words in the story?	Yes	No
Does your child realize that words have meaning and you are reading the words and not the picture?	Yes	No
Is your child aware of the words in a story and try to follow along?	Yes	No
Is your child able to pick out some letters or words?	Yes	No
Does your child notice print in their environment?	Yes	No

Script

Benefits of Reading to Your Children

Reading aloud to young children plays a special role in their literacy development. It is one of the best ways for you to help your children develop reading skills. In fact, The Commission on Reading in its 1985 report, considers reading aloud to be "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading."

It is also one of the greatest gifts that you can give your children because reading aloud helps create an interest in and love for reading. One of the most important goals is to get children to want to read. Children are not born with the desire to read, but it has to be planted (Trelease). The best and easiest way to do this is to read aloud to your children. Being read to gives children an enjoyable, satisfying experience with books.

There are many other benefits that children receive from being read to: **(READ THE HANDOUT): 10 Reasons to Read to Your Child**

Summary: Children develop longer attention spans, better listening skills, and larger vocabularies. Story reading helps them to know more about their world and stimulates their imaginations. Reading aloud also helps them to learn about print in a natural, informal, and enjoyable way - with familiar stories.

Most of us have heard about how important it is to read to our children. However, what is not explained is how listening to stories actually helps them to learn to read.

Lets look at the kinds of things children learn from being read to: **(READ THE HANDOUT): What do Children Learn by Being Read To**

Summary: Repeated exposure to stories helps children understand what reading is and how it works. They begin to understand that books are for reading, words are in books, reading is getting meaning from print, words on the cover refer to the name of the book, one reads from top to bottom, left to right, and they are able to separate print from pictures. These are the kinds of insights children need, and parents take for granted children know.

If children are exposed to oral reading early, they will begin to go through several, natural stages of reading development. (as discussed in the previous section)

Given the right conditions, preschool children can learn to read naturally.

Share Read-Aloud Books from the booklist

Comments and Questions

Break

How to read aloud

HANDOUT: Ten Best Ways to Read Aloud

Demonstration lesson: Read Aloud

Story: *The Boy with Square Eyes*
by Juliet and Charles Snape

Guided practice for parents

Door Prizes: Books

Book Checkout

Refreshments

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN BY BEING READ TO

They learn:

- * What books are for and why people read them
- * Books are meant to say something
- * Reading is an enjoyable activity
- * How books work: how a book is read
- * That direction is important in reading: people read - top to bottom, left to right.
- * How to handle a book: hold it up-right, turn the pages, look at the pictures
- * The parts of a book: the cover, the front and the back
- * To notice print (little black squiggles on the page)
- * That print has meaning: the story comes from the print
- * That the print says the same thing every time
- * That there is an exact match between what you say and the print in the book
- * That books say things differently (book language), from the way people talk
- * What a word is, and words are made up of letters
- * That there are spaces between words
- * What a letter is
- * The difference between a word and a letter
- * To recognize a few words

10 Reasons to Read to Your Child

- * Generates positive attitudes towards reading.
- * Instills in your child a love of books.
- * Creates an interest and desire to read
- * Fosters and stimulates curiosity about letters and words.
- * Builds the knowledge, insight, and understanding of how reading works.
- * Develops longer attention spans
- * Develops better listening skills
- * Develops larger vocabularies and enhances verbal skills
- * Stimulates their imagination
- * Extends their knowledge of the world

Remember your child will learn to read more easily and naturally by being read to in the preschool years. But the best part is, that reading aloud to children in the pre-school years correlates eventually to overall school achievement.

TEN BEST WAYS TO READ ALOUD

1. Choose a quality book: good illustrations and an interesting story that your child can relate to. Allow your child to help in the choice.
2. Sit close together in a comfortable spot. Enjoy a special time with your child.
3. Talk about the title, the author, look at the pictures. Before reading the book, ask your child to predict what the story may be about and ask why.
4. Read slowly and with expression. This will help your child to understand the story and will make it more enjoyable.
5. After reading several pages, stop and talk about what has happened and what may occur next.
6. At the end of the story, check on your child's predictions. Then talk about the story. What did you like about it? Ask questions that will generate discussion. What parts were the most exciting, interesting, or surprising? Relate it to something in their life. Who was your favorite character, and why?
7. If your child shows an interest, read it again. If not keep the book available so that it may be chosen on another occasion.
8. Make reading a part of your daily routine: read before bedtime, right after dinner, or anytime that is best for your family.
9. Include the whole family in reading aloud: have dad, grandparents, older brothers or sisters, and mom take turns reading.
10. The most important suggestion is to relax, and have fun.

Adapted from Prehoda, Joan (1993) Bridging the GAP Between Parents and Schools: A parent education model. P. 42

Reading Tips

Read to your child every day.

Point to the words as you read them, and let your child point too.

Let your child turn the pages for you.

Allow your child to try and say the words you read.

Discuss the story you are reading with your child.

Have your child tell the story back to you.

Let your child try and read to you.

If your child brings a book to you, read it right then and there if you can.

Sit close together and share the book with your child when you read together.

If your child gets fussy, stop reading or pick up a new book.

Let your child play with books. Don't ever keep them out of reach.

Don't get hung up on words. If you come across some words you can't read, make up the words as you go along. Just keep reading.

WORKSHOP # 3

Writing

Topic: Opportunities to Write are Important

Script: Why Writing is Important to Literacy Development

Handout: What Does Writing Teach Children About Reading?

Script: Stages of Writing Development

Handout: Questionnaire of Writing Development

Handout: Scribbling Alphabet

Break

Small Groups: Evaluate writing samples

Script: What Parents Can Do to Help

Handout: How to Make a Writing Box

Door prize: A Writing Box

Refreshments

OPPORTUNITIES TO WRITE IS AN IMPORTANT STEP

Script

Why Writing is Important for Literacy Development

Educators believe that early attempts at writing are necessary for literacy development and future growth. There is a link between reading and writing and the two processes support one another. Involvement with reading teaches children lessons about writing; and involvement with writing, teaches children lessons about reading.

Writing is an aid to reading because learning to write draws a child's attention to letters and words and children begin to understand how print works. Writing also helps children to predict both in reading and writing.

Durkin's early readers

Some researchers have reported that many youngsters are initially attracted to reading through writing. In Durkin's study of early readers, eighty-three percent of the parents listed the "availability of paper and pencils" as one of the things that interested their children in learning to read. Writing often comes before reading.

HANDOUT: What Does Writing Teach Children About Reading?

The Writing Process

Learning to write is a natural process and children will teach themselves to write in a properly supportive environment. Most kids have some notion of what writing is, even though they have not been formally taught. Children see and are aware of print at an early age. What they notice about written language serves as a base for learning how to write. Children want to write and if allowed and encouraged they will actively experiment with writing and make many discoveries on their own.

Children are great imitators and have been observed deliberately imitating adult writing by using a series of wavy line or small circles. Children's pretend writing is very important in contributing information about print.

Children experiment and explore with pretend writing and make discoveries about writing as they engage in it. It is the knowledge and experience, gained from free exploration, that forms a solid foundation on which to build for further writing and drawing development.

As children make these discoveries, their development follows a predictable pattern.

WHAT DOES WRITING TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT READING?

When children watch someone writing, they observe:

how letters look,

how to make letters

how letters form words,

how writing moves from top to bottom, left to right.

how to hold the writing tools

When children write:

They focus on the details of print

They learn how to write letters

They learn about spaces between words,

They learn how words are composed of letters,

They learn how words are spelled

They become aware of phonics and how sounds and symbols are connected

They begin to be aware of punctuation and how it works

They learn to analyze words in detail and sequence especially when copying words

Script

Stages of Writing Development

Preschool children can be seen doing similiar things in their writing. Their development seems to follow a predictable pattern

HANDOUT

1. Early Scribbles

Children's earliest attempts at writing are scribbles. All children scribble. The need to scribble is universal and children seem to be born with a strong impulse to do it. This early pre-writing behavior starts in infancy when babies "scribble" with the food on their trays or any other liquid spilt on the floor. The significance of this behavior is that the movements used for "fingerpainting" by baby (hands flat moving side to side) are the very preparation needed to develop coordination and readiness for scribbling.

Young children will find a way to satisfy the urge to scribble even without writing materials: Babies fingerpaint with food; toddlers and older children write on foggy windows, the dust on furniture, sand at the beach, and dirt in the yard to satisfy the urge to write. In fact, when the impulse strikes, a young child will draw on whatever is at hand: walls, furniture, and even the floor.

Scribbling is important because it lays the groundwork for writing:

Scribbling includes all the hand and arm movements needed in later writing and drawing.

It strengthens hand-eye coordination as a child experiments with the hand and eye movements.

Many of the lines and shapes a child discovers in scribbling will actually be put together to form letters later on.

As many as twenty shapes and forms have been isolated and identified in children's writing as part of the scribbling process.

HANDOUT: the scribbling alphabet.

This pre-writing behavior by young children goes unrecognized and unappreciated, as far as its relationship to

writing development is concerned, because their attempts do not resemble conventional writing as we know it. However, scribbling must be valued and encouraged by parents because it is a natural phase in writing development and children make many important discoveries about writing and print as they explore movements. Also, it is a necessary step children must experience if they are to reinvent writing and understand how it works for themselves.

Scribbling goes on for an extended period of time through many of the early stages of writing development up to the age of four or five. It just changes form and function as children develop.

2. Drawing Stage

Then out of the scribble emerges a distinction between writing and drawing. For instance, the marks 3-year olds make when asked to draw pictures of themselves are different from the markings they make when asked to write their name. Somehow children discover the difference.

3. Scribble Writing

The child scribbles, but intends it as writing. However, it may not necessarily convey a particular message. Often the child scribbles left to right and moves the pencil as more proficient writers do. The scribble resembles writing in spacing and alignment.

4. Letter-like Forms

The child makes marks that resemble letters. They aren't just poorly formed letters, they're creations. There is a clear intention to put a message across in their writing and drawings. Children are noticing print in their environment.

* Up to this point, much of the activity is merely the production of large amounts of writing and is not intended as a message.

* Now an important shift occurs when the child knows that messages can be put into writing.

5. Representational

The child begins to request labels for his work. The scribbles\drawings represent something, they are intended as a message. The lines and shapes that were explored in the scribble stage are now used in the child's drawings to represent the things he knows in real life. The child may use the drawing to stand for writing. Children often "read" their drawings as if they contain writing.

6. Previously Learned Units

Sometimes children use letter sequences they know to create words. They change the order of the letters, write the same one many different ways, write letters in long strings or in random order.

7. Invented Spelling

Children are beginning to make some connections between sounds and letters. Children create their own spelling for words when they don't know the conventional spelling. One letter may stand for an entire word or for a syllable in a word, words may overlap and spacing isn't considered. As the child's writing matures, the words look more correct.

Adapted from: Cook (1995). Early writing systems young children use. Early Childhood and Writing p. 76

Questionnaire

STAGES OF WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Observe your child when he or she is writing or look at samples of previous work.

1. Early Scribbles

Children scribble for the sake of enjoyment and for exploratory purposes. They play around with writing, discovering forms and exploring movements. Their efforts are not intended as a message.

Yes No

2. Drawing

The child makes a distinction between writing and drawing.

Yes No

3. Scribble Writing

Their scribbles are linear in form and more closely resemble writing, but may not convey a message.

Yes No

4. Letter-like Forms

Children begin to include letter-like forms and written symbols, sometimes mixing them with the scribbles marks.

Yes No

5. Representational

Children begin to see some similarities in their drawings to real objects and start to name their pictures. The scribbles represent something.

Yes No

6. Previously Learned Units

Individual letters become more noticeable. They begin to develop word awareness and use the few letters they know to create words.

Yes No

7. Invented Spelling

They have a basic sense that sounds and letters are related.
















Yes No

8. A child knows that messages can be put into writing.

Messages require words.

Yes No

Scribbling Alphabet

., dot	 roving enclosed line
single vertical line	 zigzag or wavy line
— single horizontal line	 single loop line
\ / single diagonal line	 multiple loop line
∩ single curved line	 spiral line
 multiple vertical lines	 multiple line overlaid circle
 multiple horizontal lines	 multiple line circumference circle
 multiple diagonal lines	 circular line, spread out
 multiple curved lines	 single crossed line
 roving open line	 imperfect circle

Illustrations adapted from *Analyzing Children's Art* by Rhoda Kellogg

(cited in Striker, 1986)

Script

What Parents Can Do To Help

"Writing development seems to have more to do with opportunity to explore print than with intelligence or age" (Clay, 1987, p.6).

Not all children show an interest in making marks on paper, especially if they don't see anyone writing. Therefore, parents have to encourage their children to write.

A home that wants to foster writing will organize a space, time, and materials to be available if the child wants to write. In addition, parents may need to create some opportunities for writing.

Parents can talk about writing as they are doing it, and explain what they are doing. Invite the child to participate in sending cards, paying bills, filling out bank deposit slips, or copying a bus ticket.

Handout: How to Help Your Child Get Interested in Writing

Handout: Writing Box

Door Prize: (A writing box)

Refreshments

How to Help Your Child Get Interested in Writing

- ___ Take advantage of opportunities to write.
- ___ have a writing corner with all kinds of paper and writing utensils.
- ___ Encourage scrawls and scribbling.
- ___ Print signs like "my toy box" and label objects in your home.
- ___ Ask child to dictate a title or caption for you to place under a picture he or she draws.
- ___ Write bulletin board or refrigerator notes to each other.
- ___ Encourage letter writing.
- ___ Involve your child in everyday activities like paying bills, writing checks, grocery lists and writing letters; encourage their participation.
- ___ Supply paper and writing utensils for fantasy play so they can pretend to write out bills, grocery lists, etc.
- ___ Keep records of events (trips, pet care, daily schedule).

MAKE A WRITING BOX

Fill a container with a variety of writing supplies. Choose a container that is big enough to hold a lot of supplies but small enough for a child to carry (lunch pail, cleaning caddy, picnic basket, plastic shoe box, food tin). Also put the child's name on the container.

The contents of the Writing Box might include:

paper (various sizes, colors, textures and shapes usually unlined)	old magazines
note pads	stickers
pencils (colored and lead)	pencil games
markers	blank books
crayons and pad	calendar
chalk	rubber stamps
mini-chalkboard	stencils
magnetic alphabet letters and numbers	envelopes
metal surface or cookie sheet for magnetic letters	"stamps"
playdough	small books
	water color paints

Beeler, T. (1993). I can read: I can write: Creating a print-rich environment. Cypress, California: Creative Teaching Press

APPENDIX B: BOOKS

Wordless Books: Books that tell the story using pictures instead of words therefore they can be "read" by pre- and beginning readers.

A Boy, A Dog and a Frog, Mercer Mayer (Dial, 1967)

Ah-Choo!, Mercer Mayer (Dial, 1976)

The Adventures of Paddy Pork, J. Goodall (Harcourt, 1968)

Amanda and the Mysterious Carpet, F. Krahn (Houghton Mifflin, 1985)

The Angel and the Soldier Boy, Peter Collington (Knopf, 1987)

Anno's Counting Book - M. Anno (Harper Row, 1975)

The Bear and the Fly, Paula Winter (Crown, 1976)

Bobo's Dream, Martha Alexander (Dial, 1970)

Bubble, Bubble, Mercer Mayer (Macmillan, 1973)

Changes, Changes, Pat Hutchins (Macmillan, 1971)

Deep in the Forest, Brinton Turkle (Dutton, 1976)

Good Dog, Carl, Alexandra Day (Green Tiger, 1985)

Noah's Ark, Peter Spier (Doubleday, 1977)

Pancakes for Breakfast - Tommy dePaola (Harcourt, 1978)

The Silver Pony, Lynd Ward (Houghton Mifflin, 1973)

Sleep Tight, Alex Pumpernickel, F. Krahn (Little, 1982)

The Snowman, Raymond Briggs (Random, 1978)

A Story to Tell, Dick Bruna (Price, Stern, 1968)

Up a Tree, Ed Young (Harper, 1983)

Predictable Books: Have repetitive words, phrases or sentences that make it easy for the beginning reader to join in.

Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothes, Judi Barrett
(Atheneum, 1970)

Are You My Mother?, P. D. Eastman (Random House, 1960)

Ask Mister Bear, Marjorie Flack (Macmillan, 1986)

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?, Bill Martin Jr.
(Holt, 1983)

The Cake That Mack Ate, Rose Robart (Atlantic, 1986)

Chicken Soup With Rice, Maurice Sendak (Harper, 1962)

Do You Want To Be My Friend?, Eric Carle (Putnam, 1971)

Drummer Hoff, Ed Emberly (Prentice-Hall, 1967)

The Elephant and the Bad Boy, Elfrida Vipont (Putnam, 1986)

Fat Mouse, Harry Stevens (Viking, 1987)

Four Fur Feet, Margaret Brown (William R. Scott, 1961)

The Friendly Book, Margaret Wise Brown (Golden Press, 1954)

Goodnight Moon, Margaret W. Brown (Harper, 1947)

The Gunnywolf, A. Delaney (Harper, 1988)

Happy Birthday, Moon, Frank Asch (Prentice-Hall, 1982)

Henny Penny, Paul Galdone (Clarion, 1968)

I Was Walking Down the Road, S. Barchas

The Important Book, Margaret Brown (Harper and Row, (1949)

It looked Like Spilt Milk, Charles Shaw (Harper, 1947)

Jamberry, B. Degen (HarperCollins, 1983)

Mrs. Wishy Washy, Joy Cowley (Wright, 1980)

The Napping House, Audrey Woods (Harcourt, 1984)

Noisy Nora, R. Wells

Nu Dang and His Kite, Jacqueline Ayer (Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1959)

Over in the Meadow, Olive Wadsworth (Viking, 1985)

Rosie's Walk, Pat Hutchins

Seven Little Rabbits, J. Becker

The Teeny Tiny Woman, Barbara Seuling (Puffin, 1978)

The Three Little Pigs, Paul Galdone (Clarion, 1987)

Tikki Tikki Tembo, Arlene Mosel (Holt, 1968)

Picture Books

The Adventures of Paddy Pork, John Goodall (Harcourt, 1968)

Aladdin, Andrew Lang (Viking, 1981; Puffin, 1983)

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day,

Judith Viorst (Atheneum, 1972; 1976)

The Amazing Voyage of Jackie Grace, M. Faulkner (Scholastic, 1987)

Amelia Bedelia, Peggy Harris (Harper, 1963; Scholastic, 1970)

The Aminimal, Lorna Balian (Abingdon, 1972; 1985)

Arnold of the Ducks, Mordicai Gerstein (Harper, 1983; 1985)

The Biggest Bear, Lynd Ward (Houghton Mifflin, 1952; 1973)

The Boy Who Held Back The Sea, Lenny Hort (Dial, 1987)

Brave Irene, William Steig (Farrar, 1986; 1988)

Broderick, Edward Ormondroyd (Parnassus, 1969; Houghton Mifflin, 1984)

The Carp in the Bathtub, Barbara Cohen (Lothrop, 1972)
A Chair for my Mother, Vera Williams (Greenwillow, 1982)
Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs, Judi Barrett (Atheneum,
1978; 1982)
Corduroy, Don Freeman (Viking, 1968; Puffin, 1976)
Cranberry Thanksgiving W. and H. Devlin (Four Winds, 1971)
Curious George, H. Rey (Houghton Mifflin, 1941; 1973)
The Day Jimmy's Boa ate the Wash, Trinka Noble (Dial, 1980)
Frederick, Leo Lionni (Pantheon, 1966)
Frog and Toad Are Friends, Arnold Lobel (Harper, 1970; 1979)
The Giving Tree, Shel Silverstein (Harper, 1964)
Goodnight Moon, Margaret Brown (Harper, 1947; 1977)
Harry the Dirty Dog, Gene Zion (Harper, 1956; 1976)
Heckedy Peg, Audrey Wood (Harcourt, 1987)
If You Give a Mouse a Cookie, Laura Numeroff (Harper, 1985)
Ira Sleeps Over, Bernard Waber (Houghton Mifflin, 1972;
1975)
The Island of the Skog, Steven Kellogg (Dial, 1973; 1976)
The Jolly Postman, J. and A. Ahlberg (Little, Brown)
Katy and the Big Snow, Virginia Burton (Houghton Mifflin,
1973; 1974)
Little Bear, Else Minarik (Harper, 1957; 1978)
The Little Engine That Could, Watty Piper (Platt, 1961;
Scholastic, 1979)
The Little House, Virginia Burton (Houghton Mifflin, 1942;
1978)

Madeline, Ludwig Bemelmans (Viking, 1939; Puffin, 1977)
Make Way for Ducklings, R. McCloskey (Viking, 1941; Puffin, 1976)
Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel, V. Burton (Houghton Mifflin, 1939; 1977)
Million of Cats, Wanda Gag (Coward, McCann, 1928; 1977)
Miss Nelson is Missing, Harry Allard (Houghton Mifflin, 1977; Scholastic, 1978)
Miss Rumphius, Barbara Cooney (Viking, 1982; Puffin, 1985)
Owl Moon, Jane Yolen (Philomel, 1987)
The Polar Express, C. Van Allsburg (Houghton Mifflin, 1985)
The Story Of Ferdinand, Munro Leaf (Viking, 1936; Puffin, 1977)
Sylvester and the Magic Pebble, W. Steig (Simon & Schuster, 1969; Windmill, 1969)
The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Eric Carle (Philomel\Putnam, 1969; 1986)
Wagon Wheels, Barbara Brenner (Harper, 1978; 1984)
Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak (Harper, 1963; 1984)
Willian's Doll, Charlotte Zolotow (Harper, 1972; 1985)

Children's Magazines

Children's Digest

Parents Magazine Enterprises

Box 567B

1100 Waterway Blvd

Indianapolis, IN 46209

Children's Playmate

1100 Waterway Blvd.

P. O. Box 567

Indianapolis, IN 46206

Child's Life

1100 Waterway Blvd.

P. O. Box 567

Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dynamite

645 Count Morbida's Castle

Marion, OH 43302

Ebony, Jr.

Johnson Publishing Co.

820 S. Michigan Ave.

Chicago, IL 60605

Highlights for Children

P. O. Box 269

2300 W. Fifth Ave.

Columbus, OH 43216

Humpty Dumpty

1100 Waterway Blvd.

P. O. Box 567

Indianapolis, IN 46206

Jack and Jill

1100 Waterway Blvd.

P. O. Box 567

Indianapolis, IN 46206

National Geographic World

17th and M Street NW,

Washington, DC 20036

Ranger Rick

National Wildlife Foundation

17th and M Street, NW

Washington, D.C.

Stork

1100 Waterway Blvd.

P. O. Box 567

Indianapolis, IN 46206

Street Magazine

P. O. Box 52000

Boulder, CO 80301-2000

Turtle Sesame

1100 Waterway Blvd.

P. O. Box 567

Indianapolis, IN 46206

Your Big Backyard

National Wildlife Federation

1412 6th St. NW

Washington, DC 20036

Zoobooks

3590 Kettner Blvd.

San Diego, CA 92101

Lara, 1995, PP. 46-47

Trelease, 1989, PP. 153

Choosing Books for Children at Various Stages of Development

Characteristics

Rapid development of language.

Very active, short attention span.

Child is center of own world. Interest behavior and thinking are egocentric.

Curious about own world.

Beginning interest in how things work and the wider world.

Implications

Interest in words, enjoyment of rhymes, nonsense, and repetition and cumulative tales. Enjoys retelling simple folktales and "reading" stories from books without words.

Requires books that can be completed in one sitting. Enjoys participation such as naming, pointing, singing, and identifying hidden pictures. Should have a chance to hear stories several times each day.

Likes characters that are easy to identify with. Normally sees only one point of view.

Enjoys stories about everyday experiences, pets, playthings, home, people in the immediate environment.

Books feed curiosity and introduce new topics.

Examples

Random House Book of Mother Goose, Lobel
Is Your Mama a Llama?, Guatino
Roll Over!, Gerstein
Mr. Gumpy's Outing, Burningham
Millions of Cats, Gag
The Three Bears, Rockwell
Sunshine, Ormerod

Eating the Alphabet, Ehlert
The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Carle
Each Peach Pear Plum, Ahlberg
The Wheels on the Bus, Zelinsky
Have You Seen My Duckling?, Tafuri
Over in the Meadow, Langstaff

Noisy Nora, Wells
Fix-it, McPhail
Where is Ben?, Russo
A Baby Sister for Francis, Hoban

The Snowy Day, Keat
Pancakes, Pancakes, Carle
Jesse's Daycare, Valens
Building a House, Barton
Trucks, Rockwell

My Visit to the Dinosaurs, Aliko
I Want to Be an Astronaut, Barton
Is This a House for Hermit Crab?, McDonald
An Octopus is Amazing, Lauber

Building concepts through many first-hand experiences.

Books extend and reinforce child's developing concepts.

Feathers for Lunch, Ehlert
Freight Train, Crews
I Read Signs, Hoban
Trucks, Gibbons
26 Letters and 99 Cents, Hoban

Child has little sense of time. Time is "before now," "now," and "not yet."

Books can help children begin to understand the sequence of time.

When you were a Baby, Jonas
A Year of Beasts, Wolff
The Little House, Burton
Time to..., McMillan

Child learns through imaginative play; make-believe world of talking animals and magic seems very real.

Enjoys stories through imaginative play. Likes personification of toys and animals.

Martin's Hat, Bloss
May I Bring a Friend?, De Regniers
We're Going on a Bear Hunt, Rosen
Corduroy, Freeman

Seeks warmth and security in relationships with family and others.

Likes to hear stories that provide reassurance. Bedtime stories and other read-aloud rituals provide positive literature experiences.

The Runaway Bunny, Brown
Some Things Go Together, Zolotow
Little Bear, Minarik
Ten, Nine, Eight, Bank
Julius, the Baby of the World, Henkes

Beginning to assert independence. Takes delight in own accomplishments.

Books can reflect emotions. Enjoys stories where small characters show initiative.

Will Have a Friend?, Cohen
I Hate to Go to Bed, Barrett
Alfie Gets in First, Hughes
Titch, Hutchins
Flap Your Wings and Try, Pomerantz

Makes absolute judgments about right and wrong.

Expects bad behavior to be punished and good behavior rewarded. Requires happy endings.

The Three Billy Goats Gruff, Asbjornsen & Moe
Babushka's Doll, Polacco
The Little Red Hen, Galdone
The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Potter

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