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ABSTRACT

Within the past decade, the movement toward family and community empowerment in literacy has grown dramatically. It is readily accepted that students' academic performance at school is closely related to the family literacy environment. Community-based programs that celebrate diversity and personal strength while strongly supporting literacy have been quite successful in fostering family literacy growth. This paper describes a workshop that gives practicing school psychologists a basic understanding of the process of designing a home, school, or community literacy partnership. It includes guidelines for effective goal and objective design; an outline of a family literacy curriculum; and a review of key components that ensure participation and program success. The workshop utilizes an active and successful family literacy program as a model to highlight key points. The workshop aims to provide participants with the information necessary to design a family reading program that suits their school's and community's needs. (Contains 29 references.) (JDM)

D'Youville College, West-Side Buffalo Literacy Project: Community and Families Together

Funded by the Education Fund for Greater Buffalo
Mayor's Parent Initiative
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
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1

Literacy

is listening, learning, and quality of life.

*It is reading, writing, thinking, scribbling, drawing,
and*

being motivated to

find

meaning.

*It is interpreting, inventing, associating, communicating,
responding, sharing,*

and being able to set visions into action.

Our challenge as educators

is to make possible for all children

*regardless of ability, experience, or cultural heritage,
to feel*

successful

in their attempts to be literate.

*Sue McCord
The Storybook Journey*

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In Family Literacy work, we need to accept:

Concept I

International Declaration of Principles

*Families have the right to define themselves.
Families share the social, cultural, economic, and political contexts of their everyday lives.
Families are the primary literary resources for their children.
Racial and ethnic identity should not be used explicitly or implicitly
to suggest that families live in households that lack social and intellectual resources.*

*Denny Taylor
Many Families, Many Literacies (1997)*

Concept II

*Reading is relational—
It requires an apprentice-mentor relationship
(Vygotsky)*

*“ Few children learn to love books by themselves.
Someone has to lure them into
the wonderful world of the
written word:
someone has to show them
the way.”
Orville Prescott
A Father Reads to His Children*

Concept III

Reading is Fun

*“Play as a process lies
at the very core
of human behavior and development.”*

Urie Bronfenbrenner

***“As a parent, I am convinced
that by working together
we can overcome the barriers
to family literacy
in our community.”***

***Diana Jusino
Parent***

I. Introduction: The Importance of Family Literacy

- A. Reading is FUN: Introduction to wonder and laughter
1. There are many activities that you may not consider literacy activities ..and they are...and they're fun
 - a. Story Grammar: a story grammar describes the order of language found in a story: setting, problem, goal, events, and resolution.
 - b. You wouldn't believe what happened to me this morning.....
 2. Read to Your Bunny (write down, journal, about your favorite reading experience)

**Read to Your Bunny
By
Mary Williams**

II. National Center for Family Literacy (2001) statistics (<http://www.familit.org/research>)

- B. Twenty-one percent to 23% of adults- or some 40-44 million of the 191 million in this country- demonstrate skills at the lowest level of prose, document, and quantitative proficiencies (Level 1).
1. Many are unable to:
 - a. total an entry on a deposit slip,
 - b. locate the time and place of a meeting on a form,
 - c. identify a piece of specific information in a brief news article.
 2. National Adult Literacy Survey, 1993
- C. People with higher levels of education were more likely to be in the labor force than less educated individuals:
1. 79% of persons 25 and older with B.S. were employed.
 2. 39% of adults 25 and older without H.S. diplomas were employed.
 3. In 1997, the unemployment rate for:
 - a. persons without H.S. diploma = 8.1%
 - b. persons with a H.S. diploma = 4.3%
 - c. persons with some college education = 3.5%
 - d. persons with B.S. or higher = 2%
 4. Digest of Educational Statistics, 1998.
- D. As education increases, the likelihood of employment increases (increases from 1997).
1. In 1998 among 25-34 year olds:

- a. 78.5% of men and 47.3% of women without a high school diploma were employed.
 - b. 87% of men and 69.5% of women with a GED or high school diploma were employed.
 - c. 90.1% of men and 76.2% of women with some college education were employed.
 - d. 94% of men and 83.8% of women with a bachelor's degree were employed.
2. U.S. Department of Education.
- E. Among 1997 high school dropouts not enrolled in college, the *employment* rate:
1. 48.8% for whites,
 2. 17.4% for African Americans.
 3. U.S. Department of Education, 1999.
- F. In 1993, about 381,000 students dropped out of high school. Over their lifetimes they will earn:
1. \$212,000 less than high school graduates,
 2. \$384,000 less than persons having some college education,
 3. \$812,000 less than college graduates,
 4. \$2,404,000 less than individuals with professional degrees.
 5. Educational Testing Service. *Dreams Deferred: High School Dropouts in the United States, 1995.*
- G. Literacy and Crime
1. The average proficiency of the prison population is substantially lower than that of the general population.
 - a. 49% of prisoners reported not having a high school diploma or GED.
 - b. *Literacy Behind Prison Walls, 1994.*
 2. Research suggests that education reduces recidivism (*Education and Training in America's Prisons, 1996*).

***"Survival comes first.
Growth comes second.
In this nutritional triage,
The body seems obliged to rank learning last.
Better to be stupid and alive
Than smart and dead."
Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan (1994)***

- H. Literacy and Voting Behavior
1. There is a strong, positive relationship between voting behavior and educational attainment.
 2. As educational attainment increases, so does voting participation.
 3. In 1994 congressional elections, college graduates aged 25-44 were 86% more likely than high school graduates to vote.
 4. High school drop outs of the same age were 58% less likely than high school graduates to vote.
 5. *The Condition of Education, 1996.*
- I. Literacy and Poverty
1. Every 40 seconds a child is born into poverty and every 37 seconds a child is born to a mother who did not graduate from high school (*Children's Defense Fund, 1999*).
 2. Children fell almost \$2 billion deeper into poverty from 1995-1997.
 3. In 1997, the young child poverty rate for African American (40%), and Hispanics (38%) was almost three times that for whites (13%).

*“The richest school districts
spend
56% more
per student
than do the poorest”
Children’s Defense Fund,
The State of America’s Children Yearbook ,1999.*

- J. High Risk Families: 14% of children living in “high risk” families in 1996, which is defined as a family with four or more of the following characteristics:
1. Child is not living with two parents;
 2. Head of household is a high school dropout;
 3. Family income is below poverty line;
 4. Child is living with a parent who does not have steady full time employment;
 5. Family is receiving welfare benefits; and
 6. Child does not have health insurance.
 7. Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count, 1999.
- K. Espisito (1999): Learning in urban blight: School climate and its effect on the school performance of urban, minority, low-income children.
1. Examined the relationship between parents’ perceptions of school climate and children’s academic and social development, controlling for maternal education and family resources for kindergarten through second grade.
 2. Results of the regression analyses indicate that overall school climate influences children’s academic and social development, even after accounting for important family influences such as family resources and maternal education.



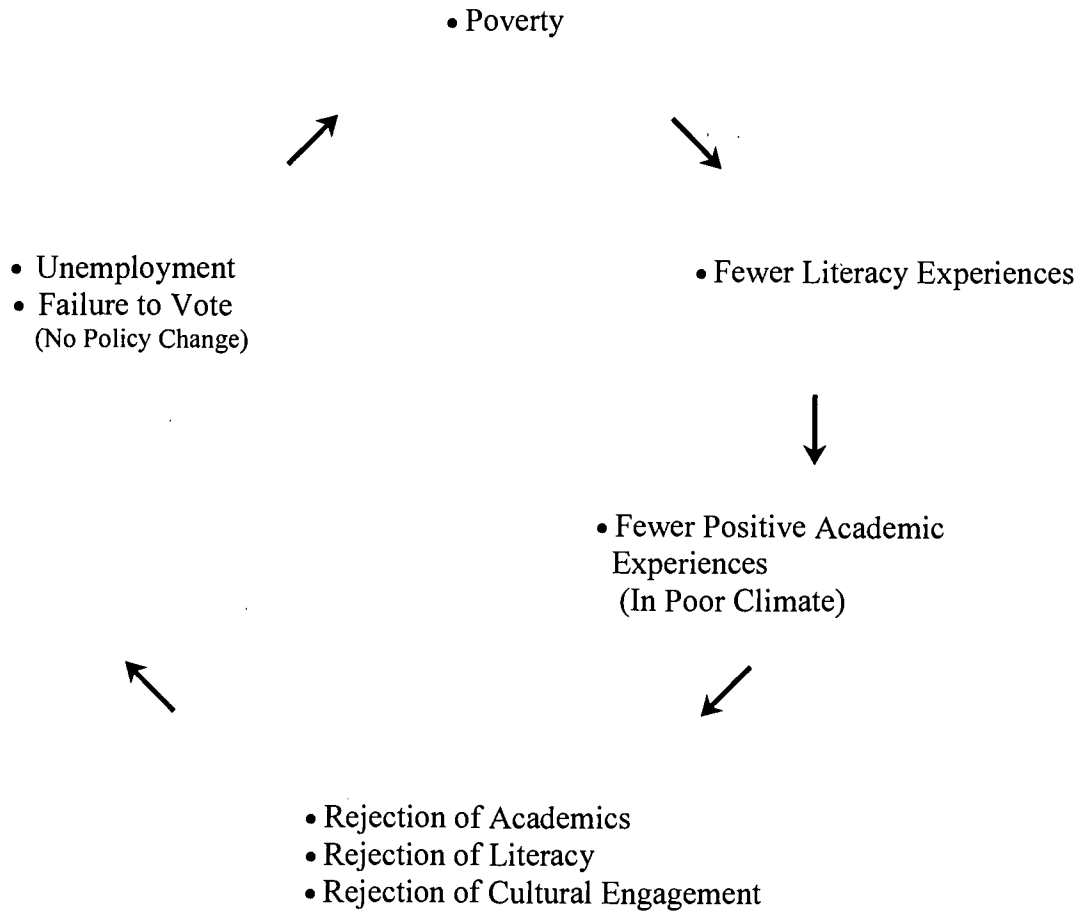
Literacy: The Bridge

***Literacy is the bridge
from oppression and poverty
imposed both
by self and others.***

Cook-Cottone, 2001

Cycle of Poverty and Literacy Disengagement

Cook-Cottone (2001)



Heroes and Books

***“I left prison more informed than when I went in.
And the more informed you are,
the less arrogant and aggressive you are.”***

***“No country can really develop unless its citizens are educated.
Any country that is progressive is led by people who have had the privilege of studying.”***

“Educating ourselves was a way to give ourselves the most powerful weapon for freedom.”
Nelson Mandela
2001

***“As he and his comrades worked side by side in the quarries,
he encouraged them to read and study,
and he himself devoured books
because he wanted what he believed to be freedom’s most powerful weapon:
education.”***

Oprah, 2001
An Interview with Nelson Mandela
Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993



The Sun (Eulogy to Mother)

Sun
Hot yellow
Swimming when it’s out
Jump to catch it
Mom
Zykea Gooch
Grade 3

The Forest

The forest is being destroyed
The forest has big trees that have broken hearts
Beautiful branches
Branches that are being destroyed
In the forest that is sad
Lawrence Baynard
Grade 4



Savage Inequalities

*"We used to be angry at injustice. Now we're just irritated with bureaucracy.
 Roots of resistance reflected in songs and sermons of Southern chapels so seeking the ultimate preacher,
 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., teacher I turn to you.
 The birth of a better way should be in the young person's eyes.
 Public schools would be the wombs, but public schools are often the tombs for alternative thoughts.
 The status quo was bought and paid for at the level of primary education.
 An adjacent cubicle is as far as many of our young children are trained to see.
 So savage, these inequalities, these unwritten rules, seared in blue blood marrow.
 It harrows the hearts, precision with which it clicks silent in our minds.*

*Tell me, Dr. King, where in speeches of dreams might I find glimpses of these sons of former slaves and
 slave owners sitting in corner offices of gold-domed buildings?
 They read reports of public school structures with asbestos in the ceilings, overcrowded classrooms with
 uncompensated educators, elevators touch three floors, No way, No chance, No dirt,
 I am flirting with the words of a masterful dreamer, attempting to coax answers out of the fine print.
 A hint of remorse does not exist. We mint his image and miss his message.
 New Jack militants scorn him McActivist.
 Every city in America bears a street with his name, the politicians master this game of nominative progress.
 Martin Luther King Boulevard always home to the segregated projects.
 Someone must see the irony, ringing replete with the echo of August '63 ringing 41 into the heart of
 maniacal police.*

*Dr. King, I read the speeches, heard them all.
 We will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.
 Did you dream this moment while standing on your mountaintop?
 A mass movement to put 14-year-olds on lock with grown men?
 We spend extraordinary time mediating in justice, thus this apartheid at our young,
 Disguised as schools,
 No tools to thrive,
 Only the fit survive, some sling rocks, some rock mikes,
 The cops is out like Gestapo in the night.
 So for whom America the beautiful.
 No one remembers there was no Head Start,
 No exposure to art,
 Of the wrong class, of the wrong caste, placed on the lower track at six years young,
 Ain't recovered since.
 King, we asked the blackbird why she will not fly, and the law walking off with her wings.
 So savage these only see equality in black and white '63 dreams.
 Is it so savage to dream equality in Technicolor prism tinged in the right to be?
 Is it so savage to dream at last?
 Free to dream at last?
 Free dream at last?
 Free at last?
 Free at last?"*

By

*Marc Bamuthi Joseph
 San Francisco's Poetry Slam Champion, 2001
 National Public Radio
 January 15, 2001
 Morning Edition
 Youth Radio*

III. Literacy is a family Matter: Accepting that families have changed and that within families there are many different expressions of family literacy

- A. Improving students' literacy learning through caring relationships (Sanacore, 1999):
1. Sanacore (1999) notes the significant changes in the American family structure in the past several decades which may lead to less supervision and fewer positive choices by children.
 2. He adds the notion of Socially Toxic Environment (Garbarino, 1997):
 - a. violence
 - b. poverty
 - c. alienation
 - d. depression, etc...
- B. Family literacy provide role models, a frame work, and encouragement for parents to embrace the role of caring adult [i.e. Maeroff's (1998) work on the roles of caring adults]:
1. Provision of a sense of connectedness,
 2. Promotion of a sense of well being,
 3. Construction of a sense of academic initiative,
 4. Establishment of generative knowledge.
- C. Genisio (1999) offers an interesting description of nontraditional reading experiences in low SES families in—What goes on at home? Conversations with three families that link love to literacy.
1. Love and literacy behaviors appear to be connected.
 2. There are several, non-traditional ways in which families link love and literacy:
 - a. Shared book reading with parents and children was not a common experience.
 - b. Children read books to each other.
 - c. The families visited the library regularly together.
 - d. Parental surrogates, such as neighbors, took on the role of reading partner.

*Reading of
I'll Love you Forever
By
Robert Munsch*

IV. Why does literacy matter so much? How can reading change a life? Growth through education, through reading, alters the neurobiological, interpersonal, and community experiences of the child.

- A. Reading develops the left hemisphere, increases integrative processing, and stimulates frontal lobe functioning.
3. Such neurological exercise results in an increased capacity for reflective response, decreased impulsivity, and increased self-regulation.
 4. The frontal lobe is responsible for directed attention, purposeful thought, and inhibition.
 5. Integration of hemispheric functioning increases positive affect and helps to regulate negative affect.
- B. Reading Narrative and Expository passages exposes the child to organized patterns of thought, of narrative, of story creating a repetitive model for organized, verbally mediated neurological growth.
1. The process is self-organizing as described in neural network models.
 2. The process creates a knowledge base for a generative knowledge, self-enhancing, engagement with the world.
 3. Read Marie Clay's Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control.

- C. The regulated and integrated child experiences much more success interpersonally and within community.
 - 1. Children with reflective and integrated thoughts interact more successfully with the environment.
 - 2. Programs that link literacy enhancement with community interaction can facilitate socialization, as well as the internally organizing processes developed through reading.
- D. For a detailed description of neurological development please read The developing Mind: Toward a Neurobiological Understanding of Interpersonal experience By Daniel Siegel.
- E. For a description of the disorganization created by generational poverty and illiteracy read A Framework for Understanding Poverty By Ruby K. Payne.

Linguistic Representations

“Linguistic representations contain information about sensations, perceptions, concepts, and categories within socially shared packets called words.

Words themselves have physical properties; they can be seen, heard, felt, spoken, and written.

But words move beyond the physical world and link

the mental representational worlds of separate people...

The evolutionary benefit of such an innate ability has been that it allows us as social beings

to create a cultural history and pass on knowledge across generations, across time,

and across a huge space

that exists

between the minds of two people.”

Siegel, 1999

Reading of A Terrible Day: Ronald Morgan

By Patricia Giff

(Respond with journal entry to the day in the life of Ronald...not able to read)

- V. Within the past decade, the movement toward family and community empowerment in literacy has grown dramatically as researchers confirm the benefits of such programs (Aurbach, 1995; Benjamin & Lord, 1996; Neuman, Caperelli, & Kee, 1998).

- A. Liu (1996) and Weinberger (1996) indicated that students’ academic performance at school is closely related to the family literacy environment.

***“Home
is the place
where children spend
most of their time while growing up,
parents being their primary teachers”
(Liu, 1996, p.60).***

- B. As indicated by Aurbach, “increased interest and awareness in the ‘family as educator,’ has sparked a proliferation of programs, publications, and public policies, all designed to broaden access to education and to enhance family skills in reading, writing, and communication” (p. 244).

VI. Key Factors and Issues related to Designing and Administering an Effective Family Literacy Program.

- A. The Four Key Factors critical for designing an effective Family Literacy program (DeBruin-Parecki, Paris, & Siedenburg, 1997)
1. Participation: To achieve some form of success programs need to enable increased access and participation by--
 - a. Reducing physical barriers:
 - i. transportation,
 - ii. child care.
 - b. Negotiating emotional barriers: for many parents of at-risk children, school was a societal demand that had to be endured (Karther & Lowden, 1997).
 - i. parents may have experienced an undiagnosed learning disability (Karther & Lowden, 1997).
 - ii. parents may have had a non-supportive oppressive home environment (Karther & Lowden, 1997).
 - iii. parents may have gone to a substandard/impoverished school making attendance an irrelevant or punishing experience (Karther & Lowden, 1997).
 - iv. fear of school (DeBruin-Parecki, et al., 1997).
 - v. parents who have had unsuccessful school careers may feel a great deal of anxiety and intimidation meeting with teachers and attending school programs (Karther & Lowden, 1997).
 - vi. memories of personal failure and unfulfilled dreams are sparked by a visit to the school building (Karther & Lowden, 1997).
 - vii. low self-esteem: parents with low educational achievement may have feelings of inadequacy (Karther & Lowden, 1997).
 - viii. parents tend to view their children as a reflection or extension of themselves and will avoid situations where they expect criticisms of themselves or their children (Karther & Lowden, 1997).
 - ix. a referral to a literacy program may be interpreted as a criticism of their parenting.
 - c. Recognizing, incorporating, and respecting cultural and family differences.
 - d. Emphasizing close connections to the community.
 - e. Establishing a well integrated referral system.
 - f. Remembering that poverty and stability are issues.

- i. many families are unable to stay in one place for a long period of time.
 - ii. an attempt should be made to include families as long as they can participate.
 - iii. attempts should be made to try and help families find some stability in the community so that they can continue the program.
- 2. Curriculum: Serves the clients best when it is meaningful to their lives.
 - a. Program components should be balanced.
 - b. Components should include a significant amount of time spent on age-interactive literacy activities:
 - i. good instruction,
 - ii. modeling.
 - c. Emphasize understanding family and child development.
 - d. Provide developmentally appropriate materials.
 - e. Curriculum should increase self-efficacy through successful learning experiences, build bridges between parents, teachers, and children, as well as, between home and school.
 - f. Don't use prepackaged curriculum or curricula without a theoretical background or base.
 - g. Collaboratively designed theoretically sound curricula that can be clearly modified for individual, cultural, and program differences are better choices.
 - h. Assessment should match curriculum, many traditional assessments may not be appropriate to evaluate family literacy outcomes.
- 3. Staff and administration: An effective family literacy program is made up of stable, collaborative staff :
 - a. With varied credentials in fields that may include:
 - i. adult education,
 - ii. early childhood education,
 - iii. elementary education,
 - iv. community education,
 - v. social work,
 - vi. educational demonstration,
 - vii. school psychology.
 - b. Expertise is also needed from the community
 - c. The key is collaboration with other staff, blending their expertise with that of others and working directly with families to help them meet their goals.
 - d. Some training is important and should consist of more than theory and instructions to assessment instruments and curricula.
 - i. should include training about the population to be served.
 - ii. information from text.
 - iii. information from communicating with participants and neighborhood leaders and agencies.
- 4. Fund-raising: Programs are always scrambling for funds (often unstable), which is highly competitive pursuit:
 - a. Most large funders require grant applications.
 - b. Many smaller programs do not have the expertise to write them or the funds to hire someone to do it for them (puts smaller program at a disadvantage).
 - c. Funders also have specific criteria for renewed funding that revolve around evaluative outcomes (programs often have great difficulty showing what to them is obvious progress).
 - d. Unstable funding also effects staff

- e. Programs with little capital are not able to provide the amalgam of services needed to purchase appropriate materials and books.
- f. Funding pursuit:
 - i. the internet (key words: family literacy, literacy and foundations, grants and reading, Barbara Bush Foundation).
 - ii. college partnerships (grant supports, grant seekers).
 - iii. board or district level: calls for Proposals.
 - iv. building support (letters of support and agreement, sample letters, thank you notes).
 - v. Beyond the Bell: A Toolkit for Creating Effective After School Programs (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory) 1-(800)-356-2735

B. Neuman, Caparelli, and Kee (1998) offered nine features of successful family literacy programs

1. Offered literacy instruction to families, broadly defined to include parents, caregivers, siblings, and young children.
2. Created strategic recruitment plans, using multiple methods that included word-of-mouth and local radio and newspaper announcements.
3. Included strong participant involvement in curriculum planning and development.
4. Emphasized retention through creative scheduling and transportation and child care for those who needed it.
5. Involved experienced teaching staff, who were knowledgeable about diversity (cultural, economic, and instructional) and learning development in both adults and children.
6. Included ongoing monitoring or program quality from multiple stakeholders and participants.
7. Created a supportive environment, where achievements (both short and longer term) were recognized and celebrated.
8. Provided opportunities for family and social networks to be formed through activities in classrooms and communities.
9. Were knowledgeable about the community and its resources; sought active collaborations with other social and educational services.

B. Key Principles (Neuman et al., 1998):

1. Family literacy is not something that can be done to people.
 - a. In creating a more collaborative approach in which staff become family mentors working with learners to shape a program that meets their needs, programs begin to focus on shared literacy and independent problem solving.
 - b. It is in the making of their integral connection between literacy and learning, personal empowerment, and broad social change that family literacy can potentially affect parents' and children's lives.
2. Family literacy is not about changing people but about offering choices and opportunities to families.
 - a. In contrast to models designed to *fix* families or *make them over* in a particular mold, family literacy programs are about access, opportunities, and options.
 - b. Programs that provide essential information, reading strategies, and techniques for negotiating schools engage families in multiple ways using literacy as social practice.
3. Parents come with rich histories and experiences that should be honored and used in program development

- a. Programs that build on participants' already existing funds of knowledge or cultural capital are far more likely to yield effects than those who approach parents as tabula rasa.
- b. Although parents may lack literacy skills, this does not mean that they lack skills or a great diversity of talents in other areas.
- 4. Family literacy programs have both direct and indirect effects:
 - a. Participants often derive serendipitous benefits from family literacy programs.
 - b. There are exponentially generative effects on the families and individuals with which the participant is alter involved.
- C. The Most Successful Programs are Community-Based and celebrate diversity and personal strength (Aurbach, 1995).
 - 1. Such findings are supported by numerous other researchers (Marcon, 1999; McWilliam, Maxwell, & Sloper, 1999; Morrow & Young, 1997; Parker et al., 1999; Rafaele & Knoff, 1999).
 - 2. Buffalo's west-side community is in an ideal position due to the high level of need present, close proximity of substantial resources, and the history of relationships built among community members, to capitalize on its inherent strengths and build a lasting family literacy effort.

*Kids
Black and White.
They're playing together.
Respectful, loving, funny, sad.
Children*

*By Keisha
Grade Two
(Poem for t-shirt art)*

*Reading of
When Sophie Gets Angry, Really, Really Angry
By Molly Bang*

Write a cinquain poem about a feeling or experience that Sophie's story brings to mind:

Cinquain Pattern
 1st line, one word: title
 2nd line, two words: describe title
 3rd line, three words: show action
 4th line four words: show feelings
 5th line, one word: another word for title

Book
 Treasured friendship
 Mysteries to explore
 Chapters laughing and echoing
 Sanctuary
 From Multiple Forms of Literacy

When you know you're doing the right thing*Janice*

*A first grader with emergent reading skills, still primer level.
 Grandma calls to set up a ride.
 I guess that her uncle can't bring her anymore, he got a job.
 Grandma can't come, Grandpa has Alzheimer's and can't be left alone.
 They're still waiting for a placement in a home.
 21st on the list. It will be a while.*

Where's mom?

*Moved away along time ago.
 Michelle's been with grandma since birth.
 Mom and Dad were Both HIV Positive from drug abuse.
 Dad's dead.*

Is Janice trouble in group?

*No she's great.
 She loves group and loves reading.
 She is always sad when her uncle says its time to go.
 She writes beautiful poems and has good friends.
 Of course we'll get her home.*

Thanks so much.

*She loves the program.
 She loves to read.*

VII. The Community and Families Together Literacy Project is designed to increase family and childhood literacy in the D'Youville, west side area with the initial focus primarily on School #3, the D'Youville-Porter Campus.

- A. Due to low socioeconomic status and conditions related to the disempowerment of poverty, these children and families lack the literate enhancement experienced by children in other more affluent and enriched neighborhoods and school districts.
- B. Further, significant numbers of children are at-risk for future illiteracy because of time, funds, lack of family literacy, bilingual issues, and personal constraints.
- C. By providing parent, child, and family literacy experiences, family literacy support, and scaffolding for independent family literacy functioning the *Community and Families Together Literacy Project* directly improves the reading skills of west side families and children.

VIII. Needs of the School Committed to the Project:

- A. The first step is documenting the need for a literacy project.
 1. Parent Surveys and School Needs.
 2. Content of parent survey: Developing key questions.
 - a. Brainstorm hypotheses.
 - b. Ask parents (qualitative or grounded theory).
 - c. Begin with a focus group.
 - d. Be specific to your school.
 3. Survey benefits:
 - a. Will direct your efforts to meet needs.
 - b. Information can be utilized for grant seeking.
 - c. Impresses granting organizations.
 4. Our survey: Answering questions:
 - a. Parent demographics.
 - b. Attitude toward school.
 - c. Exploration of current parent involvement.
 - d. Parent's perceptions of school's efforts to involve parents.
 - e. Information needed (what did parent want to know about?).
- B. Parents' perceptions of students' attitudes and behaviors.
 1. School description:

- a. The D'Youville Porter Campus School #3 is located near D'Youville College in the Zone 1 of Buffalo's Federal Enterprise Community students (DiSibio & Gamble, 1995).
 - b. At its boundaries lie city parks, a city Branch Library, and the college (DiSibio & Gamble, 1995).
 - c. Such a setting provides ready access for students, faculty and staff easy access to resources for research and recreation (DiSibio & Gamble, 1995).
 - d. School #3 is considered a "mini-magnet" school serving approximately 645 students (DiSibio & Gamble, 1995).
 - e. You can obtain their information from the school board/district or census data (available through library and online).
2. Parent Demographics (D'Youville Porter Campus School #3 Parent Survey, 1999) School # 3 Parent Survey Demographics:
- a. Parents were surveyed during the 1998-1999 school year to assess needs and concerns.
 - b. A total of 176 responses were calculated representing children for each grade level, both regular and special education, and single and dual parent families.
 - c. Of those completing the survey 37% were single parents and 51% indicated more than one adult living at home.
 - d. Most families indicated three to four children at home (40%) with 37% indicating 2 children and 17% reporting 1 child.
 - e. Six percent of the respondents stated that they had 5 or more children at home.
 - f. All educational levels were represented with 15% of parents not completing high school, 35% completing high school, 32% with some college or training, and 18% with a college degree.
 - g. Fifty-one percent of the parent responders indicated that they are employed full time and 18% indicated part-time employment.
 - h. Thirty percent reported that they were unemployed.
 - i. In general, parents indicated that they are primarily educated to the high school level, most work full or part time, and a majority of the families were bringing up two to four children.
 - j. Further, 35% of the west side community adult members have not completed high school educational attainment as compared to 25% nationally (1990, U.S. Census).
3. School #3 Student Demographics:
- a. According to recent school records, the School #3 students are multi-ethnic.
 - b. Sixty-five percent of the children are identified as Hispanic. This represents the largest ethnic group.
 - c. The next largest ethnic group is African American, with 25% of students identified.
 - d. Ten percent of the students are Caucasian, and
 - e. Five percent are Arabic/Indian or other.
 - f. In 2000-2001, of the 609 students approximately 125 are served through the ESL program indicating they are in need of some English proficiency help.
 - g. 34.5% of the west-side community fall below the federal poverty level
 - h. A total 65.4% of students are eligible for Federal Free Reduced Lunch, a number much higher than the 38.0% New York State average and 24% in Buffalo's Metropolitan Statistical Area.
 - i. This is significantly below national statistics for poverty level as nationally 13.11% fall below the poverty level (1990, U.S. Census)

4. DPCS # 3 Parent Attitudes Toward the School and Reports of Parent Involvement:
 - a. Overall, it appears that the parents who responded to the survey have positive attitudes about School #3 and reading.
 - b. When asked if they felt they could help their child in reading, 95% of parents either agreed or strongly agreed.
 - c. Interestingly, when asked if they could help their child more if the teacher gave them more ideas, 75% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed.
 - d. These parents clearly see the school as valuing them as partners (90% agree or strongly agree) and feel that the community supports their school (83% agree or strongly agree).
 - e. Parent involvement appears to be good, yet does not relate the strong attitudes shared in the previous section.
 - f. Thirty-eight percent of the parents report reading with their children only a few times this year, with 12 percent indicating only one or two times and 6% stating they never read with their child.
 - g. Similarly, when asked how often they had listened to their child read this year, 34 % indicated a few times, 12% reported once or twice, and 2% stated they have never.
 - h. When asked if they had listened to a story that their child had written, 34% reported “few times,” 9% “1-2 times,” and 3 % “never.”
5. Other literacy activities were also reported to occur at little frequency.
 - a. For example, 67% of parents indicated that they had taken their child to the library a few or less times within the past year.
 - b. In addition, parents indicated that on average they spend only approximately 16-30 minutes helping their children with homework at night.
 - c. However, they report that if the teacher showed them what to do a large percentage (67%) would spend from 31 minutes to over an hour with their children helping them with their homework.
 - d. A significant 48% of parents indicated that they specifically want to learn more about how to help their children develop reading skills.
6. ***It appears that while parents overwhelmingly show a desire and potential to help their children read, eagerness to learn how to do that from the school, and have positive feelings towards the school— the necessary family reading activities required to reinforce and sustain reading progress are not occurring frequently enough.***
7. The findings indicated, in both parent interview and the survey data, are consistent with research exploring similar demographic areas.
 - a. For example, Patton and colleagues (1999) and Liu (1996) explored the attitudes of parents in their bilingual, urban setting, they found that ***“parents cared very much about their children’s education and eagerly wanted them to succeed in school” (Liu, 1996, p. 71).***
 - b. However, families did not have the *knowledge and empowerment* to address their children’s literacy needs (Auerbach, 1995; Liu, 1996; Patton et al., 1999).
 - c. Interestingly, research also indicates that children want the help of their parents so that they can do better in school (Morrow & Young, 1997).

Documentation of National and Local Test Scores

Previous Fourth Grade Reading Scores: Weaknesses (Provided by Robert Andolino, Acting School Principal):

In 1999, the New York Statewide Testing Program implemented the first of the annual 4th grade English Language Arts (Reading, Writing, and Listening) exams. Scores were calculated for each school in New York State. Each school received a report grouping the students into four performance levels so that instructional priorities could be established using the information. School # 3 scores were significantly below expected outcomes for the average 4th grader. Significant need was demonstrated indicating that despite the many efforts currently put forth at School #3 students continue to struggle in reading proficiency.

Scores for School #3 were as follows:

<u>Performance Level</u>	<u>Percent of Students in Level</u>	<u>Description of Level</u>
Level 4	3% (1 student)	Students consistently demonstrate understating of written and oral text beyond the literal level
Level 3	25% (10 students)	Students demonstrate understanding of written and oral text with some attention to meaning beyond the literal level.
Level 2	50% (19 students)	Students demonstrate partial understanding of written and oral text at a literal level.
Level 1	21% (8 students)	Students demonstrate minimal understanding of written and oral text

The TerraNova Nation Wide Language Test (Reading: steps along the path toward 5th-grade proficiency) compares the percent of students in a particular school with the national sample in each of five performance levels so that instructional priorities can be established. It is desirable to work towards achieving a Level 4 or 5. As indicated by the School #3 scores most students (58%) are in Levels 1 and 2, not even in the Level 3, Nearing Proficiency range. Scores are indicated below:

<u>Performance Level</u>	<u>Percent of Students in Level</u>		<u>Description of Level</u>
	<u>School #3</u>	<u>National %</u>	
Level 5 Advanced	8%	7%	Students use analogies or generalize, identify and paraphrase of concepts or ideas, can indicate a thought process that led to answer, can demonstrate understanding of implied theme, assess intent, and provide justifications. Can edit narratives, and edit own work.
Level 4 Proficient	13%	17%	Students can interpret figures of speech, Recognize a paraphrase of text, identify themes of main ideas, analyze and apply data in graphic form, make reasonable generalizations, and draw conclusions.
Level 3 Nearing Proficiency	22%	32%	Students can use context clues and structural analysis to determine word meaning, identify important details, sequence, and cause-and-effect relationships, interpret characters' feelings and apply information to new situations.
Level 2 Progressing	29%	20%	Students can identify synonyms for grade-level words, use context clues, make simple inference, transfer information, and provide limited support for answers.
Level 1 Step 1	29%	22%	Students can select picture representation of ideas and identify stated details contained in simple texts.

IX. Community partnerships: The more the merrier!

- A. Each additional member lowers the work and responsibility load for all of the members.
 - 1. Community partners can serve a variety of roles:
 - a. Financial supporter,
 - b. Supply contributions,
 - c. Staff contribution,
 - d. Building support,
 - e. Publicity.
 - 2. The responsibility and pride is collective and enhanced by the experience of people coming together.
- B. Program design:
 - 1. Your school program should meet the needs of your community and school population.
 - 2. Working families need weekend and evening meeting times.
 - 3. In bilingual communities include a translator and/or bilingual programs.
- C. Staffing:
 - 1. Utilizing resources,
 - 2. Parents,
 - 3. Students,
 - 4. Community professionals and volunteers.
- D. Materials:
 - 1. Seeking donations:
 - a. Fisher Price,
 - b. Project Flight,
 - c. Border's Books and Café.
 - 2. Keeping costs low
 - a. Reusing materials,
 - b. Creating your own parent manuals,
 - c. Creating your own student books,
 - d. Paper bag puppets and presentation board stages.
 - 3. Using community resources:
 - a. Community library,
 - b. Local book stores,
 - c. The zoo mobile,
 - d. Local transportation systems.

*Reading of Tar Beach
By Faith Ringgold*

Write your thoughts about the concepts of Freedom, Imagination, and Reading: _____

X. Parent involvement or do we mean empowerment?

*“ This is my second time as a parent-teacher
and I finally feel capable as my son’s mentor.
I have seen other parents join our program,
becoming real teachers
to their own children,
to other children,
and especially...
to themselves.”*

*Karen Aris
Parent*

- A. Parents’ and Self-esteem: Family literacy programs should not be designed to help anyone.
 - 1. While we see ourselves as helping those in need, we see the problem from our perspective only—the helper.
 - 2. The esteem of the helper is raised as we “help” the needy to find better lives.
 - 3. Those who have been “helped,” have been “helped” and have missed the opportunity to grow and feel that their success is the result of someone else’s actions.
 - 4. Those who have grown and learned feel proud. They feel that they have done something valuable and want to share their growth with others.
 - 5. This is a generative process rather than a dependency creating process.
- B. Family Literacy programs should provide opportunities for parents to learn:
 - 1. Parents become educators.
 - 2. Parents are our equals.
 - 3. Parents have much to teach us.
- C. When developing your program, think carefully about how you conceptualize the role of the parent

XI. Description of Project:

- A. The Community and Families Together Literacy Project was designed to increase family literacy behaviors via three key components:
 - 1. Parenting support and empowerment,
 - 2. Child and family reading education,
 - 3. And interactive parent-child activities.
- B. The six goals described below address the three components of our literacy model and are designed to provide a scaffold, which will motivate and empower west side families to continue family literacy activities after formal programming.
- C. The program is structured in 10-week sessions of family literacy clinics/experiences.
 - 1. Specifically, the literacy sessions involve parent literacy clinics, direct work with children, and collective family activities, as well as opportunities for socializing and making friends.
 - 2. The project is completed in a series of phases.
- D. Phase One: includes parent, family, and volunteer recruitment.
 - 1. Upon first disbursement of grant funds, two parent literacy advisors (parents from School #3 dedicated to family literacy) were interviewed and hired for a stipend to assist with coordinating and supporting parent involvement and

parent training.

- a. Preferences were given to those with an exceptional love of reading, dedication to the project, and bilingual skills (Karen Aris and Diana Jusino).
 - b. Secondly, recruitment of literacy volunteers was organized and articulated. These volunteers were sought both from the community, from previous program implementations, and through course requirements at D'Youville College (students training to be teachers).
2. The combined efforts of a community and student literacy force capitalized on the strengths brought by both groups.
 3. School #3, parents, volunteers, and D'Youville students worked together to inform the west side population of the literacy program and to encourage participation through flyers and personal contact.

D. Phase Two: addresses the curriculum, resources, and planning needs of *the Community and Families Together Literacy Project*.

1. A 10-week model was designed to address the literacy needs of the 1st-4th grade students and their families preparing for the 4th grade reading exam.
2. Third and fourth grade students were targeted, in particular, as they do not have the additional reading supports more readily available to younger children served by active reading programs. Further, in their classroom they are, age appropriately, *Reading to Learn* rather than *Learning to Read*--leaving those who have not mastered reading skills particularly at-risk for a lack of reading growth.
3. The 10-week program is provided both after school and in the evenings and is designed to meet whole-family needs.
4. Children complete assessments, reading tutoring, participate in literacy activities, thematic play, and craft activities related to literature.
5. The parents participate a 10-week family literacy clinic during which the best practices of family literacy will be modelled and encouraged.
 - a. Parents were given a family literacy kit, which contains the materials needed to start a family reading center in the home.
 - b. Materials include a Parent Handbook, 3 X 5 cards for word banks, children's literature (books, books, and more books), spiral notebooks and pencil for journal writing, pens, book marks, a story board, Fisher Price Magna Doodles, etc.).
 - c. Each session of the clinic builds on previous lessons and reviews home efforts. Part of the training includes skills for home-school involvement, and teacher contacts.
 - d. Following the learning sessions, parents and children are brought together for interactive family literacy activities.
 - i. These activities are playful and fun providing increased motivation for literacy efforts.
 - ii. Further, the students, paid parents, and volunteers act as constructivistic models for parents demonstrating how to make reading fun for kids. Snacks will be available for the interactive sessions.
 - iii. The snack-time also serves to provide opportunity for parent communication and relationship building.

E. Phase Three: is dedicated to celebrating our success.

1. Families, volunteers, and students come together for a ceremony designed to celebrate our literacy experience. Completion of the 10 week session.
2. Student progress is reviewed and good times (photos, stories, etc.) will be remembered.
3. This provides further opportunity for connection.

- F. Phase Four: Completion of efficacy statistics.
1. The assessments given at the beginning and end of the 10 week sessions to children and families as well as the data from the 4th graders completing the reading exam are analyzed.
 2. The 4th grade scores of those completing the program will be compared to a control group of students in the same grade not participating in the program.
 3. Participation figures are analyzed.
 4. Surveys explore issues such as child care and transportation plan effectiveness.
 5. Surveys explore family literacy behaviors, individual reading skills of children, and involvement in ongoing Buffalo West Even Start Family Literacy Program opportunities.

XII. Content Review

- A. Fun
- B. Higher order processing
 1. Comprehension
 2. Internalization of self as reader
 3. Activities
 - a. Journaling
 - b. Draw-and-Tell: Demonstration
 - c. Reader's Theater: Demonstration....Christopher Columbus
 - d. Puppet Shows
 - e. Poetry on T-shirts
- C. Word Detective by Peg Wantuck
 1. Word recognition
 2. Phonics
 3. Before and after assessment

Reading of I Am an Artist
By Pat Lowery Collins

Draw and Tell
By Richard Thompson

(Draw yours here)

XIII. Project Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: Encourage parent support for family literacy:

- Objective 1:** D'Youville students will provide "literacy clinics," or training sessions for parents to learn reading strategies with which to assist their children.
- Objective 2:** Participating parents will receive a "family literacy kit" which will be built upon during each of the literacy clinics.
- Objective 3:** Participating parents will receive a Parent Handbook highlighting literacy best practices.
- Objective 2:** Parents who struggle with literacy can engage in adult reading tutorials with D'Youville students.
- Objective 3:** Accessibility to literature will be increased, as families will be provided with age and skill appropriate books for their children.
- Objective 4:** Helping parents and families set up reading circles and homework clubs in their communities.
- Objective 5:** Services will be available for both English and Spanish speaking families.
- Objective 6:** Families will be introduced to and encouraged to participate in the Buffalo West Even Start Family Literacy Program.
- Objective 7:** Participating families will receive ongoing educational and literacy support (through home visits) from their Family Educator through the Buffalo West Even Start Family Literacy Program.

Goal 2: Facilitate reading progress and positive reading attitudes in children:

- Objective 1:** D'Youville students and volunteers will be available for reading tutoring programs on a weekly basis.
- Objective 2:** Both after school and evening sessions will be provided by students and volunteers.
- Objective 3:** Reading activities designed for fun and literacy appreciation will be provided for children and their families.
- Objective 4:** Reading diagnostics will be completed by students on those children found to be struggling with reading progress.
- Objective 5:** Those children found to have exceptional need will be provided with additional support along with referral to special education.

Goal 3: Increase Literature in the D'Youville Community

- Objective 1:** As each child masters a book, he or she will be given the book to own.
- Objective 2:** Within the context of tutoring and Reading Circles children will write their own books. Books they can share with friends and families.
- Objective 3:** The family literacy kits will be provided to enhance and enrich perceptions and experience with literature.

Goal 4: Celebrate Success

- Objective 1:** Each semester an achievement award will be given to students and families participating in the Literacy Project (Certificates of Participation for Semester with Gains Documented).
- Objective 2:** Excellent progress at the classroom and student level will be celebrated by presentation of certificate and literacy item (book or program) to highest achieving participants.

Goal 5: Participation and Retention of community city children, school and families will

be monitored and fostered.

Objective 1: Advertising through flyers and school contacts will be completed each semester to ensure enrollment.

Objective 2: Program enrollment personnel and parent liaison will maintain ongoing contact with local community organizations and schools.

Objective 3: Following participation in the Community and Families Together Literacy Project, families will be provided with sufficient support to continue their literacy circles working toward autonomy.

Objective 4: During and following their participation in Community and Families Together Literacy Project, families will be encouraged to take part in the Buffalo West Even Start Literacy Program's Family Educator component (includes weekly home visits and ongoing literacy support).

Goal 6: To show a marked increase in the 4th grade New York State Assessments in English Language Arts.

Objective 1: The project will initially target students in the 3rd and 4th grades preparing to take the 4th grade exam.

Objective 2: Targeted students will participate in at least 2 aspects of the literacy program.

Evaluation:

<u>Outcomes</u>	<u>indicators</u>	<u>Target Success Level;</u>	<u>Percent Achieved</u>
1. Parent advisors hired	successful hire attendance	active participation in each session and meetings	100% attendance 6 Mentor Parents
2. Student participation	attendance participation quality	100% attendance at all sessions	All sessions at average of 90% capacity
3. Successful Family Recruitment	120 possible families	25% recruitment	over 40 families
4. Family Participation	30 families targeted for attendance	80% attendance for each family	22 families regularly attend 18 frequent attendance of parents and relative consistent attendance of children
	drop out rate	less than 10% drop out rate	100% with open enrollment
5. Increased family literacy behaviors	daily minutes of active family literacy beh.	50% increase in activities overall	to be assessed
7. Increase reading skills in children	assessment scores on project assessments	significant improvement	Dolche word El Paso phonics Ave. participant Showed mastery

	Grade 4 Reading Scores	significant improvement over control group	stat analysis after Exam
8. Sustained Project Activities Beyond Funding Period	continued parent/PTA involvement as indicated by meeting; Continued improvement in grade 4 reading scores; improved literacy activities as reported in subsequent parent surveys; literacy incorporated in partner organizations' plans/goals	50% continued participation, continued increase in family literacy activities	Ongoing

XIV. What have we learned so far? Ensuring success: Key components

- A. Start with a hook
 1. We started with a story teller and a visit from the zoo
 2. Begin literacy instruction within the first few weeks. Some parents want to see the direct links to reading improvement right away in order to “buy” into the program.
 3. Take pictures and have them available each following week. They are all now members of the learning community.
- B. Snacks
 1. Always feed the group.
 2. Snacks create a warm, nurturing, and community atmosphere
 3. Build a snack budget into you grant request or have parents take turns bringing thing in.
- C. Celebrations and Awards
 1. Each success should be celebrated.
 2. Celebrate full session participation.
 3. Find a reason to give an award to each family and each educator
 4. Have pizza or a “big deal” food at your celebration
 5. Incorporate a wrap up activity of what you learned
- D. Materials on site
 1. Keep the literacy bags on sight until the last session.
 2. Protect take home materials with sign out sheets and zip lock plastic bags.
 3. Part of “graduation” is now taking home your kit.
- E. Parent pay
 1. Build parent pay into you grant.
 2. Small stipends can help hard working parents feel very validated for their efforts.
 3. Again, they are not being helped, they are paid educators.
- F. Weekly phone calls
 1. Each family should be called the evening before the group session and reminded.
 2. This will significantly improve participation.
 3. This is especially important after time changes and long weekends.
- G. Administrative support
 1. Lobby for the support of building principals, superintendents, and school board
 2. Articulate how the program fits with the school’s mission statement
- H. Teacher involvement
 5. Keep teachers notified of opportunities to assist with the program

6. Teachers can help keep curriculum relevant
7. Teachers can help individually design curriculum for particular families

More of Our Children's Poems

Kids

Black and White
They're playing together
Respcuful, loving, funny, sad

Children

By Keisha Weakful
Elementary Student
School #3

My Sister Theresa

My sister likes to eat cheese.
But she does not like peas.

By Phillip Aris
Elementary Student
School #3

Flowers

I love flowers, all kinds.
I like to smell them.
I like the bees that fly by them.
I even like it when it rains.

Flowers are beautiful.

Flowers are smart.

People love them and do I.

Flowers can grow.

Flowers can swing.

When the sun comes out, they come out to sing.

Stella Perri

Elementary Student
School #3

Dog

Very Cutie.

Play, loving, fun.

I love my dog.

Fun.

Jamilis Colon
Elementary Student
School #3

Flowers

I like to smell flowers.
I like to pick flowers for my mommy.
My mommy likes to smell them.

By Theresa Aris
Elementary Student
School #3

Pink

Beautiful color
My favorite color
The brightest in the world
Rosy

By Adrianna Rolling
Elementary Student
School #3

Cars

I like cars.
I like them a lot.
I like them slow.
I like them fast

I like them blue,
I like them red.
I like them so much,
I have them in my bed.

Nicholas Perri
Elementary Student
School #3

Cars

Fast Slow

Drive it

Sit in it

Wash it

I love cars

Cool

Julian Colon
Elementary Student
School #3

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