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ABSTRACT

Predicated on the idea that one of the best ways to support individuals' book sharing with a special child in their lives is to establish a family book sharing group with people in the community, this book offers specific suggestions for organizing such a group and provides plans for at least six gatherings. According to the book, this book sharing practice allows parents to trade ideas with others about books they have enjoyed reading and improves family communication in general. Following a foreword which gives guidelines for organizing a group and answers some pertinent questions, the book is divided into six "gatherings": Gathering 1--Getting Started; Gathering 2--Motivating Children to Read; Gathering 3--Reading Aloud and Book Conversations; Gathering 4--More Book Sharing Strategies; Gathering 5--Looking Back and Looking Forward; and Gathering 6--Celebrate Success. A list of further resources is appended.  
 (NKA)

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# FAMILY

# BOOK SHARING GROUPS

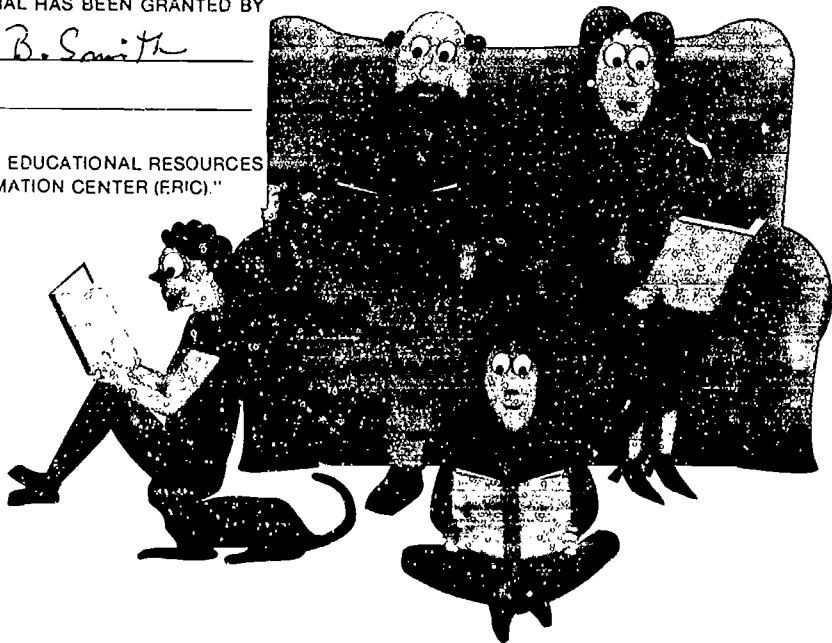
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## Start One in Your Neighborhood!

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Marjorie R. Simic and Eleanor C. Macfarlane

# FAMILY BOOK SHARING GROUPS—

*Start One in Your Neighborhood!*

by

Marjorie R. Simic

and

Eleanor C. Macfarlane

Family  
Literacy  
Center



**EDINFO Press**

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# Foreword

If you have just finished reading *Connect! How to Get Your Child to Talk to You*, we think that you may want to become involved right away in sharing books and ideas with an important child in your life — your son or daughter or maybe a grandchild or a niece or nephew. If you haven't read *Connect!* yet, perhaps you can borrow a copy from your school or public library. The book describes the experiences of people who have been doing book sharing with their children, and explains how you can get started on this experience.

In this book you will find specific suggestions for organizing a family book sharing group, and plans for at least six gatherings.

## *How can I start a family book sharing group?*

One of the best ways to support your own book sharing with a special child in your life is to establish a family book sharing group with other people in your community. In this way you will be able to support each other's efforts to share books with your children and improve family communication. You can learn from other members of the group about what works *and what doesn't work* in their families. You can trade ideas about books you've enjoyed reading and discussing with children of various ages, for example. The suggestions in this book promote this kind of sharing and support among the members of your book sharing group and provide resources for whoever is organizing the gatherings of your group.

## *Who should be in our family book sharing group?*

The easiest way to start a family book sharing group is probably with friends or neighbors or relatives — people you

already know. If you don't know many people in your community, try calling the school principal or your school's PTA/PTO president for a list of names of people who might be interested in working with you on such a venture. Small groups work better for support and sharing than large ones, so start small — with just a few families. A mix of ages is often helpful; people can learn from both the younger and older members of the group. Also, even though we sometimes refer to adult participants in your family book sharing group as “parents,” it is perfectly appropriate for a single parent or grandparent or aunt or uncle — anyone who is interested in doing book sharing with a child — to participate in a family book sharing group.

#### *Where and when should we meet?*

You may want to invite a group of people to come to your home for the first gathering, to talk over the idea of forming a family book sharing group. Then, if they are interested, you can talk together at that time about where they would prefer to meet — in different homes on a rotating basis or in the library or school or church or even a private room in a restaurant. Each locale has its own advantages and disadvantages. You can decide with the group what time of day you will meet and how often, and also whether you want to include simple refreshments as part of your gatherings. When you are first starting your group, you will probably want to meet at least once a month; many people find that every week, or every two weeks, works even better.

If finding babysitters is a problem, maybe one member of your group could offer to look after all the children at his/her home each time—Pop Jones during the first gathering, Mama Brown the second, and Grandma Juarez the third—while the other members of the group participate in the meeting (probably at a different location). If you choose this option, you will have another good reason to keep your family book sharing group small.

Talk with your group about how long you'd like the gatherings to last. One hour or one-and a-half hours are both reasonable

options. If you decide to have short gatherings (an hour or less), you will find that you will have plenty of suggestions and materials in this book for more than six gatherings.

***What should we do when we get together?***

This book contains detailed “action plans” for six gatherings of your book group. The plans are intended to be adaptable, so that you can tailor the information and activities to the needs and interests of your own particular group.

***What do I need to do before the first gathering of our book sharing group?***

First, read through the Action Plan for the first gathering. [Perhaps you can take time to skim through the suggestions for the other five gatherings as well so that you will see how the plans fit together.]

Second, as you read and prepare for gatherings of your family book sharing group, you will note that some of the activities require some preparation of materials beforehand, such as writing statements on index cards or collecting materials. Choose from among the optional activities, and underline or highlight any information you plan to share with the group.

Finally, be sure to take a moment just before each gathering to look through the information and activities carefully one last time so that you are able to get your family book sharing group off to a good start.

In the Action Plans, we have sometimes referred, for convenience, to participants as “parents” even though — as we explained above — it is perfectly appropriate for any member of an extended family to participate in a family book sharing group.

***Could we share the leadership of our book sharing group?***

If everyone in your group is very busy, you might consider passing this book around your group and have several people — let them volunteer — take turns being the “leader” or organizer.

You will probably also want to suggest that other members of the group read *Connect!*, so that everyone has a chance to catch your enthusiasm about book sharing and to read about what a difference the *Parents Sharing Books* program has made in the lives of other families across the country.

### **Suggestions for Organizing Family Book Sharing Gatherings**

A few pointers to remember:

When gatherings start and finish as planned,  
*people feel they can attend and still do all the other things that are important in their lives.*

When participants learn from the discussion and activities,  
*they feel positive about future gatherings.*

When the importance of each participant's contributions is recognized,  
*then everyone is motivated to become even more involved at the next meeting.*

If, on the other hand, gatherings are allowed to drag on past the scheduled time, or some individuals are permitted to dominate the discussion while others remain uninvolved, participants will lose their commitment and motivation and then may find reasons to miss future gatherings of the group.

***So, here are some specific guidelines to keep in mind:***

- Begin and end your gatherings as scheduled.
- Plan activities so that everyone gets involved and feels that his/her contribution is important.
- Try to keep things moving, with a good mix of small-group and whole-group activities. You will notice a variety of suggestions and options in the Action Plans.



Choose the activities that you think your group will enjoy most and learn from best.

- Be sure to establish an atmosphere where different points of view are accepted and welcomed, so that people feel free to share ideas and can learn from each other. Share a few of your own mistakes (you can think of them as “learning opportunities”) and concerns so that others feel free to share their dilemmas with the group and profit from others’ experiences and ideas.

***The Family Literacy Center is available to help.***

We hope you enjoy meeting with the members of your family book sharing group! If you have questions, please call the Family Literacy Center, 1-800-759-4723.

A video is available that describes the *Parents Sharing Books* program. The Family Literacy Center can also arrange a *Parents Sharing Books* training seminar for leaders in your community, or tell you about seminars and workshops that are already scheduled.

If you would like your own personal copy of *Connect! How to Get Your Kids to Talk to You*, call the Family Literacy Center or use the order form at the back of this book.

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## **Action Plan for Gathering 1: Getting Started**

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### **OVERVIEW OF THE GATHERING:**

- ✓ **Introduce** everyone, and make sure people in the group feel comfortable with each other. One way to “break the ice” as you start is to ask people to tell the others in the group, in a sentence or two, why they have come to this gathering about “book sharing”.
  - ✓ **Inform** participants about how they can share books with one child or several children. Explain to the group that book sharing is not complicated. It is using books as a way to have positive interactions with children, thereby creating a habit of family reading and sharing ideas.
  - ✓ **Participate** with the group in activities that help participants to think together about book sharing, and to decide how they will initiate it in their homes.
  - ✓ **Remind** participants that book sharing at home can help to improve adult-child communication. Sharing books has been shown to increase interaction among family members and to improve the quality of the time families spend together.
  - ✓ **Set goals** that will guide each participant’s efforts until the next gathering, and assure them of the group’s support.
-

*Note: As mentioned in the Foreword to this book, even though the term parent is used frequently in these Action Plans, anyone who wants to share books and ideas with a child in his/her life could be a member of your family book sharing group.*

## **OPENING DISCUSSION:**

To encourage discussion among the members of your group, pose some or all of the following questions. Encourage members to respond to each other, not just to you as a leader.

### **1. VALUES**

- *What do you want to accomplish for yourself and/or your family by coming to these gatherings?*

This is a good way to get started, because it helps you and the other members of the group share expectations for the family book sharing club. By knowing what the group wants to accomplish, gatherings can be shaped to meet the needs of individuals in the group. Sharing needs and goals gives individuals a feeling of ownership of this book sharing group.

- *Would it be worthwhile to spend more time reading together? What positive results do you think would be achieved if you and your children did more reading at home?*

Collect responses from the group.

- *Is it important for you to share ideas and values with your child through talking about books and stories? Why or why not?*

Give group members a chance to think about this question together.

### **2. CONFLICTS**

- *What do you see as the biggest conflict or problem facing you in sharing books with your children at home?*

This question helps participants identify the things that might get in the way of their starting book sharing at home with their children. Participants can share ideas and help others in the group work through conflicts and problems, such as finding time in a busy schedule, not wanting to read when favorite TV programs are on, encouraging reluctant readers, etc.

### 3. CONCERNS

- *What other questions or concerns do you have about book sharing?*

Give participants an opportunity to ask questions they may have about starting book sharing at home. Encourage participants to answer each other's questions whenever they can.

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Choose the ones that you think your group will enjoy.

#### Activity #1: **SHARING:**

Have participants share family stories about reading habits at home. Discuss the kinds of attitudes participants, and their children, have about reading.

Possible questions:

*What do you do at home to encourage reading?*

*How does this practice help to develop a home environment where reading is important?*

#### Activity #2: **PROBLEM SOLVING:**

*How will you introduce book sharing to your children?*

*How can we approach our children about it in a positive manner?*

This question and the activity described next will help participants think specifically about how they will approach others in their family about sharing books at home.

**Activity Directions:**

*Materials needed:* index cards, pencils/pens

*Ahead of time:* Place each of the following statements on an index card.

1. *Turn the TV off! Let's start reading.*
2. *Your teacher said we need to read at home so your grades will improve. Sit down here and let's read.*
3. *I'm going to unplug the TV, and everybody is going to read from now on during all their free time at home.*
4. *You are going to have to give up something you like in order to do more reading.*
5. *Here is a book that your teacher said all kids like to read. You are going to read to me. Let's get started.*
6. *We're going to read only books on this list, or books that your teacher recommends.*

**Sharing within the small group —**

Ask participants to form small groups of two or three with the purpose of thinking together about how parents can approach their children about starting book sharing at home, in ways that are most likely to succeed.

1. Give each small group a card on which you have written one of the statements listed above. (If you have only a few participants in your gathering, give each small group two or three cards.)

2. Allow a few minutes for the groups to look at the statements on their cards and to think about how their child/children would react to such a statement. Suggest that they use the backs of the cards to write new statements as needed, so as to use a positive, friendly approach to book sharing.

### **Sharing with the whole group —**

Now, have the members of each small group share with all the other participants their statement and the revision they have written on the back of the card. Talk about why the new statements are a better way to approach children about reading together at home.

Remind participants, if necessary, that the aim is to *encourage* our children to *want* to share books at home. In this program, there are no specified books that each child must read. The idea is to start with the child's interests, and work together from there.

**Discuss** the approaches that work best in participants' homes, and which approaches won't work at all. We hope to help participants realize that POSITIVE approaches to getting book sharing started at home are likely to be the best route.

*Note to the Leader: Suggestions for transforming the previous statements into more positive ones. Use these ideas to supplement what the members of your group propose.*

1. *Turn the TV off! Let's start reading.*  
This book I picked up looks interesting. When your TV program is over, how about seeing if it's a book we might enjoy reading together.

2. *Your teacher said we need to read at home so your grades will improve. Sit down here and let's read.*

I'd like to do more reading for fun at home. Why don't you pick a book that we can read together?
3. *I'm going to unplug the TV, and everybody is going to read from now on during all their free time at home.*

I'd like to spend time together at home. Why don't we work out a schedule for TV watching and our other activities? We can set aside time to read together. What would be some good times for you?
4. *You are going to have to give up something you like in order to do more reading.*

We spend a lot of time in the car. Why don't we try to remember to bring along a book we both enjoy? You can read aloud while I drive. Others in the car might get interested, too.
5. *Here is a book that your teacher said all kids like to read. You are going to read to me. Let's get started.*

Keep an eye out for books we might enjoy reading together. There seem to be a lot of interesting new books at the library. I'd really enjoy reading some of them with you. Why don't we take turns reading aloud to each other?
6. *We're going to read only books on this list, or books that your teacher recommends.*

Magazines and comic books might be fun to read once in a while. We can read a variety of things... different kinds of books, articles in the newspaper, whatever seems interesting to us both.



Activity #3: **REFLECTING:**

*Materials needed:* sheets of paper, pencils/pens

Have participants think about their day-to-day routines.  
*What do you do every day? When can you find time for reading and sharing?*

Daily Activity: <b>Finding Time for Family Book Sharing</b>							
<b>Time</b>	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thur</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>

*Directions:* Pass out copies of the time sheet above, or a similar one. Ask participants to write down on the sheet

what they do every day, in blocks of time. Then, ask them to look at their schedules and see where they could find time to read and share with their child at home. Explain that the next step is to take the schedule home and work together with their child to fill in fixed commitments for their child (maybe in a different color) and look for times when they could fit in book sharing.

**Share with other members of the group** how you plan to use the schedule with your child. Discuss the different times of day when reading can go on at home (or in the car or waiting for appointments) and what families will need to do in order to set aside time to read.

**MOVING INTO ACTION:** Give participants a reason for coming back to your next gathering. (Make sure everyone knows when and where it will be held.)

**Summarize** — *What have we learned?* Review with the members of the group some of the suggestions and ideas covered at this gathering:

- ◆ introducing book sharing, using positive approaches
- ◆ setting aside time for sharing books together
- ◆ making book sharing a pleasant experience

**Motivate** — *What do we each want to accomplish by the next gathering?*

Use the following activity to help participants set goals for family book sharing. Inform participants that, at the next gathering, they will be talking about their book sharing experiences and any changes they have made to encourage reading at home.

**GOAL-SETTING ACTIVITY:**

*Materials needed:* index cards, pencils/pens

Hand out a blank 3" x 5" index card to each participant, and make sure each participant has a pencil or pen. Participants will set three goals to accomplish by the next meeting.

The first two goals are (you may read them aloud or write them on a large sheet of paper):

- 1) Plan with my child/children for a time when we can read together.
- 2) Help my child/children select a book that we can share at home.

The third goal is different for each individual — something specific which that person wants to accomplish to promote reading at home and to encourage book sharing in some positive way.

If you have time, encourage each member of the group to share his/her individual goal with the others, but allow a person to “pass” if he/she would feel uncomfortable in sharing. Ask everyone to put the goal cards in his/her folder, and to bring the folders back to the next gathering. Explain that you will all be sharing stories with each other next time, related to your book-sharing experiences, so that you can help each other.

**POSITIVE SEND-OFF:**

*Let's see how many of us are able to achieve the goals we have set!!*

Make sure participants know the time, date, and place of your next gathering.

If you have a copy of *Connect!*, you may want to lend it to other participants of your family book sharing club so that they will share your enthusiasm.

**Note:** If possible, at the beginning of your first gathering, give each family an inexpensive pocket folder (or ask them to bring one along from home). They can use the folder to put all the materials they receive at family book sharing gatherings (note cards or papers) and also any records they keep of what they do at home (lists of books read, drawings about books or stories, etc.). Encourage participants to work with their children to decorate the folders, if they wish, and to bring the folders to each gathering.



## **Action Plan for Gathering 2: Motivating Children to Read**

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### **OVERVIEW OF THE GATHERING:**

- ✓ **Share stories** about any book sharing that people have done at home since the last gathering. Ask participants to talk about how they managed to set time aside to share books and which books they chose to share with their children. Discuss the individual goals that the participants set and how they were able to accomplish these goals. Talk about some of the problems participants are experiencing in trying to share books at home.
- ✓ **Inform** participants that making the right book choice is important for successful book sharing with their children. Explain to participants that book sharing at home is intended to be an enjoyable experience for all concerned. If a parent and child are not enjoying the book they have chosen, they should quit reading that book and choose another one. Making a child read something in which he or she is not interested does not motivate the child to read more or enjoy reading.
- ✓ **Participate** with the group in activities related to motivating children to read and share books.
- ✓ **Remind** participants of the different ways they can become aware of children's reading interests. Talk about the things children are typically interested in at different ages and how these interests can provide some clues to possible reading directions.
- ✓ **Set goals** that will guide participants in choosing books to read for themselves, and books they and their children will enjoy reading together.

**OPENING DISCUSSION:****1. MODELING AND SHARING**

- *What have you done at home since our last gathering to encourage your child to read and to share books with you?*

Participants are asked to think about the positive things they are doing to encourage their child to read. Talk about ways in which adults can encourage reading.

- *Do your children see you reading in many different contexts, and for a variety of reasons? What kind of role model are you providing for your children?*

**2. CONFLICTS**

- *What are some of the problems you are facing in getting your child to share books with you at home?*

This question helps participants target specific conflicts or attitudes that are preventing them from having successful book sharing experiences at home. Participants can share some of the difficulties they are facing in trying to motivate their children to read. Others can offer suggestions and strategies that have worked for them when encouraging reluctant readers.

**3. CONCERNS**

- *What other questions do you have about continuing to share books with your child at home?*

Give participants an opportunity to ask questions they may have about motivating children to read at home. Members of the group can serve as resources for each other — helping to answer questions and solve problems.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

**Activity #1: SHARING:**

*What kinds of books are you reading with your children?  
Are these book selections encouraging your children to  
want to read with you?*

Have participants share the kinds of books that they are reading with their children. Ask participants to explain how they and their children decide to read a particular book. Share how the chosen books did or did not motivate their children to read at home.

These discussions encourage participants to think about how they make book selections. They can become aware of reading interests of children who are the same age or close to the age of their own children. Participants can use the suggestions of others to help them choose books to share with their children.

**Activity #2: PROBLEM SOLVING:**

*How can you motivate your child to read at home?*

This question helps participants think about their children's reading interests and how they can provide motivation for their children to read. Have participants form groups of two or three and talk over how best to provide encouragement to their children for reading at home.

**Activity #3: RESPONDING TO OUR CHILDREN**

*Materials needed:* note cards, pencils or pens

*Ahead of time:* Place each of the following statements on an index card. These statements are remarks that children are likely to make about reading at home.

1. *I just can't get into the book we are reading now.*
2. *I don't have time to read, with everything else going on.*
3. *This book we are reading is about history, and you like reading about history, but I don't enjoy it.*
4. *I really like working on my hobbies, but I just can't find a book I enjoy reading.*
5. *I'd rather watch TV together than read this book.*
6. *We don't have anything in the house I like to read.*
7. *I'm too old to read with you.*
8. *I don't like to read books.*

**Directions:** Give each group 2-3 cards with one of these statements on each card. Have each group look at their statements. Ask each group to decide how parents might respond to these children's remarks in a positive, thoughtful way.

**Sharing:** Let the members of each small group share with the whole group the responses they came up with. Talk together about positive approaches parents can take that will support and encourage their children to read at home.

**Discuss with the whole group** which kinds of responses and approaches are likely to motivate children to read. Participants can talk about why they think their children like/dislike reading. Talk about how participants can help their children enjoy reading by offering to read aloud



with their child, at least to get started. Participants can help each other find solutions for children's reluctance to share books at home.

**MOVING INTO ACTION:** Give participants a reason for coming back to your next gathering.

**Summarize** - *What have we learned?* Review some of the suggestions discussed at this gathering.

- ◆ Show an interest in what your children are reading.
- ◆ Become involved with your children's book selections.
- ◆ Model the reading behavior you would like to see.

**Motivate** - *What do we want to accomplish by the time of our next gathering?* Help participants set additional reading goals (see activity below). Let the group know that at the next gathering people will have another chance to talk together about some of the books they are sharing with their children.

**GOAL-SETTING ACTIVITY:**

*Materials needed:* index cards, pencils or pens

**Directions:** Hand out a 3 x 5 index card, and a pencil or pen, to each participant. Ask participants to set one reading goal, for themselves, to accomplish by the next meeting, and to use the other side of the card to set a goal with their child/children.

The two goals are:

- 1) A book (or an article in a magazine) that the participant wants to read.
- 2) A book the participant and his/her children want to share.

### 1) A Personal Reading Goal

Asking participants to set a personal reading goal emphasizes the importance of participants' selecting books that they might enjoy reading on their own. When participants have personal reading goals and make efforts to accomplish these goals, they provide a positive role model for their children.

Give participants a few moments to think about their goal choices. They may choose a book they have heard others talk about during the gathering that sounded interesting. Or, they might write down the name of a book or a magazine article that they have started and just can't seem to find the time to read. They might want to choose a children's book, as a way of exploring whether that book would be one they would enjoy sharing with a child. Emphasize that, for this personal reading goal, they should choose something they will *enjoy* reading. If there is time, encourage participants to share their personal reading goals and to explain why they selected this particular book or article to read. (This may help members of the group to become aware of characteristics that attract people to particular books, and to think together about characteristics that attract children to books.)

**2) A book the participant and his/her children want to share.**

Participants will leave the second reading goal blank until they can discuss this book choice with their children. However, they may want to jot down a few book titles that were shared at this gathering as possible suggestions.

This approach encourages participants to involve their children in selecting books they can share at home. As a leader, you want to help participants to understand that learning about their children's individual reading interests is very important when trying to motivate them to read.

This second reading goal promotes a respect for children's reading interests and encourages parents to read something that their children want to read. Ask participants to bring their cards back to the next gathering so that they can share their progress (and problems) in meeting their goals.



## **Action Plan for Gathering 3: Reading Aloud and Book Conversations**

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### **OVERVIEW OF THE GATHERING:**

- ✓ **Share** goals that participants have set at previous meetings and the progress they have made in meeting those goals. Ask participants to share specific techniques or practices that are working for them. Talk about the books that participants are reading with their children, and what they like or dislike about these books. Have participants recommend books that others in the group might enjoy reading with their children.
  
  - ✓ **Inform** participants that the approaches they use when sharing books with their children are important to their success. Also mention that there are many different ways to share books with their children. Reading a book aloud is one way to share; having a conversation about it is another. You can discuss how best to use these and other sharing strategies that will motivate children to want to continue family reading and sharing. Gathering 4 focuses on some alternative strategies for book sharing.
  
  - ✓ **Participate** with the group in activities related to specific ways to share books with children in an enjoyable way.
  
  - ✓ **Remind** participants that book discussions are *not* a way to test their children. Sharing books offers families an opportunity to explore ideas together and have fun. Book sharing should be an enjoyable time for both parents and children. Encourage book sharing questions that allow both parents and children to share their feelings and thoughts. Asking open-ended questions allows children to express their thoughts and feeling without fear of being criticized.
  
  - ✓ **Set goals** that will guide participants as they share books at home with their children.
-

**OPENING DISCUSSION:****1. MODELING AND SHARING**

- *How do you share books with your children at home? For example, do you usually start a new book by reading aloud? Do you generally read a book together, or do you read the same book at separate times? What effects are these strategies or approaches having on your book sharing experiences?*

These questions help participants think about specific ways they share books with their children. Talk about the benefits that reading aloud offers both parents and children. Ask participants who have read aloud with their children at different ages to share their experiences.

- *What kinds of questions do you typically ask your children when sharing books?*

Explain to participants that certain types of open-ended questions and comments encourage children to express their ideas and reactions. Point out the difference between the types of questions that sound to a child like a “test” and the kinds of questions that promote the sharing of feelings and thoughts.

Here are a few examples of questions that might start an interesting book conversation:

*Have you ever felt that someone would stop liking you, as Ramona did in this story?*

*The two characters in this story seem really different. Why do you think they are such good friends?*

*How do you think the mother felt when her children gave her the beautiful chair they had saved their money to buy?*

*Ira was able to talk about how scared he was to leave his blanket behind. Do you remember a time when you were frightened, and talked to someone about it? What happened?*

*What do you think will happen next in the story?*

*Did you like the ending of this story? Shall we try to think up a better one?*

(Use *Connect!*, Chapter VII, as a source for additional ideas.)

## 2. CONFLICTS/CONCERNS

- *What are some of the problems you are having in getting your children to talk about the books you are reading together?*

This question helps participants target specific approaches or strategies they are currently using to discuss books with their children. Participants can reflect on things they are doing that might discourage their children from wanting to share books. Others in the group can offer suggestions about strategies that they have found effective in promoting communication between parents and children.

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

#### Activity #1: MODELING AND SHARING:

*What kinds of questions do you ask your children when sharing books with them? Do they stimulate your children's thinking so that they can relate to and interact with the book?*

Encourage participants to share some of the conversations they have had with their children over books.

Discuss the circumstances of these book talks: over dinner, or while they are reading together, or at bedtime. Think about what kinds of questions are the most likely to elicit thoughtful book conversations.

These discussions encourage participants to think about *how* they talk to their children about books. They can become aware of the sorts of questions that are most likely to lead to thoughtful book conversations. Participants may use the suggestions of others, and practice within the group, to help them to ask meaningful open-ended questions when sharing books with their children.

**Activity #2: “FISHBOWL” ACTIVITY:**

This activity involves some role playing and encourages participants to notice what goes on when people read or talk and others listen. Feedback from the OBSERVERS is very important.

*How well do you listen to your children when sharing books with them?* This question encourages participants to think about their own listening skills.

**Ahead of time:** Make enough copies of the following selection for each group of three:

Rocky slowly got up from the mat, planning his escape. He hesitated a moment and thought. Things were not going well. What bothered him most was being held, especially since the charge against him had been weak. He considered his present situation. The lock that held him was strong, but he thought he could break it. He knew, however, that his timing would have to be perfect. Rocky was aware that it was because of his early roughness that he had been penalized so severely — much too severely from his point of view. The situation was becoming frustrating; the pressure had been grinding on

him for too long. He was being ridden unmercifully. Rocky was getting angry now. He felt he was ready to make his move. He knew that his success or failure would depend on what he did in the next few seconds.

**Directions:**

Form groups of three. Give each group a copy of the passage about Rocky. Each group needs a **TELLER**, a **LISTENER**, and an **OBSERVER**.

- The **TELLER** in the group reads the passage to the **LISTENER**.
- The **OBSERVER** in the group watches the person listening to the selection. The **OBSERVER** should notice how the **LISTENER** responds to the **TELLER** while listening to the passage.
- When the **TELLER** has finished reading, the **TELLER** and the **LISTENER** may have a brief discussion on the topic:  
*Who IS Rocky in this passage? Why do you think so?*  
The **OBSERVER** may want to join in the discussion!
- Then have all the **OBSERVERS** share with the whole group how the **LISTENERS** in each group showed they were (or were not) listening to the other person, and also how the **TELLERS** kept in touch with the **LISTENERS**. Ask the **TELLERS** to share what they noticed about the person listening to them read aloud.

**Discussion:**

*What were some of the things people did to show they were listening to the other person?* Talk about the positive responses or signs participants can provide when listening to their children read aloud or talk about books.



Here are some suggestions that you may wish to add to those that participants in your gathering may have offered:

1. Give nonverbal support and encouragement.
2. Rephrase your children's comments to show you understand.
3. Watch your children's face and body language.
4. Use the right tone of voice for the answer you are giving.
5. Use encouraging phrases to show your interest and to keep the conversation going.

**Remind** participants that questions are important for starting conversations, but just as important is *listening to what their children are saying*. Effective listening communicates loving concern for their children, but listening is more than just "not talking." Real listening takes concentration and practice, for adults as well as for children.

**MOVING INTO ACTION:** Give participants a reason for coming back to your next gathering.

**Summarize** - *What have we learned?*

Review some of the book sharing strategies covered in this gathering:

- ◆ using techniques that make reading aloud effective and enjoyable
- ◆ asking questions that open up conversations between parents and children
- ◆ listening actively when your children talk about books.

**Motivate** - *What do we want to accomplish by the next gathering?* Help participants set additional goals for their book sharing at home.

**GOAL-SETTING ACTIVITY:**

**Sharing:** Have each participant share with the group one helpful suggestion or strategy that he/she has learned about at this meeting. Ask members of the group to explain how they think this strategy or suggestion will help improve their book sharing at home.

Participants may write this strategy down in the form of a goal (on a note card or piece of paper) to supplement the other goals they have set for themselves at earlier gatherings. They can keep all their note cards in their folders. Explain that they will be asked, at the next gathering, to share how the suggestion or strategy they chose as a goal is working for them.

Remind participants to bring their folders to each gathering. They may also wish to bring along a book they are reading to the next gathering, for an activity they will be doing.

Leaving the third gathering with one strategy they want to use during book sharing encourages participants to consider the benefits this particular strategy or suggestion offers them and their children during book sharing time.



## Action Plan for Gathering 4: More Book Sharing Strategies

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### OVERVIEW OF THE GATHERING:

- ✓ **Share stories** — the experiences each member of the group is having with book sharing at home. Talk about the goals that participants have set and how they are meeting these goals. Encourage participants to talk about some of the books they have enjoyed sharing with their children. This kind of sharing can offer others in the group ideas on book selection.
- ✓ **Inform participants** that drawing, writing, and drama can all be used when sharing books with their children, in addition to the strategies of reading aloud and having book conversations that have been considered already. (See Chapters VIII, IX, and X of *Connect!* for ideas and suggestions.) Explain to participants how drawing, writing, and drama may be used for sharing books. These strategies can encourage both children and adults to explore and express their thoughts and feelings about a story in other ways than conversation.
- ✓ **Participate** in activities with the group. Share a picture book (or a chapter from a longer book) with the group, using an informal Readers' Theater approach. Then give participants an opportunity to try out some other book sharing strategies.
- ✓ **Remind parents** that their participation is important when encouraging children to use these strategies. Parents must be willing to draw, write, and act out part of stories, too. If participants or their children are having a difficult time sitting down and just talking about the books they are reading, these alternative strategies may offer them some new ways to share books and ideas. Besides, variety is the spice of life!

**OPENING DISCUSSION:****1. SHARING:**

Ask participants to share anecdotes about their book sharing at home. Talk about the goals that participants have set and whether and how they are meeting these goals. Encourage people to mention specific books they have enjoyed sharing with their children. As they listen, others in the group may gain ideas for selecting books to share with their children. They can make notes in their folders.

**2. MORE WAYS TO DO BOOK SHARING:**

- *How could you encourage your child/children to use drawing, writing, or drama with you as a way to share a book?*

Have participants talk about experiences they have had with book sharing in which drawing, writing, or drama might have been helpful. Ask participants to suggest ways in which children might enjoy using these different strategies. (Have any members of the group acted out *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* or another fairy tale with their children?)

Talk briefly about ways participants might use and adapt these strategies so as to use them in a variety of situations.

**Writing:** For example, writing in a journal, with entries from both parent and child — an inexpensive spiral notebook works fine — is one way to use writing to share books. (Incidentally, the “rules” for dialogue journals include *not* correcting spelling or grammar — just friendly conversation back and forth.)

Another writing strategy is to use post-it notes on the refrigerator or little notes in lunch boxes telling the child how you felt about a certain part of a book you're reading together. Or use post-it notes to remind him/her of funny or interesting moments in the book.

**Art:** Drawing a sketch of a character in a story you're sharing, and letting your child guess who it is, might be fun. Then let your child draw, and you guess.

There are many other ways to use art for sharing. One is to encourage your child to draw one or more illustrations for a favorite story. Then he/she can dictate the text for each illustration, which you can write below or to the side of each picture. An older child can write and illustrate an entire story, perhaps adapting characters or situations from the book you are sharing.

**Drama:** Informal "readers' theater" (taking turns reading aloud certain characters' parts in the book) is one way to share and read a book. Acting out favorite stories (with or without simple costumes, or using puppets) is also fun.

#### ACTIVITIES:

1. **Informal Readers' Theater:** Choose a children's picture book (or a chapter from a longer book) with lots of conversation. Gather enough copies, or make photocopies, so that everyone can see the text; two or three people can easily share the same copy. Let people volunteer for parts so that each character is represented; you will probably also want a Narrator. Then begin! And remember, you can do this kind of reading aloud at home with just one other person by each taking several roles.

**Note:** if you need help finding a book with lots of dialogue, ask the children's librarian in your public library for suggestions.

Now, encourage participants to try out the two other activities listed below. You may wish to allow people to take turns with these activities. In other words, two or three people might try out the Art Box, while others in the group do Written Conversations. Then people can trade places.

## 2. **Written Conversations:**

*Materials needed:* notebook paper and pencils or pens

**Directions:** Participants use written dialogue to discuss the story that was read aloud to the group using Readers' Theater (or a book they are reading at home). The idea is to share ideas with someone else in the group, but — instead of talking about the story — writing down the book conversation on a sheet of notebook paper.

Ask participants to work in groups of two or three. Each participant writes a paragraph or two about:

*how they feel about some of the characters, or*

*things they are reminded of when reading/hearing the book, or*

*events and characters that they can relate to in the book.*

After writing for a few minutes, participants exchange what they have written with another person in their small group. Each participant then responds briefly, in writing, to the person whose comments they have just read. If there is time, participants may do another round of sharing.

**3. Art Box:**

Gather the following materials in a box: bits of cotton, brightly colored paper, gift wrapping paper, crayons and markers, glue or paste, some construction paper or inexpensive white paper, plus any odds and ends that you think might be helpful.

Encourage participants to create (by themselves or with a partner) a picture or collage that expresses an idea or feeling either about the book that was shared through the Readers' Theater activity or a book they are sharing with their children.

**GROUP DISCUSSION:****Benefits:**

*How might these strategies (writing, art, and drama) improve your book sharing at home? What are some of the benefits of using writing when sharing books with your children? When might parents and children use this strategy? When might drawing or sketching be a good way to share ideas? How about Readers' Theater?*

These questions encourage participants to talk about positive outcomes of using these strategies. Remind participants that writing, drawing, and drama all open up new avenues of communication within the family.

**Concerns:**

*What are some concerns you have about using these strategies (art, writing, and drama) with your children?*

Group discussions can motivate and encourage those in the group who may be having misgivings about using these strategies with their children.

*What other questions or concerns do you have about book sharing strategies?*

Give participants an opportunity to ask questions they may have about sharing books and talking about books. Encourage others in the group to answer each other's questions as much as possible, so that the group becomes a source of mutual support.

**MOVING INTO ACTION: Give participants a reason for coming back to your next gathering.**

**Summarize** - *What have we learned?*

Review some of the practices covered at this gathering. Make positive points about these sharing strategies:

- ◆ writing
- ◆ art
- ◆ drama.

**Motivate** - *What do we want to accomplish by the next gathering?*

Help participants set new goals for this period: using one of the strategies at home, for example. Ask participants to bring in written dialogue, sketches, or personal experience stories from using these book-sharing strategies with their children.

Make sure everyone knows the time and place of the next gathering.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:**

Help participants to make an "instant minibook." (See below for directions.) They can use it as a "journal" for their sketches and writings. Suggest the minibook be kept in the book that parents and children are sharing. Children and parents may both use the minibook.

Ask participants to bring their minibooks or other writing to the next gathering. Participants will have an



opportunity to share how they used writing, sketches, and drama during book sharing practices.

**DIRECTIONS FOR INSTANT MINIBOOK:**

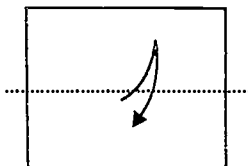
With a few simple folds and a single cut or tear, you can turn a single sheet of paper into an 8-page booklet.

*You'll need:*

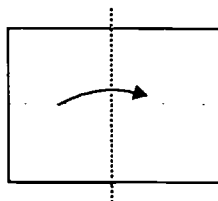
- a rectangular sheet of paper
- a pair of scissors

*What to do:*

1. Take the rectangular sheet of paper and fold it in half lengthwise.



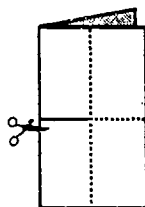
2. Open it; then fold the sheet of paper in half crosswise.



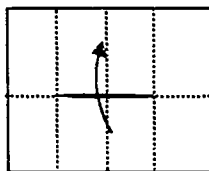
3. Fold it crosswise again.



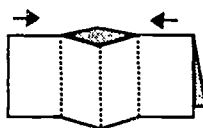
4. Unfold it so that the paper is back as in step 2. Cut or tear from the fold-side a slit halfway up the middle, like this:



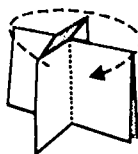
5. Open the paper and fold it lengthwise again as in step 1, with the slit on the top.



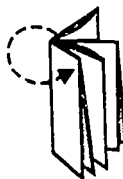
6. Grasp it at either end and push the ends of the slit together like this:



7. Fold it at one edge like this to make a book:



Now you have a minibook. The size, of course, depends on the dimensions of the piece of paper you used.



## **Action Plan for Gathering 5: Looking Back and Looking Forward**

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### **OVERVIEW OF THE GATHERING:**

#### **Looking Back:**

- ✓ **Share** family stories with others in the group. Ask participants to talk about their experiences with using the three strategies discussed in the last gathering: 1) writing, 2) drawing, and 3) drama. Encourage participants to share any drawings or written conversations that parents and children did together.
- ✓ **Talk about the need for recognizing** the changes and accomplishments everyone in the group has made in sharing books with their children at home and building strong family relationships through books. Suggest that members of the group look back through their folders and remember the activities they participated in at these gatherings. They can then assess how successful they were in changing the reading habits, attitudes, and interests of their family members.
- ✓ **Remind** participants that any change process is slow — it takes time to alter longstanding habits. Encourage families to look at their small accomplishments as well as the substantial changes and big gains. Participants may not be able to share books with their child every day, but ask them to think about continuing to increase the time they spend with their child sharing books and ideas.

#### **Looking Forward:**

- ✓ **Discuss** with the group whether members wish to continue meeting after their sixth gathering, and — if so — how often.
- ✓ **Plan a celebration** with the group.

*Since the suggestions for this gathering include planning for a celebration, it is likely to be longer than usual. You may want to have a break in the middle for some refreshments.*

**OPENING DISCUSSION: Looking Back****1. SHARING:**

- *What important thing(s) have you learned about your child and/or yourself by sharing books?*

This question gives participants an opportunity to think about the benefits they received while participating in these gatherings and book sharing at home. Listening to others share their feelings may support and encourage members of the group to continue their efforts in maintaining family reading habits and promoting positive family experiences.

**2. VALUES AND ATTITUDES:**

- *How have your reading attitudes, habits, and interests changed since participating in this book sharing group? What changes in reading attitudes, habits, and interests are you noticing in your child?*

These are important questions for individuals in the group. By recognizing the changes that are occurring, participants will be able to understand what measures they will need to take in order to maintain these positive book sharing habits and practices. Assist participants to recognize that these support gatherings help them to establish positive reading habits and to value the importance of sharing books with their child.

**3. REFLECTION:**

- *Are you taking more time to share with your child than you did before participating in these book sharing gatherings? What do you do with your child during this "quality time" that you are spending together? What have you done toward achieving your goals?*

These questions help participants recall the enjoyable times they have devoted to their child and book sharing. Help parents understand the significance of these times.

Regardless of economic background, we can all afford to spend quality time with our child. By setting goals and working toward accomplishing these goals, participants become positive role models for their children.

#### 4. CONCERNS:

- *What is your goal for sharing books and ideas with your child? What is your biggest concern related to maintaining this book-sharing practice with your child?*

These questions help participants to focus on the positive outcomes of book sharing and recognize factors and conflicts that might prevent them from continuing to share books with their child. Ask participants to listen carefully when someone expresses a concern, so that they can all learn from one another's experiences. Participants can help each other to find ways to continue book sharing practices at home.

#### GROUP ACTIVITY:

*Materials needed:* sheets of paper, pencils, crayons, markers

Participants can use their positive experiences with book sharing and their enthusiasm for the support gatherings to do a fun activity together. Ask participants to form groups of two or three. Pass out paper, pencils, crayons, and markers. Ask everyone to think for a moment about their book sharing experiences. Then have participants work together to create an advertisement, a billboard picture, or a bumper sticker logo that might draw the attention of potential family book sharing club members. Now give each group an opportunity to share what they did.

**Break for Refreshments (optional)**

**MOVING INTO ACTION: Looking forward**

**Summarize** - *What have we learned?* Review some of the thoughts and ideas that were shared at this gathering.

- ◆ Change takes time! By learning positive approaches for sharing books and support from others in a group, parents are their child's most powerful role model.
- ◆ Each member of our group received some benefits from this experience. It's worth celebrating small, as well as big, achievements.
- ◆ Sharing these positive experiences with others is important.

**Look Ahead -**

- *Where do we go from here? What do we want to accomplish next? How can we share this positive experience with others? How can we use our group's enthusiasm to encourage other parents to share books with their children?*

These questions move the support group to the next phase of this family book sharing group. At this point, participants have some choices to make.

Help parents see the significance of sharing their positive experiences with more parents. Encourage the group to use their enthusiasm (and even their advertising ideas) to reach out to more parents and support them in their efforts to bring rich book sharing experiences into their homes.

**Activity A: Pass out pencil and paper (or a note card) to each parent. Allow at least 20 minutes for this activity.**

1. Ask participants to take a moment to think about and then write down what they would like to do to move this book sharing support group forward. Do they wish to continue meeting as a group, after the celebration? If so, how often?
2. Then ask them to explain briefly, in writing, the kind of support they need in order to continue efforts to share books at home.
3. Allow time for participants to share their thoughts and feelings with one another. Give members of the group time to explain their own needs and describe whether/how they would like to move forward with this book sharing group. Ask participants to consider carefully the ideas that others in the group offer. Encourage members to support each other within the group, and at the same time to think about ways to reach out to other families who can benefit from this positive experience.

Perhaps someone in the group is willing to start a new book sharing club with some other families. Would anyone else be willing to help? Consider using the creative ideas members came up with for advertising book sharing gatherings!

4. At the end of this discussion, everyone needs to be clear about what the group has decided about its future — whether it wishes to continue meeting after Gathering 6, and if so, how often. It is possible that some people will have to withdraw from the group because of other commitments, while other participants decide to continue meeting and to invite some new members.

**Activity B: Planning for a celebration**

(See **PLANNING GUIDE** for **Gathering 6** for ideas and suggestions.)

1. **Explain** to participants that celebration is part of achieving success. They have already taken some steps toward making reading and book sharing a habit in their home. They have provided their children with some influential models and practices, and they should celebrate their accomplishments!
2. **Planning:** Allow time for participants to discuss how they want to celebrate their accomplishments. Mention that family members may be included in this celebration, and ask whether the group would like to bring a few friends along to learn more about this family book sharing group. You may wish to break into two or three committees for the planning.
3. **Responsibilities:** Members of the group should leave this gathering knowing when and where the celebration will be held. Everyone needs a clear understanding of his/her responsibilities (bringing food items or paper plates or decorations, making certificates, inviting a guest, or whatever).



## **Planning Guide for Gathering 6: Celebration!**

(Use this guide for the planning activities in Gathering 5.)

We have not provided you with specific plans and instructions for Gathering 6. Instead, we have collected some suggestions for organizing a celebration and possible options you may wish to consider as you plan.

Since there are many details to attend to when preparing for a special celebration, we recommend using a checklist (see below) and recruiting the help of all of the members of your group.

### **ASPECTS OF YOUR CELEBRATION**

There are a number of questions to consider when planning your celebration. These are a few:

#### *Whom should we invite as guests? Do we need invitations?*

Be sure to include all the people in your group (adults and children) who have participated in book sharing. If you wish, other family members may be invited. You could consider inviting a few people who have expressed an interest in either becoming a member of your group or in starting their own book sharing club. People who are thinking about joining your group are likely to be more eager to return to future gatherings when they feel comfortable in a group and sense the support that group members offer each other.

#### *Where and when shall we have our celebration?*

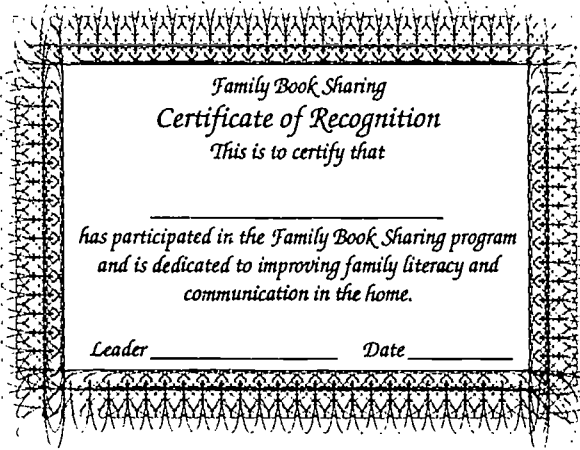
It could be in someone's home, or in a backyard, or in a large room at a church or school or community center, depending upon how many people you expect to participate. Choose a time that is convenient for the group.

*What kind of food shall we have?*

Plan to have food at this celebration — pizza, sandwiches, juice and cookies, ice cream, a carry-in dinner — whatever is popular with your group. Decide ahead of time who will bring what.

*Do we want to give out awards?*

At the celebration gathering, parents and children may receive tangible rewards for their work and “shine” in front of their families. Certificates of some kind for everyone who has participated in book sharing (both adults and children) are a very nice touch.



Giving out tangible awards is optional, depending on the circumstances and preferences of your group. If you decide to give awards, they may be gift certificates, books, bookmarks, or anything else that you can make or acquire easily.

One possibility is to ask local stores for some help. They might contribute gift certificates, food coupons, books, bookmarks, or other items. Remember to thank these supporters personally with a letter. You might even submit an article to the local newspaper explaining the purpose and goal of your book sharing group, and mention local supporters that have contributed to your group.

You could use the creative ideas of the group to come up with a logo that members can have printed on a sweatshirt or T-shirt.

**An alternative to awards:** One low-cost way for everyone to get a new book is to have a paperback book-swap. Everyone brings a book he/she has enjoyed and would be willing to share, and goes home with a different one.

*Should we have decorations?*

Balloons and crepe paper streamers often lend a festive air to celebrations. Banners created by children contribute to a festive atmosphere.

*How can we let our families shine?*

Plan activities that will let everyone in your group shine! Families may wish to conduct an informal discussion about their positive experiences — telling their favorite story about book sharing, for example. Or, they may prefer to gather around while someone reads a story or picture book to everyone. You could have a brief discussion about the story, with everyone in the group participating. You could play a few games. Whatever you decide on, be sure to encourage both children and adults to participate.

This may be an especially good time to show photographs that you (or members of the group) took during your gatherings. You could also use these photos — and additional ones taken during your celebration activities — to advertise your parent group, if you are thinking about reaching out to more families in your community.

Keep your focus on the theme for this gathering — **Celebrating Our Accomplishments** — and have fun!



### Planning a Celebration

Aspects of Our Celebration	Details	Who's responsible?
Guests?		
Where and When?	Place? Date? Time?	
Food?		
Awards/Recognition?		
Decorations?		
Activities?		

## **Action Plan for Gathering 6: Celebrate Success**

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### **OVERVIEW OF THE GATHERING:**

- ✓ In this sixth parent gathering, you will be celebrating the success that every member of the group has had in reading and sharing books at home with his/her child. (Even small successes should be celebrated.) The format for this gathering is different from that of previous parent gatherings. **We suggest that this gathering be truly a celebration!**

### **Recognizing Group Members**

- ✓ It is important that you provide recognition to everyone who has participated in this book sharing support group, and to acknowledge the work they have done. Your participants have accomplished something significant, and you don't want them to stop their family book sharing after these first steps have been taken.
- ✓ By participating in these book sharing gatherings, families have moved their children closer to being literate citizens. Some of these parents couldn't have done this without the support of this family book sharing group. They have worked hard to start some new patterns of behavior and communication in their homes. This is an occasion to pat each other on the back, recognize that it is worth the effort and time each person has invested, and look to the future.

(see next page)

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## **Action Plan for Gathering 6: Celebrate Success**

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### **OVERVIEW (continued):**

#### **Your Importance as a Leader**

- ✓ It goes without saying that you are an important person at this celebration. If your family book sharing group is having a “celebrating success” gathering, then your initiative and hard work have helped bring them to this day. You met the challenge to involve parents in rich literacy experiences with their children at home. You started “reaching out” to parents when you gathered parents together, and organized and conducted your first parent gathering. And now you are having your sixth parent gathering!
  
- ✓ Although you, as a leader or facilitator of these book sharing gatherings, may at times feel like an unsung hero or heroine, this celebration is definitely for you. Your commitment to promoting family book sharing provides the foundation for this group.

**CONGRATULATIONS ON ALL YOUR EFFORTS!**

**Don't stop here — you are making a difference. Continue to share books in your own home and to support the members of your family book sharing club. If possible, reach out to more parents. Encourage your friends to start new groups.**

Please contact the Family Literacy Center if you have questions, or if you have suggestions for improving the program.

Family Literacy Center  
Indiana University  
2805 E. Tenth Street, Suite 150  
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698  
1-800-759-4723



# Appendix

*Family Book Sharing*

## *Certificate of Recognition*

*This is to certify that*

\_\_\_\_\_ *has participated in the Family Book Sharing program and  
is dedicated to improving family literacy and  
communication in the home.*

*Leader* \_\_\_\_\_

*Date* \_\_\_\_\_



# Family Book Sharing Resources

## Family Book Sharing Groups— Start One in Your Neighborhood!

by Marjorie R. Simic and Eleanor C. Macfarlane

Parents and children can enjoy reading and communicating together. This handy book gives all the information you need to start a rewarding book sharing group in your school, community, or place of worship.

64 pages, AM12, \$6.95

## Connect!

### How to Get Your Kids to Talk to You

by Carl B. Smith with Marjorie R. Simic and Susan Moke

This inspiring book shows you how to make book sharing and open communication a reality in your home. Through family book sharing parents can become closer to their children and support their academic and emotional development. Specific strategies help families to

- Open up parent-child communication
- Find time for reading and sharing
- Motivate children and build self-esteem
- Select books to read together
- Use writing, art, and drama to share ideas



Illustrated with over 20 photographs and examples of children's art and writing.

236 pages, AG49, \$14.95

## Family Book Sharing Leader Training Manual

This comprehensive manual enables a local leader to conduct at least six meetings for family members interested in sharing books as a means for increasing reading and communication. Agendas, activities, handouts, resources, letters, press releases, etc., give leaders a ready-to-use package for an entire project.

319 pages, AM03, \$85.00

## Video for Parents Sharing Books

Shows various strategies that parents and children use for holding book conversations. Parents and teachers report the significant changes that these strategies have brought to their lives and those of their children.

16 minutes, AV01, \$29.95

## **Parents Sharing Books Technical Report**

by Carl B. Smith and Marjorie R. Simic

This report chronicles a three-year program which linked parents, children, and schools through the establishment of mutual help groups. Sample case studies give detailed examples of how to make a book-sharing project work in various school and community settings.

180 pages, AM11, \$14.95

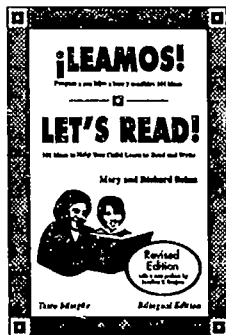
## **Family Resources for Home and School**

### **Help Your Child Read and Succeed: A Parents' Guide**

by Carl B. Smith

Readers are achievers! Parents have an important role to play in helping their children learn to read. This book contains practical, caring advice and skill-building activities for parents and children from a leading expert in the field.

265 pages, BRS, \$12.95



**¡Leamos! Prepare a sus hijos a leer y escribir: 101 ideas**

**Let's Read! 101 Ideas to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Write**

by Mary and Richard Behm

Side by side, in Spanish and English, parents get terrific, practical ideas that make learning a fun and natural part of everyday family activities.

108 pages, AG45, \$8.95

### **101 Ideas to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Write**

by Mary and Richard Behm

The same great ideas as above in English only. Parents can turn their daily experiences with their children into opportunities for developing reading and writing skills.

45 pages, AG08, \$6.50

## **The Confident Learner: Help Your Child Succeed in School**

by Marjorie R. Simic, Melinda McClain,  
and Michael Shermis

**A**n easy-to-read, interesting guide helps parents raise a child who is ready and motivated to learn.

*"This is an extremely useful and informative book, written by experienced advocates of parental involvement in education."* —**Library Journal**

131 pages, **BTCL**, \$9.95



## **The Curious Learner: Help Your Child Develop Academic and Creative Skills**

by Marjorie R. Simic, Melinda McClain,  
and Michael Shermis

**P**arents can help their children become curious, well-rounded learners who enjoy academic and creative pursuits.

*"This guide focuses on techniques parents and educators can use to broaden creative thinking skills and enhance children's abilities in specific academic areas."* —**ALA Booklist**

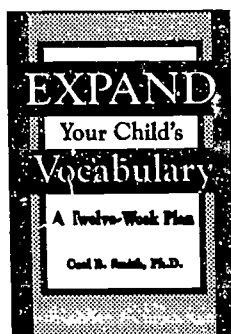
156 pages, **BCL**, \$9.95

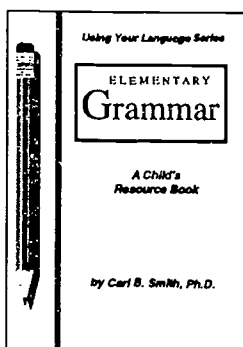
## **Expand Your Child's Vocabulary: A Twelve-Week Plan**

by Carl B. Smith

**A** dozen super strategies for vocabulary growth—because word power is part of success at every stage of life. Parents and children will enjoy these interesting vocabulary activities, appropriate for children in elementary and secondary school.

86 pages, **BEYC**, \$7.95





## Elementary Grammar: A Child's Resource Book

by Carl B. Smith

This book belongs next to the dictionary and thesaurus on every child's reference shelf. Children can use this valuable resource alone or with the help of a parent or teacher to

- 1) Answer quick questions about homework.
- 2) Catch up to or move ahead of grade level.
- 3) Get extra practice and review.

For grades 2-5.

264 pages, **BG1**, \$13.95

## Intermediate Grammar: A Student's Resource Book

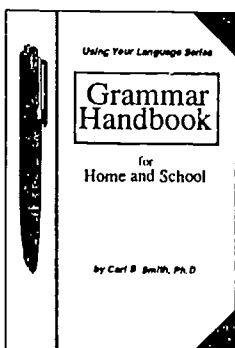
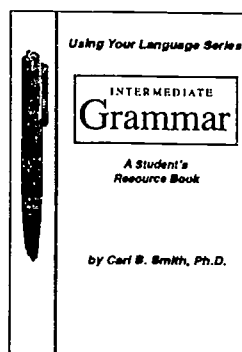
by Carl B. Smith

Whether they need to answer homework questions, polish a paper, or get extra practice and review, your middle and upper grade students will turn to this reference again and again. Includes

- Explanations and definitions students will understand.
- Examples of actual student writing that focus on common questions and errors.
- Exercises for students to check their understanding.
- A punctuation guide.

Appropriate for grades 5 and up.

306 pages, **BG2**, \$16.95



## Grammar Handbook for Home and School

by Carl B. Smith

Here's the perfect quick reference to correct language usage. Concise definitions, clear explanations, and useful examples make this a handy guide to English grammar, syntax, and punctuation.

*Grammar Handbook* serves as a companion to *Intermediate Grammar* or as a stand-alone quick reference. For grades 5 and up.

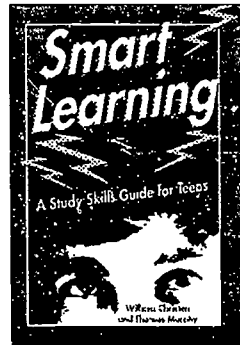
80 pages. **BGH**, \$8.95

**Smart Learning:  
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by William Christen and Thomas Murphy

**L**earn to focus study time and energy for fantastic results the whole family will be proud of! This valuable guide offers students techniques to improve note taking, writing projects, and test taking. They'll even learn how to set and achieve their own goals.

111 pages, BSL, \$10.95



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# CONNECT PARENTS AND CHILDREN!

As children grow, how can parents keep the lines of communication open? Parents and children have found a way—by sharing books!

Now you can organize a family book sharing group in your neighborhood, school, or place of worship. *Family Book Sharing Groups* offers plans and agendas for six meetings where families can meet to gain mutual support and share ideas. Families learn how to select books that parents and children will enjoy reading together, how to make time for reading, and how to make book sharing a fun and meaningful family activity.

The benefits to families participating in book sharing and book sharing groups include

- Better communication between parents and children,
- Greater mutual respect and understanding,
- Improved performance in school, and
- Higher self-esteem in kids.

If you are a parent, teacher, community leader, or member of the clergy who is interested in promoting family communication and literacy, this guide will get you started. It is one of a series of resources designed to promote family book sharing. See the back pages of this book for more details.

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