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ABSTRACT

This manual is designed to help volunteer teachers in family literacy programs introduce a writing project that provides parents and children with a worthwhile learning experience to take home and share. The guide suggests ways to prepare parents and children for a collaborative story-writing experience and offers ideas on how to structure the writing session. It also shows how to assemble the parent-child stories and illustrations into a simple book that will be a source of pride for all concerned. Tips and tools for facilitators are included. Resource lists include citations for 55 children's books, 19 books for new adult readers, and 14 books about children's literature; contains 58 references. (KC)

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Telling Tales

How to produce a book of stories by parents and their children

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Telling Tales

How to produce a book of stories by parents and their children

A Publication of
Literacy Volunteers of America—Chippewa Valley

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All proceeds from this project will be used to enhance literacy efforts in the Chippewa Valley area.

About Literacy Volunteers of America-Chippewa Valley

- Was organized in 1986 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin
- Operates as an outreach center of Adult Basic Education, Chippewa Valley Technical College
- Serves a three-county area
- Offers free one-to-one literacy instruction to adults
  - Trains and supports volunteer tutors
  - Identifies and screens students
  - Provides instructional assistance and materials tailored to the students' individual needs
- Operates a comprehensive family literacy program with the help of community partners
  - Receives Even Start funding for family literacy
  - Is recognized as an exemplary program by the National Diffusion Network of the U.S. Department of Education and the National Center for Family Literacy (1994 Validation)
- Was designated outstanding affiliate of the year by National LVA, 1994
- Serves as the state liaison for LVA, Inc.

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Betsy Kell, social worker
Jane Linton, early education teacher
Karol Machmeier, parenting teacher
The Lowes Creek Integrated Learning Center Staff

LVA-CV Board of Directors
The Family Literacy Advisory Committee

Introduction

The goal of this manual is to introduce a writing project which provides parents and children with a worthwhile learning experience and a good memory to take home and share, again and again.

In *Telling Tales* we will suggest ways to prepare parents and children for a collaborative story-writing experience. We will help you structure the writing session. We will show you how to assemble the parent-child stories and illustrations into a simple book that will be a source of pride for all concerned for years to come.

Although our suggestions stem from a comprehensive family literacy program, you need not be involved in family literacy to undertake this project. The activities in this book will appeal to early childhood teachers in many different settings: library literacy programs, library children's programs, Head Start programs, preschools, family literacy programs, ESL family programs, and so forth.

All you need are the basic ingredients:

Background

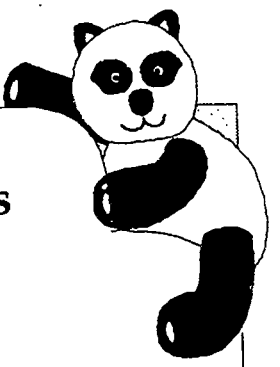
Research shows that children's achievement in school is directly related to parental involvement in their education (Ponzetti & Bodine, 1993). The desire to generate positive attitudes toward school in both parents and children has been one of the factors motivating programs to deal with the family as a unit. The application of this inclusive approach ranges from library programs and preschools which involve the parents in story activities to comprehensive family literacy programs, which have been expanded to meet multiple family needs.

The team at Literacy Volunteers of America—Chippewa Valley (LVA-CV) in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, has been involved in the family literacy effort since 1988. Our comprehensive program offers adult basic education, early childhood classes, parenting instruction, and regularly scheduled opportunities for the parent and child to play and learn together. We seek to instill and strengthen a positive attitude toward education, while integrating reading and writing into the daily lives of families. LVA-CV incorporates volunteers into all components, from the Board of Directors to classroom assistants.

As our program evolved, the staff at LVA-Chippewa Valley sought ways to share what we have learned with other programs. Participation in conferences and workshops ultimately led to the creation of our own publishing company, Chippewa Valley Publishing, as the most effective means of disseminating information. ***The Path to Family Literacy,*** published in 1994, is a manual providing step-by-step guidance for implementing a comprehensive program. In ***Put It in Print*** (1994) we deal specifically with the development of writing skills in adult students, also showing literacy providers and adult educators how to produce and distribute a book of writings by their students. ***Celebrate Writing,*** a collection of poems, narratives, and essays by students in both our family literacy and one-to-one tutoring programs, is the companion piece to ***Put It in Print.***

Whereas ***Put It in Print*** concentrates on the adults, this manual, ***Telling Tales,*** places the emphasis on the learning relationship between parents and children. In the adult classroom the instructor prepares parents to write stories appropriate for children. In the children's classroom, the teacher establishes a stimulating, print-rich environment for the children and thus prepares them for a cooperative writing and illustrating venture with their own parents. In our program, the writing process has always proven to be a positive learning experience and the finished product, a book of illustrated stories, has been well worth the effort.

Welcome to a rewarding venture!



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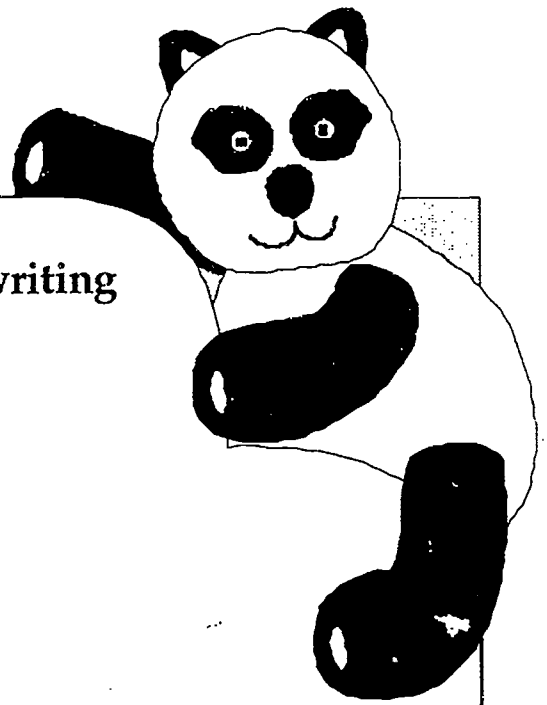


Setting goals for parent-child writing

Primary stages for action:

1. Set goals for the parents.
2. Set goals for the children.
3. Set goals for parent-child interaction.
4. Determine ways to evaluate the achievement of these goals.

One major goal of any program that deals with the literacy of families as a unit is to **instill and promote the love of reading within the family**. When we generate enthusiasm for reading in parents, we take the first step toward bringing books into the home. When we share good books with children, we broaden their horizons. When we introduce writing to parents and children, through a cooperative writing project, we show them that they also can be authors, thus establishing a more personal link with the written word. Throughout this process we are treating reading and writing as inseparable and mutually supportive partners.

With this manual we hope to define our goal in terms of its components: the parents, the children, and the parent-child interaction. As we determine the scope of the writing project, we will consider what experiences the participants need, what we are prepared to teach, and what time and budget will allow.

Setting goals for parents

Our primary goal for parents should be the emergence of reading and writing as a part of life. As parents improve their literacy skills, their self-esteem grows. As they gain information from reading and discover self-expression through writing, their involvement in the world around them is enhanced. Parents who are convinced of the usefulness of knowledge are also more likely to motivate and teach their own children (Ponzetti & Bodine, 1993).

When preparing the parents to **assist their children**, other goals for parents emerge:

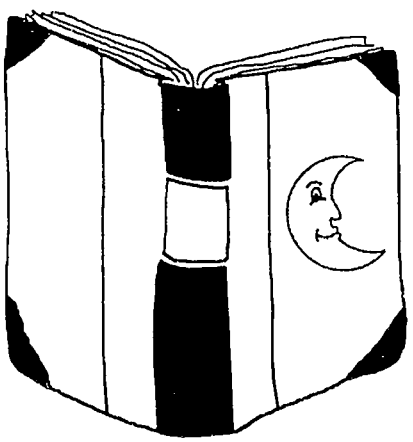
- **Awareness of developmental stages in children as they relate to reading and writing.**

  Parenting education helps parents develop patience with and acceptance of individual differences in learning. It is important for parents to understand that children develop at different rates. The five- or six-year-old child who still scribbles may need more opportunities to develop fine-motor skills.

- **Recognition of appealing elements in children's literature.**

  We expose the parents to a wide variety of children's books, from the wordless picture books to the more complicated stories. **The primary concern here is that the parents read to their children.** Because the shared reading experience will be more successful if the children like the books, we help parents recognize characteristics which appeal to children. These are:

  1. Themes and vocabulary that are age-appropriate
  2. Stories that hold children's interest
  3. Illustrations that stimulate the senses and imagination



In the great green room
There was a telephone
And a red balloon
And a picture of —
The cow jumping over the moon

From *Goodnight Moon*
by Margaret Wise Brown
(Harper & Rowe, 1947)

- **Development of the literacy skills needed to assist their children's learning.**

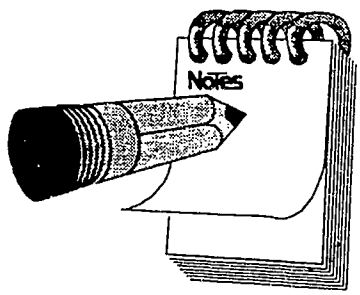
  Regardless of literacy level, parents still occupy the role of primary teacher for their children. Consequently it is important to bolster parents' self-confidence by providing them with the tools and techniques to feel adequate in that capacity. We reinforce their involvement by providing basic education, by introducing appropriate materials, by setting an example, and by sharing our own enthusiasm. Parents discover that they can cope and that they can assist their children, even without advanced writing skills.

  Nuckolls (1991) contends that the literacy development of children benefits from parents or caregivers who are also involved in advancing their own literacy. When we suggest simple activities for parents to try at home, with their children, we are promoting emergent literacy skills in both parent and child, as well as helping them feel comfortable learning together.

- **Development of literacy habits which model reading and writing in daily life.**

  Children need to see their parents reading, every day. They need to see men reading, as well as women. They need to see parents read in different settings, such as in restaurants, in the library, at grocery stores, and at home. Parents who read a variety of materials—for example, cookbooks, magazines, newspapers, instructional manuals, road signs, and road maps, as well as novels and items of personal interest—are modeling the usefulness and pleasure of reading (Strickland and Morrow, 1989).

  Parents can emphasize the meaningfulness of written language by sharing lists, notes, and letters with their children. **When children see that these written messages are relevant to the events in their daily routines, they begin not only to value writing as a form of communication, but to see how exciting and meaningful it can be.**



"Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. What parents do to help their children learn is more important to academic success than how well-off the family is." (U. S. Department of Education, 1986, 7)

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Setting goals for children

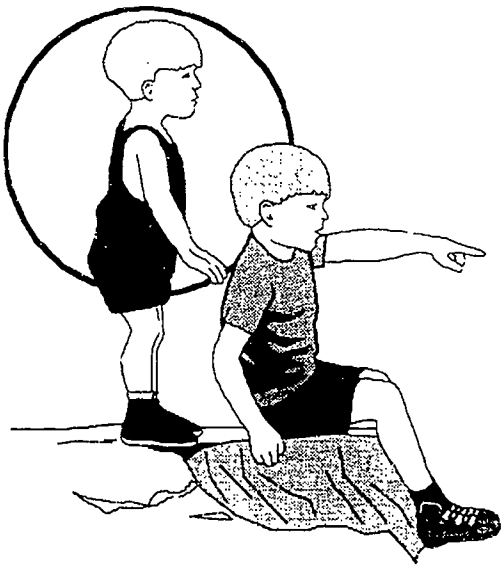
The enthusiastic adult is a powerful force in enhancing a child's perception of reading and writing. We can use the classroom to achieve the following literacy goals:

- **Appreciation of the pleasure and usefulness of reading and writing.**

- **Reinforced connection between print and things experienced.**

  Children need to experience reading and writing through a variety of materials. Words become meaningful when children can connect them to their own world. We create a print-rich environment to promote this connection.

  Children also learn by manipulating their environment. We provide sensory stimulation and "hands-on" experiences to promote this connection, allowing children to touch, taste, see, smell, and hear. We encourage them to try things, and to use them.



Followers of the Montessori method express the relationship thus: "The hand is the chief teacher of the child." In her writings, Montessori identified the young child's unique aptitude for learning as the "absorbent mind. It literally absorbs information from the environment, much like a sponge absorbs liquid. Since the child retains this ability to learn by absorbing until around the age of seven, it follows that his/her experience could be enriched by a classroom where he/she can manipulate materials which would demonstrate basic educational information to him/her." (Wolf, 1975, 4)

Children's natural curiosity and desire to make sense of their world are the only motivation they need to learn (Cullinan, 1992, 64).

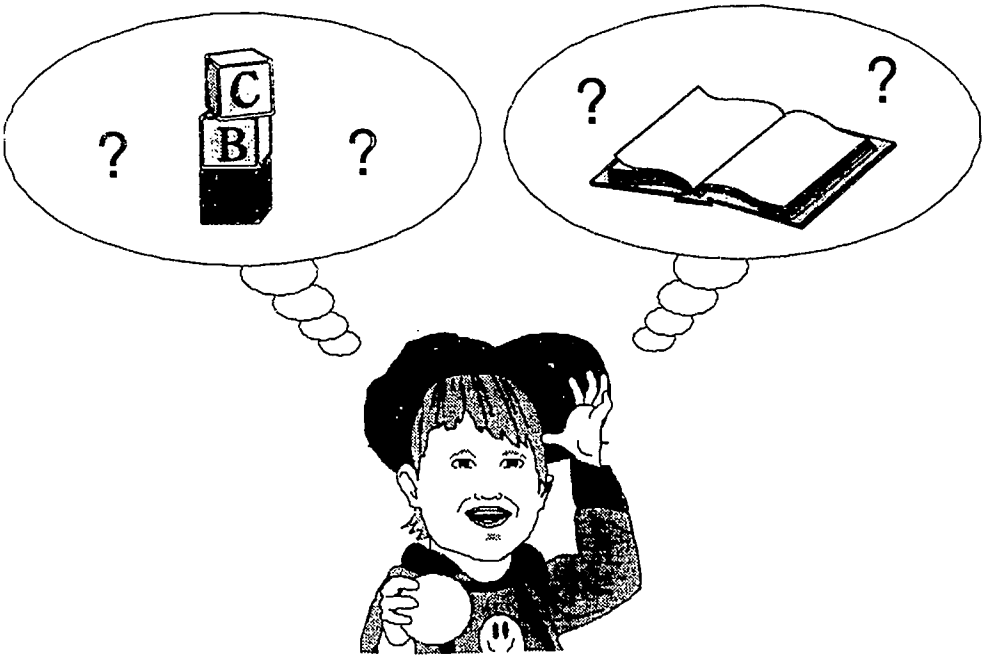
- **Expanded vocabulary.**

  Studies have found that young children can learn new word meanings from as little as one exposure in a book read aloud (Adams, 1990, 46).

- **Decision-making in learning.**

  Children who are given some freedom of choice in learning activities will claim "ownership" of that learning.

  The goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies but rather to cultivate his/her own natural desire to learn. One way to accomplish this goal is by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by his/her own choice rather than by being forced (Wolf, 1975, 3).



Our preschool program applies this principle through use of the High/Scope curriculum, which teaches children to make choices and follow through. This is known as **"Plan—Do—Review"** (Hohmann, Banet, & Weikart, 1979).

The teacher guides the children through the following sequence of events:

1. There is time set aside at the start of every day when each child can **plan** which activities he or she wants to do during free-time. There are always several possibilities.

2. When free-time begins, the child proceeds to **do** the activities that he or she has planned.

3. At the end of the day, the child will then **review**, or recall, those experiences by telling the class about them.

Setting goals for parent-child interaction

The primary goal in having parents and children read and write together is to make these activities a natural part of their relationship.

It is hoped that a story-writing experience will yield the following results as well:

- **Successful completion of an illustrated story.**

  Our short-term goal is the illustrated story produced by parent and child in a pleasurable, productive exchange of ideas. In the long term it is hoped that the parent and child will want to repeat the experience.

- **Strengthened parent-child relationship.**

  Children benefit from being encouraged to read and write (Walton, 1989). "Reading-like" and "writing-like" behaviors are important developmental steps in the process of becoming literate (Holdaway, 1984). All attempts should be praised, because each step is part of the normal progression.

  Research by Walton (1989) states that positive experiences with reading and writing for real purposes are perhaps the best "teaching" parents can offer children. Despite studies that reveal adult-literacy events do take place in nearly all homes, even in low-literacy homes (Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1987), it has been found that low-literate parents are not fully aware of the significance of adult role-modeling for their preschooler's literacy development (Spiegel, Fitzgerald, & Cunningham, 1993).

  It cannot be deduced, however, that parents who have been deprived of an adequate education themselves do not care about their children's education. Research cited by Mavrogenes (1990) indicates that most parents are willing to help their children learn but do not know how to go about it and are afraid of interfering. Parents who felt insecure in classroom settings as students are often hesitant to take on the role of "teacher." They may not feel competent to deal with school work and may not understand how they can contribute to the learning environment.

  It is our job to show parents there are many things they can do to encourage and support reading and writing, regardless of income or background. These efforts involve resources within the grasp of all of us: time, attention, and sensitivity. The goal is to achieve constructive interaction patterns which carry over into daily life.

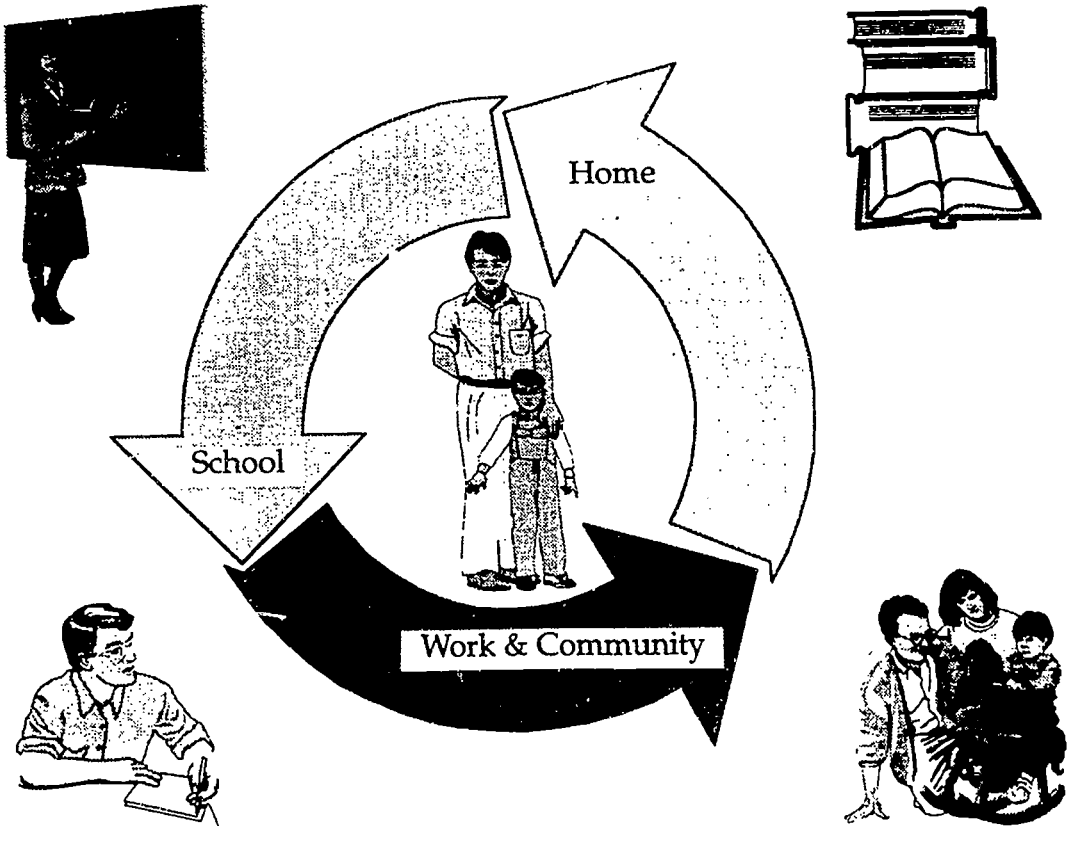
- **Enhanced whole language skills.**

  "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children. This is especially so during the preschool years. The benefits are greatest when the child is an active participant, engaging in discussions about stories, learning to identify letters and words, and talking about the meanings of words" (Anderson et al., 1985, 23).

  Children benefit when parents talk with them about stories, answer their questions, and encourage them to share their own ideas (Strickland & Morrow, 1989).

  Comprehension is strengthened by any interaction which combines written language and other daily activities: speaking, reading, writing, listening, thinking.

It is always the goal of literacy efforts to develop lifelong learners who can function successfully in an ever-changing world.



Evaluation of goal achievement

Our stated goals with the writing project for parents and their children reflect striving for some degree of change in behavior patterns. The success of many of these outcomes is not readily measured—due partially to the short-term status of the project, but due also to the subjectiveness of the qualities being discussed. In other words, we may want our parents and children to come away from this effort with a lifelong love of reading and writing, but our opportunity to influence them is limited by time factors. **Breaking down the primary goal into observable units of behavior enables us to evaluate progress and determine which areas need strengthening.**

To illustrate this process, consider the first goal for the parents: an awareness of the developmental stages of children. As we determine whether or not this has been achieved, we must ask ourselves, "How will I recognize someone who is aware of these developmental stages? What should this person be able to do, to demonstrate this awareness?" The answer: this person will be able to look at the drawings and writings of a child and identify where that child fits in a progressive sequence from scribbling to transitional spelling. (See page 17.) We observe that the parent has acquired this skill.

Whereas standardized tests used to be the method of choice in measuring knowledge, now people in the area of evaluation are stressing alternative methods of assessment. The alternative methods suggested by Holt (1994) are:

1. Surveys
2. Interviews
3. Observation measures
4. Performance samples

These evaluation procedures provide more immediate feedback for the planning staff. The right approach accesses information about the learners' progress, which allows us to measure overall project effectiveness.

Your evaluation is relevant only if it is specific to your program's own predetermined goals. The results of your evaluation will help you modify and improve your project. It will also provide a means to articulate your success to your financial backers.

There are many different ways to evaluate the achievement of goals in a parent-child writing project such as ours. The information on pages 17-19 restates our specific goals and lists the methods and tools we have used to measure success. The page numbers given will direct you to more detailed information about a particular process and to the sample forms provided in Chapter 4. (See pages 75-85.)

- **Evaluating goals for parents**

1. **Awareness of developmental stages in children as they relate to reading and writing.**

   Method of evaluation:

   After a presentation by the parenting instructor on children's emergent literacy skills, parents are given samples of preschool children's drawings and writings and asked to match each to the age-appropriate stage. Subsequently, our evaluation of the parents' understanding is achieved through observation of the parents' interaction during the activity and later responses to their children's efforts.

   For more information, see page 30.
   See the chart on page 76.

2. **Recognition of appealing elements in children's literature.**

   Method of evaluation:

   The parents are introduced to children's literature through a "Book of the Week" project in which all read the same book and then discuss it. Their awareness of the quality elements in children's literature (age-appropriate theme, interesting plot, stimulating illustrations) can be observed during group discussions and confirmed by reading their personal reactions in the required written record.

   For more information, see page 26.
   For a sample book recording sheet, see page 78.

3. **Development of the literacy skills needed to assist their children.**

   Method of evaluation:

   The basic skills of reading and writing are essential to the successful completion of the project described in this manual. In our program, the parents' literacy skills are a major focus of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and the evaluation of those skills is done within that program. The adult instructor is also able to assess writing abilities through performance samples. One classroom assignment relevant to the parent-child writing project is the weekly essay.

   For more information, see pages 27-29.

4. **Development of literacy habits which model reading and writing in daily life.**

   Method of evaluation:

   When parents sign up for our family literacy program, they are asked to complete a survey which indicates the prevalence and types of literacy activities within each family. The survey is repeated at the end of the program, providing a tool to measure positive growth from entry to exit.

   See the survey form on pages 79-81.

- ## Evaluating goals for children

1. **Appreciation of the pleasure and usefulness of reading and writing.**

   Method of evaluation:

   Our primary evaluation method with the preschool children is observation of their behavior. If children seek out books and/or writing materials when given a choice of activities, this is an indication that they are developing an appreciation of reading and writing. Teachers can use a checklist to record children's progress in this area.

   See the checklist on page 82.

2. **Reinforced connection between print and things experienced.**

   Method of evaluation:

   Again, observation is the key to evaluation. Children who participate in labeling activities in the classroom and obviously enjoy learning new words are increasing pre-reading skills.

   For more information, see pages 32-36.
   See the checklist on page 82.

3. **Expanded vocabulary.**

   Method of evaluation:

   Listening is the essential method of evaluation. Parents, as well as the teacher, will be able to observe growth in the children's answers to questions and in general conversation.

See the checklist on page 82.

4. **Decision-making in learning.**

   Method of evaluation:

   Teachers can use the same checklist as mentioned above to record each child's ability to choose an activity for free time, carry out that activity, and then share (review) the process at the end of the class period.

See the checklist on page 82.

- ## Evaluating goals for parent-child interaction

1. **Successful completion of an illustrated story.**

   Method of evaluation:

   If the parent and child completed an illustrated story together in time to include it in the book, they were successful.

2. **Strengthened parent-child relationship.**

   Method of evaluation:

   Regularly scheduled PACT (Parent and Child Together) time exposes parents to many educational activities and provides the opportunity to strengthen the parent-child relationship through quality time spent together. After each interaction parents write in their PACT journal, describing the experience and their personal reactions to it. Parents periodically review this journal to evaluate their own progress. Through this they can detect changes in behavior, attitudes, and feelings—in themselves and in the children. The journal is also used as a basis for discussions with the parenting instructor.

See page 27 for more information.
See page 83 for a sample journal page.

Most assessment to this point has been without parental input.
The evaluation of parents regarding their own progress, the participation of their children, and the quality of the parent-child interaction can be a valuable contribution to your overall program assessment.
For an instrument that will provide more insight into the reactions of the parents, see the form on page 85.

3. **Enhanced whole language skills.**

Method of evaluation:

Whole language skills are enhanced by many interactions between the parent and the child. Reading books together is a valuable experience for both, particularly when the parents have been given some assistance in skillful oral reading and effective interaction. One means of measuring this ability is through an observation checklist. As the parent reads, this form can be completed by an observer—the instructor, the tutor, or another parent.

See the checklist on page 84.

We have constructed these evaluation tools under the **assumption** that the parents participating in this project come into it with sufficient literacy skills to do the following:

1. Read, comprehend, and complete our parent literacy survey (page 79)
2. Participate in the preparatory activities and actual story writing

This will not always be the case. The parent may tell you that he or she cannot read very well or may come with an assessment from another program (such as ABE). Perhaps you will observe the situation yourself during preliminary activities.

In a family literacy program such as ours, this parent has access to literacy assistance through Adult Basic Education. If your program is essentially child-oriented, with no formal adult program, consider one or both of the following options:

1. Arrange for a tutor to assist the parent one-to-one, someone who will encourage the parent to practice oral reading, help as needed with the writing, or even write the story as the parent dictates. (This is an effective solution in some English as a Second Language situations.)

2. Refer the parent to literacy programs in the community.

The main objective of this writing project is to make it a positive experience for both the parent and the child, ultimately promoting life-long learning. Your response to individual situations will depend on the services available to you.

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Chapter Two

Implementing activities to support parent-child writing

Primary stages for action:

1. Prepare the parents for the experience.
2. Prepare the children.
3. Bring parents and children together.

If we want to make the cooperative writing experience meaningful and valuable, we must strengthen the literacy background of both parents and children. We do this through positive exposure to reading and writing. We also strive to help parents become better teachers of their own children. By combining realistic expectations with a few useful techniques, we equip parents to deal with this challenge more confidently.

We prepare the children for the experience by filling their world with books, letting them know that print has meaning and is important. We share the joy of reading by modeling our own enjoyment. We share the joy of writing by allowing them a sense of "authorship," whatever their level of development. We praise their attempts to read and write, even when they make mistakes.

Most importantly, we prepare parents and children for the story-writing project by encouraging them to participate in reading and writing activities together. We provide the guidance—and we provide the opportunities.

Preparing parents for the parent-child writing experience

There are many different ways to give parents the background they need to be more effective teachers of their preschoolers. The following suggestions are adaptable to varied educational settings.

1. Explain children's pre-reading characteristics.

Children already understand recognition of objects, assigning names to things. Children who are read to at an early age will more readily make the association between the arrangement of letters and specific words. This process is helped by reading books in which the illustrations follow the story so closely that the child can "read" the tale merely by looking at the pictures.

Children like repetition and predictability, hearing their favorite stories and phrases over and over again. This also aids reading.

> So Goldilocks tasted Papa Bear's porridge. "This soup is TOO HOT." She tasted Mama Bear's porridge. "This soup is TOO COLD." But Baby Bear's porridge was "JUST RIGHT!"

Children have a wide range of interests. They can be as captivated by interesting tales of other children as by adventures of talking animals. They have a remarkable capacity to move from playful make-believe to the interesting world of facts (Arbuthnot, 1969).

Children relate easily to illustrations. They insist on synchronized pictures and text, yet are accepting of a great variety in color, style, detail, and action—as long as it wraps up the story.

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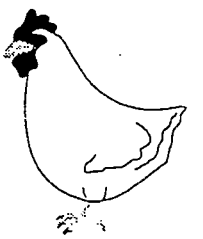
2. List and discuss the qualities of a good story.

A good story should have a substantial theme, robust enough to give rise to a lively plot with action, conflict, suspense, and a satisfactory ending.

Example:
Rosie's Walk, by Pat Hutchins (Macmillan, 1968)



With fourteen bold pictures and only 32 words, Hutchins shows a fox's unsuccessful attempt to disrupt Rosie's peaceful walk around the barnyard.

Characters should be well-drawn, unique, and memorable.

A good story has style that is appealing and forthright, with humor, beauty, or appropriate dramatic elements.

3. Encourage storytelling.

Sharing what you know best is the easiest way to become comfortable with the story-telling process. All parents have stories to share about when they were children, or when the child was a baby. Parents can also rely upon popular Mother Goose rhymes and well-known fairy tales when seeking story material. They will find that the children like to contribute details to familiar stories.

Parents can use interesting stories and/or pictures from the newspaper or other sources to show their children how reading enables us to share in the experiences of others.

Bedtime is a good time for storytelling. Make up a story together, taking turns adding action and details. Be sure to create an ending.

Libraries frequently offer storytelling programs. They also have books which tell how to become a better storyteller.

4. Stress the virtues of sharing stories with children.

Storytelling one-to-one or in small groups has many benefits.

- **It provides directness.**
  Children can use facial expressions, gestures, and explanations to derive meaning when the words are strange. The experience is also enhanced by varied speed and drama.

- **It involves warmth and intimacy.**
  These qualities are reassuring to children.

- **It is flexible and informal.**
  It can be done anytime, anywhere.

- **It provides excellent training for listening.**
  Children form the pictures in their own heads.

- **It allows children to gain information, ask questions, and make comments.**
  Good storytellers are also good listeners.

5. Provide activities that expose parents to children's literature.

The most important thing is for parents to read to their children. Whether they read books or menus together, parents must be encouraged to continuously demonstrate the value of the printed word. Imposing the values of others about which books are "good" and which are "bad"may have the effect of intimidating parents already insecure about their reading skills or their ability to choose appropriate reading material.

We suggest that you place the emphasis on sharing with children books which have been well received by other children, the "tried and true" method. A parent reading such a book can feel confident that it will be a fun thing to do together, particularly if you model a few techniques for effective and pleasurable oral reading (such as reading with expression, imitating characters' voices, and encouraging comments and questions).

(See the recommended book lists on pages 64-69.)

LVA's ***Reading With Children*** (1989) is a good source of reading activities for parents. Its training program shows literacy volunteers how to introduce parents to appropriate and meaningful books which they can then share with their children. A program like *Reading With Children* provides structure for those just beginning to make parents aware of good children's literature.

Reading With Children uses the following materials to demonstrate instructional techniques:

Taped books with their accompanying tapes
Picture books (wordless books)
Puppets (instructions for making them)
Rhymes/poems/songs/finger plays
General children's read-aloud books

(LVA, 1989)

(For information on obtaining this resource, see page 72.)

Recommendations: Introduce parents to the use of stories on tape if they are reluctant to read aloud. Show them how to glance through a book first, without reading, to predict the content. Point out the summaries usually found on the back or inside cover. Gradually progress to reading to each other. Show them how and where to hold the book when reading to others.

Discussion before and after reading a book helps set the groundwork for writing activities. Knowing the story also makes oral reading easier.

In our **Book of the Week** project, the parents in our family literacy adult classroom all read the same children's book and then write their own brief responses to it. The books are chosen because they have a good plot, age-appropriate theme, and effective illustrations. (See the recommended book lists in Chapter 4.) Parents keep written records of what they have read.

Book of the Week

Parent's name _____

Month _____

Week 1:

Title of book _____

Author _____

Date _____

Have you read this book before? _____

Comments about story or illustrations: _____

_____(See page 78 for form which can be copied.)_____

Our instructor suggests the following adaptations for beginning ESL programs or other low-level readers:

- Have a tutor work with the parent on the book, stressing the need to ask questions about things not understood. Bring parent and child together two or three times during the semester to read a book together.
- Try getting the parents together occasionally to read aloud to each other.
- See page 68, for a list of books using simple vocabulary.

6. Provide activities that expose parents to writing.

Our parents are required to participate in journal writing as part of the **Parent and Child Together (PACT)** project. This ongoing writing assignment uses a question-and-answer format to help the parents record their thoughts and feelings about the time spent in the child's classroom or in scheduled interaction times. At first the response may be only a word or two, or a single sentence, but parents will become more comfortable with writing as they develop the habit. The goal is to focus the parents' attention on personal interactions with their children.

Report of Parent-Child Interaction Time

Parent's name _____ Date _____ Time _____

Child's name _____

What did you do in your child's classroom today?

What did your child do?

How do you feel about the time spent? Why?

(See page 83 for form which can be copied.)

Parents in our family literacy program also get writing experience in the form of weekly essays. Many of the assigned topics are related to their children, such as "Write about one thing that surprised you as a parent," or "What do you wish for your child(ren)?"

Parents are encouraged to share their writing with their children and to save special pieces for when the children are older. When parents attach value to their own writing, they are more likely to appreciate writing done by their children.

Our family literacy parents are included every year in a program-wide writing project called ***Celebrate Writing.*** This is a published collection of original poems, stories, and essays by LVA-CV literacy students. The book is a source of pride for all concerned, but the process also yields benefits.

- It involves productive practice. Writing has high priority throughout our program, so parents can either improve a previously written piece or create a new one. Our writers' manual, *Put It in Print* (1994), describes the five-step process which our instructors and tutors use to teach writing to adults.

  These steps are:
  1. Pre-writing (brainstorming, listing, research)
  2. Drafting (writing down ideas as they come)
  3. Responding to the draft (analyzing content)
  4. Revising (changing content to meet your objectives)
  5. Editing (correcting errors)

- Completing the process of writing and editing their own work gives parents better understanding about the nature of the undertaking. They learn to be patient with the children's efforts. They learn to listen closely so they can retell the children's stories accurately.

- By the time parents have completed their contribution to *Celebrate Writing,* they have experienced the sense of accomplishment which comes from authorship. They recognize the children's project as something special and exciting. Consequently most parents show respect for their children's work and do not argue about either the process or the product.

"Because the writing process constantly requires reading of materials being generated, it helps reinforce reading ability." (Cheatham, Colvin, & Laminack, 1993, 75.)

LVA's ***Reading With Children*** (1989) offers as part of its curriculum a clearly outlined structure for teaching writing. It includes lesson plans, activities, and discussion questions.

The following steps summarize the procedure used in *Reading With Children* when introducing story writing to the parents:

Group writing process

1. Talk it out.
2. List words for the story.
3. Write the story—or tape it and then write it.
4. Read the story.
5. Have the group respond. (What do you like about it? Do you want to know more about something?)
6. Revise. (Editing depends on level of learner's skill.)

LVA, 1989: *Reading With Children,* 31

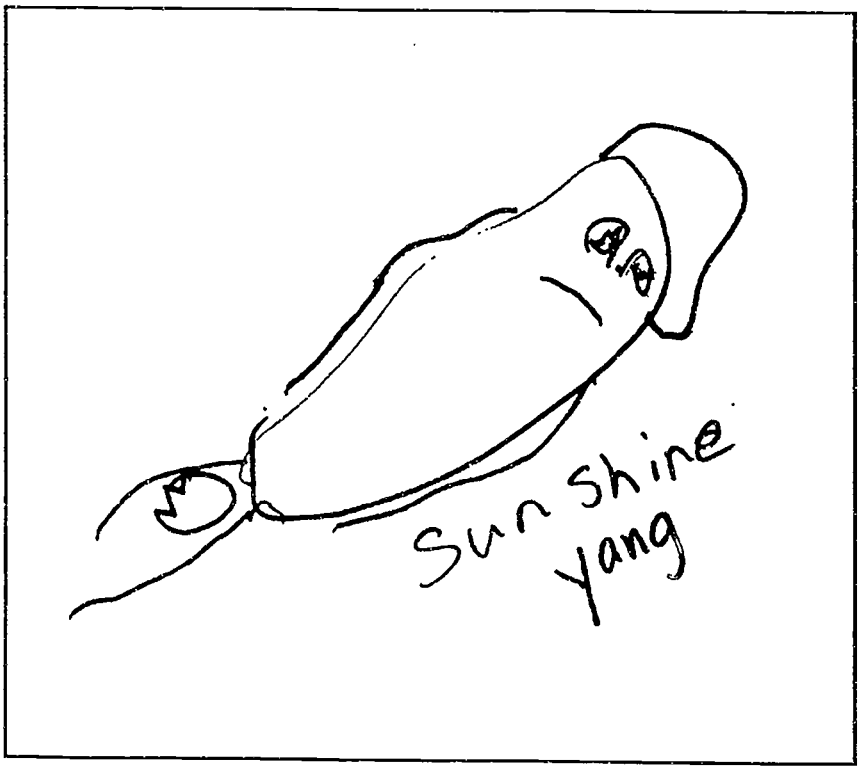
LVA urges that parents be allowed to select their own topics in practice writing sessions. For those who have trouble choosing a topic, suggest that they write about a favorite relative, their earliest memory, a favorite place, or an influential person in their lives. (LVA, 1989, *Reading With Children/Trainer's Guide*, p. 18) Choose a topic in which there is a high level of knowledge, interest, or experience.

We empower parents to write when we acknowledge them as readers and writers with the tools to communicate through print. These basic tools are their own words, their own thoughts, and their need to communicate. (Purcell-Gates, 1993).

7. Show examples of original children's stories and drawings.

We encourage the parents involved in our projects to examine the parent-child books from earlier classes for ideas. Your local children's librarian may be able to direct you to resource materials containing typical preschool artwork and oral stories.

As mentioned before, parents need to understand that children, as well as adults, display a wide range of ability and developmental levels. Children typically draw before they write. Consequently parents will see a gradual progression from scribbles to recognizable forms. A child will differentiate between objects and letters as these forms become meaningful. A child who surrounds a drawing with letter-like forms is most likely in the first stages of labeling (Lamme, 1987).



"One day the bear and his boy went to a picnic. The wind blew. It started to rain. The rain looks like water. The bear eats but the rain comes and they go home."

Story by Sunshine Yang, age 3

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Preparing children for the parent-child writing experience

When preparing children to read and write, it is essential that written language be perceived as meaningful. Establish a reason for writing, create a comfortable environment for learning, get support from parents, and the rest will fall into place.

Literature becomes meaningful through **practical application to daily life,** as evidenced in the whole language approach to reading and writing. But it also becomes meaningful through its **effect upon emotional well-being.** Part of the reason for including literature in children's lives is that vital needs can be met through careful book choice. Truly good literature gives children and adults insight into the causes and results of human behavior. The following suggestions reflect both these aspects:

1. Choose books which meet children's needs.

- **Material security.** Satisfying conclusions answer the yearning to be safe, warm, well-fed, and comfortable.
  Suggested book: *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown

- **Intellectual security.** Aside from satisfying natural curiosity, acquiring knowledge counteracts the feeling of smallness, inferiority, being always 'wrong.'
  Suggested book: Richard Scarry's *Cars and Trucks and Things that Go*

- **Emotional security.** It is important for children to recognize that limitations, failures, and mistakes are not necessarily forever, but may be righted. They need the experience of bestowing love as well as receiving it. We all crave happy endings.
  Suggested books: *Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter
  Jessica by Kevin Henkes

- **Competence and achievement.** Books provide indirect guidance toward the ideals of behavior. Reading about courageous children who persist in the face of obstacles and solve their own problems gives children a sense of their own potential.
  Suggested book: *There's a Nightmare in My Closet* by Mercer Mayer

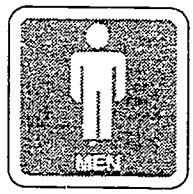
- **Play, or the need for change.** Fantasy, laughter, and nonsense break the intensity of meeting life's challenges.
  Suggested book: *Chicken Soup with Rice* by Maurice Sendak

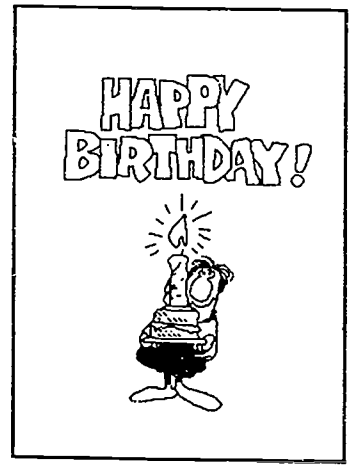
(Publishers of these books are found in the listings on pages 64-68.)

2. Provide ongoing activities that support children's writing.

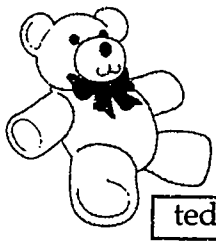
An environment in which written language is meaningful is often referred to as a **"print-rich" environment.** The activities on the following pages suggest ways to stimulate and facilitate word-object association.

Introduce signs and symbols. Decorate the classroom with familiar signs, easily understood symbols, and meaningful charts. These help children associate words with pictures.





Label ordinary items. When you label toys and other materials to match their storage places, the children are able to put them back when they are finished using them. This makes an association between word and item and also provides practice in matching individual words. For ESL populations, provide labels in both English and the children's native language.



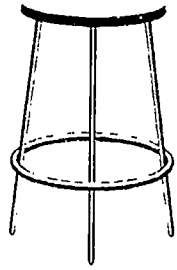
teddy bear

paint

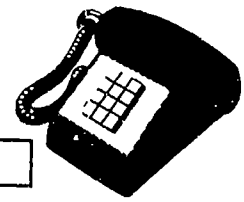
bus

table

stool



telephone



school

house

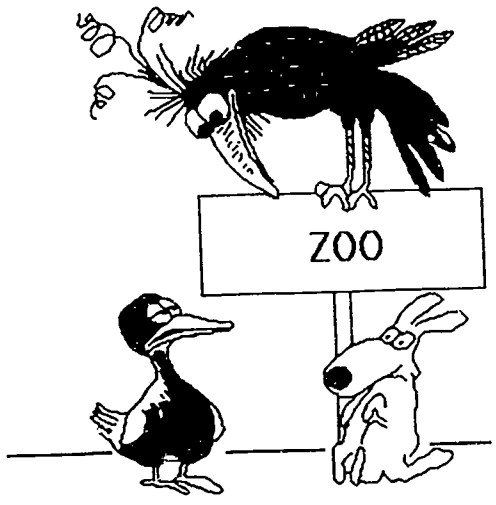
puzzles

32

Create imaginative play areas with props, costumes, and identifying signs. These temporary centers encourage creativity, cooperative play, and the development of language, cognitive, and other readiness skills.

Suggested play areas:

zoo
grocery store
hospital
beach
farmers' market
post office
house
doctor's office
barn
fast food counter



When our children were preparing for a group activity with a barnyard theme, the teacher constructed a large red barn from a 3-sided cardboard box and red contact paper. She set this up in the classroom prior to the activity and equipped it with animal costumes and props so the children could dramatize a farm setting or act out favorite animal stories.
(See page 40 for a description of the activity.)

What parents can do at home:

- Label items around the house.
- Let the children set up a pretend grocery store or post office.
- Take children to interesting places: shopping, the zoo, museums, movies, concerts, worship services, the library, sports events, hobby shows. Read signs along the way. Talk with them about these experiences.
- Limit the time children spend watching television. Watch television together as a means to stimulate discussion and develop vocabulary.

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Introduce sentences into the curriculum. The gradual introduction of sentences will help children develop left-to-right progression as well as early identification of particular words.

Consider making a "newsperson" out of tagboard for the class. This character (person, animal, or animated object) has the job of delivering a new sentence every day. If the children and teacher create the sentence together, then tack it to the newspaper, the children will feel a sense of ownership for the message and probably remember it.

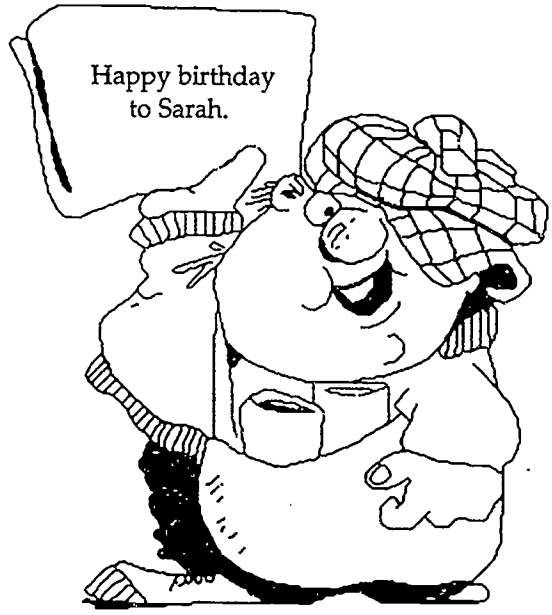
- You might select a theme for each week, such as OUR SENSES WEEK. Sample sentences might be:

  I see with my eyes.

  I hear with my ears.

- Share bits of information about each person in the class:

  John likes red.



- You might use the newsperson to announce the days of the week, the months of the year, or special events.

- Have the children match colors with objects. You could spend several days naming things that are blue.

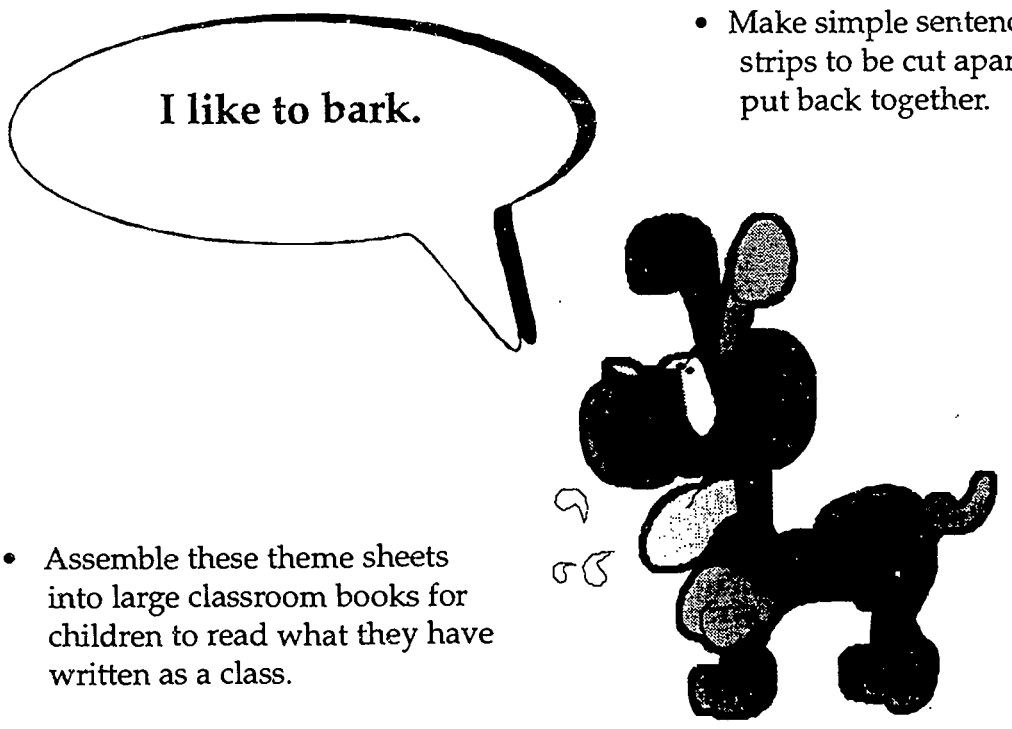
  The sky is blue.

"Children who are encouraged to draw and scribble 'stories' at an early age will later learn to compose more easily, more effectively, and with greater confidence than children who do not have this encouragement."

(U. S. Department of Education, 1986, 14)

Choose a new theme each week for the daily messages. Display a picture which clearly represents that theme for the children.

The class would again choose sentences appropriate to the theme. For example: if the theme is animals, a dog could be used to communicate the daily message about dogs. The class could read the sentence at the beginning of class and at the end to reinforce the association between words and meaning.



- Make simple sentence strips to be cut apart and put back together.

- Assemble these theme sheets into large classroom books for children to read what they have written as a class.

What parents can do at home:

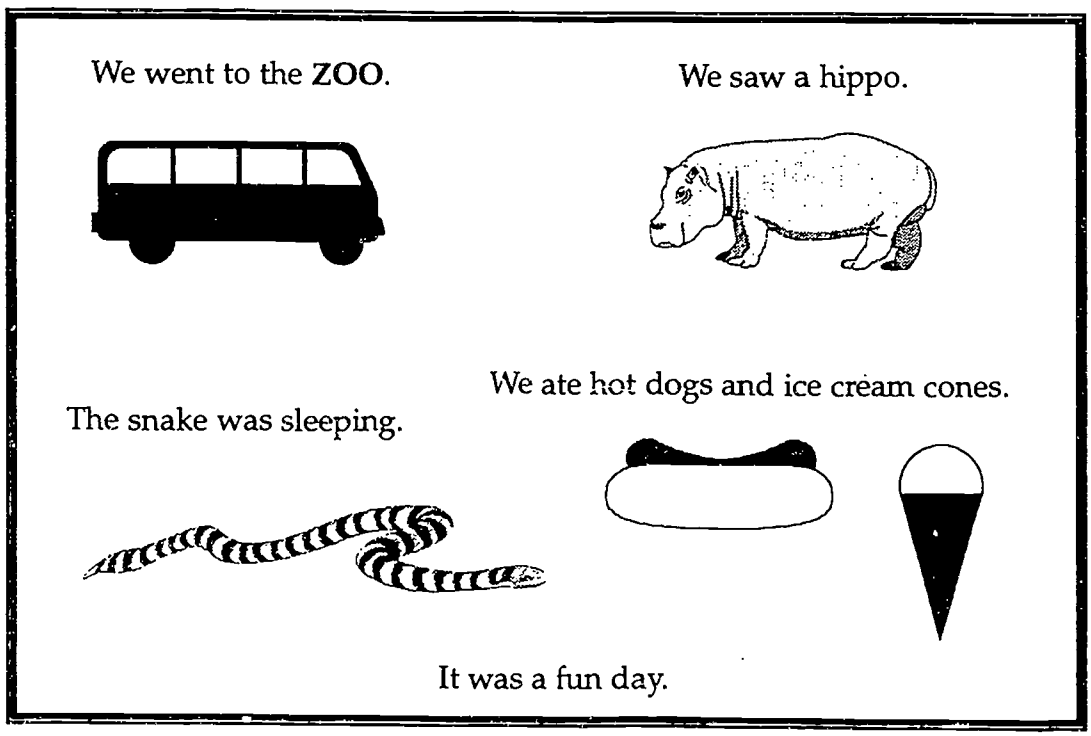
- Put notes in the children's lunch boxes. These can be simple drawings or just "Hi" or "I love you."
- Give children their own calendars with stickers to place on special days.
- Praise children's attempts to invent their own spellings. These show that they are learning the relationship between print and speech.
- Display children's drawings and writings at home.

Write stories together. Make good use of field trips and other class activities by writing stories together about the experience. Display each story in the classroom for a week so the children can see and review it daily. These stories help children associate what they saw or did with a word or picture.

Let's take the example of a class trip to the zoo. On the day following the trip, ask the children questions such as:

Where did we go?
What did we do?
What did we see?
What did we eat?

As the children relive the experience, reproduce the story using simple words and basic drawings. Guide the children through the story again, pointing to the corresponding element (word or picture) for them to identify. It is helpful to share this style of story-writing with the parents, so they can try it at home.



When you have finished with your experience story, place it in a book with your other stories. You might name this book "Our Class Book" or "Things We See and Do." Leave it out where the children will look at it. They will delight in reading it again and recalling the fun things they have done as a group.

Create a writing center. This should be a **comfort zone**, a place where children are comfortable with taking the "risks" of trying to read and write, a place where even the messiest scribbles will be recognized and praised.

A writing center will contain assorted supplies, things most of these children do not have access to at home:

lots of paper:
- tablets
- colored sheets
- unlined and lined
- computer paper

interesting pencils
colored ink pens
colored pencils
washable markers
crayons
envelopes
memo pads
bank forms
order pads
stamps and stickers

adhesive tape
glue stick
scissors
paper punch
stapler
rulers
stencils
rubber stamps
typewriter
adding machine
magazines
wallpaper samples
pipe cleaners
yarn
magnifying glass

One of our preschool teachers has a "theme tree" made from an actual tree branch. It is placed near the writing center so the children can decorate it with the things they make. Anything is acceptable.

The children are also able to construct materials they need for play, such as money, forms for the doctor's office, pieces of mail, and so forth.

What parents can do at home:

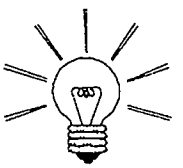
- Assemble a writer's box with supplies for children to use.
- Help children write letters or make cards for special people.
- Have children help with grocery lists.
- Fold or staple pages together to make simple books for children to fill.

Bringing parents and children together

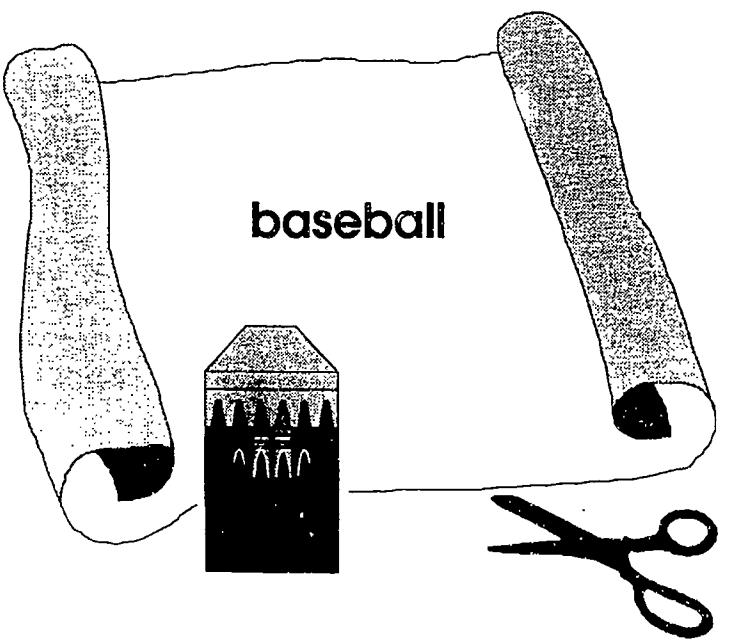
Family literacy has coined the phrase **PACT** time, which stands for **Parent And Child Together** time. This parent-child interaction gives parents the opportunity to observe their child in a classroom setting, to see how the teacher interacts with that child, and to practice such interaction themselves. As parents see how children learn, they become aware of their own significant role as teachers. As they build a positive relationship with preschool staff, they become more comfortable in a school setting. These healthy interactions are introduced and reinforced through regularly scheduled group activities.

Activities for parent-child writing begin with very basic verbal interaction. The initial goal is to provide a structured, non-threatening atmosphere where parents and children can work together. The "writing" requirements grow in complexity throughout the year, beginning with simple word associations and leading ultimately to the creation of an original tale. The following suggestions have been successful in our program:

1. Schedule regular interaction times.



Our preschool teacher asked each parent to choose one word describing something his or her child liked, such as **baseball** or **ice cream.** After the parent wrote this word on a poster, the parent and child decorated it together. They used an assortment of art materials, including crayons, markers, construction paper, paper scraps, and magazine cut-outs.



Our parenting instructor assembles take-home kits called Parent Pacs. These kits consist of canvas or plastic tote bags containing all the materials and instructions for a parent-and-child activity. They may keep the kit at home for one month.

Parent Pacs contain different items for different activities:

- One kit may contain a book and its corresponding audio tape.
- Another may contain the basic story line and all the supplies for making a simple illustrated storybook.
- A third may contain an erasable "magic slate" or stencils to encourage pre-writing activity.

Parents are expected to write their reactions to each activity with the children on their interaction report sheets. (See the form on page 83.)

> The instructor tries to keep the cost of the Parent Pacs down by shopping for used books at garage sales, having volunteers sew the tote bags, and using cast-off materials from businesses and schools.

Plan field trips for the whole group. Each year we go to the library for story hour. One fall we traveled to a giant pumpkin patch. Other trips included walking in the park, visiting a petting zoo, attending a theater performance for children, and picking apples at an orchard.

Plan special events for the whole group. When we were preparing for the first storybook (with a bear theme), we hosted a teddy bear picnic. Another time the theme book *Green Eggs and Ham*, by Dr. Seuss (Random House, 1960), was read to the children prior to a special breakfast for the parents and again at the breakfast. The children helped cook and serve the green eggs and ham.

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2. Invite parents and children to Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) activities.

RIF is a federal program which encourages reading. Participating publishers offer a discount to programs which give books to children. RIF programs are often hosted by libraries and run by volunteers. In our program, the literacy board of directors takes on this task.

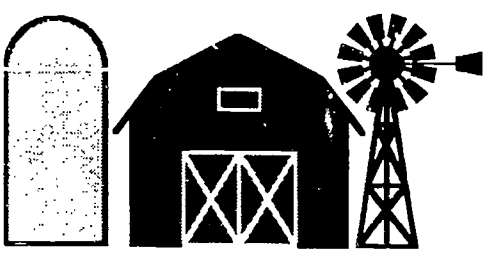
(See Chapter 4, pages 71-72, for more information on how to start and run a RIF program.)

Some sample themes and programs are listed below.

Since the title of our writing project this year was to be "Animal Tales," our **RIF** committee focused on animals for all three programs. The theme of the fall program was "Barn Dance," featuring barnyard animals.

The following books were chosen to be given to the children:

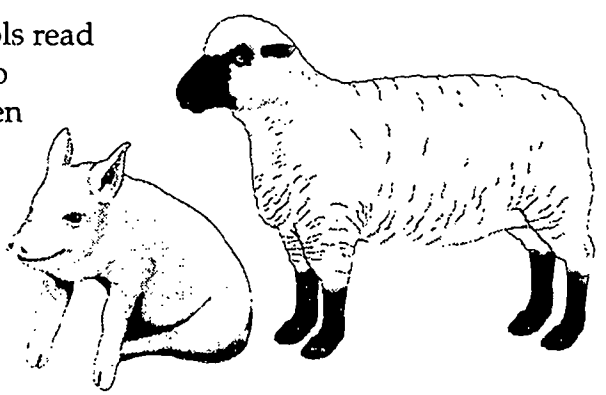
Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown (Harper & Rowe, 1989)
Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins (Macmillan, 1968)
The Cow that went Oink by Bernard Most (Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1990)



The special events were a visit from a few live farm animals (small ones!) and participation in a very simple country line dance.

We served animal cookies, popcorn, and punch.

Teachers in participating preschools read the featured books in class prior to the event. This enabled the children to make more informed choices when allowed to select one book to take home.

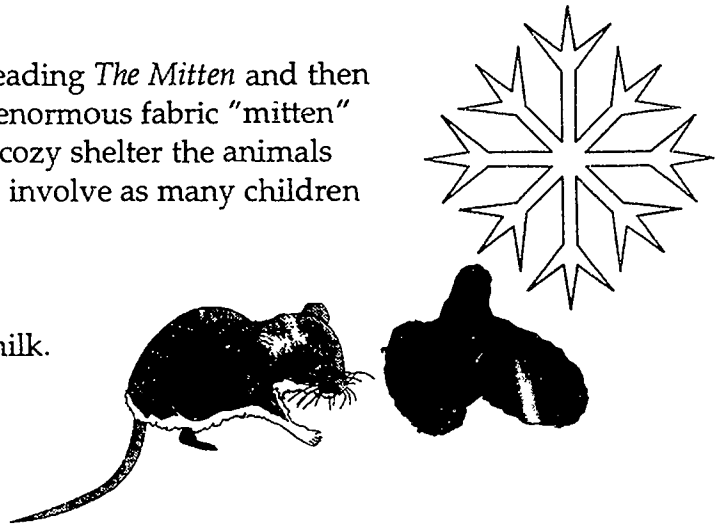


Our second **RIF** theme was "The Mitten," featuring winter activities.

Selected books: *The Mitten* by Jan Brett (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1989)
The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats (Puffin, 1962)
A Winter Day by Douglas Florian (Scholastic, 1991)

Special events included reading *The Mitten* and then play-acting the story. An enormous fabric "mitten" was used to simulate the cozy shelter the animals share. Effort was made to involve as many children as possible in the activity.

We served corn candies, popcorn, and chocolate milk.

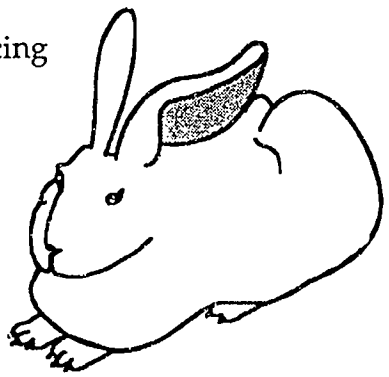


The spring **RIF** program revolved around spring animals, particularly bunnies and other animal babies.

Selected books: *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown
(HarperCollins, 1942)
Chickens Aren't the Only Ones by Ruth Heller
(Grosset & Dunlap, 1981)
Over in the Meadow by Ezra Jack Keats
(Four Winds Press, 1971)

Special events featured a story session and dancing the "Bunny Hop" together. We also brought in a bunny and a chicken for the children to see.

We offered animal cookies, raisins, and punch.



3. Have children act out stories for their parents.

Another way to bring parents and children together is to expand on one of the selected topic books through story acting.

Preparing the children

The preschool teacher chooses a book to read to the class. Although using a familiar tale, such as "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," simplifies the procedure, reading and discussing a new story stimulates good listening habits.

Here are several guidelines for successful story acting:

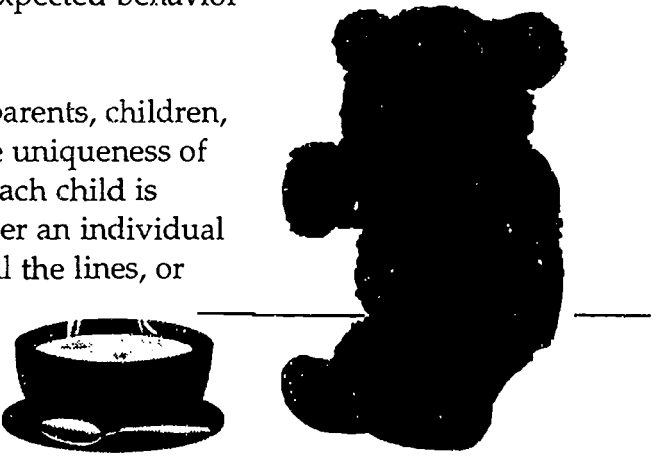
- Discuss what a play is, how to communicate the story to others.
- Involve the children in all steps of the "production."
- Allow the children to decide what to use for props, when to use them.
- Assign every child a part, even if you repeat the play several times.
- For the performance, have the teacher narrate and children fill in the dialog in their own way.

Preparing the parents

It is helpful to prepare the parents before they come to see the "performance." The parenting facilitator should spend some time with them discussing the following:

- What their children may be learning through this experience.
- What kinds of responses or actions they can expect from the children.
- How to respond to the unexpected behavior which could occur.

With this kind of preparation parents, children, and staff come to delight in the uniqueness of each child. They also see that each child is successful, regardless of whether an individual acts out all the motions, says all the lines, or chooses to be part of the audience.



Chapter Three

Producing a book by parents and their children

Primary stages for action:

1. Determine the scope of the project.
2. Form a committee.
3. Establish a timeline.
4. Write the stories.
5. Produce the book.

In this chapter we will discuss how to plan for the project. We will also present several different options for seeing the project to a satisfactory conclusion, taking into account the financial factors and program goals.

Planning the project: Determine its scope

The first question to ask is, "How much time, energy, and money can we invest in this project?" The primary goal of the project is to foster a productive, enjoyable learning relationship between parents and their children. The process is more important than the finished product. However, a book which replays those good memories at home is a tangible reward for effort. Consequently you want a product which is not only meaningful but also somewhat durable.

Consider the options

The amount of funding available will probably determine your course of action. It is important to remember that your book is going to be of greatest value to those who participate in the process. In other words, this is not a highly marketable product, so it is wise not to count on recovering your costs through sales. Here are three possible options, ranging from the simplest and least expensive assembly to more sophisticated printing methods:

1. **Create one big book together, to be shared by the class.**

2. **Photocopy single pages, then insert them in a binder or tie them together with yarn or ribbon.**

3. **Have the book commercially printed.**

These options will be explained fully on pages 53 - 54. The costs will increase with number of pages and number of copies, as well as the complexity of method. After you determine the money you have available, you will need to consult with local copy centers or printers to finalize your project estimates.

Factors to consider

- Resources available, monetary and in-kind
- Access to copy machine
- Availability of volunteers to help with lay-out, copying
- Availability of parents or volunteers to help with book assembly, etc.
- Ways to distribute extra copies of the book if professionally printed
- Number of parent-child pairs: one page for each pair, or for each person?
- Length of book
- Size of pages
- Stories handwritten or typed?
- Printed one side or both?
- Binding desired

Secure funding

We are assuming that the classroom writing instruction of parents and children is integrated into an existing program. Consequently the cost of the first option on the preceding page will be slight. The production of an imaginative class book is limited only by materials at hand, time spent, and creativity.

Reproducing the book for everyone is more expensive. We recommend that you have your list of available resources in hand when you seek additional funding. Private businesses and agencies such as the United Way can often be persuaded to sponsor short-term projects. You might approach a copy center, for instance, about running your copies for you for free or at a reduced rate in exchange for acknowledgment in the book itself or some newspaper publicity. Once again, costs can be kept down by using what you already have and by doing the work of collating and assembling the books yourselves.

Our previous children's books, all entitled *Bear Tales*, were part of a larger writing project for literacy students funded by Dayton's Corporation of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. This grant also covered writing workshops and the printing costs of a collection of writings by adult students entitled *Celebrate Writing*. Both volumes were professionally printed. *Celebrate Writing* was written for marketing and public relations purposes, as well as to recognize a talented group of new writers. *Bear Tales* was printed primarily for the participants. Of the 100 copies run last year of *Bear Tales*, 40 went to participating parent-child pairs. The remainder were sold to tutors and given as thank-you gifts to our community partners in family literacy (ie., the public school system, YMCA daycare, county human services department).

The following cost estimates will give you a starting point for your own inquiries. These estimates may or may not be typical of your community. We were fortunate in finding a printer who viewed working with as us as a community service. It is wise to assess your capabilities before jumping into the project, rather than finding out too late that you cannot afford your choice.

As you consider estimates, remember that small quantities will cost you more per copy. Talk to your printer about weight of paper, types of binding, and cover finish. We chose to have a shiny protective finish applied to our cover because it would be handled by children with dirty fingers. You could save money with a stapled binding and unvarnished cover.

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Sample estimates for children's books:

Size: 7" x 8 1/2" (legal size folded over) camera-ready sheets
Number of pages: 60
Weight of paper: 50# (like this manual)
Cover: cover stock, printed one color, varnished one side

Perfect bind (like this manual) or center stapled

50 books		100 books	
Perfect bind	$2.95 each	Perfect bind	$2.30 each
Stapled	$2.50 each	Stapled	$1.85 each

Possible sources for sponsorship

Businesses

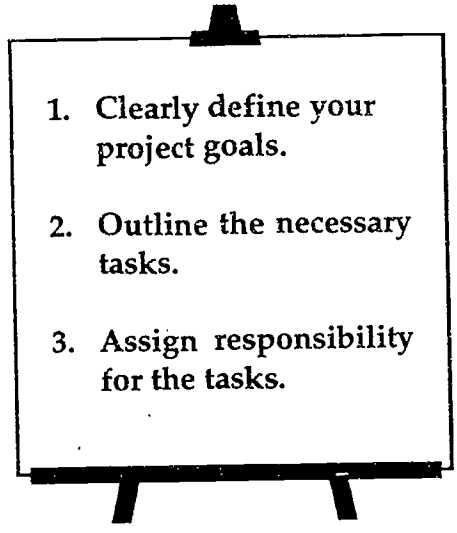
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local banks
- Community branches of larger businesses:
  - financial institutions, utilities, supermarkets, department stores, discount chains
- Local manufacturers and businesses

Nonprofit programs

- Local United Way
  - As a member agency
  - As an applicant for short-term funding
- National and local service organizations
- Local service clubs such as Junior League, Kiwanis, Rotary International, Lions
- Professional societies such as Adult Education Association, Reading Councils
- Friends of the Library
- Other organizations with an emphasis on education
- Churches and temples
- Labor unions

Form a committee to facilitate the writing project

Organization is a key factor in the success of any endeavor. The parent-child writing project will run smoothly if you take the following three steps:



Your project goals will be defined in the early stages, based upon resources available and option chosen for production. The next step is to outline the tasks. Stated in simplified form, these tasks are:

1. Coordinate the overall effort.
2. Prepare the parents for the experience.
3. Prepare the children for the experience.
4. Plan and supervise the actual writing and illustrating.
5. Assist parents with editing.
6. Organize the stories and assemble the book.
7. Arrange for printing (or copying) and binding.
8. Distribute the finished product.

There are many different ways to divide the workload involved in a cooperative project such as this. Generally it is more efficient to have one person act as the facilitator and coordinate the activities of separate groups. But every program is different. In our program it works to have the coordinator role shared by the editor, who makes all the arrangements for production, and the parenting instructor, who schedules and supervises the actual writing of the stories. This is because of the distance between their work sites. The editor, who sets the schedule, works out of the literacy office. The parenting instructor is at the family literacy site and can communicate with the adult instructor and the preschool teacher to ensure that the preparatory activities are completed in time to meet that schedule.

Establish a timeline

Two committee meetings ought to be sufficient for this project. The first should be held early in the planning stages.
The goals of the **first meeting** are:

1. To assign responsibility for tasks.
2. To establish a timeline which coordinates the effort.

The second meeting should be held when the project is almost done.
The goals of the **second meeting** are:

1. To settle any unresolved issues.
2. To select the art work to be used on the cover of the book.
3. To reassure the facilitator that things are going smoothly.
4. To give the editor final approval for publishing.

When determining a timeline, our editor suggests that you establish your deadline (when the finished product is to be distributed) and "walk backwards" from there.

Here is a sample of a reverse timeline:

Our Celebration of the Stars is **May 9**. We want the books by **May 7**.

Our printer needs two weeks. The printer must have the material by **April 23**.

The editor needs 4-6 hours to organize and arrange the stories for the printer. This task includes creating the introductory page and a table of contents. We issue **April 8** as a deadline for turning in completed stories. This allows for a two week "cushion" to accommodate for absences and unforeseen problems. The committee meets on **April 15** to assess progress.

The parent-child writing session takes place on **April 1**. That gives parents one week before the deadline to edit the stories and do the final printing.

The preschool teacher wants three weeks to focus on the theme of the book and on activities which prepare the children to create a story with their parents. The adult instructor and parenting instructor will have the same amount of time to work with the parents. The project officially begins on **March 8**.

The committee meets to establish a timeline on **March 6**.

Writing the stories

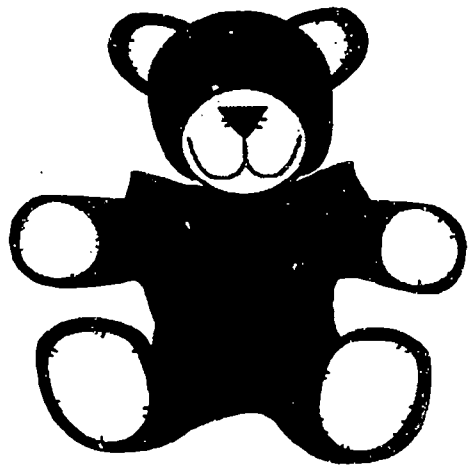
Once the theme has been chosen for the parent-child stories, it can become the central focus of classroom activity. For example, two weeks prior to writing our own *Bear Tales*, bears began appearing everywhere: in puppet activities, on flannel boards, in songs, in art projects, and in the stories read to the children. Teddy bears were chosen because almost every child and parent has had some special experience with a toy bear. The grand finale was a teddy bear picnic, to which the bears accompanied their owners. Parents got to watch the bears parading behind one of the volunteers dressed up in a bear costume. The children were encouraged to play-act with their bears, preparing them for storytelling.

The actual writing of the stories is not difficult, since so much preparation has taken place. It is accomplished in three major steps:

1. Children dictate the stories.

First parents sit down with their children and talk about writing a special story for a book about the chosen theme. Since our 1995 version was expanded to include all animals, our parents and children chose a favorite animal together and proceeded to talk about it. Some parents start out with, "Tell me about. . ." Other parents remind their children about play-acting animal stories, such as "Remember when you pretended to be Goldilocks and met the three bears?" Some children do not need questions or reminders to get their imaginations going. The stories are already there, waiting to be told.

Following the child's lead, the parent writes down as closely as possible what the child says. Together they may write two or three stories and then choose the one they like the best to go in the book. Allow **45 minutes to one hour** for this, taking breaks as needed.



2. Parents edit the rough draft and rewrite it.

Parents print their chosen story on a practice page. The teacher (ABE instructor, parenting facilitator, or tutor) works with the parent to correct spelling and punctuation errors. Good printing style is encouraged. Parents make final corrections and then print the story with a fine-point, felt-tipped black marker on the proper paper. For our book, this would be on half of a 8 1/2" x 14" sheet.

- Clearly define margins on the final paper. You should allow about an inch margin on the inside for binding, one-half to three-quarters inch on the outside edges.
- To help parents write in straight lines, place a darkly lined sheet underneath the final copy. This can define margins, as well.
- We encourage parents to print the story themselves, but if the parent simply cannot print, someone else could print it or type it.
- Keep a bottle of white correction fluid handy to ease the stress of printing errors in the final copy.

This is a story about Grumpy Bear. Grumpy Bear is always grumpy because everyone yells at him, and he's always sent to his room. Grumpy Bear sleeps in the top bunk, and I sleep in my bottom bunk 'cause Grumpy Bear always hogs the covers. Grumpy Bear likes to play house. He's the husband, and I'm the Mom. Jello and cookies are his favorite foods. Grumpy Bear has no ears, and he likes to sleep in the chair. I cook all his meals.

Story by Amanda Loew, age 4

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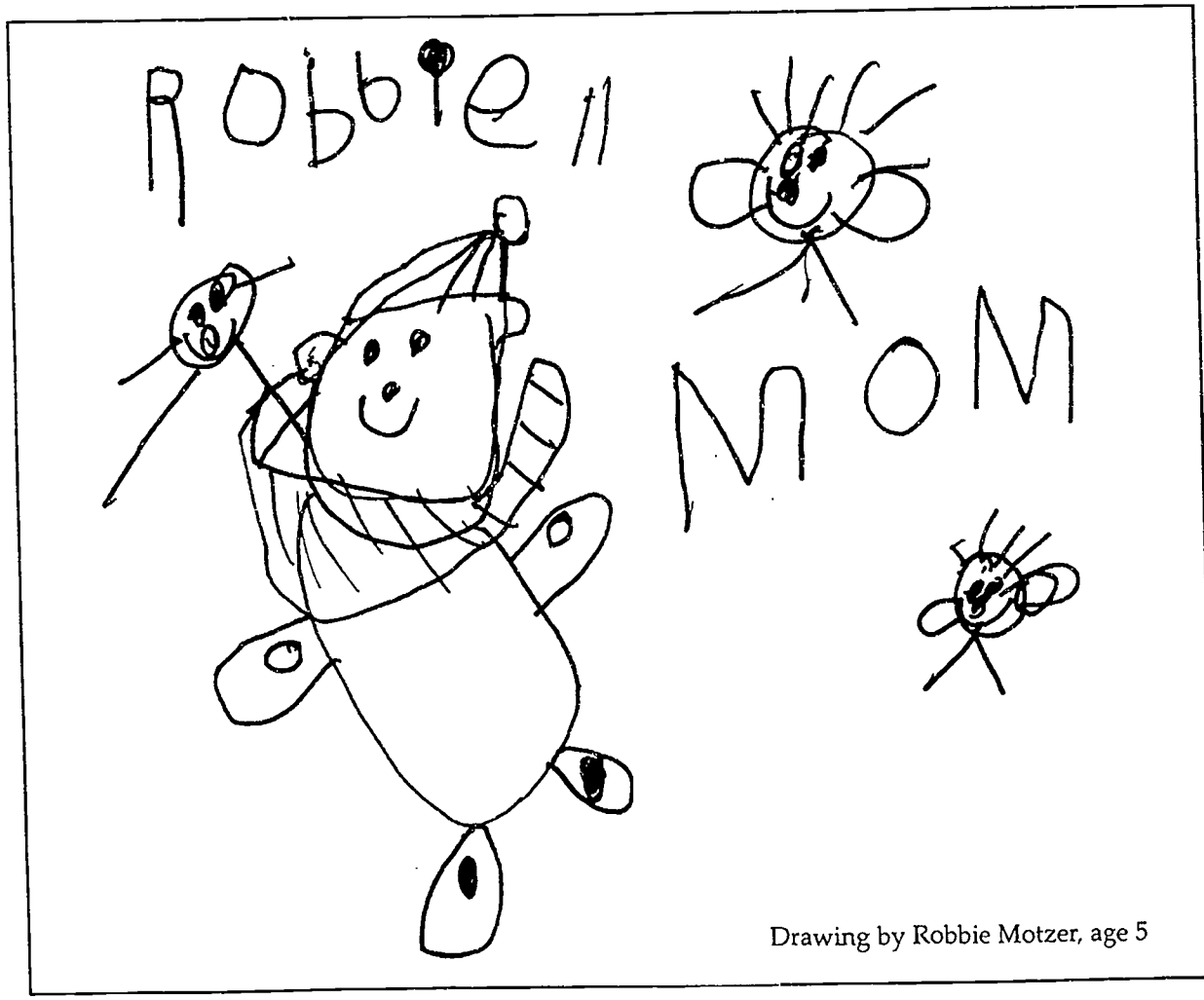
3. Children illustrate the stories.

After the parents have written the stories, the families are brought together again. The parent reads, then asks the child to draw a picture about the story.

Give the children the same size of paper and the same felt-tipped markers. They usually respond enthusiastically to illustrating. Sometimes children want to draw on several pieces of paper and then choose the one they like the best for the book.

- It is important that the parents have already discussed the pre-writing stages of children's development so parents can accept a three-year-old's scribble as comfortably as a five-year-old's more detailed drawing. Everyone needs to feel successful!

- Once again, keep white correction fluid at hand for final clean-up.



Drawing by Robbie Motzer, age 5

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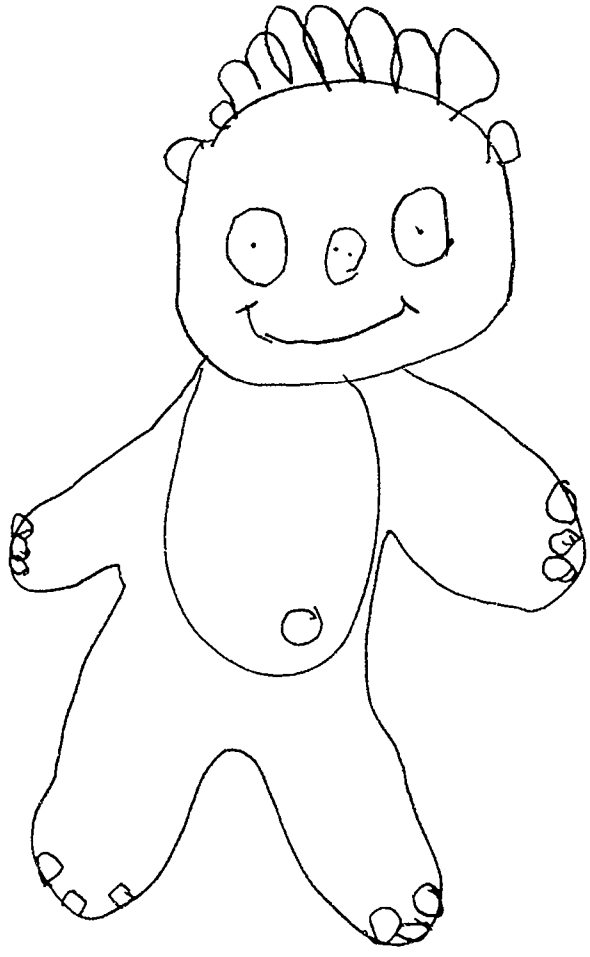
Here is a sample book cover to show how we used a child's artwork.

BEAR TALES



LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA-CHIPPEWA VALLEY

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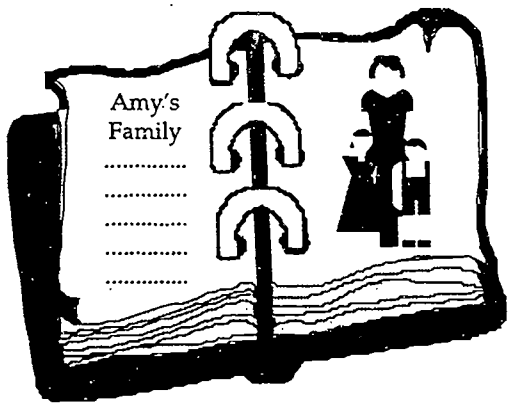
Producing the book

Now that you have your completed stories and illustrations, you are ready to bind them together. We will examine in greater detail the options listed earlier.

1. Create one big book together, to be shared by the class.



- Get everyone involved.
- Keep the book accessible to the class.

- Make this an art project as well.
- Create your own cover.
- Fasten pages together with yarn or big metal ring clasps. . . or purchase and decorate a 3-ring binder.
- Use large pages, so the book can be shown to a group . . . or use smaller pages, so the drawings don't have to be so big.
- Incorporate a variety of colors and textures.
- Frame the pictures with construction paper or fabric trims.

2. Photocopy single pages, then bind them together.

- To reduce the thickness of the book, photocopy the final draft of each parent's story on the same page with the corresponding drawing.
- Print on one side of the paper only.
- Make your own decorated tagboard covers or use purchased binders.
- Tie the pages together with yarn, or staple if the stack is not too thick.
- Buy colored sheets for the pages.
- Collate pages yourselves to save money.

The Purple Farm Cat

One day the purple cat went out to the barn to feed the chicken and the cows and also the calves.

Then the purple cat went to Grandma's house to eat supper. After supper the purple cat went home and put his PJs on and went to bed.

By Jacob, age 3

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3. Have the book commercially printed.

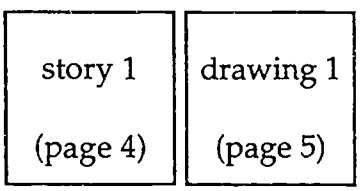
Our *Animal Tales* book is done on U.S. legal-size paper (8 1/2" x 14"). When these sheets are folded in half, the booklet is the right size for little hands, with the parent-assisted story and the child's drawing on facing pages.

Your local printer will explain the preparatory steps. You can avoid set-up charges by delivering camera-ready copy (stories and pictures already arranged in the right order). This procedure can be confusing at first until you understand that printers work from a two- or four- page spread, which is cut and folded in the final stages.

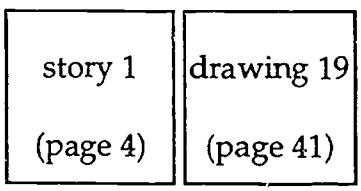
Your ready-to-fold sheets must be in the proper sequence. You can start out with matched pairs on a single sheet, but these will be separated and then re-pasted on other sheets so that the order is right when all the sheets are folded together down the center. The only parent-child set on facing pages in the camera-ready form is the one in the exact center of the book.

Our lay-out editor recommends creating a "dummy book" from scrap paper—any size is all right as long as the pages are all the same. This practice copy allows for manipulation of pairs until they line up correctly.

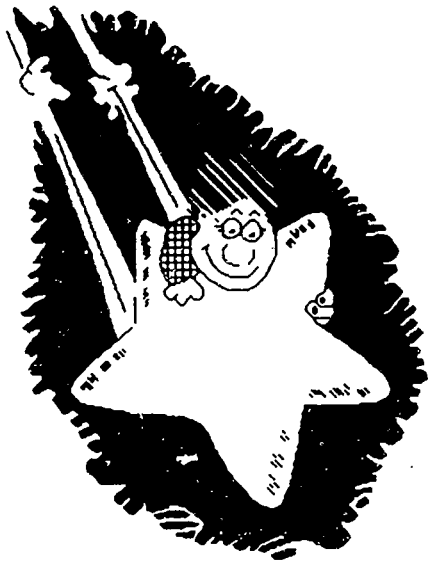
- Fold these sheets in half to make a book the same length as yours will be.
- Label the necessary front pages right away. You will need a title page and a table of contents.
- Number your stories and pictures with removable sticky notes, in the order you want them.
- Use identical numbers on sticky tags in your dummy book. Now you can vary the order without excessive handling of the final copies.
- Once your dummy book "reads" correctly, open up the folded practice sheets and create corresponding camera-ready book sheets.



Story/drawing pair



Camera-ready sheet for 20-story book



Once the book is finished, it is time to celebrate! In our program we invite the parents to a Celebration of the Stars where all students and tutors are recognized for their achievements. Parents and children receive notice of the event in the mail, with a coupon for redeeming their free book.

Our tangible goal has been reached when we send the books home. The parents and children have worked together to create a lasting memory. When they look at the book later, they will be reminded of their shared experience. We would hope that there are other positive results—results difficult to measure but none the less influential.

First of all, the book of stories represents distinct ownership of an idea. The parent has accepted the child's imaginative tale as worthy of preserving by simply listening and writing it down. This allows the child to stake a claim in the world of writing. By becoming authors, the parent and child have established a closer tie to the written word.

Secondly, the book represents a journey into the realm of cooperative learning. The parent and the child have worked together in a pleasant environment. Ideally the parent has been supportive and the child has been cooperative. They have learned together and from each other.

Thirdly, the book of stories represents positive educational experience. If the parent comes away from this joint venture with anything of real lasting value, it will be the pride that results from success in a new endeavor. If we keep showing parents that the door to learning can be opened, some of them are bound to come through—and bring their children with them.

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Chapter Four

Tips and tools for facilitators

Areas covered:

1. Adapting to other programs
2. Choosing appropriate books
3. Incorporating volunteers
4. Evaluating success

The suggestions given in this manual come from a well-established family literacy program which offers adult basic education instruction and early childhood education on a regular basis and in a classroom setting. The parent-child interaction component of such a program readily facilitates a cooperative writing project because the preparatory activities and actual writing are part of the scheduled curriculum.

However, this project is not limited to family literacy settings. There are a number of other settings which provide opportunity for creating a parent-child story book. The key factor to accomplishing this in any setting is the organization of a basic committee. You need individuals willing to take responsibility for the different segments and a facilitator to coordinate the effort. You need someone to guide the children through the story-telling process. You need someone to instruct the adults about what to expect from the children and how to encourage their creative response. And you need an editor, someone capable of pulling the stories together in a pleasing fashion. These roles may, of course, be combined.

Adapting this project to other programs

The following sections discuss ways for facilitators to adapt this project to other literacy efforts. The programs described include preschools, public library programs, literacy programs with one-to-one tutoring, and English as a Second Language programs.

1. Preschools, Head Start programs, daycare centers, and Chapter 1 classrooms where children attend each day

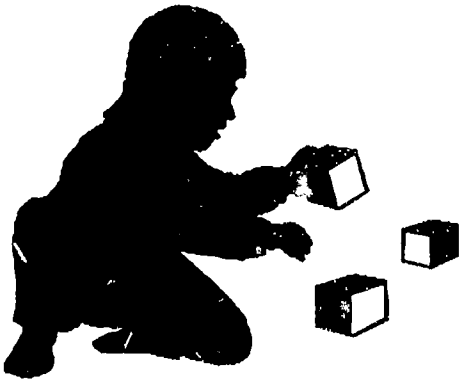
- Conduct a parent meeting to inform parents about the project. Send out flyers to get them interested. Since there isn't much opportunity to discuss story writing or to bolster the parents' confidence as writers, promote the venture more as a valuable experience for the children. Emphasize the pride they will feel when they take home the finished product. Remind the parents to support and encourage their children for the effort shown and not worry about trying to impress anyone else.

- Conduct readiness activities through the mail. Send flyers home periodically which suggest activities that parents and children can do together, such as labeling objects. Encourage storytelling and reading books.

- Send free books home which relate to the theme chosen for the story book. Have parents and children sign and return a coupon indicating that they have read the book together.

- Have parents come back to the classroom for the actual writing and illustrating activity.

- Plan on a three-to-four week timetable. That allows enough time to work with the children at school and carry out two or three home activities without losing the interest of the parents.



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2. Public library programs

- Friends of the Library and/or the children's room could sponsor a "mini-course" for parents and children. Require families to register for the program to encourage regular attendance.

- The project could be carried out in five weekly sessions.

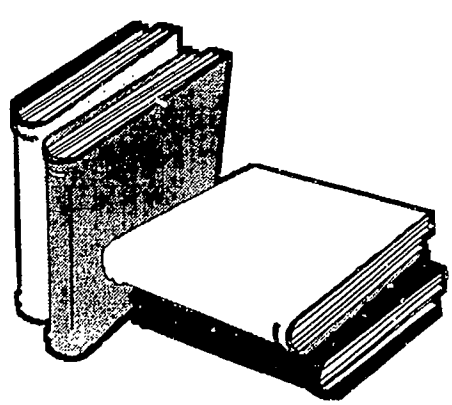
  a. Plan the first meeting to organize the project and prepare the parents. Have someone work with the parents while the children are involved elsewhere in a story time session.

  b. Have parents and children attend story time activities together, then check out animal books (or other chosen theme) to take home with them.

  c. Conduct the writing and illustrating session.

  d. Help parents revise and refine the stories while children participate in a story time. (You could be using LVA's *Reading With Children* for these activities. See pages 25 and 72 for more information.)

  e. Invite participants to the final session to enjoy and appreciate the finished story book. Call it an "Authors' Party." Read the stories aloud if parents are willing. Send everyone home feeling successful!



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3. Literacy programs with one-to-one tutoring

- Conduct an inservice to "sell" the idea to tutors. Equip them with enough reasons and reassurance to convince their students of the value of such a project.

- If tutors are not already working on writing with their students, suggest that they begin with short personal stories and progress to writing short stories their children might enjoy.

  For writing process instruction, tutors can refer to Chapter 7 (pp. 77-85) in LVA's *Tutor: A Collaborative Approach to Literacy Instruction* (Cheatham, Colvin, & Laminack, 1993) or to Chapter 3 (pp. 25-34) in *Put It in Print* (Clark, Fuerstenberg, Gabler, Goethel, & Milne, 1994).

- All of the preparation of the parent can be done by the tutors. When the parent is ready, schedule a special tutoring session with both parent and child for writing the story. The tutor is there to guide the interaction if needed, but the parent should be encouraged to take the lead.

- If a group of tutor/student pairs is participating, you might bring them together to revise and edit the stories. They will benefit from hearing the stories and experiences of other parents.

- If possible, bring parents and children together to celebrate the completion of the story or story book. This reinforces the positive relationship nurtured during the cooperative writing session.

> In our literacy program we send notices home to parents and children after the stories have been published. We tell them they may pick up their free copy at our annual Celebration of the Stars. We encourage students to invite their t ors to come and share in this event.

4. English as a Second Language programs

- **Familiarize parents and children with pre-reading skills.**

  With ESL students you must first do some groundwork. Demonstrate that English is read left to right, top to bottom, and front to back. Illustrate that words (specific ordering of letters) have meaning. Emphasize that words and pictures enhance each other.

- **Introduce books with simple vocabulary and universal themes.**

  Bring the parents together in small groups to read the books, discuss vocabulary, and ask questions. Model effective techniques for reading aloud. This will increase parents' confidence. Use simple books with proven appeal, like those listed on page 68. Share your own enthusiasm for reading.

- **Stress the importance of parental involvement in children's education.**

  Once you have demonstrated how and what to read to maintain children's interest, show parents how to interact with their children while they are reading. Encourage them to ask questions, draw the children into discussions, and enjoy the activity.

  Assure parents that reading to their children is valid and valuable in any language. In some family literacy programs, both languages are used in the beginning classes. This helps to strengthen the role of the parents as well as build literacy in two languages.

- **Incorporate themes from the children's own culture whenever possible.**

  It is important for children to feel proud of their culture and secure in their cultural identity. Incorporate such aspects as folktales, music, art, food, and holidays into your preparatory activities.

  Have a story read to children in their own language first, then in English. Talk about similarities and differences. Encourage parents to share other folk tales from their childhood.

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- **Provide interaction activities which incorporate all aspects of whole language.**

Have the parents read chosen books to you first, then send the books home to be read to the children. It might be helpful the first time to arrange an assisted reading time at school or have parents practice reading to each other. Make sure the words can be read by the parent and are readily understood. Have the parents talk about their reading experiences afterward. (See the evaluation form on page 84.)

Show the parents how to construct a simple board game, using a short path with a few obstacles and either folded paper dice or word cards to determine the evasive action. Have each family make a game at home.

One ESL family literacy program based their board games on the book, *Rosie's Walk* (by Pat Hutchins, Macmillan 1968). This lively tale uses simple vocabulary, mostly prepositions, to conduct the oblivious hen, Rosie, along a treacherous path. Some families included several obstacles, such as little gates or ponds. The player would try to get past these by using the preposition facing up on the paper cube. Some families even printed out instructions.

Read a book about snow, such as *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats (Viking, 1962). Then show the parents and children how to fold paper and cut snowflakes to hang from the classroom ceiling.

Demonstrate how to make simple animal drawings on the board or large paper. After the children draw and color their own animals, have the parents discuss the pictures with them. Count the legs, ears, tails, and so forth. Talk about colors and other descriptive words.

Have parents and children make play dough together, following a simple recipe which uses flour, salt, and water. Then have them create animals out of the dough. If it is a dough which hardens, you can incorporate a unit on color when they paint their animals.

Encourage parents and children to make flashcards together, using words and/or pictures of things they like.

Simplified parent-child writing project for beginning level ESL families

Preparatory activities:

- Conduct a unit about animals.
  Have parents and children draw simple animals.
- Conduct a unit about colors.
- Read the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin (Holt Rhinehart & Winston, 1983).

Writing:

- Have the families pair up a color word with an animal name.
  Example: yellow pig, black cat, purple cow, and so forth
- Have parents insert these word pairs into the blanks:
  "I see a _____ _____ looking at me."
  Do one sentence per page.

Illustrating:

- Have the children draw and color animals on each page like the ones they have described in words.

Creating a story:

- Select one or two pages from each family. Assemble these in a book. The lead sentence on each page will incorporate the animal introduced on the preceding page, following the pattern of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*

  Example: Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?

  I see a green turtle, looking at me.

  

  Green turtle, green turtle, what do you see?

  I see a _____ _____ looking at me.

Developed by Adler, ESL Family Program, 1994

Choosing appropriate books

For your convenience we have included lists of books which are appropriate to specific areas and which have proven appealing to children in the three-to-six-year age range. The categories offered are: Predictable books with repetition of words and phrases
High interest books with compelling characters and action
Alphabet books with simple vocabulary
Books for beginning ESL programs and other adult new readers

We have also included a list of resource materials for children's literature.

Predictable books

Adams, Pam. *This Old Man.* New York: Grossett and Dunlap, 1974.

Ahlberg, Janet and Allan. *Each Peach Pear Plum.* New York: Viking, 1979.

Brett, Jan. *Goldilocks and the Three Bears.* New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1987.

The Mitten. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1989.

Briggs, R. *The Snowman.* New York: Random House, 1978.

Brown, Marcia. *Three Billy Goats Gruff.* New York: Harcourt Brace, 1957.

Brown, Margaret Wise. *Goodnight Moon.* New York: Harper and Row, 1947.

Carle, Eric. *The Grouchy Ladybug.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977.

The Mixed Up Chameleon. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1977.

Charlip, Remy. *Fortunately.* New York: Parents' Magazine Press, 1964.

Flack, Marjorie. *Ask Mr. Bear.* New York: Viking Press, 1955.

Galdone, Paul. *Henny Penny.* New York: Scholastic, 1968.

The Three Billy Goats Gruff. New York: Seabury Press, 1970.

The Three Bears. New York: Clarion, 1972.

Hutchins, Pat. *Good Night Owl.* New York: Macmillan, 1972.

Rosie's Walk. New York: Macmillan, 1968.

Martin, Bill. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear.* New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1983.

Martin, Bill and Archambault, John. *Here Are My Hands.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1985.

Listen to the Rain. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988.

Mayer, Mercer. *All By Myself.* Racine, WI: Western Publishing Company, 1983.

If I Had . . . . New York: Dial Press, 1968.

Just For You. Racine, WI: Western Publishing Company, 1975.

Just Go to Bed. Racine, WI: Western Publishing Company, 1983.

I Was So Mad. Racine, WI: Western Publishing Company, 1983.

Piper, Watty. *The Little Engine That Could.* New York: Platt & Munk, 1945.

Polushkni, Maria. *Mother, Mother, I Want Another.* New York: Crown Publishers, 1978.

Rosenberg, Amye. *Little Red Hen.* Golden, 1984.

Scheer, Jullian, and Bileck, Marvin. *Rain Makes Applesauce.* New York: Holiday House, 1964.

Shaw, Charles, B. *It Looked Like Spilt Milk.* New York: Harper and Row, 1947.

Zaid, Barry. *Chicken Little.* New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976.

High Interest Books

Brown, Margaret W. *Goodnight Moon.* Harper & Rowe, 1947.

Heller, Ruth. *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones.* Grosset & Dunlap, 1981.

Henkes, Kevin. *Jessica.* Greenwillow Books, 1989.

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Shhhh. Greenwillow Books, 1989.

Holabird, Katherine. *Angelina Ballerina.* Potter, 1983.

Johnson, Crockett. *Harold and the Purple Crayon.* HarperCollins, 1983.

Kasza, Keiko. *Wolf's Chicken Stew.* Putnam, 1987.

Lionni, Leo. *Swimmy.* Pantheon, 1968.

Martin, Bill Jr. & Carle, Eric. *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* Henry Holt & Company, 1991.

Numeroff, Laura Joffe. *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie.* HarperCollins, 1985.

Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit.* Warne, 1902.

Raskin, Ellen. *Nothing Ever Happens on My Block.* Atheneum, 1966.

Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are.* Scholastic, 1963.

Seuss, Dr. *Green Eggs and Ham.* Random House, 1960.

Sharmat, Mitchell. *Gregory, the Terrible Eater.* Four Winds, 1950.

Steig, William. *Doctor De Soto.* Strauss & Giroux, 1982.

Vincent, Gabrielle. *Ernest and Celestine.* Greenwillow, 1982.

Wood, Audrey. *The Napping House.* Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1984.

Young, Ed. *Lon Po Po.* Philomel, 1989.

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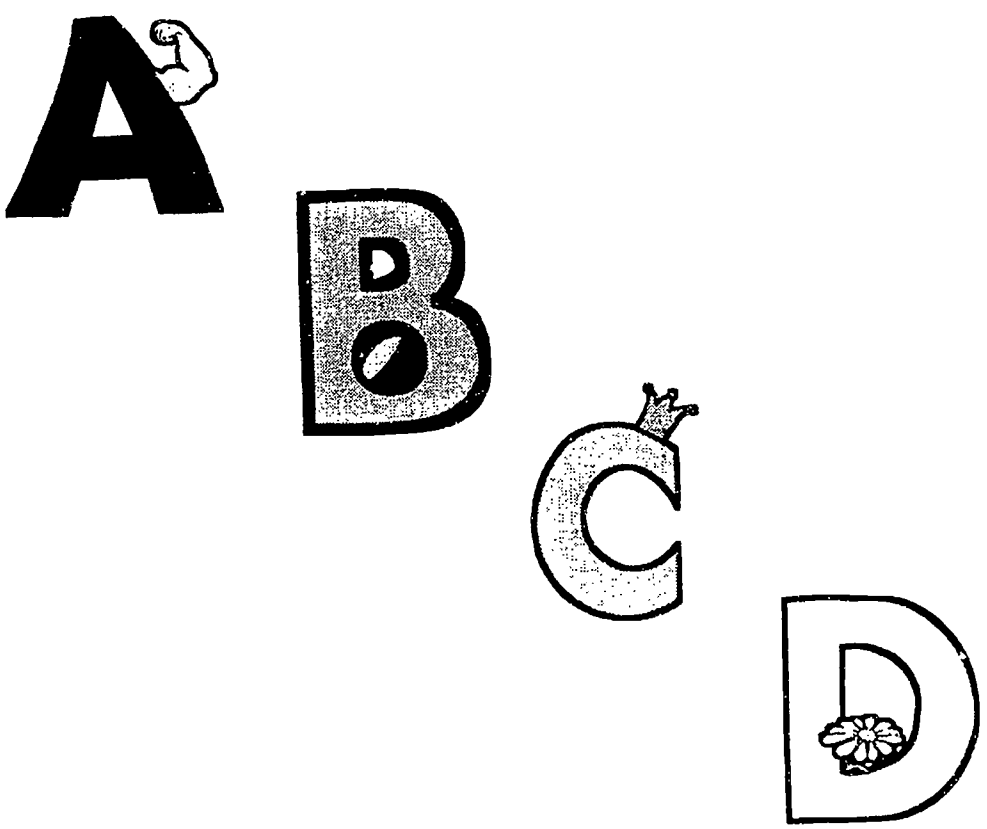
Hoban, Tana. *A,B, See!* Greenwillow, 1982.

Lobel, Arnold. *On Market Street*. Illustrated by Anita Lobel. Greenwillow, 1981.

MacDonald, Suse. *Alphabatics*. Bradbury Press, 1986.

Martin, Bill Jr. & Archambault, John. *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*. Simon & Schuster, 1989.

Merriam, Eve. *Goodnight to Annie*. Four Winds Press, 1980



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Books for beginning ESL programs and other adult new readers

Anno, Mitsumasa. *Peekaboo.* Philomel, 1987.

Asch, Frank. *Good Night Horsey.* Simon & Schuster, 1981.

Brown, Margaret Wise. *Goodnight Moon.* New York: Harper and Row, 1947.

The Runaway Bunny. Harper & Rowe, 1942.

Carle, Eric. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar.* Philomel, 1969.

Florian, Douglas. *A Winter Day.* Scholastic, 1991.

Henkes, Kevin. *Shhhh.* Greenwillow Books, 1989.

Hoban, Tana. *Over, Under, and Through.* Macmillan, 1973.

Hutchins, Pat. *Rosie's Walk.* Macmillan, 1968.

Kalan, Robert. *Jump, Frog, Jump!* Greenwillow, 1981.

Kanao, Keiko. *Kitten Up a Tree.* Knopf, 1987.

Keats, Ezra Jack. *The Snowy Day.* Viking, 1962.

Kovalski, Maryann. *The Wheels on the Bus.* Joy Street Books, 1987.

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

Miller, Margaret. *Who Uses This?* Greenwillow, 1990.

Perkins, Al. *The Ear Book.* Random House, 1968.

Rey, H. A. *Where's My Baby?* Houghton Mifflin, 1943.

Rockwell, Anne. *Things To Play With.* E. P. Dutton, 1988.

Sheppard, Jeff. *Splash Splash.* Macmillan, 1994.

Udry, Janice May. *A Tree Is Nice.* Harper & Rowe, 1956.

Each year new **multicultural** and **bilingual** books are published for children. See your local librarian for these listings.

Resource Listings for Children's Books

Donovan, D. (1992). Best of the best for children. New York: Random House

Freeman, J. (1990). *Books kids will sit still for: The complete read-aloud guide.* New York: R. R. Bowker.

Gillespie, J.T. & Naden, C.J. (1990). *Best books for children: Preschool through grade 6.* New York: R. R. Bowker.

Graves, R. (Ed.) (1987). *The RIF guide to encouraging young readers.* New York: Doubleday.

Kimmel, M. M. & Segel, E. (1988). *For reading out loud!: A guide to sharing books with children.* New York: Delacorte Press.

Kobrin, Beverly (1988). *Eyeopeners! How to choose and use children's books about real people, places, and things.* New York: Viking.

Kruse, G.M. & Horning, K. T. (1991). *Multicultural literature for children and young adults: A selected listing of books 1980-1990 by and about people of color.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin/Department of Public Instruction.

Landsberg, M. (1987). *Reading for the love of it: Best books for young readers.* New York: Prentice-Hall.

Lipson, E. R. (1988). *The New York Times parent's guide to the best books for children.* New York: Times Books.

Oppenheim, J., Brenner, B, & Boegehold, B. D. (1986). *Choosing books for kids.* New York: Ballantine Books.

Rudman, M. K. & Pearce, A. M. (1988). *For love of reading: A parent's guide to encouraging young readers from infancy through age five.* Mount Vernon, New York: Consumers Union.

Taylor, D. & Strickland, D. S. (1986). *Family storybook reading.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Thomas, J. (1992). *Play, learn and grow: An annotated guide to the best books and materials for very young children.* New York: R. R. Bowker.

Trelease, J. (1989). *The new read-aloud handbook.* New York: Penguin Books.

Incorporating volunteers into the project

Well-trained, informed and supported volunteers can really enhance this type of project. Our program used volunteers in the following ways:

- as members of the planning committee
- as planners and facilitators of the entire RIF program
- as literacy tutors for the adults
- as helpers in the preschool classroom
- as participants on the editorial committee
- as assistants in fundraising and publicity

If you are associated with an educational institution which does not ordinarily utilize volunteers, think about contacting your area literacy program, reading council, or Friends of the Library. These groups can be great sources of talented and willing people. Remember: it is essential that you **train** these volunteers, so they understand what is expected of them, and that you **show appreciation** of their efforts.

Job Description of a Volunteer Literacy Tutor

Specific responsibilities:

1. To complete the required training.
2. To maintain confidentiality regarding assigned student.
3. To actively prepare for each session.
4. To maintain records of tutoring sessions.
5. To maintain contact with the literacy provider and adult education instructor concerning the student's progress.
6. To adhere to the goals and procedures of the literacy provider.

Every volunteer has the right to be viewed as a valuable resource to the agency, its staff, and its clients. A volunteer is entitled to meaningful assignments, with full involvement and effective supervision, and should receive recognition for work done.

Our entire **RIF** (Reading Is Fundamental) program is organized and operated by volunteers, our LVA-CV Board of Directors. The job description on the following page outlines the coordinator's duties but also describes the functions of our RIF program.

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Job description for Volunteer RIF coordinator

Specific responsibilities:

1. To develop a budget based on the grants and monies available.

   If fundraising is necessary, assign leadership of this effort to a committee member.

2. To form a RIF committee willing to organize and run the RIF events.

   It is helpful to have early childhood educators and some experienced mothers on your committee, both for input on good books and for understanding of this age group.

3. To arrange and conduct necessary planning meetings.

   The goal of the first meeting is to select dates and themes.
   The committee then chooses appropriate books related to the themes which are given free to the children at the event.

   Each event consists of storytime, at least one activity, snacks, and book distribution. A meeting is held 1-2 weeks prior to each event to finalize organizational details.

4. To order the books chosen for the events.

   The RIF organization will provide you with a list of publishers offering discounts to RIF programs.

5. To make sure everything is ready for the event.

   This includes site procurement, transportation arrangements, media equipment, event leadership, book distribution, and so forth.

6. To contact the media prior to a book distribution.

7. To write thank-you notes to all who contributed to the program.

For further information:

The following resources were referred to in the manual. You may contact them at the addresses/phone numbers given below.

About Literacy Volunteers of America

Literacy Volunteers of America
5795 Widewaters Parkway
Syracuse, NY 13214

(315) 445-8000

Services offered:
- Assistance for literacy providers
- Instructional and training materials
- Volunteer program
- Management materials: 50/50 Training
  Verse Computer Management System
- *Reading with Children* program
- Annual conference

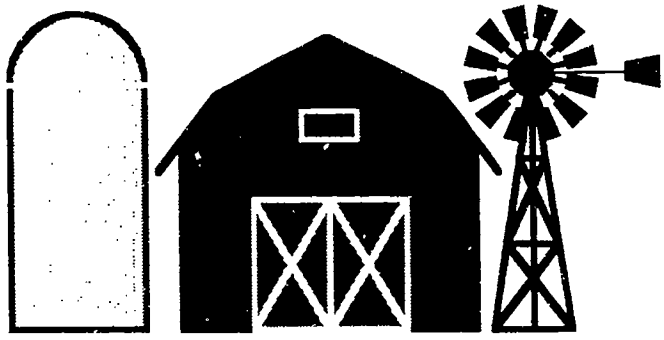
About Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), Inc.

Reading Is Fundamental
Programs Division
600 Maryland Avenue, SW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20024

(202) 287-3220

Services offered: Reading motivation program that works with children and families, providing free materials and special programs for at-risk families

Sample flyers for R.I.F. events 



COME TO A BARN DANCE!!

SPONSORED BY YOUR LOCAL **RIF** PROGRAM

(READING IS FUNDAMENTAL)

WHO? CHILDREN AGES 3-6 AND THEIR PARENTS

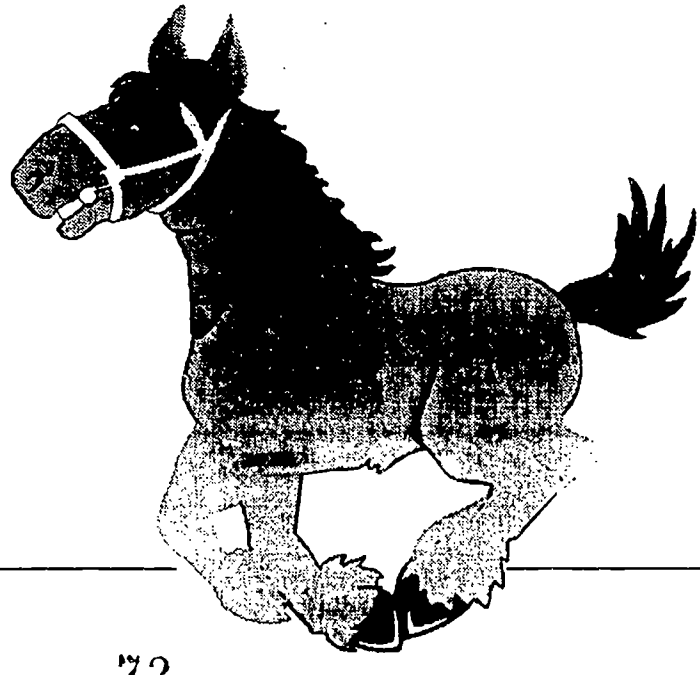
WHAT? STORIES, GAMES, AND ACTIVITIES
SNACKS
FUN FOR ALL!!

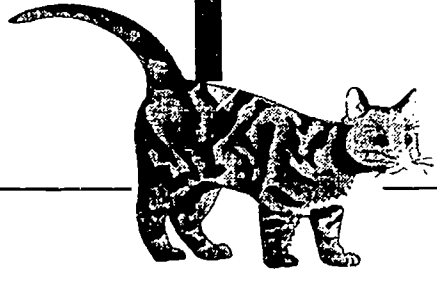
FREE BOOKS!!!

WHEN?

WHERE?

CALL THIS NUMBER
FOR INFORMATION:





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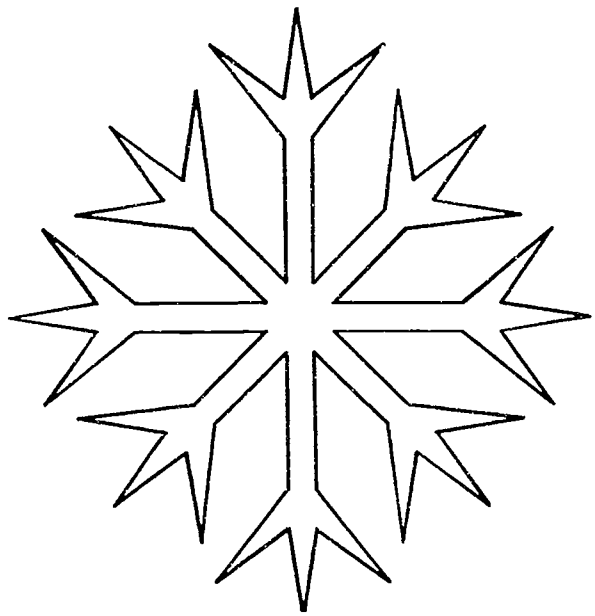
WINTER ADVENTURE



SPONSORED BY YOUR LOCAL RIF PROGRAM
(READING IS FUNDAMENTAL)

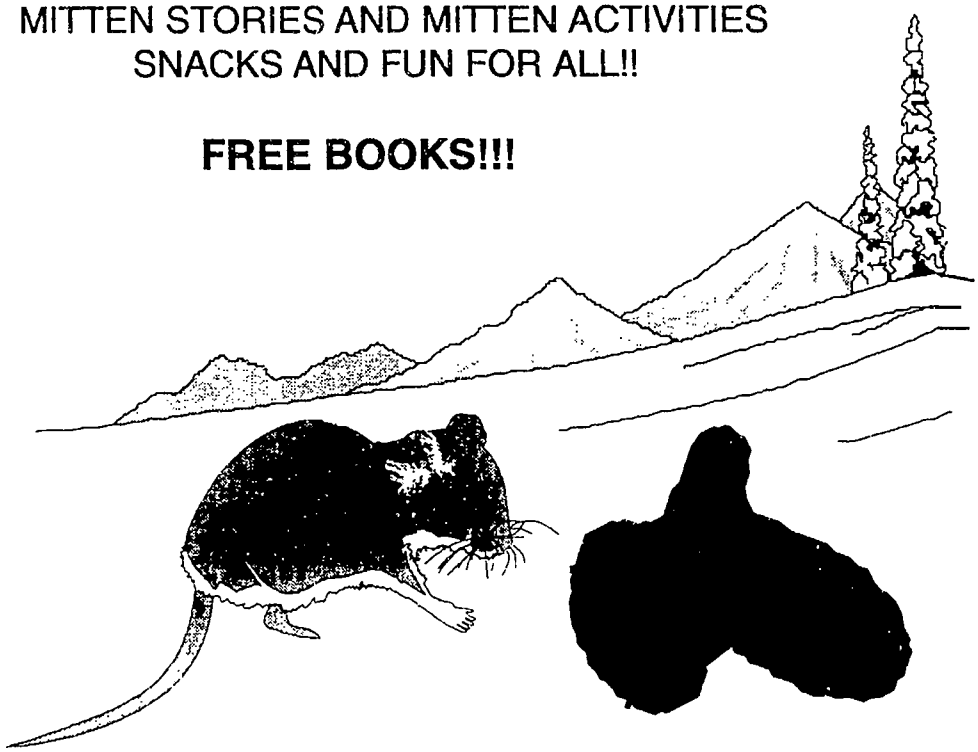
WHO? CHILDREN AGES 3-6 AND THEIR PARENTS

WHAT? MITTEN STORIES AND MITTEN ACTIVITIES
SNACKS AND FUN FOR ALL!!

FREE BOOKS!!!

WHEN?

WHERE?



CALL THIS NUMBER FOR INFORMATION:

ERIC

Evaluating the success of your project

As you assess your program, it is helpful to keep in mind these standards for assessment:

- All assessment should be done in the best interests of the student.
- It must be fair and equitable for all.
- Its primary purpose is to improve teaching and learning.
- Assessment must recognize the role that school, home, and society have in a student's literacy development.
- Assessment must involve all participants, giving parents an active voice in their children's educational development.

(*Journal of Reading*, November 1994, 242)

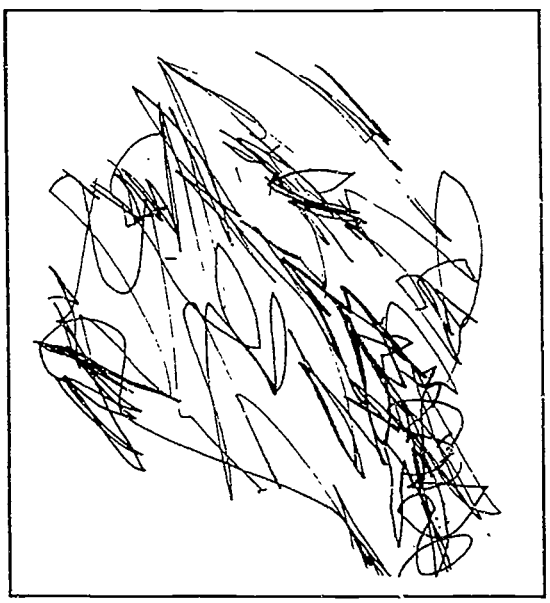
In our program we have applied various forms of the assessment methods suggested by Holt (1994). (See pages 16-20.) We have involved administrators, teachers, students, and parents. We have conducted project evaluation at each level of the process (with parents, with children, and in parent-child interaction) in order to address specific needs of the individual areas.

Measurement methods applied overall to our parent-child writing project revealed that the project enjoyed considerable short-term success. Our survey of participating parents indicated that 90% of them were reading to their children more often after the project was completed. It was apparent to observers that the parents' comfort level when reading to their children had improved tremendously after participation in the supportive activities and increased exposure to appropriate-level literature.

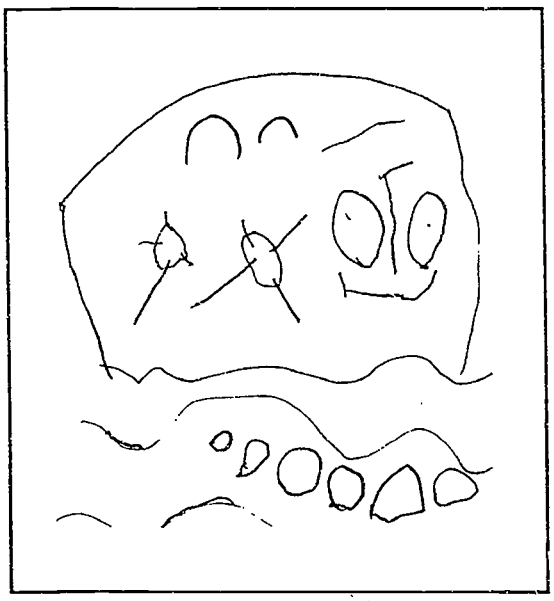
We have included the following sample forms to assist you in evaluating different aspects of your own projects. There are many other methods available; this list is intended merely as a starting point.

The forms in this section were developed by Family Literacy staff members Brunstad, Gabler, Linton, and Machmeier to enhance the family literacy program.

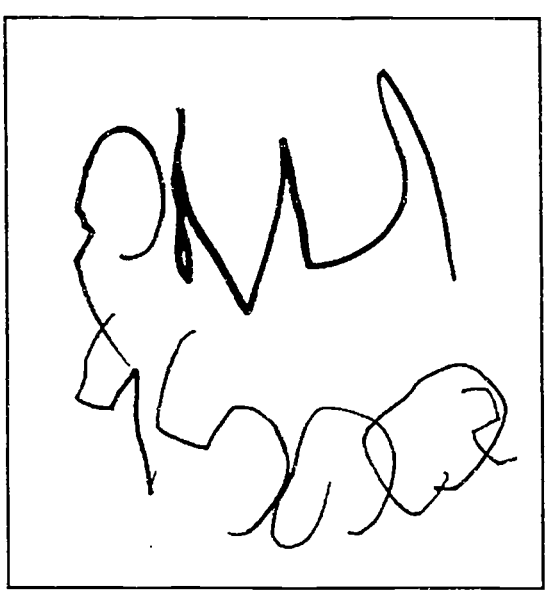
Developmental Writing Chart



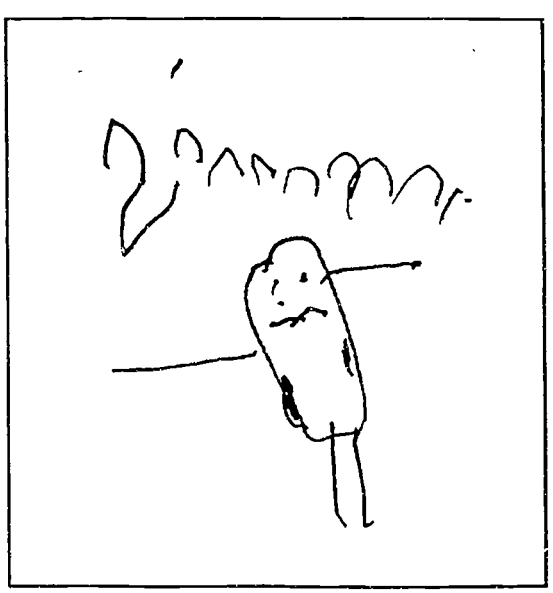
1. Scribbling — precommunicative



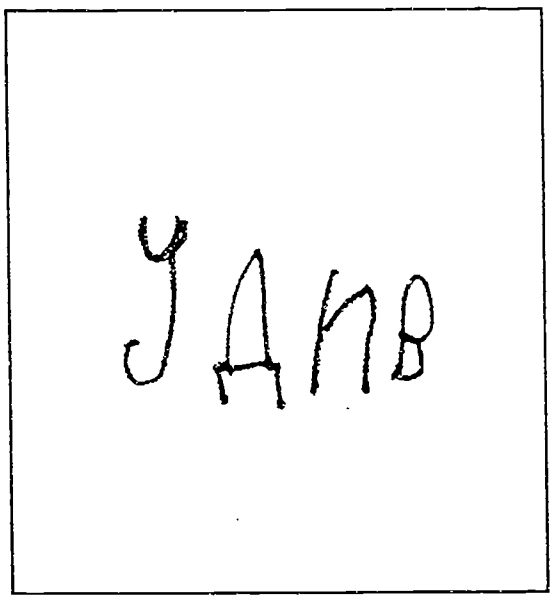
2. Drawing to communicate



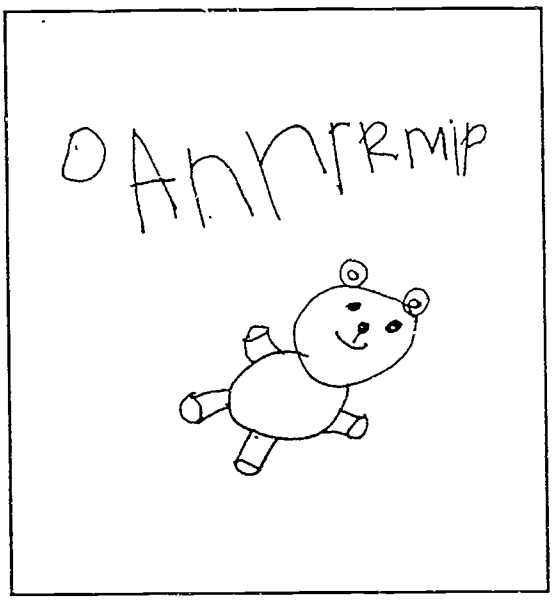
3. Scribble writing — mock linear



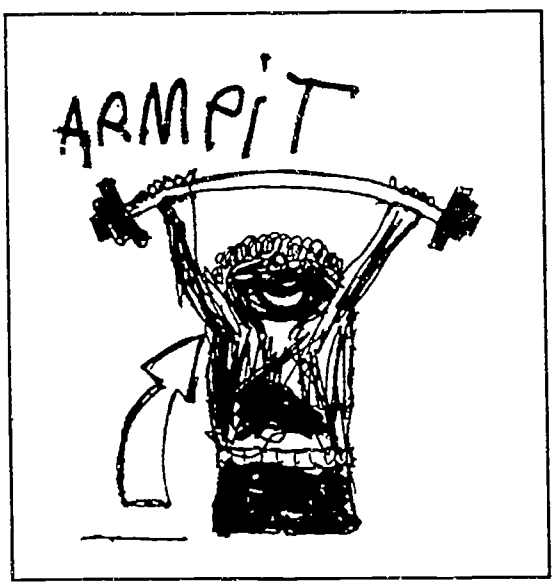
4. Mock symbols/letters



5. Letter strings



6. Transitional spelling



7. Conventional spelling

Parent's name _____

Parent's Record of Books Read

Title of book	Author	Read before? Yes	No	Comments (Describe theme, plot, or illustrations.)
Month: _____ Week 1:				
Week 2:				
Week 3:				
Week 4:				
Month: _____ Week 1:				
Week 2:				
Week 3:				
Week 4:				
Month: _____ Week 1:				
Week 2:				
Week 3:				
Week 4:				

You may copy this page.

Family Literacy Parent Survey

Name _____ Date _____

1. Age and sex of children:

	Age	Sex		Age	Sex
1.			4.		
2.			5.		
3.			6.		

2. Check which of these reading materials you have at home.

____ Newspaper
____ Children's story books
____ Magazines
____ Adult books
____ Dictionary
____ Encyclopedias

3. How much time do you spend looking at these each day?

____ 0 ____ 15 min. ____ 30 min. ____ One hour or more

4. Do you ever go to the library?

____ Yes _____ No If yes, how often? _____

5. Do you ever take your preschooler/kindergartner to the library?

____ Yes ____ No

6. Does your child have his/her own library card?

____ Yes ____ No

7. Have you ever visited or observed in this child's classroom?

____ Yes ____ No

8. Have you ever talked with your child's teacher about a problem your child is having or asked your own questions about the class?

____ Yes ____ No

9. How comfortable do you feel about talking with people at your child's school?

____ I avoid it.
____ I feel uncomfortable but will do it.
____ I feel okay about it.
____ I feel very comfortable.

10. When you take your younger child to the grocery store, on walks, or to a department store, do you talk about and explain the things you see?

____ Yes, always ____ Sometimes ____ No, not usually

11. Here is a list of activities that parents can do with their children. Which ones do you do at home?

____ Playing
____ Singing
____ Drawing and writing
____ Doing puzzles and learning games
____ Telling (not reading) stories

12. About how much time do you spend reading to your preschool or kindergarten child each day?

____ 0 min. ____ 5-10 min. ____ 10-20 min. ____ More than 20 min.

13. About how many minutes can your young child sit and pay close attention during a reading time?

____ 0 min. ____ 5-10 min. ____ 10-20 min. ____ More than 20 min.

14. How often does your child sit and look at books by him/herself in a day?

____ Very often ____ Often _____ Seldom _____ Never

15. About how much time does your preschool/kindergarten child spend watching television each day?

____ Less than 1 hour ____ 1 hour ____ 2-4 hours ____ More than 4 hours

16. Does this child usually

____ watch TV alone?
____ watch TV with a sibling?
____ watch TV with a parent?
____ ignore TV?

17. List two of your child's favorite television shows.

_____

_____

18. Many children have stories they like to have read over and over. List two of your child's favorite story books.

_____

_____

You may copy this form.

Observation of Children's Behavior

Period of observation: From (mon./yr.) _____ to (mon./yr.) _____

Checklist code: **N** = Never **S** = Sometimes **AA** = Almost Always

Behavior:	1* ..books..			2* ..writing..			3* ..labeling..			4* ..new words..			5* ..review..		
Child's name:	N	S	AA	N	S	AA	N	S	AA	N	S	AA	N	S	AA

1* Looks at books in free time
2* Uses writing center in free time
3* Participates in labeling activities
4* Uses new words
5* Is able to plan, do, & review activities

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Family Literacy Program

Report of Parent/Child Interaction Time

Parent's name _____ Date _____ Time _____

Child's name _____

What did you do in your child's classroom or at home today?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What did your child do?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you feel about the time spent? Why?

_____

_____

_____

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Evaluation of Parent's Oral Reading

Parent's name _____ Child's name _____

Tutor _____

Story _____ Date _____

(To be completed by tutor, peer partner, or other observer.)

Mark one box for each skill listed.

Skill	Needs practice	Able to complete the task	Shows competence
1. Pronounces all words in story correctly			
2. Reads with expression and inflection			
3. Asks appropriate questions of child			
4. Responds with understanding to child's comments and questions			

Does the parent seem comfortable reading to the child?

Are there any other relevant observations?

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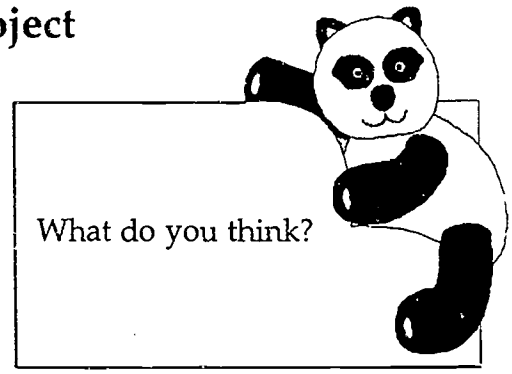
Parent Evaluation of the Writing Project



If you agree with the statement,
place a checkmark beside it.

1. I learned about my child by observing in class. _____
2. I enjoyed reading and learning about children's books. _____
3. I feel more confident choosing books to read to my child. _____
4. I feel more confident doing writing activities with my child. _____
5. I read more to my child at home now. _____
6. My child enjoyed the activities with books and story writing. _____
7. My child shows more interest in books. _____
8. The RIF program is a good way to share books with my child. _____
9. We have a library card and have used the public library. _____
10. We will continue to attend story hours together at the library. _____

11. My child and I completed a story for the book. _____

Comments:

You may copy this page.

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