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ABSTRACT

Providing an overview of some of the possibilities for enhancing education in afterschool programs, this manual provides ideas and strategies to help children and youth develop a love of learning and illustrates how much community youth development program experiences are vital to the educational growth and development of young people. Many of the New York City Beacons School-based Community Centers serve as examples of best practices in informal education. After an introductory section, sections in the manual are: "Why Beacons and Education?:"; "Literacy: What Is It and Why Is It Important?" (discussing principles of afterschool programs and core elements of literacy based programs); "Literacy Activities for the Afterschool" (discussing journal writing, thematic education, storytelling/drama, book buddies, and technology and education); "Making Literacy Links: Integrating Literacy into Existing Programs"; "Homework and Other Issues in Afterschool" (addressing funding and space for literacy programs, and putting more help in homework help); "Building Bridges: Fostering Learning at Home" (discussing getting the parent's ear and seven steps to encouraging learning at home); "So, How am I Doing?: Assessment"; and "Additional Resources" (presenting word attack games for 6-12 year olds, word games and literacy activities, guidelines for selecting bias free books, suggested books for read-alouds, and literacy training organizations and programs). (Contains 15 references.) (RS)

Beacons and Afterschool Education

making literacy links

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Friend:

Learning is a life long process which occurs at home and on the playground, during community service projects and class projects, at school and in afterschool programs. It was important to write this manual to underscore the importance of education in afterschool settings. Beacons' many roles in informal education serve as examples of best practices in this manual but the strategies and ideas presented are applicable to any youth worker, parent, teacher or community member interested in enhancing children's educational experiences.

Thank you to the Beacons staff members who shared their ideas, input, training outlines and best practices with us. Thank you to Eddie Calderon-Melendez, John Kixmiller, Diana Johnson, Kristina Nwazota, Shawn Dove and Leroy Darby.

Thank you to those who have been working with community based organizations for years helping them in enriching their afterschool programs. We appreciate the time you took to speak with us -Lena Townsend, Anne Lawrence, Carmen Vega-Rivera, Michelle Israel and Merle Froschel.

Thank you to Martin Oesterreich and Violet Mitchell whose leadership at the Department of Youth and Community Development have helped sustain the Beacons Initiative.

Thank you to the Youth Development Institute staff who provided context, suggestions, ideas and editing - Michele Cahill and Alicin Reidy. Also thank you to Elizabeth Cunningham, Carlos Bryson and Denise Rosado for their administrative support and John Won who outdid himself in the layout and design of this publication.

Lastly, a special thank you to those who did the research, writing, rewriting and editing to create this publication - Jessica Mates, Janice Colon and Chris Hall.

Sincerely,

Arva Rice
Project Director
Beacons Technical Assistance

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I. Introduction

Beacons seek to create an atmosphere where children, young people, staff and community members are encouraged to set and reach their educational goals. Creating this atmosphere is accomplished in a number of different ways. Academic support and enrichment ranges from traditional tutoring, homework help, SAT/ACT and college prep courses to video production and script writing, environmental projects and the creation of youth newspapers. Older staff members assist youth staff in filling out college or employment applications, helping edit college essays and many Beacons sponsor college trips. Together these efforts help develop communities of learning and prepare young people for internships, summer jobs and careers. Yet, there is so much more that can be done to help children and youth learn. This manual has been developed in response to Beacons' desire to help children and youth learn better and smarter. It is initiated to help older youth and youth workers increase learning outside of school and complement work in school.

The purpose of this manual is not to add reading, writing or language arts teacher to the many roles of Beacon staff. The goal is to provide ideas and strategies to help children and youth develop a love of learning; and to illustrate how much youth development program experiences are vital to the educational growth and development of young people.

There is growing recognition among education reformers of the importance of informal education for youth. Informal education can take place in the home, during community service projects and on leadership retreats. Researchers have shown that youth who have opportunities to be involved in a wide range of activities that encourage decision-making, expressing ideas and feeling and reading and writing as a part of daily life increase academic achievement. Involvement in a variety of activities also help motivate learning and build cognitive capacities. Increased learning has been found to especially be true in settings where the home cultures of children are valued and serve as a bridge to formal schooling. Community youth programs, like Beacons, offer opportunities for such learning.

Some of the ideas and activities in this manual may sound familiar, because they are based on observations of Beacon programs, conversations with staff and reflection on how we, ourselves, learned to read and write. Other ideas and concepts may seem new or unfamiliar. Adapt them to your program and the needs of your participants and let us know how they worked out. This manual seeks to first define literacy and introduce elements of engaging literacy programs. Next are ideas for new, low cost projects you may want to implement in the Beacon and strategies to integrate literacy into what you are currently doing. Lastly, there is a section on how to assess your success and where to look for additional information. This manual is not comprehensive. Instead it provides an overview of some of the possibilities for enhancing education in afterschool programs. Information on where to look for more comprehensive resources on each of the topics presented can be found in the last section of the manual.

II. Why Beacons and Education?

Beacons seek to link community-based youth organizations with schools to build supportive communities for youth to meet their needs and to assist them in building academic and social skills to become self-sufficient and successful young adults. Beacons work to accomplish their goals by working in four core areas: youth development and leadership, family support, neighborhood and community development and school-community collaboration. All forty of the Beacons are located in schools in order to help make the partnership between the community and the school really happen.

Beacons help increase the likelihood of children and youth achieving educational success by helping to create environments where learning is fun and attending school, whether it is middle school, high school, college or graduate school, is the norm. Beacons directly offer resources to support youth in setting high expectations, attending school, solving problems and sustaining effort. They also offer youth opportunities to discover their talents, experiment with the arts, celebrate their cultural heritages and learn how to work together constructively.

Beacons strive to complement the work of schools by bringing a web of supports and opportunities to schools that Beacon Directors often refer to as the three R's – relationships, resources and relief. Beacons provide opportunities for young children and teenagers to develop and maintain relationships with caring adults who serve as role models, teachers and friends. Some Beacons share resources such as computers, gym equipment and general office supplies. Beacon staff provide relief to teachers by serving as mediators when conflicts arise in the classroom by providing counseling to children and parents in families in need. Beacon staff also support the work of school by providing afterschool homework help and literacy activities.

Beacons regularly convene community advisory boards that are comprised of parents, teachers, principals, Beacon staff members, young people and members of the community. Conversations with advisory boards and more formal surveys of the community reveal that education still ranks highest on individual Beacon's list of community needs. Although there are many contributing factors to success – education is a very important key. So, Beacons relation to education is based on community need, the complementary goals of schools and Beacons and the Beacon's presence in school buildings.

III. Literacy: What is it and why is it important?

I'm convinced that education is important, but why literacy?

Literacy is about reading and writing – communication. It is one of our most valuable resources for sharing our life experience. These skills are the foundation on which other skills are based. Just like any other resource or skill language must be developed. Many children learn about reading and writing by watching, imitating and talking with parents, grandparents, older siblings and other adults who are writing a grocery list, reading a newspaper, taking a phone message or filling out a form. They especially learn by hearing a favorite storybook read aloud, answering questions about the book or chiming in during reading. Children who are read aloud to learn to look at pictures for meaning. They also learn the format of sentences and the logical sequence of stories before they enter school or have any formal language arts education. In the best circumstances, particular reading and writing skills are taught later. Unfortunately, too many of the young people with whom Beacons work lack adequate language skills. The absence of these skills can lead or contribute to low self-esteem, dislike of reading, writing and school in general and eventually dropping out of school. Reversing the trend is difficult but re-introducing reading as an enjoyable activity is a good first step.

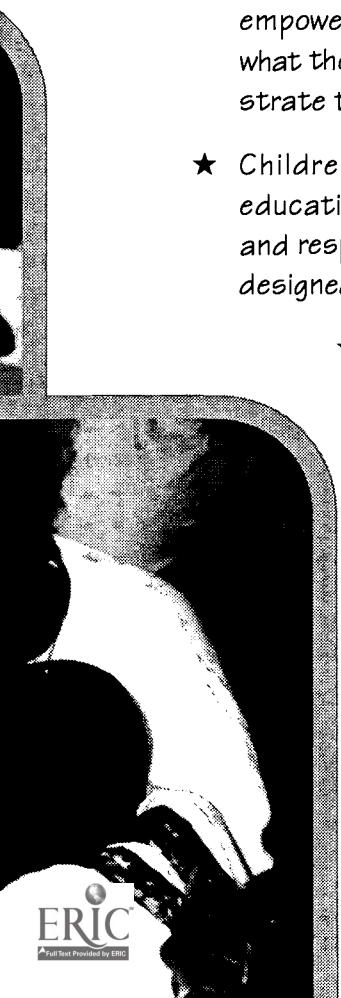
Helping people - young or old - become better readers is a challenging and complex task. One teacher said the only way to get children to become better readers is to have them read. But that's easier said than done. People may not want to read because of previous negative experiences. They may be able to sound out words but are unable to get meaning from the string of sentences. A person may never have learned to look at pictures, previous sentences or the sentence itself for clues for what the words could mean. Good teachers observe, work and model good reading practices for children and youth. So, don't be discouraged if the children and young people you are working with struggle with reading and writing. Just keep on reading.

Principles

So, what do literacy-based programs look like?

Literacy-based programs may look a lot like what you are already doing or they may seem totally new. However, there are some common principles and activities that can be found in literacy-based programs. In successful literacy programs there are many opportunities for young people to self-select readings and writings and to read in pairs or in groups. There are also opportunities for reading aloud. Each of these program elements is built on the following core principles of literacy education.

- ★ Children can achieve if given adequate support and opportunities to do so.
- ★ Children and young adults should be empowered to make choices about what they learn and how they demonstrate that learning.
- ★ Children and young people on all educational levels can participate and respond so activities should be designed to include everyone.
- ★ Reading is used to comprehend meaning, to solve real problems, to get things done, for interpersonal relations, to pretend and imagine, to explain to others, to re-create past experiences.
- ★ Assessment is an ongoing part of instruction.



Elements

Independent reading is exactly what the phrase implies - time for young people to read on their own. This reading does not always have to be a text book or Shakespeare. Encourage young people and children to read magazines, articles and even comics as well as books. Have as many types and kinds of reading available as possible, so that your participants can make independent choices about what they would like to read. By allowing youth to choose from a range of reading materials they are encouraged to read for pleasure as well as simply to complete a school assignment.

Researchers have concluded that how much a child is read t,o is one of the strongest indicators of whether he or she will become a good reader. Reading aloud helps build a feeling of community in a group and the staff person who is reading serves as a role model, helping instill the value of reading. Reading aloud encourages children of all ages to visualize what they are reading and let their imaginations and creativity flow. *More instructions on how to prepare for reading aloud to children follows in Chapter IV. Literacy Activities for the Afterschool, p. 13.*

Paired reading or reading discussion groups are small groups that are based on children's choice or interest. In contrast to "reading groups" that are often formed around ability levels, small groups and paired readers are made up of readers with varying abilities. The groups are designed so that children can give their reactions to a particular book, make connections to other books and their own lives, or share what they would have done had they been the characters in the book.

Dramatic interpretation of reading can be a powerful way to illustrate that reading can be fun. Storytellers can make stories come alive by acting out each of the characters or encouraging young people to write their own version of the book in their own language. For younger children, choral reading gives them an opportunity to read aloud familiar lines in the story in unison, e.g. the chorus of the Three Little Pigs. Children can also be given props, such as a whistle, bell or pail to act out scenes from their favorite books. Activities such as these help greatly in children's reading comprehension because children, like adults, remember 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 70% of what they say and 90% of what they say and do or act out.

As with reading, children must have opportunities to do **independent writing**. Early attempts at writing may consist of drawings, or sentences filled with misspellings. But as readers hear more about the sequence of writing through read-alouds and have more opportunities to talk about the meaning of stories through discussion groups, writing can and will improve. One way of encouraging writing is through the use of journals or learning logs which may take several forms. These include dialogue journals (where group leader and youth write back and forth to each other or two participants write to each other about any topic), literature logs (where youth respond to a particular story or stories) and reflection journals (where youth reflect on their experience over the day or week). We realize that getting young people to actually write in journals can be very difficult, so some ideas for how to get your young people writing can be found in Section IV.

The last component of an educationally enriching program is that there are specific instructions in sounding out, recognizing and understanding words based on content. In Section V there are some specific strategies for how to **support** this work. Remember, no one expects you to be a teacher, but you can assist young people's learning in the afterschool.

Strategies

- Beacon staff can help support reading and writing by reading favorite books to children again and again, demonstrating what it means to be a reader. Adults and teens should be sensitive to the reading levels of their participants. Look for text with patterns or rhymes for younger children, chapter books for third and fourth graders and serial books for young teens.
- Beacon staff should respond positively to children's early attempts to read, offering support and encouragement even if words are mispronounced or not recognized the first, second or even third times.
- Beacon staff should provide a safe environment where risk-taking is supported and encouraged.
- Beacon staff should model "good literacy" behavior. Write when you ask your young people to write and read when they are doing independent reading.
- Lastly, staff should expect young people to be successful in their reading efforts.

In the next section you will read about literacy activities you can add to or integrate into existing programs. In either case, it may seem daunting at times but you can do it!

IV. Literacy Activities for the Afterschool

Competence in reading is more than just being able to say the words on the page. Reading is being able to find meaning in those words. Competent readers draw on their knowledge of the world and of language and combine it with the information in print to make sense of what they read. One author says that reading is a combination of **word attack skills**, **sight vocabulary** and **comprehension**.

Good readers combine these skills in order to make sense of what they are reading. For example, read the following paragraph.

> Jamel watched the elequardests parade around the circus ring. The elequardest in front held his trunk high in the air, as if he were proud to be the leader. The next one wrapped his trunk around the leader's tail. All the other elequardests did the same, forming a procession of huge animals working together flawlessly. Billy realized that these elequardests were extremely intelligent animals and he wanted to know more about them.

When you read the paragraph, you knew most of the words on sight. However there was one word you may not have seen before. You may have been able to figure out what it meant using word attack skills dividing ele-quar-dest. Or you may have been able to figure out that an animal at a circus that also begins with the first letters ele is an elephant. Some children would not be able to figure out the sentence because they might skip over the new word impatiently. They could substitute the wrong word like elevator which also has the same beginning letters. Phrases like forming a procession could also frustrate a child because they do not form a mental picture. A child could figure out the story was about elephants but not know what they did. Or a child may not be able to figure out the word elequardest because they have never been to the circus.

Word attack skills mean being able to sound out or decode words. Most educators say that a child should know 90% of the words in their school books. Children who have trouble with reading should know 95% so they are not frustrated. Sight vocabulary refers to those words which you immediately recognize without having to sound them out. Reading teachers say children must see a word thirty-five times before they are able to recognize it on sight. At some point we all had learn about the meaning of the word the. There is no way to act out the word the or to draw a picture of it. We just learned it and it has proven to be immensely helpful to us in our reading comprehension. Which brings us to our last strategy for reading - comprehension.[1] Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. Children often can not understand what they read because they place so much emphasis on understanding individual words that they cannot derive any meaning from what they have read.[2] The following are some specific

[1] "Word attack skills" refer to sounding out words or breaking them into smaller parts or syllables to figure out their meaning. This can include phonics.

"Sight vocabulary consists of those words we know by memory without using any word attack skills.

"Comprehension" simply is understanding what we have read.

[2] Adapted from Taming the Dragon; Setley, Susan, Starfish Publishing, 1993.

projects that can be utilized to enhance literacy. In the appendix are also some games to enhance word attack skills, particularly for 6-12 year olds.

Journal Writing – Keeping It Real

Journals are great tools for writing and reflection. They allow children and teens the freedom to create writing pieces that are not limited to subjects covered in the classroom. They give youth the opportunity to write about their identity, opinions and emotions without having to make their writing fit the mold of what adults think or expect. So, why aren't all the young people in your Beacon jumping for joy when you say, "Today you're going to have the opportunity to do some journal writing"?

Understanding the reasons why young people may not want to participate in an activity is the first step to discovering how to engage them. This fear of writing could have its roots in one of three areas:

1. Lack of knowledge and support with the writing process,
2. Lack of interest (Boredom),
3. Lack of reasons to write (motivation to write).

If a young person in your group is constantly saying that he or she doesn't know how to write, it is important that you find out why that is the case. Is it because the child or teen is bored with the writing task or is it because he is not able to put together coherent sentences or doesn't understand the structure of a paragraph? The young people you work with may be experiencing difficulties with organizing sentences or spelling and that may be affecting their attitude toward journal writing. If this is the case, young people may need you to show them that you are supporting them and are there to assist them with the process.

Getting young people to participate in an activity that they have had negative experiences with in the past or have found to be boring, is not an easy task. Changing young people's attitude toward an activity requires a little research and a lot of imagination, but it can be done.

Keeping It Real & Fun

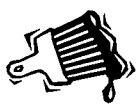
One of the greatest challenges for youth workers is to find the appropriate "hook" that will reel a young person into the world of journal writing. Empowering young people is certainly a strategy that has proven to be effective in a number of Beacon activities such as Leadership Groups and Youth Councils. The question is, "How do you empower young people to write in their journals?" The answer is: There is no Top 10 List of guaranteed ways of making journal writing fun for all young people. Engaging youth to write is a challenge and is accomplished in various ways. However, the following **Top No-Nonsense Twelve Ways to Encourage Writing** should get you started in the right direction.

Top No-Nonsense Twelve Ways to Encourage Writing

12. Engage in Pre-Writing Activities with Youth

Take time before introducing a journal writing activity to get youth excited about the topic. Brainstorm with youth about the theme you have selected for that day or about several topics they could write about. For example, in order to inspire young people to write about their role model or the qualities of an accomplished person you might want to take them to a park where colorful murals of community heroes are displayed, travel to the Historical Society where they could see artifacts from heroes of the past, or read a part of the biography of Cesar Chavez (labor organizer).

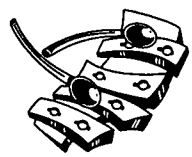
11. Decorate Journal Books



Encourage young people to decorate their journal notebooks with artwork, photos, pictures, poems etc. which reflect their identities and interests. This incorporates creative arts into writing and more importantly gives them the opportunity to take ownership of the process they are about to begin.

10. Let Music Do the Talking

If your goal is to have young people write about something they have accomplished or want to achieve in their lives, you can start the class by playing an inspirational song such as "We Believe We Can Fly." Afterwards, you might have a discussion about the use of rhyme in the song or about what the song made each person think about.



9. Dialogue Journals

Response or dialogue journals are simply written conversations, dialogues or letters exchanged between two learners on a regular basis. The journals can be written in response to a particular questions or the writers can ask questions of each other. Dialogue journals can be used between participant and counselor or between participants.

8. Use Role Plays

Another effective way to inspire young people to write in their journals is to have them act out an issue or debate a topic using a skit and then have them write about it afterwards.

7. Keep It Real

Connect writing assignments to topics or subjects that children and youth can relate to.

- During a pre-writing discussion about young people's favorite hobbies, you may discover that many of your group members mentioned listening to music, specifically Hip Hop as a hobby they enjoy doing.
- Now that you have discovered an interest they all share, you may want to develop it with another writing assignment. The next week you may start your class by playing a song by a popular Hip Hop artist.
- Afterwards you might give them a

scenario to think about – Your school principal and parents association have voted to ban Hip Hop songs from school dances. How would you respond to them? A debate could follow with one side defending Hip Hop and the other side arguing for the reasons that their principal and parents may have for banning it.

➜ The writing assignment could be to have students write to their principal explaining why Hip Hop music should not be banned from school dances.

6. Use Resources to Generate Ideas

Thinking of creative ways of getting young people to keep journals is not easy. The key is to give them as many possibilities as you can in the hopes that something will click. The following are two suggestions taken from Writing Down the Days, a book which offers creative journaling ideas for every day of the year.

➜ October 31 – Describe your favorite costume from this year or the past. Or describe the costume you would like to wear tonight if you could be anyone or anything you wanted.

➜ September 8–7 is National Cable Television Month - Do you watch much cable TV? What is your favorite cable program or station? If you could start your own cable TV program, what would it be like?

5. Allow Young People to Explore Interests

Give young people the opportunity to research a particular current event or subject of interest. When they are done with their research, have them write about what they found or about the experience they had finding the information. Scavenger Hunts offer great opportunities to develop young people's critical thinking and research skills, but they can also be used to jump-start the creative process.

➜ If you find that the young people you work with have an interest in designer clothing, you may want to suggest that they research the work of Tommy Hilfiger (designer) and find out what fabrics and colors he commonly uses or biographical information about how he got started in the business. Then, have them write a summary of their research or a profile of the designer.

4. Give Youth the Tools They Need to Explore New Ideas

A variety of other suggestions for creative Scavenger Hunts can be found in "Can You Find It," a book written by Randall McCutcheon, which provides young people with opportunities to research questions as diverse as " Why did Whoopi Goldberg once work at a mortuary and what did she do there?" and "Who put words in Neil Armstrong's mouth?"

➜ Students can research topics in groups or individually. They should all, however, be encouraged to choose topics which interest them. Also, allow time for debriefing about what they've researched after the exercise. This will allow them to reflect on what they learned or experienced and will get them started on the writing process.

3. Respect Young People's Space

- Always ask a young person's permission before sharing his or her journal with parents or other staff.
- Give young people the opportunity to select the writing pieces that they will allow you to read for comments. Do not require them to hand in their journals for every assignment.
- Establish a safe place to hold journals – a drawer that can be locked, a basket that can be stored, etc. to ensure that journals are not misplaced or lost.

2. Eliminate the Excuses

- Encourage youth to share their work with others. Often a child or teen may write something and think it is not important, but when they let someone else read it or read it aloud they discover that other people liked it or learned something from it. Giving kids the opportunity to share their writing with one another is a great way to acknowledge their work and to help them to improve their writing. This can be done by pairing a young person with someone else or by asking for volunteers to read a piece of writing they wrote in front of the class.
- Encourage youth to publish their work. Seeing an essay, poem or short story a young person wrote appear in a school or Beacon magazine or the Beacon newsletter is bound to make a young person proud and motivated to write in their journals again. In addition, bring examples of journals that have been published or encourage youth to research this so that they become aware that the possibilities are endless when it comes to writing.

- Teach youth about the power of writing – It is more than likely that if you point out some of the practical uses of writing to young people they will eventually stop asking you why they should write and make more attempts to actually do it.

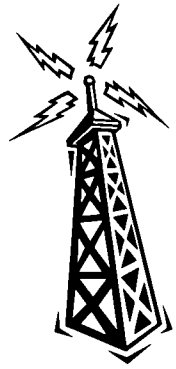
1. Reward, Reward, Reward

As in all Beacon activities, young people need and deserve to be rewarded for their accomplishments as well as participation in journal writing activities. Receiving recognition should not be the only incentive youth have to write, however, it is important for sustaining interest and making young people associate positive feelings with writing.

- Post writing pieces that are exceptional as well as those that show the most improvement.
- Reward all of your group members with a party at the end of the Beacon school year.
- Publish your youth's writing pieces in newsletters or magazines.
- Sponsor book reading contest or book reviews with rewards for participation.
- Remember reading can and should be a reward in and of itself. Applaud youth for the knowledge they receive through reading.

Beacon Publications:

Beacon newsletters, newspapers and/or magazines can be great tools for helping young people improve their writing. Participating in the production of a publication offers youth yet another opportunity to write about subjects that interest them whether it be a story about the success of a Beacon event, highlights of an NBA Championship Game, or an editorial supporting a candidate running for political office. Participating in this type of writing can also help young people become better writers. The young people you work with may be inspired to take more time and put more effort into their writing if they know that it could be published. In addition, it is likely that writing pieces submitted will have to be edited and re-written to fit the space allotted or improved because of errors in grammar usage, sentence structure or spelling. Involving young people in the process of rewriting and editing articles is an effective way to help them develop good writing habits. Last but not least, writing for publications provides youth with the opportunity to develop a variety of other skills such as oral communication and organizational skills as well the ability to set and meet deadlines.



A number of Beacons have excellent youth publications including Rheedlen's *Harlem Overheard* and Center for Family Life's *The Mix Magazine*. Please contact the Beacons for additional information.

I like the Beacon publication idea. How do I start?

The following are some suggestions for starting a newspaper, newsletter, or magazine at your Beacon:

1. Introduce the idea of participating in the publishing process at a journal writing class. Do a pre-writing activity where young people are given assignments to report on various issues. For example, have them cover a Beacon event or report on an event in history as if it were happening today, or interview the Beacon Director on her/his accomplishments. Encourage them to write in the form of an article or to do an oral report if they are more comfortable with that.

2. Involve young people in the process of making and posting flyers to attract others to join the publication's staff and/or contribute to the publication.

3. Hold a meeting where young people discuss what they would be interested in doing – layout, graphic designing, writing, editing. Also have them decide whether the publication will be for the Beacon community or the community at large.

4. Involve youth in the process of setting a budget for the publication. Have them research the different costs for producing and printing the publication and come up with a plan for how to use the funding available effectively.

5. Give youth space to meet for writing, meetings, etc. Provide them with access to computers for writing and designing pages.

6. Assist young people in acquiring skills they

might want to develop such as, graphic designing, editing, etc. Provide referrals to classes, books where they can acquire these skills.

7. Establish a time and space when young people will meet to brainstorm about ideas for the publication.

8. Determine how the publication will be distributed.

Thematic Education

Whether we realize it or not, most of us are familiar with topic or theme based education. At some point between kindergarten and third grade you probably experienced a unit on bears or dinosaurs. As you grew older you may have studied U.S. States or planets over a period of time. In high school or college you may have studied literary themes such as brotherhood, good versus evil or loyalty through A Tale of Two Cities, Julius Caesar or The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Theme based education gives young people and children an opportunity to thoroughly explore a particular topic and see the connection to other subject areas and facets of their lives. In this section we will explore one strategy to develop theme based learning in your Beacon – ILAPs.

Integrated Language Arts Packages, ILAPs, were created by staff members of the Literacy Assistance Center in response to children's varying learning styles and interest and community based organizations' lack of creative materials to address and explore those various learning styles. Individual youth organizations have built on and developed the idea of ILAPs. An ILAP is a thematic project that enhances reading, writing and communication skills. ILAPs have four basic components: a pre-literacy activity, the literacy activity itself (reading a book, magazine, poem or article) a post literacy activity and journal writing. These four activities combine to help make ILAPs interesting and fun. ILAP creators refer to ILAPs as magic boxes that contain books, maps, puzzles, masks, journals, stickers and other art supplies that all relate to one theme or concept. ILAPs are physical embodiments, or boxes, that represent the idea of them based education. ILAPs combine literacy activities with arts and/or science projects showing

that learning can be experiential and fun. ILAPs have been created on a number of different themes including Circus, Ancient Egypt and City Life.

ILAPs create an environment where students can build on knowledge they already have from real life experiences. ILAP activities are student-centered, meaning that students explore ideas that interest them. ILAPs encourage students to choose their own texts to read, write their own stories and share their experiences with others. This motivates them to explore their creative thoughts. By combining hands-on projects with literacy activities students can see that learning can be fun.

A number of Beacons utilize ILAPs in their afterschool programs. At Phipps Beacon teenagers have primary responsibility for delivering ILAP instruction in the classroom. At the beginning of each school year they participate in a week long training on developing and delivering literacy programs. They also take part in on-going instruction throughout the school year. At Red Hook Beacon youth and adult staff as well as parents have been trained in ILAPs. In the Fall of 1997, parents, youth and staff will work together to develop additional ILAPs for the Beacon. At FEGS Beacon teachers provide ILAP instruction to Beacon participants. The key to ILAPs success is to provide staff with the training to conduct the activities, because they already have the creativity and the capacity to make ILAPs work.

So, I like the ILAP idea. How do I do it?

When developing an ILAP it is important to have input from staff and the young people themselves. A successful technique for generating themes involves brainstorming and then discussing what activities could be conducted to complement the theme. Begin by thinking about what reading, writing and arts activities could be offered in relation to the topic and proceed from there. Once you have a theme and a few related activities, take a trip to Barnes & Noble, Bankstreet College Bookstore or the library and search for books that relate to your topic. Be sure to ask the librarian or salesperson for assistance as they can be a great resource. Next, identify guest speakers or field trips that could help further develop the topic. Look for or create materials and activities that are age-appropriate, flexible, reusable (or at least copies can easily be made) and encourage creativity. Once you decide on ice cream, voting rights or a particular sport you will be surprised how many articles, books and activities you will see on those topics. Each ILAP should have a book list, suggested pre and post literacy activities (described in next paragraph) that connect to reading, writing, arts and crafts or theater. These connections of one topic or theme to other academic subjects are called <u>academic extensions</u>. ILAPs should be flexible enough that staff members can be creative but also have enough ideas and activities to support the theme. The ILAP should also include suggestions for longer term projects and opening and closing events. Once you have all of the materials together they should be placed in boxes that can and should be decorated to fit the theme.

What about teens?

Although the example of dinosaurs is meant for 6-12 year olds, theme based education does not have to be limited to children. Also it does not always have to come in a brightly decorated box. Teens can brainstorm for themes that they would like to discuss and they can be developed into ILAPs. Relationships can be used as a theme in February and can culminate with a Beacons Dating Game. Youth can write their own version of Romeo and Juliet or contrast the love songs of Mary J. Blige and Aretha Franklin. Health connections can be made through discussions of AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and birth control. The young people could be asked to do research on the historic or changing role of women of color in families or the history of St. Valentine's Day. Activities may include a journal entry on "my perfect soul mate" or their definition of love. You could ask participants to develop an "Advice for the Lovelorn" or "Ebony" Advisor column and provide some real life scenarios to which they must respond. Watch "Boyz 'n the Hood," "Waiting to Exhale," or "Love Jones" and discuss the reality of the depictions of male/female relationships.

As mentioned previously, ILAPs have four central components, the pre and post literacy activity, the literacy activity itself and journal writing. The pre-literacy activity is extremely important because it introduces children and youth to the theme. One Beacon refers to activities that are done to creatively introduce ILAPs as "hooks." One author refers to activities that encourage young people to write as "invitations". Language arts teachers and literacy specialists refer to "hooks" or "invitations" as pre-literacy activities. Regardless of the title they all creatively introduce books using brainstorming, role plays, group discussions, music, dance or anything that comes to your mind. And they should make youth eager to proceed with the literacy activity. After reading the story be sure to do a post-literacy activity where children reflect on what they have learned in the session. A pre-literacy activity for dinosaurs may be brainstorming with the group everything they know about dinosaurs. After the activity you may ask them to draw a dinosaur based on their existing and new found knowledge.

As you can see, theme based education provides an opportunity for staff members to exercise their creativity. Regardless of whether you are an activity specialist, child care worker, counselor, security staff or recreation staff you can contribute to the ILAP theme. The curriculum guideline can be used with staff when brainstorming for new themes. All of the ideas can be synthesized for the ILAP curriculum.

Integrated Language Arts Package

Curriculum Outline

Theme: _____

Projected Length of Theme: _____ (days, month, year) **Targeted Age Group:** _____

What are the curriculum goals for this ILAP? What new ideas or knowledge will youth have at completion of ILAP?

1. _____

   _____

2. _____

   _____

3. _____

   _____

Once you decide on a theme you may brainstom for sub-themes or areas that you want specific grades and ages to focus on.

K – 1st: _____

2 – 3: _____

4 – 5: _____

6 – 8: _____

H.S.: _____

What academic extensions will be made?

Science: _____ **Music:** _____

Social Studies: _____ **Recreation:** _____

Math: _____ **Computers:** _____

Theater: _____ **Arts and Crafts:** _____

What special events, long term activities, or projects will be used to highlight, open, or close the theme?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Please list three ideas for Pre-and Post-Literacy Activities to introduce this theme.

Pre-Literacy Activities:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Post-Literacy Activities:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please list three ideas for Writing Activities related to this theme.

Writing Activities:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Please list any Children's Books related to this theme.

Children's Books:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Drama and Storytelling

When people hear the word drama they usually think of a stage, elaborate costumes, masterfully designed sets, a huge arts budget and staff with experience in the theater. Developing a drama program in your Beacon can involve all of these elements. But drama can also be used as a teaching tool to enhance literacy and learning. Drama can be used to tap into the natural creativity of children and youth. It can also help uncover the storyteller, actor, screenwriter or director in your group. The following section outlines the benefit of and strategies for using various drama forms in programs.

It is important that young children in particular develop a sense of how stories are organized. This sense of story structure gives the reader or listener a head start in processing and recalling stories. Research shows that children who have acted out stories that they have read or that have been read to them were better able to retell the stories. Also children were more likely to understand how the characters felt in the story and were able to determine why things happened in the book based on previous actions that had occurred. Lastly, it helped strengthen children's overall reading comprehension. Drama can encourage children and older youth to explore, clarify and elaborate on feelings, attitudes and ideas. Drama increases creativity, originality, sensitivity, flexibility, cooperation, examination of moral attitudes and decisions, while developing communication skills and appreciation of books and literature. One other benefit that the researchers did not mention is that acting out books makes reading more fun and enjoyable. And it is, perhaps, because of the latter reason that drama has made its way into suggestions for literacy based programs in Beacon afterschool programming.

Storytelling

The art of storytelling is what some might argue is the oldest form of communication. Whether you agree or disagree with the statement, the power of a well told story can not be disputed. Storytelling, quite simply, is the telling of family history or a family legend, sharing a folktale or myth, retelling the story from a book or making up a story of your own. Storytelling, dramatic reenactment, role plays, skits and sing-alongs all help bring stories to life for children and youth. Robin Moore, a well known storyteller and author, describes his art this way, "The source of the story is the image it creates in one's mind. If the story lies in words on a page it's like going to a restaurant and eating the menu and never tasting the food. Storytelling involves taking listeners back to the kitchen, where the real nutrition begins." [3]

Every story has four parts: the invitation, the beginning, the middle and the ending. The invitation can be a simple as "Does anyone want to hear a story?" or it can be as formal as dimming the lights, lighting a candle or gathering around a campfire. The beginning is a crucial transition from the outer world to the world of the story. Phrases as simple as "Once upon a time" or "a long, long time ago" are common story beginnings. The middle is

[3] Moore, Robin, Awakening the Hidden Storyteller, Shambala Publications, 1991.

the meat of the story. The storyteller reveals the problem and begins to work towards its resolution. No matter how many twists and turns you put in the plot the middle should always be heading for the end. The end returns the listener back to current space and time. It is also important to have a definitive phrase to indicate the ending like the traditional "and they lived happily ever after" or "and that was the last anyone ever heard of the old woman who lived in the shoe." These phrases function as signals for listeners.

In Robin Moore's book he says that there is a storyteller that lies within us all. Only you can be the judge of that, but the following information is designed to assist in your storytelling. One of the most important things in telling a story is your voice. Your voice should be used to convey excitement, draw children into the story and keep them excited. The storyteller's voice can be used in four ways: narrator's voice, characters' voice, singing voice and sound effects. Most of the stories you will read or tell will have a narrator. Many times storytellers use their own voices for this part. Next are the characters' voices which should be changed for each character, so the listeners knows who is speaking. If you need more voices than the wicked witch and the fairy godmother try listening to the radio and imitating voices. One of them could be used for prince charming or the voice of a distant relative. Second, singing is a welcome addition to a spoken story. If your vocal chords are up to it, throw a little singing into your story. Lastly, sound effects such as whistling birds, howling wind and tramping feet can really add to a story. Be careful so that your sound effects do not draw attention away from the story itself.

The other two tools of the storyteller are nonverbal tools – facial expressions and eye contact. Facial expressions can convey love, rage, concern or astonishment. Just as each of your characters has a voice they should also have facial expressions. You may want to practice a few characters in the mirror before you tell the story. Maintaining eye contact in storytelling is important. Move your eyes among the young people in the group, so that they feel as if you are telling the story directly to them. Do not be concerned if everyone does not return your gaze. Be sensitive to the different cultural norms about looking people directly in the eyes.

When telling a story there are four things that you should keep in mind.

Keep it Simple – The storyteller does not need to describe everything in detail. That would leave nothing for the listener to do. Decide on what to leave out, not how much detail to put in. Begin the story and introduce the problem from the outset.

Easy Does It – Most stories improve by telling them at about half the speed. Silence gives the listener time to draw a mental picture of the story you are telling.

Keep it Moving – Make sure the story has a distinctive beginning and that everything you say moves the tale toward the story's conclusion.

Nail the Approach and the Dismount – Commit the first three lines and the last three lines of your story to memory. This will help to stave off nervousness. A well thought out ending line also helps bring closure to the story.

I've practiced my voices and faces. Now where do I look for stories?

There are a host of sources for storytelling material – your own childhood experiences, your imagination, stories you have read or ones you have heard other storytellers tell. Neighbors, friends, relatives, librarians and colleagues are all good sources of stories. When it's time to tell the story simply pull the ingredients out of your memory. There are no words to remember, just the story. Feel free to improve and add your own details, or omit others. If you are still nervous about creating your own tale, there are many sources of stories that can be read aloud. Don't worry, many modern day storytellers tell their tales based on written stories. *(A list of books for read alouds and storytelling can be found in Section IX.)*

Drama

It is ironic that although most English classes require students to read plays, many children and youth are not exposed to drama as a teaching tool. Like storytelling, drama gives young people an opportunity to be creative, to imagine and to explore. In addition, acting out stories and plays gives youth the opportunity to actively participate in their learning. For small children, their first exposure to drama may be in acting out a book they have read. Language arts teachers refer to this as dramatic story reenactment. In dramatic story reenactment children re-create or play familiar stories by acting out the story themselves or by using puppets to act them out. There is minimal use of props, costumes or scenery and often times none are used at all. Children can read Three Little Pigs and play the roles of the pigs and the wolves or they can use the story Little Red Riding Hood and act out their own ending.

Another way to act out stories is to use small props. The Institute for Literacy Studies at Lehman College sponsors a training on The Little Red Lighthouse where participants are given a flashlight, whistle and keys to act out the story of a light-house that sits at the base of the George Washington Bridge. The sound effects of the howling wind and the crashing waves make this story come to life.

Helping children become comfortable enough to stand up and act out stories takes time. The children need to develop a comfort level with each other, with you and with the story they are going to present. The more familiar children are with the stories the more inclined they will be to act them out. The children must know what comes next and what happened in the beginning, middle and end. Prepare children for their roles as storytellers by re-reading stories and selecting books with choruses, rhymes or repetition so that children can join in at the appropriate time. You may also use sing-alongs with arms and hand motions to accompany it. You may remember singing "She'll be Coming around the Mountain" as a child or "The Itsy Bitsy Spider".

Drama for older youth can take them places they may never go and challenge them to explore other opinions or ideas. In drama or role plays, youth have the opportunity to be heads of state, Beacon Director, CEO of a Fortune 500 company, an immigrant in the 1920's, a community resident or a character from a book or play. As these characters, young people must act as they think the character would or should have acted and make decisions, solve problems and deal with the consequences. Drama is most successfully used when exploring topics that can have multiple interpretations. You can suggest the topic or read the piece aloud, then it is up to your group to dramatize their interpretation. The Valley Inc., has successfully used role plays for over fifteen years in their Paul Robeson Leadership Training Institute to help young people make choices and deal with decisions and consequences around dropping out of school, unprotected sex, peer pressure, racism and discrimination and other relevant subjects.

If you decide to do an actual play with your youth, you may want to use "A Raisin in the Sun," "For Colored Girls Only," "Malcolm X," or "Zooman and the Sign." Create as many opportunities as you can for youth to develop their own voices. Have teens create their own stories using pictures from popular magazines. Ask youth who the characters in the picture are. What are they feeling and why? Where are they going or from where did they just return? What issues are they currently facing in their lives and how do you think they should resolve them? Youth may be more willing to continue to work on a piece, edit and revise it they know it is going to be performed.

Drama can also involve writing and producing radio and television programs, creating videos, screenplays or documentaries. Rise and Shine Productions and Educational Video Center both involve youth in producing their own videos. Winthrop Beacon and Alianza Dominicana have their own youth cable television shows. Public Access TV stations in each borough offer free training in video, editing and live studio work. *Call your local public access network for more information.*

Like acting out stories for children and role playing for youth, video and TV provide opportunities for older teens to develop their creativity, examine their own morals and values and develop solutions to problems in their lives and their communities. They also provide opportunities to learn skills and explore career paths.

Reading Buddies, Literacy Peers or Adolescent Helpers

Adolescence. The very word brings up images of changes, turmoil, finding oneself and getting lost in peer pressure. It is a time of risk and opportunity and it is important as Beacon staff members that you are there for teens during this difficult transition period. In addition to being a period of rapid physical and emotional change. Adolescence is a time when young people are capable of great cognitive growth. Adolescence is also a time when young people become more aware of the world around them and can either decide to work to improve their communities or opt out of them. Beacons provide many opportunities for young people to have meaningful and responsible roles in their communities. Involving young people in youth-initiated projects has helped them develop organizational, communication and critical thinking skills. Involving young people in community service projects that focus on literacy gives them an opportunity to develop another critical skill – reading.

Some Beacons have involved teenagers in programs where they read to younger children. At Phipps Beacon these youth are literacy peers, at Center for Family Life they are counselors-in-training. National Helpers Network has incorporated Reading Helpers into their successful community service program for middle schoolers. Involving older teens in read-alouds, paired reading and book clubs with younger children will move them both toward a greater appreciation of books and reading. Research has shown that both teenagers and younger children improve their reading skills when teens learn techniques to discuss books with children. Developing Book Buddy, Literacy Peers or Reading Helper programs requires the same things as other community service programs – rules and rewards, clear expectations, guest speakers and field trips related to the book topics, structured time for reading and reflection and of course, books and training. The following are some general guidelines for preparing young people to work with younger children.

Reading Aloud

Before teens read books to children they should become familiar with the books themselves. The following are questions you should encourage teens to ask themselves before they read aloud to children.

Before Reading the Story:

1. What personal experiences have children had that they could relate to the book?
2. What vocabulary in the book might be new to them?
3. What aspects of the book might be familiar to them?
4. What might be a challenge and how could you address this during the book introduction?
5. Introduce the book, discussing the front and back covers, title and contents of the book. Encourage children to look, predict, justify, think, talk, ask questions, solve problems and reflect on what they are doing.
6. Determine the setting of the story. If the story is set in a real place (unlike never

never land) help children locate the location on a globe or map.

While reading the story:

1. Select a book that is suitable for children to read and that they will enjoy re-reading many times.
2. Gather the children close to the book so that they can see the print and feel a shared sense of community.
3. Read fluently and with appropriate expression, as this is a model for the way children will read. Encourage children to join in with the reading as soon as they are able to do so.
4. Read the book many times on subsequent days and leave it in a place that is accessible for children to read individually, in groups or in pairs.
5. When children feel successful at reading the book, use it to demonstrate how pictures help us read, how to use punctuation and vocabulary and the way different books are written.
6. Cover up words that are predictable and ask children to predict what the words might be. Talk about what makes sense and sounds right and whether or not each word looks right. Praise all responses.

Independent Reading

Teens can also encourage younger children to read independently. As a conclusion for independent reading time, gather children in a circle and ask for volunteers to share thoughts and feelings about what they have been reading. The following are examples of questions that could be explored following independent reading:

- ✓ What their books made them think about or reminded them of?
- ✓ Things they wonder about after reading their books?
- ✓ What they learned from their reading today?
- ✓ Who they would recommend their books to and why?
- ✓ What their books were about?
- ✓ What they thought about the author or illustrator?

Read aloud daily, re-reading favorites and encouraging children to talk about books. Involve children in many shared reading and writing experiences to build their confidence and encourage independent reading and writing. Read poems, teach songs and provide copies of these for children to read independently.

Technology and Education

The Information Super Highway has the potential to provide information and resources to people who would not normally have access, or it could serve to further divide the have's and the have not's. Linking communities to the Information Super Highway will require more than phone lines, computers and on-line accounts. The new technology must be demystified and misperceptions erased. Young people must be able to utilize computers in everyday life to help solve a math problem, do research for a paper or learn word processing in preparation for future employment. Beacons have been able to provide community members with their first introduction to computers and teens with innovative ways to print their writing, research for school papers or learn new vocabulary through computer games. But there is so much more that can be done and explored. The following are examples of projects you may want to try in your afterschool and resources to assist you in your efforts.

The number of resources available on line to educators, youth workers and parents is staggering. They range from simple Web sites with "fun stuff" for kids, to international organizations doing cutting edge research in educational technology. Most of these resources are geared toward educators and or parents, so it will be up to you to adopt many of the ideas and suggestions for your young people. The organizations e-mail addresses, web pages and phone numbers are listed. Even if you are not "wired" at your Beacon you can assess these resources either at a local library, at the Fund for the City of New York or by calling them.

Resources

AGENCY: **Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)**

ERIC is the largest education database containing more than 800,000 records of journal articles, research reports, curriculum and teaching guides conference papers and reports. AskERIC is an on-line question and answer service based on ERIC. Youth workers, educators and parents can send in questions on any topic and receive answers personally researched by AskERIC staff.

WEB: http://ericir.syr.edu

E-MAIL: e-mail: askeric@ericr.syr.edu

PHONE: (800) LET-ERIC

AGENCY: **Classroom Connect**

Classroom Connect is a hard copy newsletter published nine times a year which contains regular departments on lesson plans, available grants, and listing of educational resources. The newsletter is $39 a year. Every issue also contains a full page of listings of educational Web sites and mailing lists. Each resource is briefly described and has e-mail addresses.

MAIL: c/o Wentworth Worldwide Media
1866 Colonial Lane
P.O. Box 10488
Lancaster, PA 10488

WEB: http://www.classroom.net/

E-MAIL: connect@classroom.net

PHONE: (800) 638-1639

AGENCY: **KIDLINK**

KIDLINK is one of the most comprehensive international online organizations that involves school aged children directly in conversation and online projects. With a global coordination team of 80 volunteers, KIDLINK operates as an entirely volunteer non-profit organization. KIDLINK maintains KIDCAFE, an online forum, in six language, for children ages 10-15 years old from around the world.

KIDCAFE is monitored by its adult volunteer staff for safety reasons.

WEB: http://www.kidlink.org

AGENCY: **Consortium for School Networking**

CoSN is an educators' forum that is dedicated to bringing educators up-to-date information on how to get quick, easy and cost-effective access to the Internet and other online resources. CoSN hosts a highly regarded conference in a major city every year that brings together educators from across the country.

WEB http://www.cosn.org/

E-MAIL: cosn-faq@irtc.org

PHONE: (202) 466-6296

AGENCY: **ICONNECT**

ICONNECT is the umbrella organization for four different programs for K-12 educators, teachers and librarians. IBASICS, Curriculum Connections, Mini-grants for librarians, and KidsConnect. IBASICS is an online course for educators and parents that helps them get familiar with the Internet. Lessons are e-mailed to participants with both information and exercises. Curriculum Connections are web sites selected by librarians. KidsConnect, like AskERIC, gives youth an opportunity to ask questions on a range of library sources.

http://ericir.syr.edu/ICONN/ihome.html

E-MAIL: iconnect@ala.org

PHONE: (800) 464-9107

AGENCY: **Teaching Matters**

Teaching Matters is a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting educators in infusing technology into their classroom. Teaching Matters has worked in hundreds of classrooms throughout New York City, offering on-site consultation as well as workshops. Teaching Matters charges on a fee for service basis.

CONTACT: Jane Condliffe, (212) 870-3505

AGENCY: **Fund for the City of New York**

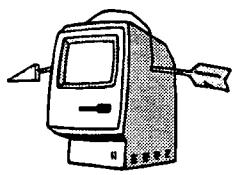
The Nonprofit Computer Exchange offers over 40 different computer workshops including basic through advanced level instruction in word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheet and database management programs and an introduction to basic computers. The Fund has also established an Internet Academy where courses are offered in accessing the Internet and Surfing the Net.

CONTACT: Jason Price, (212) 925-6675

AGENCY: **Fund for the Borough of Brooklyn**

Fund for the Borough of Brooklyn has recently received a federal grant to provide hardware, software and training to provide access to the Internet to select organizations in Brooklyn. The Fund for the Borough of Brooklyn is also preparing a curriculum for computer instruction that will be available for the public.

CONTACT: Onida Coward, (718) 935-1122



Ideas for Computer Projects

- Have youth take a "virtual trip" where they make their travel arrangements, research the cities they will visit and establish electronic pen pals from the country they will be visiting. KIDLINK sponsored a two week "Virtual Vacation" where children designed their "vacations" in their home cities and countries from around the world. The children created their own itineraries and were then able to actually tour each other's homes through Cu-SeeMe free software which allows youth to actually see people working at their computers. (To subscribe to CU-SeeMe send an e-mail to lists@gsn.org with a

blank subject line and message (Subscribe cuseeme-schools *Your Name* in the body of the letter)).

- Train young people about how computers work as well as word processing, desktop publishing and surfing. Intel has developed a free curriculum for science and math teachers that introduces young people to how computers actually work. To order the curriculum visit Intel's web site a http://www.intel.com or call (800) 346-3029 ext. 143.

- Integrate computers into what you are already doing. If you are studying the environment have young people research environmental problems, and propose solutions based on the information they have gathered. If you decide to create a Fantasy Basketball League for your sports program have them visit the NBA's official home page at http://www.nba.com to see how their team is doing.

- Have youth create greeting cards, T-shirts, business cards or stationary. After some practice, youth may be able to develop their own businesses. Family PC Magazine regularly features ideas and software suggestions for young people interested in graphic arts.

- Have youth utilize desktop publishing and Microsoft Publisher to design pages for their poems, writings and stories. Then encourage them to publish their writing in the Beacon newsletter,

- Utilize multimedia encyclopedias and dictionaries such as *American Heritage Children's Dictionary, Storybook Weaver Deluxe, The Amazing Writing Machine,* and *Explorapedia* to give visual learners an opportunity to engage in writing and learning. *The Student Writing and Research Center,* contains templates to help students write reports, newsletters and journals and letters. The program also includes an interactive encyclopedia, thesaurus, atlas and a host of graphic art.

- Don't forget about spreadsheets and data charts. Youth may overcome their fear of numbers when they can see them displayed pictorially.

- For more information check out Family PC, a computer magazine that is available at most bookstores. Family PC regularly reviews software to determine its ease of use, educational value and value. There are also features on inexpensive hardware and software, ideas for Internet projects and entrepreneur businesses youth can start using computers.

- Also Edutainment, a computer software company that specializes in educational products, is a good resource for educational games. Contact Edutainment at (800) 338-3844 or at http://www.edutainco.com.

V. Making Literacy Links: Integrating Literacy into Existing Programs

I'm not a teacher, so how can I put literacy into my projects?

Reading and writing is in everything that we do. The key is to bring out those natural writing experiences and build on them, so that children and youth develop a love of reading. There are opportunities to read and write everyday whether it is completing a grocery list, reading the stops on the subway, reading a magazine or browsing through a catalogue. Every one of these activities provides opportunities to strengthen reading and writing skills. The key is to look for and exploit those opportunities in your Beacon programs. You can learn to look for learning opportunities or *literacy links* in all of your work. *Literacy links* are the ways in which your task, activity or project can be linked to language. For example, every day you take attendance. Have young people write their own names and check their names off the attendance sheet or have young people take turns taking attendance so they can begin to recognize other children's names. Later on when they are reading you can remind them that *mouse* makes the same sound as *Michael* or *Maria*. The following section uses the examples of leadership programs, summer day camps, and recreation to illustrate how Beacons can build *literacy links* in their programs.

Almost every Beacon operates a summer day camp either for small children for teens or for both. Summer camps provide rich opportunities to connect field trips to reading and link literacy and fun. If your group is going to the Bronx Zoo, why not read Curious George? If you liked Green Eggs and Ham as a child, read Dr. Suess to your group and have them write their own poems. One of the keys to getting your children to read will be in creatively introducing the books and getting the children's attention. Rather than just reading or assigning Charlotte's Web, ask children to bring in pictures of their pets or talk about their favorite animals. If you are reading a book about someone from another part of the country or the world ask young people about what they know about the country or their experiences traveling. You can also use movies to introduce books and vice-versa. Disney's *Hercules*,*The Lion King* and *Aladdin* can be used to introduce books of the same name or the concept of myths, folklore and fables. In the previous section we discussed using dramatic play to encourage literacy and almost any five to ten year old can play any of the roles in *The Lion King*.

Another term that is often used with literacy activities is *academic extensions*. Academic extensions are ways in which you take one topic or idea and link it to other academic subject areas. Continuing with the example of *The Lion King*, Beacon staff could have children identify parts of Africa where they could find lions. Older children could do a research report on the kinds and varieties of lions in the world and both groups could take a field trip to the Museum of Natural History or the zoo. Extra points could be awarded to the group who could figure out why lions sit at

the entrance of so many well known buildings including the main branch of the Manhattan library. By engaging your group in these activities that all began with a simple viewing of *The Lion King* you have made academic extensions that will encourage children's learning in geography, social studies, reading, writing and research.

Watch *The Lion King* and then ask the children what moral lessons that Simba learned from his father. Linking reading to other subject areas is a little like putting pieces of a puzzle together. It may seem difficult at first. If you are an artist make the connection to art, if you like football make a sports connection. Try doing the brainstorming with other staff members and it becomes easier. But believe us, the puzzle pieces really do fit.

Do not abandon the idea of *literacy links* when the summer program concludes. Theme based education can also be used during the school year. Devote a portion of your homework help hour to read alouds, book clubs and independent reading. Remember to continue to connect field trips to books. An annual trip to the Rockettes or Shea Stadium can be the culmination of an exploration of New York City theater traditions or the history of the Negro leagues or Latinos contribution to modern baseball. Holiday celebrations can be accompanied by letters to children in the country where the tradition began.

Let's not forget about older youth. Many of the Beacons involve young people in leadership activities. These activities already involve communicating, which as we learned in the earlier section, is the foundation of literacy. Often this communication is oral, so look for ways to weave more reading and writing into your existing leadership activities. Introduce youth to articles about leadership or speeches by well known leaders by reading the pieces aloud. You can also use audio or videotapes which are readily available at local libraries For example have youth read The Autobiography of Malcolm X, visit a mosque, the UN, and the former site of the Audubon Ball room. Encourage youth to read and discuss Ossie Davis' eulogy or ask the young people to write about what would have happened had Malcolm lived. Use your own imagination and your young people's creativity to develop projects related to the book.

Sports can also be used to enhance math and communication skills. Fantasy basketball leagues, where youth select their favorite players to comprise teams that "compete" against each other, can help youth see the relevance of percentages, averages and means. Once the youth select their teams ask them to write out their justification of their selections. At the end of the week, month or season ask them to calculate how close they were to their predictions. Sports can also be used to enhance reading and writing skills. For example, ask your youth to create their very own trading cards. This will require developing their own statistics and writing about themselves. They can write comparisons of themselves to one of the NBA's elite 50, one of baseball's greatest heros or the future legends of the WNBA. Once this project is completed they can learn or improve computer skills by developing scouting reports, or creating their own newsletter or magazine.

You have just read about a few examples of how to infuse literacy into your programs. Take a few minutes today and think of an activity you do everyday in the Beacon and make a *literacy link.*

VI. Homework and Other Issues in Afterschool

We'd love to establish a literacy program but we don't have the funding or the space.

In this manual we have introduced a number of different ways to enhance reading and writing in Beacon programs. We have made an effort to select low-cost projects and ideas, but still there are some costs to developing a literacy-based afterschool program. The first cost is staff to actually do activities like read alouds, writing projects, and journals. Most Beacons have staff members who could be trained to conduct literacy activities. We all have some experience learning to read and write. By drawing on these experiences, both negative and positive, and providing training and follow-up, you can foster a more supportive learning environment in your Beacon. Try to recruit parents, college students and community members to commit an hour or two a week to spend with a group of young people reading aloud.

Once you have the volunteers, parents or staff on board you will have to do some training. Handing a child a book and expecting them to read it is not enough. Whether they are teens, parents, staff or volunteers, adults need to receive training in how to present books and encourage young readers to ask questions. There are a number of organizations that specialize in literacy training that may be able to assist you. Also be sure to call other Beacons and ask them about their programs or better yet, pay them a visit. *Organizations with literacy programs and training organizations are listed in the resource manual in Section XIII.*

With all this talk of reading and writing no one has mentioned the cost of books. Make sure every participant in your program has a library card. Be sure to visit sidewalk sales, flea markets, library sales and discount department stores to find inexpensive books. One Beacon was able to stock their library by asking every guest to bring a hard cover book to the grand opening of their library. The following are some places to obtain low or no cost books:

Books for Kids

Books for Kids was created by a group of people in the publishing business who were struck by the lack of books that are available to poor families. The group set out to get publishing companies to donate 10,000 books to their Holiday Book Drive. They far exceeded their goal and decided to ask publishers for books year round.

☛ For more information contact Liz Quinlan at (212) 252-9168.

Barnes and Noble

Barnes and Noble offers 20% off the cost of all of their books to non-profits. Simply bring in your 501(c)(3) letter when making a purchase.

☛ Check the yellow pages for the Barnes and Noble closest to you.

First Books

With chapters all across the nation, First Books is dedicated to providing free books to children

who otherwise would not have access to books. First Books seeks donations from individuals and purchases books to donate to non-profits. As a result, they are able to purchase new and culturally diverse publications for young people.

☛ For more information call (202) 393-1222.

Many literacy programs throughout the city have redesigned their space to reflect their commitment to literacy. Examples of space renovations include developing book nooks where small tables, bookshelves and comfortable chairs are arranged close to a muraled wall with picture books. A science center can be a grouping of desks where the aquarium sits next to plants grown by children. Well, Beacons do not have the luxury of dedicated space. In lieu of space, Beacons have purchased carts, similar to grocery carts, Yaffa crates, and tote bags which are assigned to group leaders, activity specialists or other afterschool staff. In each cart, bag or box are all the materials needed to run the afternoon activities. Look for a closet or purchase a locker to store these portable libraries.

The last major cost in integrating literacy is time. Developing ideas to creatively introduce books and encourage children and youth to write and keep writing will take time. Time for training, time for brainstorming and time for planning. You are not going to be able to put more hours in the day. So don't make the time – take the time.

But parents want us to do homework

Integrating literacy into your projects does not prevent you from doing homework help. It is up to your Beacon to determine how much, if any, homework assistance to have in your program. But as long as teachers keep assigning homework parents – working and not working, non-English speaking and English speaking, tired and overwhelmed – will seek assistance in ensuring their children's work is done. The fact is that Homework Help may be the most difficult program to staff and to manage that your Beacon may ever have. College students are great tutor resources but college schedules, lack of time for adequate training and long holiday and summer vacations may cause numerous breaks in programming. Teenagers relate well to younger children but they can become frustrated with students who seem to keep stumbling over the same words or have not improved their grades. The same frustration occurs with community members, parents and, yes, Beacon adult staff.

Helping children and youth with homework can quickly move popularly titled "Homework Heaven" into something closer to purgatory. It is important to remind ourselves of what homework was originally intended to do. According to How to Help your Child with Homework, homework serves six primary purposes.

1. Homework encourages children to practice skills they haven't yet fully learned.
2. Homework gives children opportunities to review skills they might otherwise forget.

3. Homework enriches and broadens children's knowledge.
4. Homework teaches responsibility.
5. Homework allows for tasks which are too time-consuming to be finished during school hours.

Well, we obviously all have our own ideas on how much homework reaches any of these goals. But, if you are committed to doing homework in your afterschool program, here are some tips to improve homework help.

Children participate in homework help because their teachers and parents want them to complete their assignments. As Beacon staff your goal should be to help them understand how to complete the task so that in the future they can work independently.

1. **Concentrate on how to read directions.** Show your participants how to break multi-step directions into components. Many times learners do not do well on homework simply because they do not understand the directions.
2. **Think about process as well as product.** The product is the finished homework. The process is how the answers or solutions were derived. When students get answers correct, ask how they got it. When they get answers wrong, ask them to explain their logic.
3. **Avoid doing the work for your learners.** Demonstrate how to solve problems or work together with your students to understand key concepts.

Putting the Help Back in Homework Help

Children do not want to fail in school. Indifference to grades usually comes after months or years of lack of success. Often times children and youth fail not for lack of trying, but not knowing how to try, how to prepare, how to organize and how to study. Study skills empower youth to manage the demands of school. Armed with study skills more youth are able to succeed in school. Instead of waiting for students to become frustrated, Beacons staff can help youth become better learners. The following strategies are designed to help your participants become better learners.

The strategies which follow can be introduced in the opening moments of homework help and reaffirmed during the session. For older youth, you may want to offer a specific session on *How to get to get A's Without Really Trying* on a day when homework assignments are lighter like on a Friday. The following techniques are for older students ages 12-22. In the appendix you will find games to help younger children develop and strengthen the word attack skills needed to help them complete homework assignments.

➜ Train students to "cheat"

Walk participants through their reading material and examine the title, purpose of the chapter or chapter objectives, headings and subheadings, graphic and illustrations, words in boldface type or italics, summary, and questions at the end of the chapter. Let them know that they are all clues to the topic and meaning of the chapter. Help young people predict

questions that may be asked on tests. Let them know that if the teacher mentions it in class and it's in the text it will probably be on the test. In homework sessions, let them know that if they read something they did not know before, it will probably be on the test. Have magazines, books or short articles or stories available for young and older teens.

Have them read the stories and outline the main points of the story or develop a test for the piece. Once they have developed the test, give other students the opportunity to take the test. Remember at first participants may try to "stump" other youth. So, create incentives for youth to do well on other students' tests.

➜ Organizing Readings and Notes

Encourage your participants to create study tools such as outlines, concept maps and index cards to organize information they should know for tests. Using outlines is probably one of the more familiar strategies for studying. Although there is no best way to take notes research suggest that the very act of note taking, in any form, promotes retention of information and increases concentration. It also helps individuals organize, process information and creates study materials. Aside from using a traditional outline with Roman numerals, capital and smaller case letters, there is column notetaking. In order to do column notetaking you must create two vertical columns on the page by drawing a vertical line about one to one and a half inches from the left margin on a piece of paper. Notes should be written on the right of the margin and key words, concepts or questions on the left. The left hand should be filled in as participant reviews notes.

Beacons

School based community centers	40 throughout the city. Operate evening, afterschool and weekend. 27 in middle schools, 12 in elementary schools, 1 in high school.
Funded by Department of Youth and Community Development	Funding is $395,000 per Beacon. Funding originally from Safe Streets, Safe City legislation. Currently part of youth services budget and approved by City Council.
Neighborhood based	15 Beacons in Brooklyn, 9 in Queens, 7 in Manhattan, 8 in the Bronx and one Beacon and a mini-Beacon on Staten Island. Beacons are managed by CBO's who have a history of service delivery in the community.

Mind or concept maps help make the main idea of an article, story or book leap off of the page. Mind maps provide a picture of a subject and the relationships between ideas in a visual way. By using key words a participant can condense a large subject into a smaller one making it more manageable. In order to create a mind map brainstorm the main ideas of the piece. Then on a piece of paper place the main idea in the center of the page and scatter the other ideas on the page. Then brainstorm ideas that are related to the main ideas. Those ideas should be written around the main idea and lines drawn to connect them. *To create a concept map, follow these four steps.*

1. List the key concepts in the text. Aim to express each concept in three words or less. Most concept words are nouns, including terms and proper names.

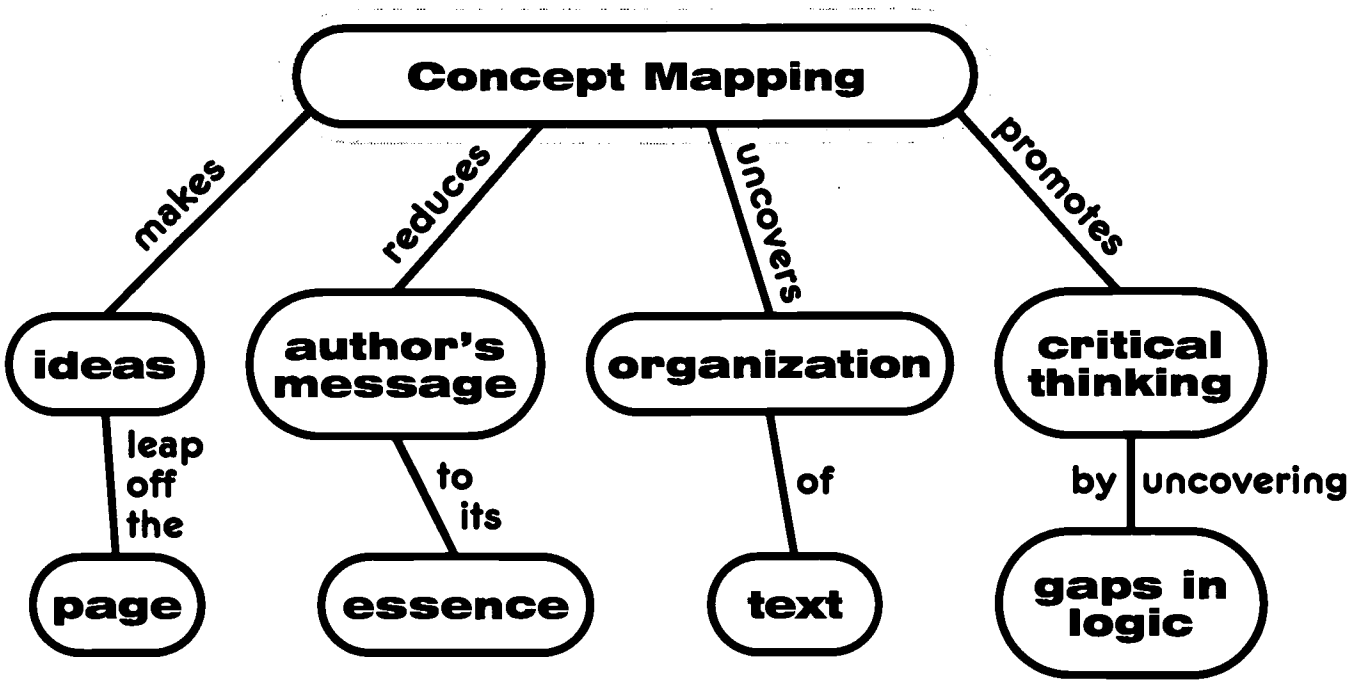
   At this point you can list the concepts in any order. For ease in ranking the concepts later, you might wish to write each one on a single 3x5 card.

2. Rank the concepts so that they flow from general to specific. On a large sheet of paper, write the main concept at the top of the page. Include the most specific concepts near the bottom. Arrange the remaining concepts in appropriate places throughout the middle of the page.

3. Draw lines that connect the concepts. On these connecting lines, add words that describe the relationship between the concepts. Again, limit yourself to the fewest words needed to make an accurate link. Linking words are often verbs, verb phrases, or prepositions.

4. Finally, review your map. Look for any concepts that are repeated in several places on the map. Eliminate these repetitions by adding more links between concepts. Also look for accurate linking words and missing concepts.

   Below is a sample concept map based on the first paragraph of this article.



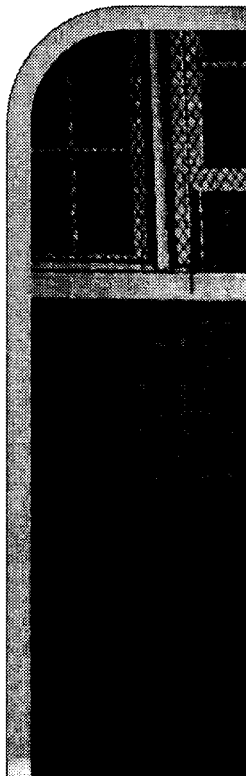
them. Start out by bringing in tapes of the news and ask participants to take notes and compare them at the end of the broadcast. Then ask young people to watch at home and compare each other's notes in afterschool the next day. You may want to begin this exercise with something a little more interesting at first like Sportscenter or even a popular show.

The last idea for organizing ideas and information is the use of *index cards*. Index cards can be used to organize information. Preparing the cards is an important part of the studying process. They should contain key facts, ideas and concepts. Once the cards are prepared they can be reviewed while waiting for the bus or subway as well as during specific study periods. The cards can contain pictures as well as writing. Youth should be encouraged to use whatever works best for them.

What is important to remember is that note taking is a skill that is rarely taught and easier said then done. Encourage youth to practice note taking in your program. Ask youth to write down key words and ideas on the evening news and organizing the information that was presented. Have participants review the notes during commercials and develop mind maps, index cards or outlines depending on what is the best study technique for

➜ Keep notes on individual progress

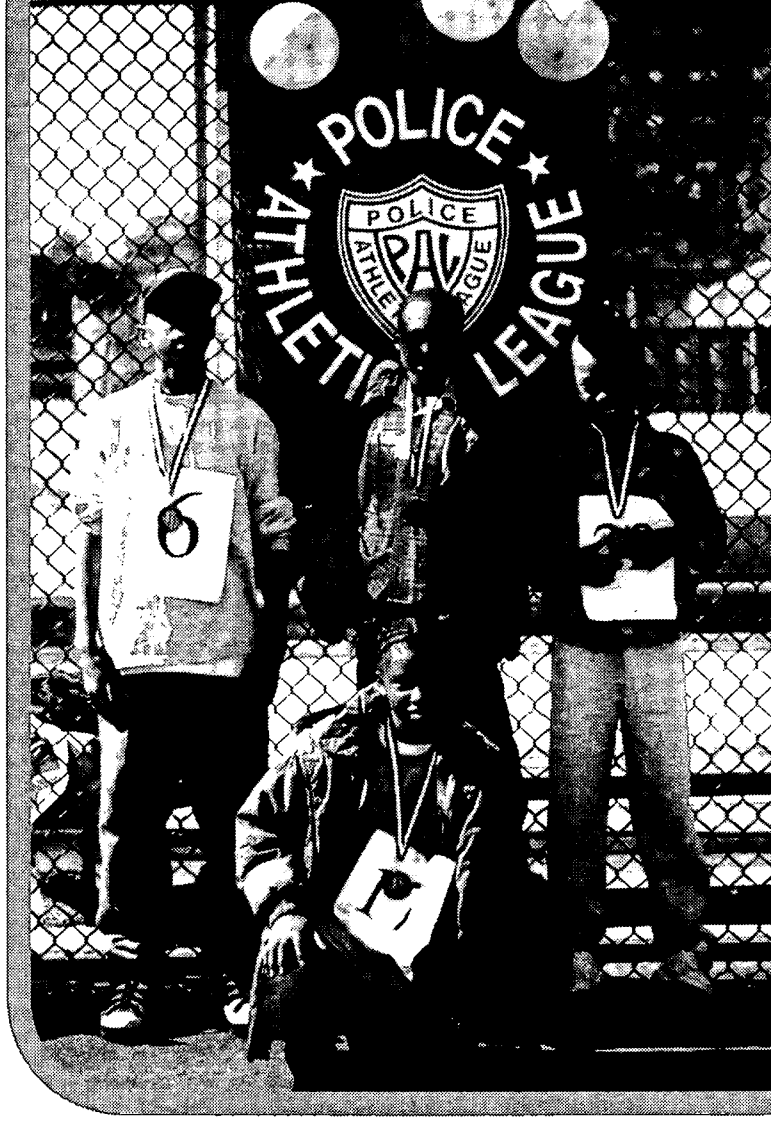
Beacon staff do not often have the luxury of working one-on-one with young people. As a result, it is difficult to keep track of students' progress or to evaluate the success of your program. Even if you're working with a large group keep notes on children and youth's progress. Keeping track of students' progress is not only good for the student but it helps keep you motivated. If you are working with a large group divide the group into smaller groups of three or four. Each day of the week make notes on one group of youth. These notes can be in the form of index cards or a checkoff list. Once you complete a few weeks of lists or see a



pattern you can bring them to your supervisor's attention.

A conversation about homework would not be complete without discussing report cards. Most Beacons have implemented some type of system so that staff members view participants' report cards on a regular basis. Unfortunately, these grades, how they were determined and how they can be improved, can be as mystifying for Beacons staff as they are for parents. You may want to develop your own Beacon report card. The report card should not replace the school's official transcript, but it can give parents a sense of how their child is progressing in an out of school setting.

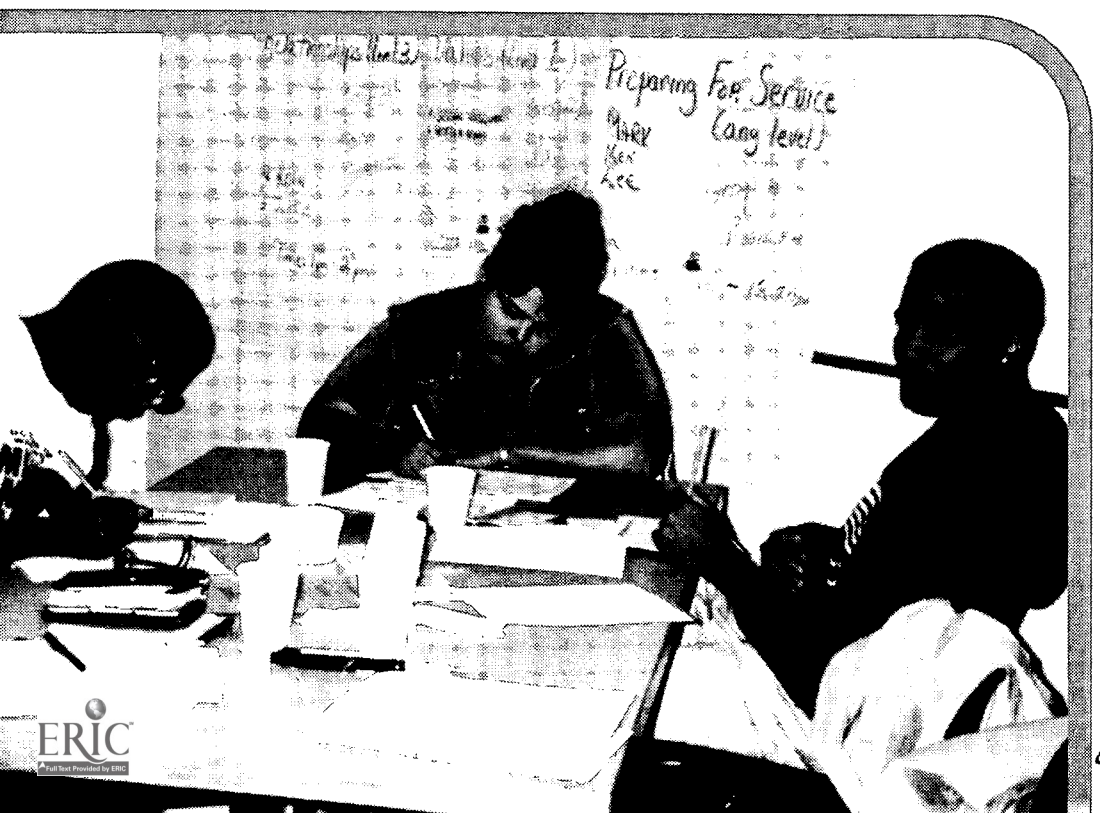
☛ For more information on how to support teenagers and college students in becoming better students see the book Becoming a Master Student by David Ellis.



VII. Building Bridges:
Fostering Learning at Home

How Can We Get Parents More Involved?

When parents become involved in their children's education, we can expect to achieve more positive outcomes for youth. Research shows that when parents are partners in their children's education the results are improved student achievement, improved graduation rates, and better overall school attendance. But how do we get parents involved, especially when many have not had positive educational experiences themselves? Providing these parents with the knowledge, skills and support to be the first teachers of their children is indeed a complex task. The following sections are designed to assist you in your efforts.



Getting The Parent's Ear: Effective One-On-One Communication

All right, so now we have you convinced. Parental support can help children learn better and make your job a whole lot easier. Unfortunately, many parents fail to see how they can contribute to their children's academic achievement and are quite simply intimidated by the prospect of becoming involved. This is where you come in. You must convince parents that they are capable of playing an important role in the academic success of their children regardless of their level of education. But how will you reach and communicate with parents? Some traditional methods of communication include one-on-one telephone conversations, written notes or letters, or parent conferences. While you may use any or all of these methods, good "people skills" will go a long way towards helping youth workers communicate effectively with parents. Good listening techniques, kindness, tact, empathy, enthusiasm and an understanding of parent-child relationships are all important.

The following is a list of six Guidelines for Communication which you as a youth worker should keep in mind as you communicate with parents one-on-one:

1. Recognize that Beacons and homes have shared goals and different roles.

It is important that Beacons and parents share the same goals for children. However, although the goals are similar, the roles each must play in the children's development are different but complimentary. Parents have primary responsibility for their children's physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Beacons are there to support both parents and youth.

2. Show that you respect parents.

Treat parents with respect. We communicate respect through our body language, facial expressions, word choice and tone of voice. Losing patience with a parent will convince a parent that you are impatient with their children as well.

3. Prepare an agenda.

Before meeting with parents, plan questions to ask, points to make and suggestions to offer. This will help make your message short, simple and straightforward. Be sure to begin with a positive comment.

4. Tailor communications to your audience

Communicate clearly and directly with parents using plain language. Remember that your objective is to be understood while earning the parents' respect and trust. Don't patronize.

5. Get expert help if you need it.

Don't hesitate to call upon professionals – such as social workers – to help you reach parents.

6. Communication is a two-way street. Invite responses when communicating with parents.

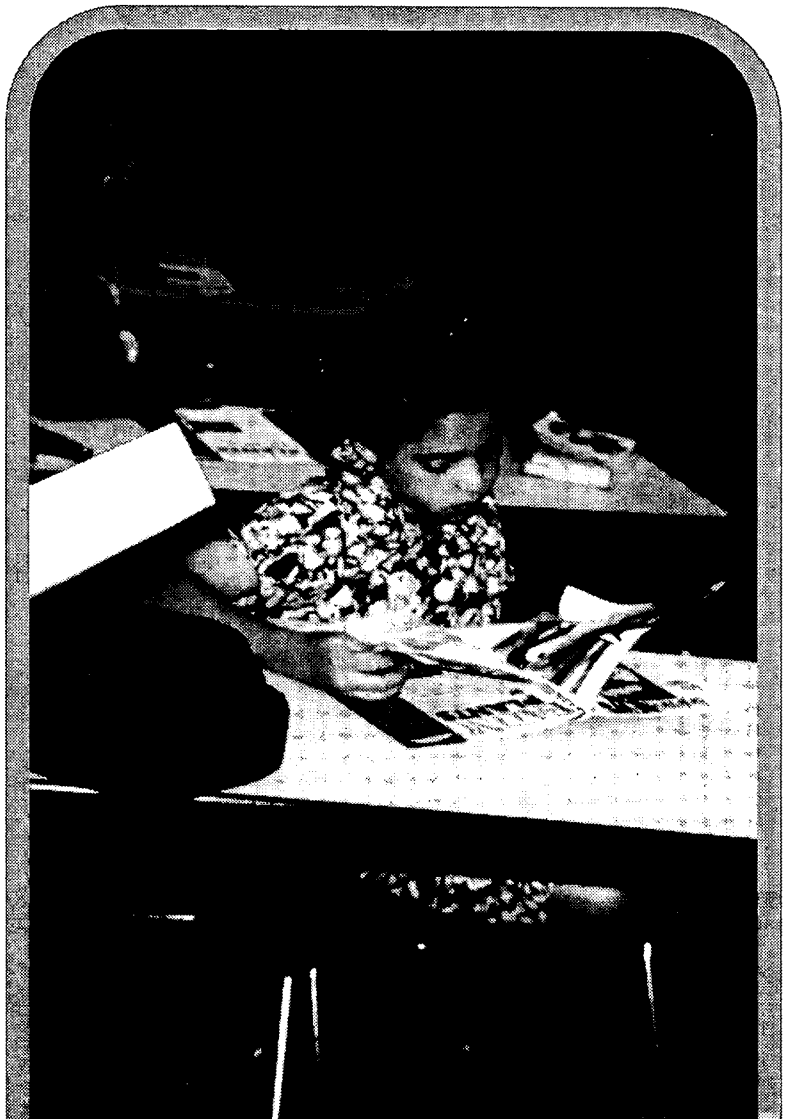
Parents know their children and can assist program staff in developing appropriate strategies to help children achieve.

Encourage parents to ask questions or share any suggestions they might have. Provide them with contact information so that they can reach you whenever necessary.

Helping Parents Help Children: Seven Steps to Encouraging Learning at Home

Now that you have the ear of parents, what will you tell them? How can parents contribute to their children's education? Perhaps the most basic needs that parents must meet are the physical ones. Research has shown that hunger and poor nutrition have negative effects on educational performance. In addition to lower achievement scores, hungry or malnourished children have trouble fighting off infection and are thus more likely to get sick, miss school and fall behind in class. Regular exercise and rest are also important aspects of health that are essential to a child's educational performance. Parents ought to see to it that children get an opportunity to exercise daily and have sufficient sleep – 8 to 9 hours daily. Proper food, rest and exercise prepare children to perform at high levels.

In addition to these very basic physical supports which parents may provide, there are a number of other ways in which parents may positively affect their children's education. Parents should be encouraged to reinforce basic reading and writing skills taught in school through real-life practice and supplementary learning activities at home. By now you're probably scratching your heads. You're asking yourselves, "How can we expect parents to contribute to their children's educations when many parents feel uncomfortable with their own reading and writing skills?" We believe that, with your guidance, such parents can feel comfortable contributing to their children's educations. There are many opportunities for parents to get involved in the education of their children. The following steps outline some of the opportunities that parents have to contribute along with some suggestions for how Beacons can support parents in these efforts.



Step 1: Talk to Your Children

One opportunity, perhaps so often overlooked because of its simplicity, is the simple practice of talking with one's child. Through engaging children in conversation and family discussions, much needed language development can occur. It is important to note that parents should not hesitate to use new words with children, as this is an ideal way for children to develop their vocabularies. The benefits of parent-child conversation go beyond language and vocabulary development however. Parents that communicate with their children are taking a huge step towards building and sustaining good family relations.

How Can Beacons Support This?

Sponsor intergenerational activities at events such as a Beacon Family Night. Activities could be designed to encourage communication between parents and their children. For example, do you remember the popular 80's television show the Newlywed Game?

Create a take-off on this game where children and parents are asked to answer questions that will determine exactly how much they know about their other family members. Send one children out of the room and ask parents questions such as, "What would your daughter say is her best talent or skill?" or "Who's your child's favorite sports or movie star?" Call the children back into the room and ask them to guess what answers their parents gave to each question. Award points for all questions that contestants answer correctly.

Step 2: Encourage a Reading Habit

Parents should directly encourage attempts at reading One of the best ways to do this is to keep the home well stocked with reading material. If children are surrounded by reading material, they will read. Also, parents should read to their young children. Children that are read to learn to look at pictures for meaning and are much better prepared to learn to read in school. Once children learn to read, they should be encouraged to read aloud to parents. This shared enjoyment of reading will reinforce your child's appreciation for it.

How Can Beacons Support This?

Host Beacon Family Reading Hours at which Beacon staff could model how parents should read with their children. Set up a library on site for use by children and parents with a borrowing system. To stock the library, check out local department stores and flea markets for good books at reasonable prices. A more inexpensive way to encourage a reading habit is by getting a library card and helping children select and check out new books on a regular basis. Today's libraries also provide music, computers, video, puppet shows, story hours and even field trips that parents and children may

explore together. It should be stressed that children's books are not the only source of suitable reading materials however. Comics, cereal boxes, advertisements, newspapers, magazines, street signs and menus all represent possible reading materials for children. Any and all attempts at reading should be encouraged. Additionally, to ensure that books are returned in good condition, hand out special bags for the children to decorate. These will be the children's special bags to be used for books only. Additionally, Beacons can sponsor book clubs and reading contests.

Step 3: Encourage Writing

Attempts at writing ought to be encouraged as well. Children can write shopping lists, stories, movie reviews and letters among other things. They should be encouraged to express their feelings in writing by keeping a daily journal. Also, parents can help and encourage children to write letters to friends and relatives or dictate their own letters to children. Writing, like all other skills, requires a great deal of practice. With a little creativity, parents can provide numerous opportunities for children to practice these skills.

Children love to receive mail. Getting a crisp manila envelope with an undisclosed treasure inside is the next best thing to a holiday for some children. Thus parents may use mail to encourage writing at home. If a child expresses interest in going to Great Adventure, have him/her write a letter to the park asking for information. Most businesses are happy to respond to

How Can Beacons Support This?

Incorporate writing into all Beacon activities. If your youth express interest in going to a concert, take them, but insist that they try writing their own songs in exchange. If they express interest in sports, have them create their own sports trading cards. This will require youth to write biographies and stats. When playing games, encourage youth to agree upon rules and put them in writing before they begin playing. This will help avoid arguments and provide writing opportunities. Encourage journal writing *(see Section Four of this manual)*.

As you must well know, adolescence is when youth start to become more aware of what's around them, both negative and positive. As youth begin to voice their critical opinions, steer them towards decision makers, encouraging them to write letters to officials. This will help youth get a sense that their views count and that they can make a difference.

requests for information. Not only will children get an opportunity to develop writing skills, but they will also feel a sense of self-efficacy. Children will perhaps begin to view writing as a worthwhile activity only when they understand the practical purposes of it. Parents can see to it that they do.

Step 4: Practice What You Preach

Unfortunately, children often do as adults do rather than as they say. Accordingly, as a child's most important role model, parents should encourage reading and writing through doing so themselves. If a child never sees his/her parent reading or writing, s/he may think that these are skills only used in school. However, if a child senses that his/her parent enjoys reading and writing, s/he is more likely to follow the parent's lead in coming to value these activities as well.

How Can Beacons Support This?

Serve as reading role models outside of school. You, as youth workers, have tremendous influence over youth. Thus, you should make a point of modeling desirable behavior. When you ask youth to write in their journals, write in your own. Try to create opportunities for youth to "catch" you reading. Show that you value reading and writing and the youth will follow.

Step 5: Turn Household Chores Into Learning Opportunities

Routine household duties such as cooking and shopping provide valuable opportunities for children to develop their skills in a practical environment.

Cooking requires children to read recipes, make measurements and follow directions, all essential life skills which children can develop while spending some quality time with their parents. A trip to the grocery store can also yield some valuable learning opportunities. Grocery shopping together

How Can Beacons Support This?

Sponsor cooking classes for parents and children. The class could include units on clipping coupons, budgeting, and nutrition with field trips to the supermarket. Beacon staff could use this opportunity to foster a healthy learning relationship between parent and child while teaching some interesting and useful life skills.

allows parent and child to discuss prices and bargains so that children can practice math skills while learning the value of money. Participating in household duties allows the child to feel as though s/he is a contributing part of the family.

Step 6: TV: Use It, Don't Abuse It

Forbidding television viewing altogether is unrealistic and undesirable. Used effectively, children can learn a great deal from television. Parents can use its appeal to improve oral comprehension and promote reading and critical thinking. Parents should make an effort to watch television with children whenever possible. Television should be used as a tool to foster communication between parent and child rather than as a baby-sitter. When watching television with children, parents are urged to pose questions such as: "Has anything like this ever happened to you?", "What do you think will happen next?", "What would have happened if . . . ?" Additionally, parents are advised to provide children with reading materials which relate to subjects seen on television. Some recommended television programs for young viewers are: "Sesame Street", "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood", "Captain Kangaroo", "The Reading Rainbow", "Eureeka's Castle", and "Shining Time Station".

How Can Beacons Support This?

Sponsor a TV-watching workshop. At this workshop, parents and children would be invited to watch television programs together. Beacon staff should use this opportunity to model follow up questions that parents can ask their children during television viewing.

Bring in tapes of popular shows and play them, stopping at appropriate intervals to ask questions. Challenge parents and children to compare TV to real life.

Step 7: Keep Lines of Communication Open

Parents should review and discuss papers and projects that their children complete in school. Parents should ask open ended questions such as, "What do you like best about school?" or "What do you like worst about school?" The more information like this a parent has, the more prepared s/he will be when problems arise. Help, praise and encouragement should be offered when appropriate. Above all, parents are encouraged to praise effort rather than results. Knowing that someone cares and appreciates their hard work will give children the confidence and motivation needed to persevere and succeed.

How Can Beacons Support This?

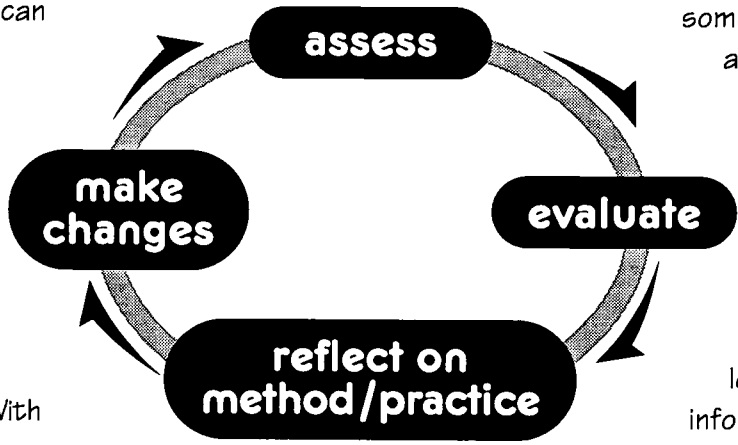
Initiate communication between parents and children. Offer constant praise of children's efforts and keep parents informed of successes. Don't wait until problems arise to get in touch with parents. Get in the habit of contacting at least one parent a week with good news about their child. These "sunshine calls" are very much appreciated by both parents and children. Keep track of them and try to see to it that each parent gets one every few months.

Support parents in their interaction with school staff. Be available on parent-teacher nights to escort parents to the meeting or to prepare parents for the conference or to discuss a teacher's comments and how they can better support their children in the future.

VIII. Assessment

So, how am I doing?

You have successfully incorporated literacy into your program. Youth are reading and writing and engaged in various literacy activities. But are they really increasing their skills? Are they reading and writing better? Are they enjoying these activities and benefiting from them? And when your supervisor, your funder, or other staff ask you how effective your programs are, what can you tell them?



Assessment and **Evaluation** serve two purposes. They help you to determine what is going right and what is going wrong with your program. With this information, you can make appropriate changes, so that your program gets better and better. In addition, assessment and evaluation can help give you concrete information about how the youth in your program are doing. Armed with this information, you can stave off cuts in funding and maybe even increase funding for your program.

Assessment and Evaluation can seem scary and complex. Sometimes agencies pay professional evaluators to come in and look at what you are doing and write lengthy analyses of various aspects of your program. Certainly evaluations vary in scope and intensity. But as the person closest to their programs, you may be in the best position to gather meaningful information about your participants and the progress they make. The following are some tips for assessing and evaluation of the literacy components of your program.

1. The difference between Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment is the collecting of information about something, while evaluation is making judgments about information in comparison to a standard. For example, you might assess a young person's learning by collecting information on how often he or she reads and at what level. You might then evaluate that young person's strengths and areas of need, compared with information about typical age and reading comprehension levels.

2. An important way to gather information is through observation

Things to observe when young people are reading:

- ✓ How did they select what they would read and how long did the selection take?

- ✓ How are they handling the books?
- ✓ Do they read the same book each day?
- ✓ Are they understanding what they are reading?
- ✓ Are they talking to others about what they are reading?
- ✓ Do they get distracted easily?

Other components of reading to look out for:

- ✓ Do young people enjoy listening to others read out loud?
- ✓ Do they choose to read on their own?
- ✓ Can they retell stories they have read or heard?
- ✓ Can they go back to what they have read to find details?
- ✓ Do they recognize most words on sight?
- ✓ Do they enjoy reading a variety of types of works?
- ✓ Do they read aloud with confidence and expression?

Things to observe when young people are writing:

- ✓ How do they choose what topic to write about?
- ✓ How confident do they seem (are they writing quickly, slowly, thoughtfully, painfully?)
- ✓ How are they using words?
- ✓ Are they talking about what they write?

Other components of writing to look out for:

- ✓ Can they form letters correctly and write so that others can read what they wrote?
- ✓ Do they use various forms of punctuation correctly (capital letters, periods, commas, question marks, exclamation points, quotation marks?)
- ✓ Can they spell and look up spelling of words when necessary?
- ✓ Can they plan what they want to write and write in a logical order?
- ✓ Can they use paragraphs?
- ✓ Can they use interesting and descriptive words?
- ✓ Can they proofread and edit their own work?

Don't forget – *speaking and listening are important skills, necessary to achieve reading and writing success. Here are some things to look out for when observing young people's speaking and listening skills:*

- ✓ Do they pay attention when others talk?
- ✓ Are they able to follow instructions?
- ✓ Do they take part in small and large group discussions?
- ✓ Do they enjoy talking with others?
- ✓ Can they speak their thoughts fluently and confidently?

3. A good way to gather information is by asking participants questions, asking them to respond to written questions, or asking them to take part in evaluation exercises. The following are examples.

On The Bean – *This is a method of evaluation that involves three different kinds of beans (or you can use buttons or poker chips in three colors). Label one kind of bean (or one color item) "Great", another "OK", and the other "Awful." Place a clear jar in the room.*

Have program participants put the bean or colored button or chip that best describes what they are feeling about what is going on in the jar. By looking at the jar, you can keep a running sense of how things are going during your activity.

☛ Adapted from Reading, Writing and Reviewing, National Helpers Network, Inc.

Enthusiasm Measure Chart (from Effective Literacy Assessment by Sarracino, Herrmann, Batdorf, and Garfinkel) on page 47.

Tool for Documenting Learner Competencies (from The Reading Teacher, Vol.50, No.4, Feb., 1997) on page 48-9.

You can also create your own questions and your own methods of asking them.

In order to keep track of how everyone is doing and how the program is going, you need to ask questions or conduct evaluation exercises more than once. You might want to conduct some form of assessment or evaluation once a week, once a month, or three times over the course of your program. But remember, the more information you collect about how things are going, the easier it will be to make improvements in your program activities. And the easier it will be to show others how your program participants progressed.

4. Keeping a collection of your participants' work (a portfolio) helps provide ongoing information about how well they are doing.

Portfolios can include a number of items:

Reading Response Journals are ways in which young people can record their reactions to what they have read. While you don't want to test young people on what they read, you can get a sense of their level of comprehension and enjoyment through these journals.

Writing Samples give you a great indication of how well young people write. By keeping samples of the various writings that your participants do (whether journal entries, poems, letters, newsletter articles, or other things) you can track changes/improvements in spelling, punctuation, form, organization, and quality of work. You may want to involve the youth in reviewing their own work by asking them to put stars on writing that they thought was most important and then ask why they selected those pieces.

Opinions, Goals, Ideas – These are all things that can be recorded and added to your participants' portfolios. You may want to ask them questions about reading (what kinds of things do you like to read and why?), about what they think (which activities help you to learn best?) and about their goals (what do you want to accomplish in the next 6 weeks?) Again, these types of questions are most useful when asked several times over the course of your program, so you can note changes in your participants.

The following Enthusiasm Measure (adapted from McKenna and Kear, 1990) explores changes in learners' attitudes toward reading. The form was created by modifying an elementary reading attitude survey developed by McKenna and Kear (1990)

Enthusiasm Measure

Learner's Name: **Date:**

		always	sometimes	never
1.	I always enjoy my reading lessons.	☺	😐	☹
2.	Reading is interesting.	☺	😐	☹
3.	Reading is my best subject in school.	☺	😐	☹
4.	I care about reading better.	☺	😐	☹
5.	I like to read in front of people.	☺	😐	☹
6.	I like to read about new ideas.	☺	😐	☹
7.	I try hard to understand new material when I read.	☺	😐	☹
8.	I really like to read at home.	☺	😐	☹
9.	As I learn new ways to think about reading, I am more interested in reading.	☺	😐	☹
10.	I enjoy answering questions about stories I read.	☺	😐	☹
11.	I learn a lot when I read.	☺	😐	☹
12.	I like to read hard books.	☺	😐	☹
13.	I like to read aloud.	☺	😐	☹
14.	When I read hard books, I feel smart.	☺	😐	☹

A Tool for Documenting What I've Learned

My Name: _____

My Group: _____

The Day I Began: _____

The Day I Finished: _____

"We believe that literacy enhances personal and career achievement and provides a source of enrichment and joy in life."

Language arts curricular outcomes. This is what I can do in Grade 3.

On the way to reading fluency

R1	Specific Reading Outcomes	date	I can do it!	I saw you do it!
R 1.1	I enjoy listening to chapter stories.			
R 1.2	I choose to read independently.			
R 1.3	I choose to explore unfamiliar resources.			
R 1.4	I share creatively about books I have read.			
R 1.5	I share my feelings about books.			
R 1.6	I can retell stories in sequence.			
R 1.7	I can recall facts from informational books.			
R 1.8	I can reread for details.			
R 1.9	My English language experience is OK for reading.			
R 1.10	I recognize the basic sight words.			
R 1.11	I enjoy reading a variety of literature.			

R2	Oral Reading Fluency	date	I can do it!	I saw you do it!
R 2.1	When I read aloud, I observe punctuation.			
R 2.2	I read with confidence and expression.			

R3	Reading Attitudes	date	I can do it!	I saw you do it!
R 3.1	I choose to read because I enjoy reading.			
R 3.2	I can select books that I enjoy and can read.			
E 3.3	I like to share reading materials with others.			

On the way to writing fluency

W1	The Conventions of Handwriting	date	I can do it!	I saw you do it!
W 1.1	I can form letters correctly.			
W 1.2	I can join letters correctly in cursive writing.			
W 1.3	I can space my words correctly.			
W 1.4	I write so others can read what I have to say.			

W2 The Conventions of Punctuation in Writing		date	I can do it!	I saw you do it!
W 2.1	I can use capital letters at the right times.			
W 2.2	I can use periods at the right times.			
W 2.3	I can use commas at the right times.			
W 2.4	I can use question marks at the right times.			
W 2.5	I can use exclamation marks at the right times.			
W 2.6	I can use quotation marks at the right times.			

W3 The Conventions of Spelling in Writing		date	I can do it!	I saw you do it!
W 3.1	I follow phonetic rules when they work.			
W 3.2	I can use basic sight words.			
W 3.3	I can use a dictionary or spellcheck to check.			

W4 Creative Writing		date	I can do it!	I saw you do it!
W 4.1	I can plan my writing tasks.			
W 4.2	I can sequence my ideas logically.			
W 4.3	I can form paragraphs with main ideas.			
W 4.4	I can use interesting and colorful words.			
W 4.5	I can proofread and edit my first drafts.			
W 4.6	I can write short stories.			

On the way to listening competency

L1 Specific Listening Skills		date	I can do it!	I saw you do it!
L 1.1	I enjoy listening to my teacher read.			
L 1.2	I enjoy listening to my classmates read.			
L 1.3	I listen attentively when my teacher talks.			
L 1.4	I listen attentively when my classmates talk.			
L 1.5	I follow instructions.			
L 1.6	I enjoy talking with a small group.			
L 1.7	I enjoy participating in large group discussions.			
L 1.8	I enjoy a variety of listening activities.			

On the way to speaking fluency

S1 Specific Speaking Skills		date	I can do it!	I saw you do it!
S 1.1	I like to give information to others.			
S 1.2	I like to talk with my teacher.			
S 1.3	I like to talk with other students.			
S 1.4	I speak with appropriate grammar.			
S 1.5	I can speak my thoughts fluently and confidently.			

Adapted from "The Reading Teacher", Designing A User-Friendly Curriculum Guide for Practical Applications, 4, February 1997

IX. Additional Resources

Word Attack Games for 6-12 Year olds

Taming the Dragons

These games make it easy.

Use these 3 games, in the order presented, to nail sight vocabulary down:

"Show Me" ➡ **"Flip It"** ➡ **"Knock, Knock"**

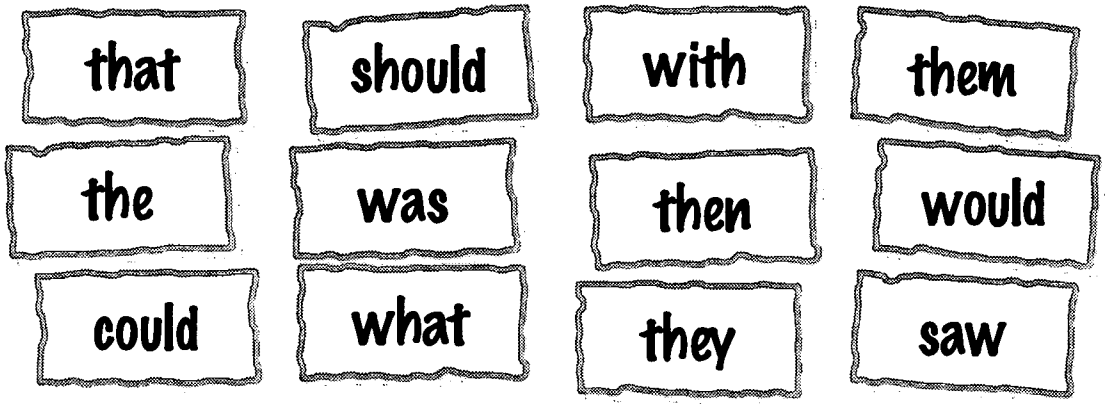
Do not proceed from "Show Me" to "Flip It" until your child can play "Show Me" *perfectly.*
Do not proceed to "Knock, Knock" until your child can play "Flip It"with *100% accuracy.*

Materials:

- ✓ 3 x 5 cards
- ✓ Record sheet found in the Chapter Nine Appendix
- ✓ Colored marker
- ✓ Lists of words – both the ones your child knows and the ones he's currently working on. Get these lists from your child's reading teacher.

FIRST GAME: **"Show Me"**

1. Double-check: ask him to read all the words he's supposed to know already, to make absolutely sure that he can read seven of those twelve words. Do not proceed until you have seven words he knows *well* in the stack.
2. Mix the cards and lay them all, face up, on a table or the floor, like this:



3. Say to your child, "Show me..." and name one of the words. If your child finds the word he can turn it over.

4. Continue: "Show me..." "Good! Show me... ." Plan ahead so that the card facing up is one he already knows, not one of the newer words.

5. If he's having difficulties with the new words, give clues. For instance you can say "It's a three-letter word" or "The last letter is a t."

6. For the last word left face-up, change what you say: "What does this word say?" Since you made sure one of his known words would be the last one facing up, he'll be able to read it.

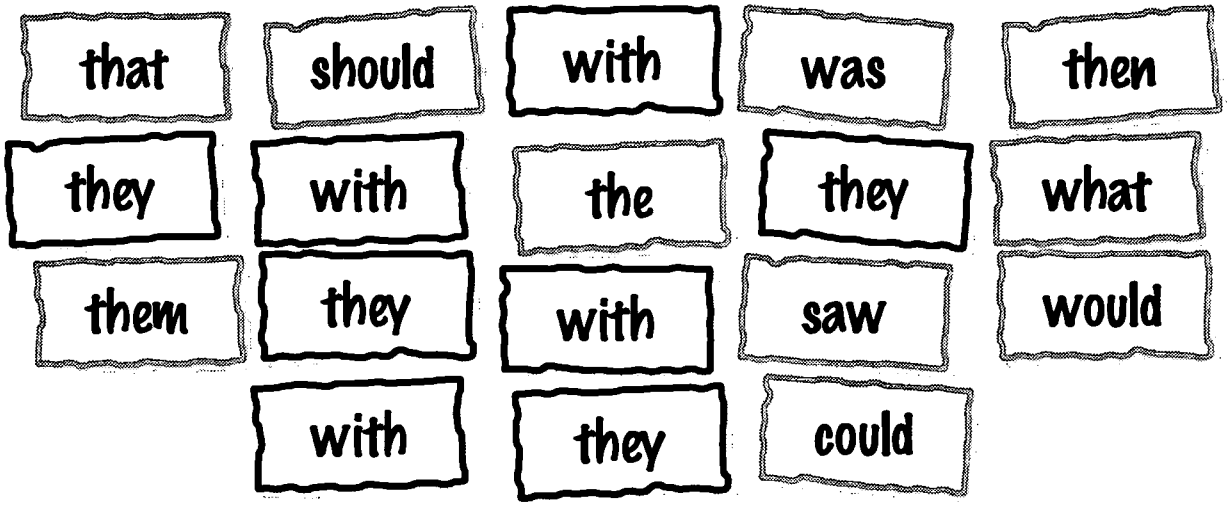
7. When he can play "Show Me" and get all the words right with no clues or hesitation, he's ready to go to the next game.

SECOND GAME: "Flip It"

1. Lay out the cards just as you did at the beginning of "Show Me," face up.

2. This time your child should scan the cards. Each time he spots one he can read he should read it and then flip it over. He continues reading until all the words have been flipped over. It doesn't matter what order he reads the cards in; just mix them up each time so he doesn't see them in the same place each time.

3. Write troublesome words three more times so he sees those words more often. In this example, the child had difficulty learning with and they, so now each of them are in the cards four times instead of only once.



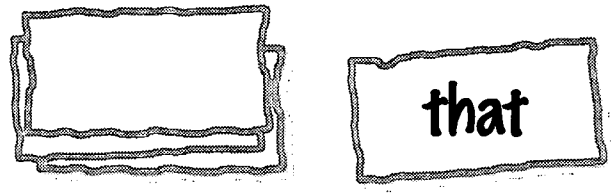
4. It's all right if he reads all the cards saying the same word at the same time. For instance, he can read with and flip it, and then read the other three copies of with one after the other: "with... with... with... !"

5. When he can play "Flip It" and get all the words right with no clues and no hesitation, he's ready to go to the next game.

FIRST GAME: **"Knock, Knock"**

For some reason children just love this game. We suspect the reason is that they realize they're learning, and leaning is a lot of fun when it works well. Follow the instructions to this game precisely because although they seem silly, they help the child focus his attention.

1. Place the cards mixed up and in a stack, face-down.
2. Your child should make a fist and rap twice (not once, and not three times) on the top card. He says "Knock, knock" as he raps. Don't allow any variation; the repetition of this pattern, done quite consistently, increases accuracy.
3. You turn the top card over and say "Who's there?"
4. Your child reads the card.
5. If he gets it right, he sets it aside. If he misses it, you read the word correctly for him and put it back somewhere in the middle of the pile.



Continue until the stack is finished.

Other Games

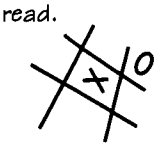
(Use these only after your child has mastered "Show Me," "Flip It" and "Knock, Knock.")

"Concentration"

1. Write each word (up to twelve words) twice on 3 x 5 cards, making 24 cards.
2. Shuffle the cards and lay them out face-down on table or floor.
3. Have your child turn two cards up and read them. If the words match, he keeps them and gets another turn. If they don't match, it's your turn to try. Whoever gets the most pairs wins.

Note: Be sure your child reads each word as he turns them up. It's quite possible for him to play this game – and win – using words he can't read.

"Tic Tac Toe"



Play Tic Tac Toe the standard way, but both parent and child should read a word before taking a turn.

To have a little extra fun with the game, you can deliberately misread a word occasionally. If your child catches your mistakes he gets an extra turn.

"Go Fish"

Make a card deck by writing each word four times. Then you play "Go Fish" the standard way, except the child asks for words: "Do you have any cards that say 'with?'"

Enhancing Learning through Word Games

Most word games require few or no materials and can be played in classrooms, afterschool, while traveling on the train, waiting at a doctor's office, walking to school, or just about anywhere two or more people are together. Word games enlarge vocabularies, enhance word knowledge and usage, and encourage players to think creatively. The more frequently players engage in word games, the more proficient they become in the use of verbal skills.

Hot Seat

Together, the group chooses a story that everyone knows, such as a fairy tale. One player is selected to play the role of a main character in the story. If the group is large, every character in the story can be represented. The chosen players take a seat – the Hot Seat – in front of the rest of the group. While in the Hot Seat, a person must try to think and talk like the character he or she represents. The games begin with audience asking questions concerning events in the story. The person in the hot seat can be asked how the character felt, why they did what they did or what they may have done differently if they had the opportunity.

Outta This World

A leader draws a large circle on a chalkboard or paper and thinks of any category into which objects or other things can be classified. The other players try to guess the category by first naming words which could fit in any category. If the word fits the secret category, the leader says "It's in this world." If the word does not fit the category, the leader writes "It's out this world." For example, if the category was NBA Basketball, Michael Jordan would be inside the circle, but John Thompson would be "Out this world."

Parts of Speech

Players divide into groups of four to six. Each player is assigned one of the following parts of speech: noun, verb, adjective and adverb (for four players). With a fifth player, add a prepositional phrase, with a sixth player, add a second adjective or prepositional phrase. The players think of their word and reveal their choices one by one. The players arrange the words so that they create a sentence, no matter how silly it sounds.

The Haunted House

One person becomes the storyteller and makes up a story about a haunted house (or any other subject), using characters and words identified in advance by the group. For example, words could include monster, coffin, clock, ghost, candle, cat, dracula, spider and door. The group decides on a sound or action with which to "act out" each of the identified words every time the storyteller mentions it in the story. For example the word clock might be acted out with the sound "tick-tock" and the back and forth swaying of the body. The storyteller begins the tale, sure to include each identified word several times. The listeners must act out the words every time they hear them.

Adverbs

The Guesser leaves the room while the other people decide on an adverb. Some easy verbs are "quickly," "loudly," "happily," or "gently." When the players have decided on the adverb, they call the Guesser back to the group. The Guesser then asks individual members of the group to perform an action in the manner described by the adverb. For example, the guesser may say, "Say hello in the manner prescribed by the adverb." Players may decide at the start of the game how many commands and guesses the Guesser can make before the adverb is revealed.

Enhancing Learning in Your Summer Program

Journal Writing

Writing like rap is based on "sampling." Encourage youth to find a "beat," character, interest or theme they like and encourage them to pursue it.

- Have young people develop stories based on their favorite TV characters or characters from a book. Youth and children can be asked to write a story about a "typical" day for Superman, Michael Jordan or Hilary Clinton.
- Play popular music and ask youth to respond in their journals to questions you have developed.
- Give youth open-ended questions for them to respond to in their journals so they do not have to start from scratch, eg. Two things people don't know about me are..., This week, I learned..., One thing that frustrates me in my neighborhood is...
- Develop a group journal where individuals are responsible for contributing their own page which is the "best of" their summer work.
- Create dialogue journals where counselors actually respond in writing to the young people's journal entries.

Fun With Books

Unfortunately for many young people reading is associated with textbooks only. This summer show young people that reading can include Sports Illustrated, Essence, VIBE and Latina.

- Create a Book Club where young people read a book centered on their interest.
- Book buddies – teenagers can read to younger children encouraging children to ask questions, and predict the story based on the pictures.
- Book Contest – leading to trip or activity such as Beacon Great Adventure Day

Community Exploration

At some point this summer you will probably do a community or neighborhood scavenger hunt. Utilize scavenger's hunt to introduce an exploration of the Beacon community.

- Create a map of all three resources that exist in a 10 block or 1 mile radius of the Beacon.
- Conduct an oral history of the community by interviewing community members.
- Create a youth resource directory.
- Create a book, play or vignette about life in your neighborhood.
- The result could chronicle the history of your neighborhood, family or meaningful event.

Cultural Arts

An end of the year summer celebration is a must at any Beacon. This year create an end of the summer production that will last long after the hot, muggy days of summer.

- Create a video chronicling the summer
- Develop a youth newspaper
- Create a photography club. Pictures can be taken of summer events and accompanying articles can be written. Or young people can take pictures of community members and tell their stories.
- Create a photo exhibit that can be displayed at a Fall Open House

Tips and Tricks: Comprehension

PROBLEM: You need entertaining ways to work on reading comprehension.

SOLUTION: **"Giggles 'n gags"**

Look for books of jokes and riddles your child can read easily (meaning he can read 95 of 100 words without help).

SOLUTION: **"Now we're really cooking!"**

Thumb through a children's cookbook with your child and pick some yummy recipes to try together. Let the child choose what he wants to make. Don't take over too quickly: lead your child to read, then understand, then do.

COMMENT: Pre-read the instructions in the cookbooks, model kits and other items that come with instructions before trying them with your child. Sometimes those directions are written badly or unclearly, and you'll want to find problem spots ahead of time.

TIP: We examined a variety of children's cookbooks and recommend KidsCooking, published by Klutz Press, as being well-written and well-suited for children.

SOLUTION: **"Read about 'hot topics'"**

Use your child's interests to his advantage. Keeping his reading ability in mind, get him a book or two on his favorite hobby or sport. See "Five-Finger Exercise" elsewhere in this chapter in this chapter on page 112 and use it to determine if the books you consider are too hard or not.

INFORMATION: Some books tell sports humorous sports stories and can be a lot to read. Humor encourages comprehension.

SOLUTION: **"It's In the mail!"**

If your child has a special interest, subscribe to a magazine that covers the topic. Some examples include Cat Fancy, Sports Illustrated for Kids, and Kid City. Also explore magazines aimed at children such as Highlights for Children and Cricket.

TIP: Before spending money on a subscription, take a trip to the library. Examine some magazines and pick one or two your child particularly likes. Depending on how well your child reads you might look in the adult magazine area as well.

SOLUTION: "Simple science"

Go to the library or bookstore and find a book of easy science experiments for children to do together. Again, supervise carefully for safety. See Chapter Sixteen for inexpensive science kits you can buy or order.

SOLUTION: "That's a hoot!"

Read humorous poetry and act it out (you act it too, Mom and Dad!) See poems by writers like Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelutsky. Some suggested books are listed at the end of the chapter.

INFORMATION: Reading humorous material requires excellent comprehension while providing the motivation to work at it.

SOLUTION: "Time to tinker"

Get a simple model, or use directions to build a doghouse or birdhouse. Be ready to help, but always try to lead your child to figure out what the directions mean before explaining. Supervise the use of tools and glue carefully. If you can tie the project into some special interest the child has. If your child asks for help with the reading too quickly, a good dodge is to say "Ill be there in a moment..." and give your child another 15-30 seconds to sort it out himself.

WARNING: Don't get too "teachy." This is supposed to be fun! Keep your child's strengths and weaknesses in mind. If he tends to be clumsy with his hands, be ready to assist (he can hold a part in place while you apply the glue, for instance), but let him do as much of the project – and the reading – as possible.

PROBLEM: Your child doesn't concentrate on what he's reading.

SOLUTION: "Centering thoughts"

Before your child begins to read, he should consider all the supporting information provided If he's reading from a textbook, he should look at the pictures and read the captions under them. he should also scan for titles, subtitles, and words printed in bold – most likely that's new and important vocabulary. If he's reading a story, he should examine any accompanying illustrations. He may need guiding questions from you while looking at the illustrations: which person do you think is the main character? How old is he or she? Can you tell from the pictures if the story could happen now, or does it take place in the past or future? Ask just enough questions to get the child's interest in the reading raised, but if the pictures and illustrations provide valuable information make sure he notices those details.

PROBLEM: **Your child can read most of the words in his textbook, but it still doesn't make any sense to him.**

SOLUTION: **"Closing the gaps"**

Read the selection aloud to your child and discuss it with him. Search for necessary knowledge your child might lack: does he know there's a continent called "Europe" and another called "Asia?" Does he know that China is part of Asia? Get the globe out. Also see the tip .called "Just the Facts, Please" elsewhere in this chapter.

TIP: If you don't have a globe, get one. Globes are much easier to understand than flat maps.

PROBLEM: **Your child reads his textbooks but has trouble remembering the details of what he's read.**

SOLUTION: **"Making connections"**

Read assignments with your child and discuss new concepts as you go along. Example: "Europeans wanted goods from Asia – spices, silk, etc. – as badly as we want whatever is 'hot' and new at the mall. They couldn't go to a mall, though, because it was so far away, so trade routes developed...."

TIP: Providing this sort of background information night be a good task for a tutor. If you can afford it, get and encyclopedia so you and your child can look up information to expand his general knowledge about the topic.

SOLUTION: **"Rainbow reading"**

MATERIALS: Highlighters in several colors
Photocopy of material to read

Your child should read the material one paragraph at a time. He should highlight new vocabulary in one color, important names in another, important dates in another, and important concepts in a fourth. This list may not suit all subjects, but he can devise his own system. The point is to use the highlighters as a way for him to begin to notice what kinds of information are buried in the material he reads for school. If this works, photocopy chapters from textbooks ahead of time. Once marked, these photocopies make excellent study materials for tests.

Guidelines For Selecting Bias-free Storybooks

Book drives and library donations are two great resources to consider when establishing your library. They involve the community and can yield many books. However, be forewarned, you may receive books that are in poor condition or have story lines which perpetuate discrimination based on race, gender, handicap, or age. The following set of criteria will help you select those books which are appropriate for your library.[4]

Involving Literacy Peer Counselors in training or older teens in this selection process is an effective way to hone their critical thinking skills and to reinforce the value and legitimacy of their judgements and experiences. Below you will find guidelines for introducing the notion of critiquing books on the basis of race and gender stereotyping, and questions to guide both you and your teens through the evaluation process.

Introducing the process to Teens:

Before screening and selecting books with your older youth, discuss the importance of your undertaking. Ask students to think of the books (and, perhaps, the television shows) they most enjoy, and record titles on the board. Ask why those listed are favorites. Is it because the characters are like the students? Why is it good to read about someone similar to yourself? How do you feel if there is no one like you in books or on T.V.? This discussion should involve recognizing that books have power and authority. They can evoke feelings of belonging or alienation.

Next ask for definitions and examples of racism and sexism. If you feel your students will productively process the information, include the notions of "handicapism" and "ageism."

Finally, ask the youth to examine their list of favorite books and think of how they appreciated seeing their own experiences represented. Ask why this would be particularly important for young children. How would the unrepresented feel? How will a child of color feel if all characters are white? How will urban children feel if all stories take place in the country?

While Examining Books Keep The Following In Mind:

➜ Consider the effects on a child's self image.

Does the story establish definitions of what is normal that might make a child feel badly about himself? How will children of color feel if all of the books they read are written about white people and if all heroes are white? What effect can it have on

4 Adapted from Guidelines for Selecting Bias Free Text Books and Story Books, a publication of the Council on Interracial Books for Children.

children of color to read stories in which white is shown as the ultimate in beauty, cleanliness, virtue etc.? Is the color black associated with "evil" and the color white with "good?" What happens to a girl's self-image when she reads that boys perform all the brave and important deeds? What about a girl's self-esteem if she is not slim and "fair?"

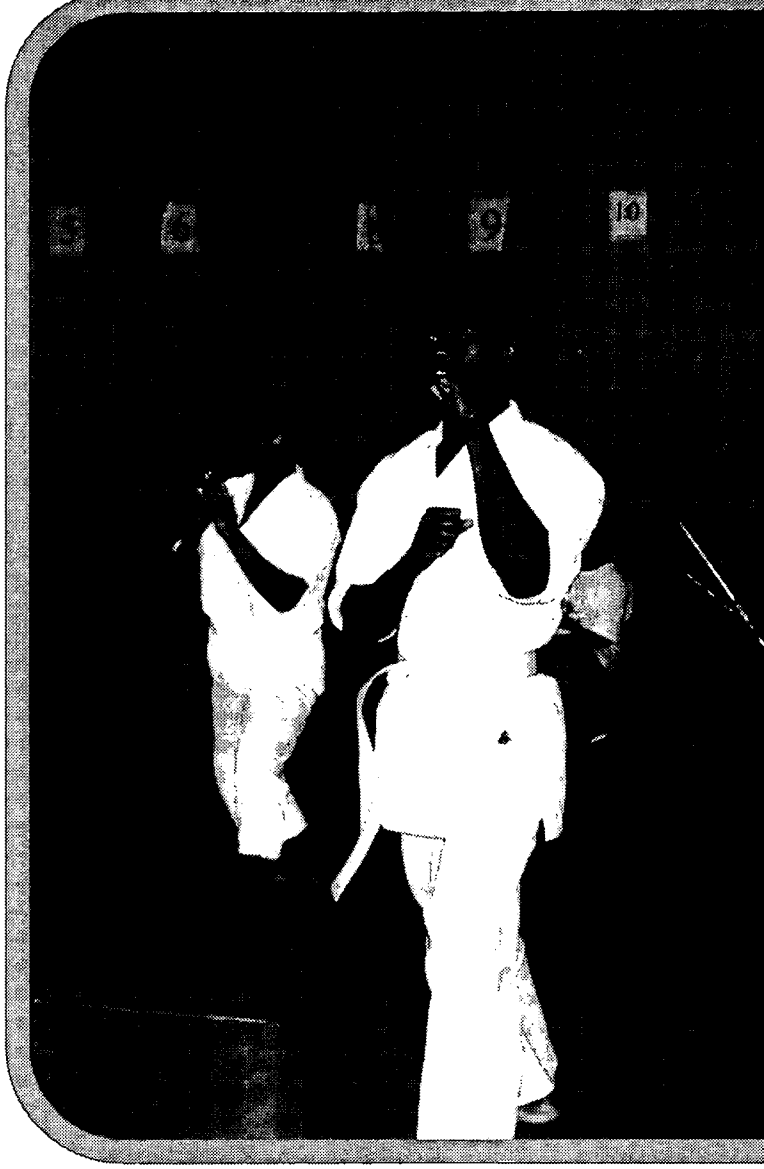
Check Illustrations

➜ Look for stereotypes.

A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race, or sex, which insults and demeans that group. The books you are examining may be quite old, so discuss even those stereotypes which seem outdated and absurd. The more obvious examples, such as the happy-go-lucky sambo, the sombrero-clad, macho bandito, the naked "savage" and his squaw, are easily recognized. Others are more subtle; be aware of situations which depict non-dominant culture as "festive," "quaint," and devoid of substance. Generally, ask Helpers to look for any situation in which a character is mocked or devalued because of their race, gender, or ethnicity.

➜ Look for tokenism.

If there are people of color in the illustrations do they look just like whites except for being "tinted"? Do all people of color look alike, or are they depicted as individuals with distinctive features?



➜ Who's doing what?

Do the illustrations show people of color serving others or leading? Do people of color respond to events around them or do they initiate action? Are men active "doers" and females passive observers?

Check The Story Line

➜ Standards for Success.

Does a person of color have to leave his or her community to succeed? Is making it in a white world projected as the only ideal? Do people of color and women have to do extraordinary

things to get ahead? Do they have to excel in sports, get straight A's etc.? In friendships between white children and children of color as "just like me" rather than appreciating the ways in which their experiences and outlooks may be different?

➜ Resolution of problems.

How are problems presented and solved in the story? Are people of color or women considered the problem? Does the story encourage people to work towards solving the problem or does it imply that the problem is insoluble? Is a person of color's or a women's problem solved only by the intervention of a kind white person or a man?

➜ Role of women.

Do women or girls do well because of their own efforts and abilities or because they are pretty and friends with the "right" boys. Are typical sex roles important in the plot? For example, does the story line depend on girls playing with dolls and boys playing football? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?

Look At Lifestyles

Are non-white, non-Christian, and non-American cultures shown in such a way that they seem "bad" or "scary?" Are people of color shown only in ghettos? If the book shows you a culture which is not common does it do so with respect? Does the culture seem interesting and serious or cute and silly?

Weigh The Relationships Between People

Are the decision-makers and powerful leaders in the story predominantly white? Do people of color and women act as "servers" and "supporters"? How are families shown? In Black families, is the mother always in charge? In Latino families, are there always lots of children? If a family is separated do they seem heartless and negligent, or are problems with society, such as poverty and unemployment, given as reasons for their separation?

Suggested Books for Read-Alouds

Literature to hook reluctant readers and keep them reading

Repetitive Texts

Pattern books

Aardema, V (1981). Bringing the rain to Papiti Plain. Jefferson City, MO: Scholastic

Koaiko, L. (1988). Earl's too cool for me. New York: Harper & Row.

Zemach, H. (1969). The judge. Toronto, ON: Collins.

Poetry and verse

Adoff, A. (1982). All the colors of the race. New York: Beech Tree Books.

Adoff, A (1995). Street music: City poems. New York: HarperCollins.

Agard, J., & Nichols, G. (Eds.). (1994). A Caribbean dozen: Poems from Caribbean poets. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick.

Bruchac, J., & London, J. (1992). Thirteen moons on turtle's back: A Native American year of moons. New York: Philomel.

Carlsen, L.M. (Ed.). (1994). Cool salsa: Bilingual poems on growing up latino in the United States. New York: Holt.

Cole, W. (Ed.). (1981). Poem stew. New York: Harper Trophy.

Feelings, T. (Ed.) (1993). Soul looks back in wonder. New York: Dial.

Giovanni, N. (1993). Ego tripping and other poems for young people. New York: Lawrence Hill.

Linthwaite, I. (Ed.) (1990). Ain't I a woman? A book of women's poetry from around the world. New York: Wings.

Prelutsky, J. (1980). Rolling Harvey down hill, New York: Mulberry.

Prelutsky, J. (1984). The new kid on the block. New York: Greenwillow.

Rylant, C. (1994). Something permanent. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Silverstein, S. (1974). Where the sidewalk ends. New York: Harper & Row.

Silverstein, S. (1981). A light in the attic. New york: Harper & Row.

Tripp, W. (Ed.). (1973). A great big ugly man came up and tied his horse to me: A book of nonsense verse. Boston: Little, Brown.

Viorst, J (1981). If Iwere in charge of the world. New York: Aladdin.

Jump rope and street rhymes

Cole, J. (Ed.). (1989). Anna Banana: 101 jump-rope rhymes. New York: Scholastic.

Cole, J., & Calmenson, S. (Eds.). (1990). Miss Mary Mack, and other children's street rymes. New York: Beach Tree Books.

Yolen, J. (Ed.). (1992). Street rymes around the world. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press.

Performance texts

Speeches

Berry, J. (Ed.). (1995). Classic poems to read aloud. New York: Kingfisher.

McKissack, P.C., & McKissack, F. (1992). Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a woman? New York: Scholastic.

Literacy Training Organizations

AGENCY: **Academy for Educational Development (AED)**

100 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011

PHONE: 212-243-1110

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Alexandra Weinbaum, School and Community Services

DESCRIPT: AED seeks to help organizations and individuals meet today's social, economic, and environmental challenges through education and human services development. Participatory Assessment in Afterschool Programs that includes segments related to effective literacy programming in youth-serving agencies was recently published.

AGENCY: **Bank Street College of Education**

Division of Continuing Education
New Perspectives
610 West 112th Street
New York, NY 10025

PHONE: 212-875-4649

CONTACT: Eileen Wasow, Associate Dean

DESCRIPT: Offers a range of continuing education weekend courses in the fall, spring and summer. Courses are offered in varied subjects such as arts education, mathematics, reading and writing, conflict resolution, special education, etc. Credit available.

AGENCY: **Childcare, Inc.**

275 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001

PHONE: 212-929-7604

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Nancy Kolben

CONTACT: Judy Ennes, Coordinator of Special Projects

DESCRIPT: Provides a range of training and advocacy services to child care providers in New York City. They are currently developing a literacy development training initiative for staff in child care centers citywide.

AGENCY: **Elders Share The Arts (ESTA)**

57 Willoughby Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

PHONE: 718-488-8565

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Susan Perlstein

PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Gina Gayle

DESCRIPT: ESTA is dedicated to validating personal histories, honoring diverse traditions, and connecting generations and cultures through "living history arts." Through this unique synthesis of oral history and the creative arts, ESTA's staff of professional artists, writers, and storytellers work with old and young to transform their life stories into dramatic, literary, and visual presentations which celebrate community life. ESTA offers training, therefore, in program design, implementation, and evaluation.

AGENCY: **Foundation for Children in the Classics**

153 Waverly Place, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10014

PHONE: 212-627-6643

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & FOUNDER: Susan Ingalls

DESCRIPT: Foundation for Children in the Classics works with young people during the out-of-school hours. Using script-based learning (also known as Language Theatre), the Foundation helps children and youth develop language and social skills. They provide technical assistance, on-site consultation, equipment loans for community art projects, and educational resources

(scripts, musical scores, activity handbooks, etc.), and instructional videos.

AGENCY: **Homes for the Homeless**

The Institute for Children in Poverty
36 Cooper Square, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10019

PHONE: 212-529-5252

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Ralph Nunez

CONTACT: Aurora Zepeda, Vice President of Management and Budget

Ana Smith, Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator

DESCRIPT: The Institute for Children in Poverty provides technical assistance in accelerated after-school education, early childhood education, and family literacy programs, as well as job-readiness training and placement, independent living skills, aftercare and general program design and implementation. Technical assistance is available through on-site consultation, customized training sessions, and program evaluations.

AGENCY: **Institute for Literacy Studies (ILS)**

CUNY @ Lehman College
250 Bedford Park Boulevard
Speech & Theatre, Rm. 117
Bronx, NY 10468

PHONE: 718-960-8758

DIRECTOR: Marcie Wolfe

CONTACT: Lena Townsend, Coordinator of Professional Development for Youth Practitioners

DESCRIPT: The ILS conducts projects which have as their goal the improvement of urban education. Institute initiatives have served staff and students in a variety of educational settings, ranging from elementary schools to college campuses and community-based organizations. Many of its projects are designed to increase teachers' effectiveness in helping students to use literacy. The ILS provides technical assistance, training, and assessment services to youth-serving organizations.

AGENCY: **Interfaith Neighbors**

247 East 82nd Street
New York, NY 10028

PHONE: 212-472-3567

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CONTACT: Eileen Lyons

DESCRIPT: Interfaith's agency-wide training sessions and workshop series target professional and para-professional staff, individuals, and entire agencies, teens, and adults. Core Workshops build the program and practice skills of the youth practitioner. Several workshops teach core competencies in group management, literacy, and human development; others train participants in Interfaith's model of intervention including a specific service delivery and program curriculum, such as The Path. Interfaith provides on-site training to agency and school staff.

AGENCY: **Literacy, Inc. (LINC)**

@ Childcare, Inc.
275 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001

PHONE: (212) 620-5462

DIRECTOR: Mimi Lieber, Richard Shpuntoff

DESCRIPT: This is a new initiative which has as its goal to improve the reading skills of children in kindergarten through third grade. LINC seeds to provide one-on-one volunteer reading partners for every child (in these grades) in New York City's Public

schools. The project hopes to develop community partnerships among parents, community agencies, and schools.

AGENCY: **Literacy Assistance Center (LAC)**

84 Williams Street
New York, NY 10038

PHONE: 212-803-3300

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Michael Hirschorn

CONTACT: Emily Hacker, LAC professional development offerings

Anne Lawrence, youth-related professional development

DESCRIPT: The LAC provides on-site technical assistance (TA), workshops, seminars, and resources to after-school programs. The Clearinghouse at the LAC houses thousands of literacy education resource materials. One-on-one TA appointments for youth literacy instructors and program mangers are available free of charge. The LAC is collaborating with PASE to expand the Clearinghouse as a resource for youth practitioners.

AGENCY: **Literacy Partners, Inc.**

30 East 33rd Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10016

PHONE: 212-725-9200

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: John Deveaux

CONTACT: Sally Ashley, Coordinator of Volunteers

DESCRIPT: Formally the Literacy Volunteers of New York City, Literacy Partners,. Inc. provides free instruction in reading and writing to adult beginning readers. Volunteer tutors work with the adult students. Tutor training lasts eight weeks, two evenings a week, two to two and a half hours each evening.

AGENCY: **New York City School Volunteers Program**

352 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010-1709

PHONE: 212-213-3370

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Susan Edgar

DESCRIPT: Since its founding in 1956 as the first program of its kind in the nation, the New York City School Volunteer Program has recruited, trained, and placed tens of thousands of volunteers. Interested volunteers may participate in specialized programs that introduce children to the joy of reading through Read Aloud workshops with published authors; lead students in seminar discussions of contemporary, multicultural literature; offer parents tips on reading to their pre-school children; help students master high school subjects and plan for college; help teens assume leadership roles as tutors to elementary school students; and introduce students to the city's major museums.

AGENCY: **Partnership for After-School Education (PASE)**

199 14th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215

PHONE: 718-768-0778

DIRECTORS: Janet Kelley, Executive Director, Project Reach Youth

Carmen Vega-Rivera, Executive Director, East Harlem Tutorial Program

DESCRIPT: Network of youth-serving agencies citywide. Offers workshops at quarterly meetings, technical assistance through intervisitation among agencies, and an annual conference. Currently developing partnerships with agencies to offer a range of professional development activities.

AGENCY: **Teachers and Writers Collaborative**

5 Union Square West
New York, NY 10003-3306

PHONE: 212-691-6590

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Nancy Larson Shapiro

DESCRIPT: Teachers and Writers Collaborative links writers and educators in collaborations that become the source for new ideas and materials that explore the connections between writing and reading. The Center

offers myriad resources including books in teaching writing and the writing process, a collection of classics in education, materials from many cultures and on a wide variety of subjects related to writing (folklore, oral history, language, art), current and back issues of literacy and education periodicals, examples of writing and art by children, and special events, including workshops, seminars, and receptions. Various hands-on workshops include: poetry, fiction, and playwriting, the literary and personal essay, memoir and journal writing, multicultural literature and writing, whole language learning, theater improvisations for problem solving and conflict resolution, and children's literature, among others.

AGENCY: **Teachers College Writing Project**

Office of Continuing Professional Education
Box 132, Teachers College
Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York, NY 10027

DIRECTOR: Lucy Calkins

DESCRIPT: The Teachers College Writing Project is a staff development program that helps teachers in New York City schools establish writing workshops in which children pursue projects they care about and in which teachers, acting as mentors and coaches, lead children in exploring the writing process, learning about language, and extending what they do as writers. These workshops function as bases out of which teachers build new images of what is possible in their classrooms throughout the day. Writing, then, is the entry point for helping teachers make and sustain fundamental changes in their classroom practice. The Project offers an array of other services to support teachers' learning, including Summer Institutes, study groups, and mentor courses.

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