Reading on the Go!
Volume 2:
A Handbook of Resources

Prepared for the
National Center for Homeless Education
by

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Preface

J. K. Rowling's sixth Harry Potter novel made its debut as I completed my visits to programs that provide literacy experiences to children experiencing homelessness and high mobility. I could not help but reflect on the stark contrast that exists between the lives of children in poverty and those in more affluent families as my husband and I made the trek with our daughter to our local bookstore for the "big event" on the eve of the release of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*.

Our copy of the book had been ordered online months earlier. An announcement that the book could be ordered appeared in my e-mail one day. I merely clicked on the link, entered my credit card information and address, and within a few minutes could rest easy that the book would soon be on the way. The summer would include "snuggle time" with my youngest daughter as we took turns reading Harry's new adventures to each other (something we've done since she was in kindergarten) and lively discussions about the new events in Harry's life with our older daughters around the dinner table. Long before the book arrived on our doorstep, the girls had figured out how to share and maximize their opportunities to finish it as quickly as possible: "Denise reads most quickly so she gets it first, but Beth can borrow it if Denise is at work, and Mommy and Meredith get it whenever Mom says so."

On the night of the party, the bookstore was crowded with children and adults, some dressed like Harry or Hermione, and pointed hats and capes abounded. The media reported many such parties around our community and throughout the country. Children curled up in corners, reading with flashlights under the covers, bleary-eyed from non-stop marathon reading sessions were the order of the day. As a teacher, such a reading frenzy during summer vacation was exciting and gratifying to me.

The students of the teachers I visited recently have had very different experiences. I received an e-mail on my personal computer; those children had no computers. I had a credit card that would be accepted online and the ability to pay the bill when it arrived; many of their families had challenging credit histories and were not able to spend $20 on a book when money for food and shelter were limited. I had an address that I could include with the book order months before it would be needed; many of these children did not know where they would be living a month later.

My own children have had a very different experience learning to read than the children seen daily by my teacher hosts. In our family, access to books was never a problem. In fact, my girls learned as toddlers that Mom might say no to a trip to the toy store, but a request to visit the bookstore would be harder to decline and usually resulted with some packages going home. Reading a story as part of the bedtime ritual is something my 20-year-old still recalls fondly. Some of my girls learned to read with such ease that it seemed effortless. Even my daughter who struggled in the primary grades received the support she needed with private assessments and a little extra attention from Mom. By middle school, her reading skills surpassed those of many of her peers and she was more likely to be corrected by a teacher for reading in class when she was not supposed to than for talking out of turn.

The parents of children in poverty and homelessness want the best for their children, but may lack the resources whether financial, emotional, or educational to provide the early literacy opportunities that are taken for granted in middle class communities. A book of your own, a place with light to read each night, a parent who can negotiate the education system to get help when it is needed is not a given among such children. Were these children at the Harry Potter parties? Did these children have access to a copy of any of the Harry Potter books? And ultimately, were these children capable of reading Harry?

While reading often appears in the headlines because of its importance as a critical predictor of success in adulthood, we must remember that reading also is a wonderful, joyful part of childhood. I hope that the information in this handbook provides new ideas and tools to ensure students who are highly mobile, living in poverty, and experiencing homelessness acquire the reading skills they need to succeed AND to enjoy the treasures and wonderment that comes from reading.

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Chapter 1

Purpose and Process

This handbook is the second installment in a project supported by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) to explore reading instruction for students experiencing high mobility as a result of high poverty. The initial document, *Reading on the Go! Students Who Are Highly Mobile and Reading Instruction,* reviewed the characteristics of highly mobile students and provided a literature review of reading instruction, with a focus on the research on reading and high poverty in an effort to help practitioners better understand the needs of highly mobile students and inform their selection and structure of programs by making research-based decisions.

This *Handbook of Resources* begins the discussion of implementation based on the literature reviewed in Volume 1 but was further shaped by the voice of practitioners captured through focus groups and site visits. Thus, the practices and materials presented here are based on the literature and input from teachers who work with students experiencing homelessness. The focus is on supplemental instruction and children experiencing homelessness in preschool and elementary grades (the emphasis being K-3 instruction), given the sites that were visited. While these interventions may apply to other highly mobile groups and may apply to in-class instruction, further exploration is needed to support their use with other groups.

Studies that address the literacy needs of highly mobile students are limited because it takes time before changes resulting from interventions are observed and because children who move frequently are among those represented by the asterisks in statistical tables of results that note the attrition rate. This project is intended to be an interim support that can assist today's students and help set a research agenda by highlighting topics and issues for subsequent studies. The intended audience includes school-based and community-based staff and other individuals interested in developing and maintaining literacy programs for homeless and highly mobile students.

Approach

The information included in the handbook is based on several years of conference sessions, discussions with reading experts, an eye on the literature, and visits to programs on the "front line." The

handbook identifies instructional methods and resources used by educators who serve mobile students on a daily basis and those that have research support for students, in general, that also "make sense" in capturing progress and imparting knowledge quickly when there is little time to teach.

Data Collection

The information collected in this handbook was shaped by the voices of educators who work with children who move frequently. Specifically, focus groups were conducted with state coordinators for the education of homeless children and youth who were available for a conference call meeting during the summer of 2003 as well as attendees at the 2003 Conference of the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) who volunteered to join a special session to discuss the issue of literacy. (Proceedings from these focus groups may be found in Appendices B-1 and B-2.)

During the spring and summer of 2005 several site visits to successful programs also were conducted. A nomination form requesting identification of programs that were improving the literacy skills of elementary school-aged children who were homeless or highly mobile was distributed to state coordinators for the education of homeless children and youth, migrant education coordinators, and institutions of higher education with programs that addressed literacy for this population. Four programs were nominated. Ultimately, three sites were visited based on scheduling availability.

Two of the programs involved supplemental after-school tutoring. The third program emphasized support for the literacy skills development of preschoolers. While not the primary focus for this project, the growing numbers of young children experiencing homelessness and the research-based practices being incorporated provided an opportunity to explore the needs of younger children as a preventive measure against later reading struggles. The sites included a preschool home-based literacy project on Long Island, New York, an after-school literacy project housed in a short-term domestic violence shelter in Austin, Texas, and an after-school tutorial program offered in a homeless shelter in Kenosha, Wisconsin. (Appendix A-1 includes more details about the methodology and actual case studies of the three sites.) While anecdotes and quotes from these site visits have been included throughout the handbook, readers are encouraged to read Appendices A-1 and A-2 to reap the full benefit of these visits.

These appendices contain many rich lessons learned by the teachers who opened their programs for visits and shared a wealth of insights.

Chapter 2

Identifying Students and Establishing Goals

Early Considerations

Before a program is selected and implemented with highly mobile students, care must be taken to clearly identify the students to be served, their needs, and the desired outcomes. Analysis of data to gain an accurate understanding of the students to be served is a critical early step and one that should be revisited throughout the endeavor. Starting during initial planning, community and school representatives who can access needed data and will be able to share the project's needs and goals should be identified. With literacy being the target skill, it is imperative that community-initiated projects seek representation and support from the schools. Educators' understanding of the dynamics of local mobility and homelessness can be enhanced by involving those community agencies that serve these children and their families.

Data-Driven Decision Making

Using data effectively involves not only data-based decisions and actions, but also using the relevant information to shape your message. Appropriate use of data is part of effective "selling" of a project. For example, funders are looking for projects that can effectively describe the current status of needs in a community and include mechanisms to document changes brought about by the project. Increasing awareness of needs and building consensus and support for a project requires effective packaging of the facts as part of your message. This can be considered during the initial data gathering stage.

Known as strategic communication, this process focuses on changing behaviors and realizing outcomes rather than simply providing general communication. It tells people where you are going and what you want to achieve. Accurate data help develop your rationale. Use of this kind of marketing approach among nonprofits and advocacy groups has been gaining more attention in recent years. The following organizations have resources that may be useful in developing strategic communications and accessing data at the state and national level.

- **The Annie E. Casey Foundation** (www.aecf.org/) is responsible for KIDS COUNT, a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United Sates on indicators of well-being. The information is used by policymakers and citizens. KIDS COUNT "seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children."[1]

- **FoundationWorks** (www.foundationworks.org) is an alliance of communication experts. As described in the introduction to their Web site, FoundationWorks' mission is "to accelerate social change by partnering with foundations and their grantees to ensure more effective use of philanthropic resources. We believe strategic communication can be the principal agent for achieving the next level of philanthropic effectiveness."[2]

- **Corporation for National and Community Service** (www.cns.gov) has created a booklet to assist nonprofit organizations and volunteers groups in conducting media outreach.[3]

- **Voices for America's Children (**www.voicesforamericaschildren.org/**)** is dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness of state and local child advocacy organizations. Their Translating Research Into Advocacy Project provides information, resources, and technical assistance on policy-relevant research, such as Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT**.**

- **W. K. Kellogg Foundation** (www.wkkf.org) "is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to apply knowledge to solve the problems of people."[4] Among the resources available on their Web site are publications that describe program evaluation and the use of logic models in program planning and evaluation. *The Logic Model Development Guide* includes a discussion of how the logic model can assist in marketing programs and presenting programs to potential funders. The program logic model is a picture of how an

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[1] Retrieved December 23, 2005, from KIDS COUNT homepage www.aecf.org/kidscount/

[2] Retrieved March 15, 2005, from www.foundationworks.org

[3] Corporation for National and Community Service. (2005). *Sharing your national service story: A guide to working with the media.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved August 23, 2005, from www.cns.gov/about/media_kit/index.asp

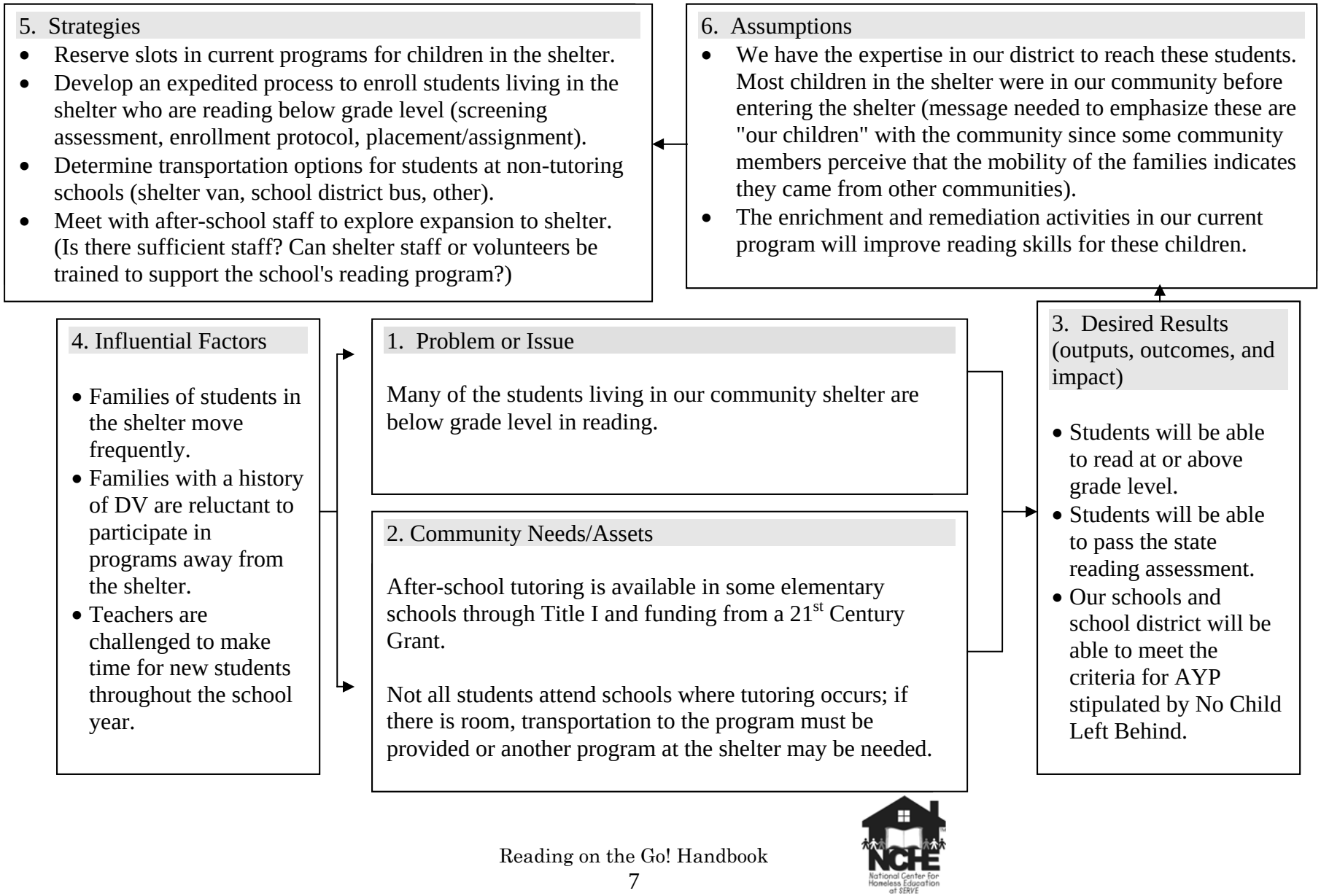
[4] Retrieved November 15, 2005, from www.wkkf.org/WhoWeAre/Default.aspx

organization does its work – the theory and assumptions underlying the program, which links outcomes with program activities and the theoretical assumptions of the program.[5] The following logic model was created from a sample template found in the guide. It may be adapted as you begin to plan or continue to improve your program.

[5] W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2004). *Logic model development guide.* Retrieved 11-09-05 from www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf

Figure 1

Sample Logic Model for Program Planning



Targeting Student Groups

Given the limitations of funding and resources, most programs must place parameters on which students can be served. So, how do you decide?

If the literacy project is to be shelter- or community center-based, the potential population is already limited. Longitudinal data that provides detailed demographics about the children to be served are needed, including:

- How many children at any given time are on site?
- What are the typical ages and grades served and what is the frequency of each?
- How long are children in the program before they move again?
- What is the range of duration?
- Why do the children move and where do they go?

This is information the shelter or center can provide. Knowledge of children's reading skills may be less accessible. Observational data from staff can be valuable in describing what is known about the children's skill levels and literacy needs. Here are some additional questions to consider:

- How do children relate school experiences? What information do they share? How many are positive and excited about school? How many are reluctant to talk about school? Are their discussions negative? Are there any quotes or stories that can be shared?
- If homework is completed in the program, how many children are able to complete it independently or with minimal direction? How many children have homework that they do not seem capable of completing successfully?
- Do children seek out books and reading opportunities?
- If report card grades are available, how well are children in the program performing?
- If state and local assessment data are available, how are the children in your program succeeding?

The last two questions underscore the need for collaboration with schools. Given appropriate permission to share information, school-generated data are more complete and will complement the observational and demographic information that the center can provide. If the project is initiated within a school or a school district, many of the same questions must be addressed, but additional

considerations will arise. For example, mobility patterns should be analyzed in order to better understand the students and special learning needs.

- What kind of mobility (e.g., military moves, moving from state-to-state following work, moving in and out with relatives) do we see?
- Is mobility higher in certain grades or schools?
- Do the students remain in (or return to) our school or school district?

Analyzing mobility patterns can help identify which grades and students should be considered when asking further questions.

- How well are our mobile students doing on statewide assessments?
- How are stable peers in the classroom performing on these assessments?
- How is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) affected by students' mobility?
- Has the school district made a concerted effort to help students remain in their school of origin, especially if the school moves have occurred within the same school district?

In our current era of accountability, answers to such questions will be of great interest to leaders whose support can further the development of a new project. In addition, the anecdotal observations of teachers and other school staff, as well as families, provide further detail and understanding.

- What do teachers report as challenges in their classrooms with students with high mobility?
- How do the literacy skills of highly mobile and homeless children compare with those of their grade-level peers?

Knowledge of the incidence, needs, and special characteristics of the target population provides a basis for determining the priorities that will be accepted within the community and those that can be matched with funding sources and other school and community resources. The following table provides an illustration of how such planning may evolve in a shelter-based after-school program.

Table 1

Planning Options Based on Current Data

Age/ Grade	# served/ year	# served at one time	Literacy skills (average scores/range) anecdotal observations/needs	What could we do?	How could we get it done?
PreK	50	10	Lack of exposure to books & activities	Set up preK reading corner Organize library visits Bring in volunteers to read with children	Book drives Daycare vans for transportation Existing community programs
K	30	5	Weak vocabulary Low recognition of alphabet and letter sounds PALS – 80 percent scored in lowest quartile	Build background knowledge Play literacy games Provide one-to-one drill with chart of progress	Consult K teachers for recommended activities Employ reading consultant to train volunteers
1	25	5	Weak decoding Limited sight vocabulary	Reinforce phonics instruction Play vocabulary games	Consult school system teachers for supplemental activities
2	25	4	Weak decoding Fluency problems (slow with multiple miscues)	Offer sequential multi-model decoding practice Use repeated readings of stories; recorded books	Hire trained tutors to implement adopted program
3	15	2	Reading on early first-grade level Oral comprehension is on grade level	Provide comprehensive tutoring to enhance school-based instruction	Consult special education program and/or Title I for approved/suggested programs
For all ages			At or above grade level	Consider: Will these children benefit from participation? What can we do to provide enrichment?	

If possible, the ideal is to provide experiences for all children tailored to their ages and skill levels. Unfortunately, too often resources are limited, priorities are shaped by a donor or grant that targets a particular age group, or priorities are identified by the

expertise of those who have already committed to participating. In addition, incidence and impact on the school can be considered. While the school may find the performance of third graders a concern as the first state assessment draws near, the numbers of students to be served may indicate the need for preschool services. Additional information regarding the performance of last year's third graders in the same shelter and kindergarten students who had been in the shelter the previous year may assist in determining which group to serve. When a need is seen as a priority that cannot be met with existing resources, the opportunity to explore additional partnerships can be justified. Finally, there will be students who are not struggling with reading skills, and program staff must decide whether such students can participate, if adjustments will be needed to meet their needs, or whether other options for enrichment would be more beneficial.

Selecting Appropriate Reading Goals

The mobility of the population to be served is a critical factor in determining realistic reading goals. Bringing a child to grade level in reading may be realistic if the intervention can be maintained for nine months but would not be meaningful if children exit the program within 30 days. The sites visited for this project suggest that using retention of children within the project could be a valuable process-oriented goal. If previous interventions have been short-lived due to mobility, exploring ways to retain children for longer periods, even after they leave their current residence, may need to be incorporated into the planning. Through changes in participation policies and procedures that allowed families to be followed throughout the county, both Kenosha and Central Islip found ways to keep their children for extended periods, and reported more considerable achievement gains when this occurred. Staff at the Austin site included increased length of participation as a "wish list" item for the future.

Possible Strategies for Extending the Provision of Services

- Create or revise enrollment policies to allow students to remain in the program after they leave the current shelter. This will likely require coordination of transportation.
- Obtain permission from parents for release of contact information among agencies serving the families along with addresses and phone numbers of family members and friends. When a move occurs, you may be able to locate the family and offer continuation of the program.
- Consider the McKinney-Vento requirement to maintain a child in the school of origin when feasible and in the child's best interest. If the family moves, but the child is able to stay in the same school, where should the program be based? Would the school, shelter, or some other community setting work better with transportation considerations?

Affective and behavioral goals may produce more notable changes when time is limited. Documented changes in the student's approach to reading tasks may not translate directly into a higher standard score, but interest in learning and excitement in reading can generalize into classroom behaviors – those teacher-pleasing behaviors that increase student engagement and have been associated with increased achievement in the literature. A reading professor once said, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." This applies to motivating children to reading. However, she included a postscript: "But you can salt his oats and run him hard!" Documenting the effect of that "salting" can be powerful.

Even when time for instruction and intervention is limited, academics should be included in the goals. To obtain baseline data about the student's current skills, even through informal means, is worthwhile. Checklists and charts (discussed in Chapter 5) can be used to document even small incremental growth. To increase the usefulness of these measures, be sure to consider how the information

can be shared between the classroom teacher and literacy project staff. Further, address how the information will move with the child, especially when students move after short periods of instruction. Portfolios, including electronic portfolios (similar to the migrant education record data system), can be developed along with methods to transfer the information when the student moves. For example, the student may maintain the portfolio and the program holds a copy that can be forwarded to the receiving school or program.

As this chapter illustrates, much information must be collected and many decisions must be made during the early stages of program development that will affect the direction of the project and, when addressed thoughtfully, lead to future stages in a logical progression which can reduce missteps or duplication of effort.

Planning does not require starting with a blank slate. Rather, planning is more meaningful with a full plate. A plate filled with knowledge about the children to be served, knowledge of existing programs that can be accessed, and a series of additional questions that need to be answered.

Chapter 3

Selecting or Creating a Reading Program

Once needs have been identified and the decision has been made to take action, an important step for program planners is to determine whether an existing program in the school or community can be expanded to serve highly mobile and homeless students, whether a program being used in another community can be adapted to fit your context, or whether the needs you have identified are unique enough so that major adjustments to existing programs and the creation of new materials will be necessary to reach the identified goals. Considerations for each of these scenarios follow.

Expanding an Existing Reading Program

To reiterate the old adage, "Why reinvent the wheel!"—building on existing programs has a number of benefits. Someone already researched the program, considered its alignment with the school's curriculum, obtained funding, trained staff, purchased supplies and obtained other resources, and has gained at least some implementation experience within your community. Much of the "homework" has been done, but not all. Additionally, simply including highly mobile students and students experiencing homelessness in a mainstream, well-developed reading program is a sensible step. Table 2 is a checklist developed by the Region IV Comprehensive Center at SERVE that can be used when reviewing the adequacy of research to support a program or strategy.[6] It is important to recognize that using a validated program but altering it, such as reducing the number of sessions per week or the length of sessions, means that the program has been compromised and that the research-based results for effectiveness therefore may no longer apply. Readers also may wish to review the work of Louise Moats for additional direction in evaluation of reading programs.[7]

Commonly, supplemental literacy programs are not geared to short-term interventions. If you have high mobility among the students you wish to target, simple logistics of participation must be addressed with those managing and delivering the program. Consider the following issues:

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[6] SERVE. (2005). *School improvement planning: Technical assistance modules and materials*. Greensboro, NC: SERVE and Edvantia. Table included with permission.

[7] Moats, L. (2007). *Whole-language high jinks: How to tell when "Scientifically-Based Reading Instruction" isn't.* Retrieved February 2, 2007 from http://www.edexcellence.net/foundation/publication/publication.cfm?id=367

- *If there are limited numbers of slots for students, can some be reserved for highly mobile students*? The slot may always have a mobile student, but it may not be the SAME student.
- *If this can be done, how will new students be placed*? The importance of this question will vary depending upon whether the program focuses on one-to-one or small-group arrangements for instruction. One-to-one can be tailored to individual students, whereas small-group work may require that students be reading at similar levels.
- *Do those delivering the instruction have the skills to accommodate students with wider variations of reading skills?* If not, can small groups be increased or new groups be added?

Further, how will new students who enter the program at times other than the beginning of the year be oriented? Is there a welcome procedure? Are there rules that must be communicated to the student to be successful? Will a peer buddy, a teacher, volunteer, or some other person be able to address these needs? An additional consideration when exploring the appropriateness of an existing program is whether there is any evidence of its effectiveness for students similar to those you wish to include. This can include the research base for the program and anecdotal evidence derived from the observations of staff using the program now.

Table 2

Scientifically Based Research Checklist

Goal: _____

Strategy Considered: _____

YES/NO	QUESTIONS	EVIDENCE/RATIONALE
	1. Is there a research base of more than one or two studies?	
	2. Is the research based on experiment or observation by outside researchers (not the program developer)?	
	3. Do the data analyses appear rigorous?	
	4. Does the research employ multiple measures?	
	5. Are there enough subjects in the studies to provide good data?	
	6. Were control groups used in the studies?	
	7. Are the studies presented clearly and in enough detail so that other researchers could replicate it?	
	8. Are the time frames of the studies sufficient to provide good data?	
	9. Have the studies appeared in peer-reviewed journals or have they been independently reviewed?	
	10. Does the research design seem appropriate to answer the research question(s)?	

If the students you wish to serve have not traditionally participated in the existing program, it is helpful to explore the reasons why this has occurred. Perceived or real barriers to participation must be confronted and addressed if future access is to be successful. Finally, providing access to existing programs is likely to increase numbers, which may increase personnel needs and a demand for additional resources. Whether the program has the capacity for growth or will need additional funding to meet increased participation must be explored.

Reviewing Programs Developed for Similar Students

If an existing program cannot be accessed, the search for potential programs that others have used begins. The questions and considerations listed here are critical when a new selection is made, but also can be discussed when adopting an existing program.

An early question is how well a potential program aligns with the standards and curriculum for your state and locality. Different programs use different strategies and terminology, even when addressing the same skill. Too many mixed messages can confuse a student who is already struggling. A review by the school's reading specialist of any programs under consideration would be very appropriate.

So, where should a search for possible programs begin? School districts that use federal education dollars must select programs that are scientifically based. To assist schools in making such selections, states have developed lists of approved comprehensive (such as those used in regular classrooms) and supplemental (intended to reinforce specific skills) literacy programs. Therefore, checking your state's list of approved programs can provide a starting point. If there are specific areas of weaknesses that have been identified as most challenging for your students, consider how well a given program emphasizes those skills.

As mentioned under existing programs at the beginning of this chapter, the population of students studied to create the scientifically based evidence for a given program should be compared to the profile of the students you wish to serve. If the groups are very different, you cannot generalize the results to your students. This does not mean that the program will not be successful, but it means that the data on effectiveness should be interpreted cautiously. (See Chapter 3 of *Reading on the Go! Volume 1* for an expanded discussion of scientifically based evidence.)

Other items to consider include what assessment tools are included with the program and what monitoring tools are available.

- If the assessments (pre- and post-) are more extensive, do you have trained staff who can administer and interpret them appropriately?
- Are the forms for assessment and placement consumable, meaning you will need to purchase additional forms over time? This is an important budget consideration.
- How do students, teachers, and/or volunteers monitor progress over time? Given the mobility of our target population, having forms to document performance in each session and provide ongoing progress checks is critical. Students and staff must be able to celebrate incremental growth when the likelihood of the student being present for a post assessment is small. Chapter 4 of this handbook provides an expanded discussion of this topic.
- Are there forms to communicate with the classroom teacher and with parents? This applies to supplemental programs – the focus of this handbook.

Finally, the continual question must be asked: "If the preferred program is costly, is there a commitment to explore funding?" Information about funding agencies in Chapter 2 and potential resources in Chapter 7 elaborate on this topic.

Table 3 identifies several programs that may be of interest in your survey of available options. A more extensive list of resources to explore may be found in Chapter 7.

Table 3

Potential Programs to Investigate

Program Name **Contact Information**	**Brief Description**
Reading Connection www.thereadingconnection.org/	The Reading Connection is a Virginia-based non-profit organization that brings books and a lifelong love of reading to children in housing crisis. Goals include exposing children to books and encouraging them to spend more time reading; providing children with free books to keep; increasing language input during critical stages of literacy development; and encouraging parents and children to value independent home reading.
Read Naturally www.readnaturally.com	Read Naturally is a fluency program with a home component and leveled "one-minute reader" books used with reading probes of words read correctly per minute. The program uses a computerized reading application (fluency building includes

	timed repeated readings and repeated readings with recorded books). Read Naturally's One Minute Reader won the 2006 Teachers' Choice Award for the Family from *Learning Magazine.*
Glass Analysis www.glassanalysis.com	Glass-Analysis is a decoding skill building program that uses a clustering approach to get students to identify letters and clusters in whole words, visually and auditorily, to promote correct decoding at the automatic level.
Accelerated Reader www.renlearn.com/ar/overview/default.htm	Accelerated Reader (AR) is reading management software that provides teachers with methods to monitor guided reading practice.

Tailoring a New Reading Program

If you decide that a new program must be developed, you will need someone with reading expertise. "Teaching reading IS rocket science," as Louisa Moates[8] proposed. This would be an opportunity to partner with a local university's school of education. Whether seen as curriculum development, action research with school partners, or some other form of research, such efforts may be of interest to a variety of professors in curriculum and instruction areas.

Concluding Thoughts on Program Selection

Making the match between your students' needs and available resources is no easy task. Programs that emphasize a positive experience with literacy are helpful when students' literacy skills are fairly intact and when very high mobility and limited funding preclude more extensive programming. However, such efforts alone do not provide the extensive and intensive instruction that may be needed when children are not functioning at grade level. A more comprehensive program that meets the specifications currently accepted for quality programming will be necessary. This raises the questions: Should we emphasize remediation or enrichment? Can we do both?

While some research and programs praise the efficacy of highly prescriptive programming, others in the field challenge the way we

[8] Moats, L. C. (1999). *Teaching reading is rocket science: What expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do.* Available at www.aft.org/pubs-reports/downloads/teachers/rocketsci.pdf

differentiate curriculum and instruction for children in poverty as illustrated in the following quote:

> … a growing body of information has offered quite clear specifications of what young children from poverty homes need. In order to learn, they require:
>
> - Real-world experiences with real-world objects
> - Meaningful tasks
> - Conversation opportunities
> - Opportunities to make activity-based discoveries
> - Individualized pursuits to allow the child to engage in learning
>
> 
>
> Instead, the curricula available for these children lead to:
>
> - Artificial activities with abstract drawings
> - Contrived tasks
> - Admonitions to remain silent
> - Requests to parrot back unconnected pieces of information. Whole group sessions which encourage all but the most able of children to tune out[9]

Jonathan Kozol[10] described the inequity of curriculum for children in poverty, which often emphasizes rote skills with large quantities of drill and practice[11] to the exclusion of higher- level skills, which are rarely addressed. Richard Allington's work[12] underscores the discrepancy between students' instructional needs and the skills of

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[9] Weiner, C. (2001). Preparing for success: Meeting the language and learning needs of young children from poverty homes. Youngtown, AZ: ECL Publications. p. ix.

[10] Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America.* New York: Crown Publishers.

[11] See also, Knapp, M. S., Shields, P. M., & Turnbull, B. J. (1993). *Academic challenge for the children of poverty: The summary report* (ERS Item #171). Arlington, VA: Education Research Service.

[12] See, for example, Allington, R. L. (2001). *What really matters for struggling readers: Designing research-based programs.* New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

the teachers who teach them. Sadly, our students with the greatest needs are often taught by the least experienced teachers. Highly programmed instruction is seen as means to "teacher proof" the materials. The message to students becomes, "Stay in your place and follow directions. It is not your place to challenge and question." This message is the exact opposite of that typically found in affluent communities, which demand that children think critically. Lorraine Monroe[13] responds when asked, "What should we do to teach these children?" with a question of her own: "What would you do if these children were wealthy?" Are the programs in affluent communities highly scripted to limit teacher error? The answer most frequently is, "No. We hire expert instructors with the skills to adapt to student needs and challenge them." To select and create effective programs, we must seek programs and staff that can address the skills that have been carefully identified, incorporate instructional techniques and strategies that strengthen such skills, and ensure the inclusion of higher-order thinking skills and enrichment-style activities.

[13] Monroe, L. (2005). Keynote address at National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Conference. Kansas City, MO.

Chapter 4

Assessment and Evaluation

Two terms that receive much attention in the field of education these days are *assessment* and *evaluation*. While the two words are frequently linked, they serve distinct purposes.

Assessment may be defined as "any method used to better understand the current knowledge that a student possesses." This implies that assessment can be as simple as a teacher's subjective judgment based on a single observation of student performance, or as complex as a five-hour standardized test. The idea of current knowledge implies that what a student knows is always changing and that we can make judgments about student achievement through comparisons over a period of time. Assessment may affect decisions about grades, advancement, placement, instructional needs, and curriculum.[14]

The view that assessment can provide a "snapshot" of student knowledge and learning and the recognition that this snapshot is always changing has important implications when applied to the instructional needs of highly mobile students. "Assessment provides a way to measure students' demonstration of learning. It helps us answer the questions: 'How much did they learn?' and 'How well did they learn it?' and 'How well did we teach it?'"[15] Assessment provides us with a description of a student's skills.

In contrast, evaluation focuses on placing a judgment on the *quality* of work produced (whether it is the teacher's, student's, or program's performance). There are two types of evaluation, summative

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[14] Dietel, R.J., Herman, J.L., & Knuth, R.A. (1991). *What does research say about assessment?* NCREL, Oak Brook. Retrieved April 5, 2006, from www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/stw_esys/4assess.htm

[15] *Assessment, evaluation, and curriculum redesign workshop.* (n.d.). Retrieved December 13, 2005, from www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/assessment/index.html

and formative. Traditionally, schools and long-term programs have emphasized summative evaluation in which feedback is collected after instruction is completed. Summative evaluation is the end-of-unit test, the weekly spelling test, and report card grades. When reporting results to funding agencies, summative evaluation data will be required that can place assessment measures within the context of goals achieved and challenges met.[16] While the following quote refers to "program evaluation," the distinction made from assessment also can be applied to student work.

> Program evaluations are individual systematic studies conducted periodically or on an ad hoc basic *to assess how well a program is working* [italics added] ... A program evaluation typically examines achievement of objectives in the context of other aspects of program performance or in the context in which it occurs.[17]

The second type, formative evaluation, involves ongoing collection of data and feedback to students throughout the instructional cycle. Rather than waiting until all the lessons have been taught, the teacher continually monitors student performance and understanding and shares those observations with the student. It requires an extra step in each lesson – a "step back" to reflect on the effectiveness of strategies used, the student's responsiveness, and the progress (no matter how small) that can be observed. This allows both teacher and student to continually adjust and improve their work. (Veteran special educators may recognize this approach as diagnostic-prescriptive teaching, a popular approach to teaching students with disabilities in the 1980s.)

While both summative and formative processes play important roles in tracking student achievement, there is a renewed interest in ongoing (i.e., formative) evaluation.[18] This bodes well for students who

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[16] For a review of experimental design methodology used in smaller community programs, see, Wimer, C. (2006). *Out-of-school time evaluation snapshot: Learning from small-scale experimental evaluations of after school programs.* Harvard Family Research Project. Retrieved May 5, 2006, from www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/snapshot8.html.

[17] U.S. General Accounting Office. (2005). *Performance measurement and evaluation: Definitions and relationships.* GAO-05-739sp. Retrieved December 12, 2005, from www.gao.gov/htext/d05739sp.html.

[18] Wilcox, J. (2006). Less teaching, more assessing. *Education Update, 48*(2), 1-7.

are highly mobile. We do not have to wait until the unit is finished or the closing chapter of the novel has been read. We do not need to say, "Sal was gone before we finished Chapter 6, so I can't tell you how much he learned." Formative evaluation can be part of every lesson, every day. We do this by adding an evaluative judgment to the assessment data and interpreting all those "snapshots."

Skilled teachers are in perpetual formative evaluation mode. They are constantly monitoring their students' understanding of lessons and modifying their instruction based on those observations. For some teachers, this may be such a natural and automatic process that appears to be sheer intuition at work. For students who are highly mobile, it is important to find ways to capture and document those observations more systematically so they can be shared as the student moves from teacher to teacher and school to school. A few well-placed questions in a tutor's lesson plan can keep the evaluation going, even when volunteers with limited training in teaching techniques work directly with students.

In Austin, tutors are asked to note a reflection for each lesson.

"In the reflection section, please note whether the child enjoyed the activity, if it was the appropriate level, and ideas for the next section."

Further, after the first and final lessons, guiding questions are used to capture potential progress:

_____ **Positive:** (Willing to go with tutor; likes to be read to or to read; engaged in lesson; participates in activities; easy to work with.)
_____ **Neutral:** (Goes with tutor when told; listens but does not actively participate; less engaged.)
_____ **Negative:** (Refuses to go with tutor; does not want to read or to be read to; does not participate in any activity; difficult to work with.)

What has it been like working with this child? *(easy to engage, difficult to engage, positive experience, etc.)*

Describe the progress you have seen over the course of lessons academically. Please be specific. *(Examples: learned to recognize two letters and their sounds, became more comfortable giving his/her opinion of the books we read)*

See Appendix A-2, pp. App.26-32.

Since the descriptive data are needed before a judgment (evaluation) can be made about the information, much of this chapter will focus on assessment, with reference to implications for evaluation as they arise.

Initial Assessments

As noted in the opening quote in this chapter, assessment provides us with information that can be used in a variety of ways. When thinking about literacy skills for students who move frequently, the first concern is determining students' skills and needs when they enter the program. That entry, baseline data should answer a variety of questions. For starters:

- What is the child's language background?
- What is the child's cultural background?
- What topics/content/genres are of interest to the child?[19]
- What is the student's reading level? (independent, instructional, and frustration)
- Will the student be able to read our classroom texts?
- Are there strengths or weaknesses among the components of reading? (Is decoding difficult? Is there inattention to punctuation? Does the student recognize words in isolation with ease?)
- How does the student approach reading tasks? Is she reluctant to read? Did she try to avoid reading tasks?
- What do I teach tomorrow?

If you are using a published program, it is likely that a placement test is available that can be administered to determine where to start instruction. In addition to placement tests for specific reading programs, a wide variety of published standardized reading assessments and less formal alternative assessments that involve informal reading inventories, reading probes, observation of student behaviors, and checklists are available. Considerations that influence assessment selection include:

- Cost (for the "test kit" and testing protocols if copying is not allowed under copyright law)
- Grade-level spans that can be assessed

[19] The first three questions are from Noll, E., & Watkins, R. (2003). The impact of homelessness on children's literacy experiences. *The Reading Teacher, 57*(4), 363, citing Owoki & Goodman, 2002.

- The need for individual versus group administration
- The time needed to complete the assessment
- The skill level required for the individual conducting the assessment

An additional consideration that is of particular significance when serving students who are highly mobile is balancing the time, effort, and cost of the initial assessment against the information obtained and the possibility that some assessments may produce anxiety for children at a time when they already face stressors in their lives. If the student has just come to the community because he lost his home, is a formal test on the first day the best use of time? If the test takes an hour to administer and the student may only be available for four hours of instruction, is the information obtained helpful enough to justify the time? How can we lessen the potential anxiety of testing and build rapport with new students while still collecting useful data about their reading needs?

Both standardized and less formal assessments may be used to determine a student's entry-level reading skills. Each approach has strengths as well as limitations. Standardized tests have been developed with reliability and validity in mind. That is, systematic administration to ensure consistency is paired with statistical and expert evaluation of items to create tests that are likely to produce similar results over and over again (reliability) and that are likely to provide the information about learning and skills that is being sought (validity). While standardized tests can be *criterion referenced* – in other words, designed to compare a student's performance to a target level of performance (or criterion) – many published standardized tests are *norm referenced*, meaning a student's performance is being compared to the performance of a pool of students who have taken the test (the norming group).

A variety of norm-referenced standardized reading tests can be used to learn more about a student's reading skills.[20] Someone in the program should be able to interpret assessment data obtained from such tests. If school data are being used, the evaluator should create a report that translates scores into implications for instruction. Training of tutors should address whatever data will typically be provided to assist their instruction. A school psychologist, educational diagnostician, reading specialist, or special education teacher would be able to identify what standardized reading assessments are used in the

[20] A recent publication from the National Center on Homeless Education provides an overview of quick assessments for a variety of academic subjects. See *Best practices in homeless education: Prompt and proper placement: Enrolling students without records.* www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/assessment.pdf

school system and may be shared with your program. Test kits for such norm-referenced assessments can be expensive; if school kits are used, the expense may be limited to scoring protocols. These tests usually require one-to-one administration with administration time ranging from 15 minutes to one hour or more. When administered by individuals who have been trained to follow the protocol and when interpreted by experts (especially when the expert has conducted the administration and can collect observational data to enhance and explain any numbers generated), such instruments can capture a wealth of information to inform teaching. Since these assessments may be part of a battery of tests used when determining eligibility for special education, coordination with school assessment staff is critical. When such tests are administered too frequently, the results can be distorted, negating the usefulness of the assessment.

Expertise in reading instruction and assessment is needed to make the results of such testing meaningful for instructional purposes. The scores generated are often misunderstood by the general public. Depending on the test, age or grade equivalents can be obtained, which allow a comparison of the student's performance to that of peers of the same age or grade to obtain percentile rankings or standard scores (such as an IQ of 100 or 130). It should be noted that grade equivalents obtained from such assessments do not translate into reading-level placements nor do they capture growth that equals months or years of instruction. A grade equivalent simply means that the student performed at the same level as 50 percent of the students in the norming sample who were at the identified grade-month of school. A grade equivalent of 3.5 (third grade, fifth month) means the student performed at the same level as the original group of students who were in the middle of third grade. This does not mean those original students were working on a mid-third-grade reading level meeting the expectations of today's classroom in your community. Percentiles and standard scores that compare students to their peers may not capture growth upon retesting unless there is an achievement gap that shrinks or grows.

Some research suggests standardized testing has a negative impact on at-risk students when used to justify grouping or retention. It may limit higher-order thinking if passing the test becomes the sole priority.[21] However, when used to understand a student's needs and to create supportive instructional programs, students can benefit. The use of norm-referenced standardized tests should be limited to meeting the specific needs of the program and students.

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[21] NW Regional Educational Laboratory. (2001). *Student assessment and testing.* Retrieved August 18, 2005, from www.nwrel.org/cnorse/booklets/educate/11.html#4

Since assessment is much broader than single-shot tests, a variety of additional formats can be explored to document students' present skill levels and incremental growth, and inform instruction. Performance-based instruction can include open-ended questions, observations, and even student exhibits.

All three of the sites visited for this project relied upon informal checklists. (Samples from site visits may be found in Appendix A-2.) These checklists were developed to align with local grade-level expectations and/or research on child development in the area of language skills. The checklists may be used to roughly gauge a student's entering reading level and skill needs *and* collect ongoing samples of work to document smaller increments of growth. The amount of information obtained while observing a student's performance and completing a checklist is affected by the skill of the observer. A skilled reading teacher will be able to identify subtle student behaviors, generate hypotheses based on years of experience, and probe through questioning, and adjusting the reading materials or context to test those hypotheses to determine instructional "next steps." On the other hand, non-educators working as tutors can be learn to look for specific behaviors, especially when a checklist is available to guide that observation.

Knowledge of the mobility patterns that are most common for your students is useful in determining what level of detail is most appropriate. Checklists that focus on state or national standards may be easier to generate for students who move from locality to locality or across state lines. The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) provides listings of state standards to assist military families moving across state lines to compare differences in requirements.[22] This could be a helpful resource if you know several of your students have come from or are going to relocate to specific states. Similarly, school district-level expectations may be analyzed if students tend to move among certain school systems (such as a city and its suburb). If students tend to move back and forth, educators from the districts most affected by the mobility could be invited to meet, discuss their expectations and develop a checklist that has the most meaning for all systems. Such a meeting also could become a forum for discussing other forms of assessment and instruction for the shared students. A community-based program could initiate such a dialogue. If you see the need, you and your colleagues may be ones to pull the educators together.

Tracking Incremental Growth

[22] See www.militarychild.org/

As noted in the previous section, many formal, standardized assessments are designed for pre- and post-testing when there is an extended length of time between tests. Unless alternate forms of tests are available, many tests should not be used within the same school year. Because instructors need ongoing information about student progress, additional techniques are needed. For students who are highly mobile, this is the most critical element to address. Instructors need the most accurate information to tailor each lesson, students need to see their progress and be part of the monitoring as a means of enhancing engagement and personal efficacy, *and* this information should be portable and easily shared with the next tutor, teacher, and school when another move occurs.

Curriculum-based measures. Checklists, teacher notes, charts, and graphs can capture incremental growth. Beginning in the late 1970s, Stan Deno, a professor of educational psychology, developed a method known as curriculum-based measurement (CBM). CBM was designed to give teachers of students with learning disabilities "a simple set of evaluation procedures that would allow them to literally graph a child's academic progress … CBM enjoys support from the U.S. Department of Education and has been the measurement and assessment tool of choice in numerous federally funded studies."[23]

CBM has a number of characteristics that make it an appropriate method to adopt when working with highly mobile students. Specifically, CBM provides a simple, statistically reliable, and practical means of measuring student skills in subject areas such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Students are given brief, timed exercises to complete, using materials drawn directly from the child's academic program. This process allows teachers to closely monitor the rate of student educational progress with limited time constraints.

[23] Curriculum-based measurement (CBM): Student assessment. Retrieved August 25, 2005, from University of Minnesota, College of Education and Human Development Web site: http://www.education.umn.edu/Pubs/ResearchWorks/CBM.html

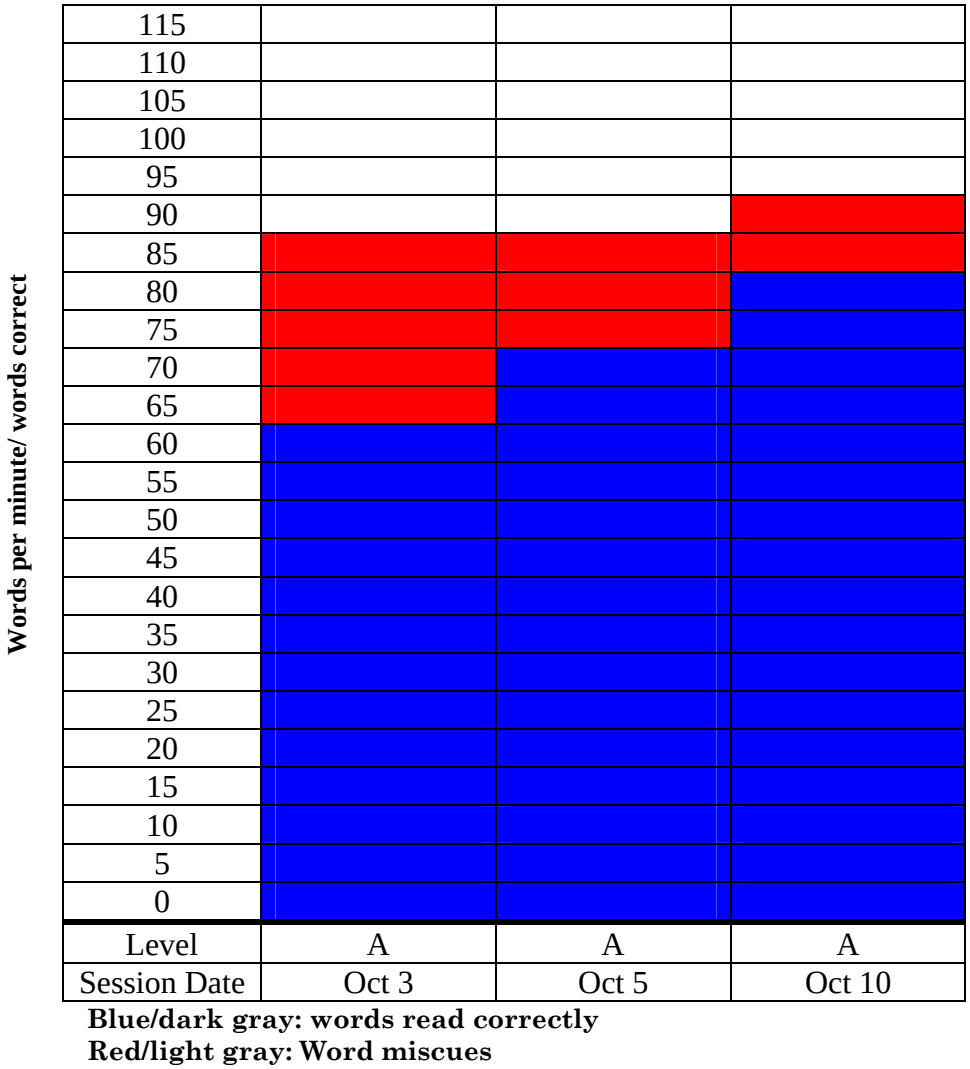
Curriculum-based measurement, or CBM, is a method of monitoring student educational progress through direct assessment of academic skills. CBM can be used to measure basic skills in reading, mathematics, spelling, and written expression. It can also be used to monitor readiness skills. When using CBM, the instructor gives the student brief, timed samples, or "probes," made up of academic material taken from the child's school curriculum. These CBM probes are given under standardized conditions. For example, the instructor will read the same directions every time that he or she gives a certain type of CBM probe. CBM probes are timed and may last from 1 to 5 minutes, depending on the skill being measured. The child's performance on a CBM probe is scored for speed, or fluency, and for accuracy of performance. Since CBM probes are quick to administer and simple to score, they can be given repeatedly (for example, twice per week). The results are then charted to offer the instructor a visual record of a targeted child's rate of academic progress.[24]

Figure 2 provides an example of a daily monitoring tool that employs CBM principles similar to that used in the Read Naturally program.

[24] Wright, J. (n.d.) *Curriculum-based measurement: A manual for teachers.* Syracuse (NY) City Schools. Retrieved August 25, 2005, from http://www.jimwrightonline.com/pdfdocs/cbaManual.pdf

Figure 2

Monitoring Student Progress – Reading Fluency



Blue/dark gray: words read correctly
Red/light gray: Word miscues

Graphing progress provides the instructor and student with a visual image that can be very motivating. Analyzing the graph is a great opportunity to do some problem-solving and even reinforce math skills. If the graph is showing an increase, discuss what is working. If the graph is "flat" or shows a decline, discuss possible causes and brainstorm ways to move beyond them. Given high mobility, incremental gains must be documented and celebrated.

Collecting post-test data. In addition to day-to-day monitoring, programs often determine specific "end points," such as mid-year or end of year, for documenting student growth and provide program evaluation data. Given the characteristics of highly mobile students, such traditional assessment points are less meaningful and harder to

evaluate. The assumption that the results reflect five or ten months of consistent instruction may be true for few, if any, of the participating students. Thus, ongoing assessment is likely to provide the most meaningful information for individual students.

For program evaluation, traditional post-testing may be required. If so, it should be explained in a way that clearly identifies the length of the intervention and number of sessions provided to students: the range, the median, and the mode. CBM data are designed to allow for such reporting as well. In addition, any observational data that have been collected may be summarized or excerpted to provide the personal story the program can share with the community. Again, this is an area that might be of interest for a local college or university researcher. Researchers need access to data and your program may have a wealth of data that have not been analyzed. The analysis provides the research with a meaningful project and you have the benefit of the expertise needed to present your data in a meaningful way.

Sample Assessments and Support Resources

- Readability formulas are used to estimate the reading difficulty of text. Such formulas may be used with textbooks and other sources of fiction or nonfictions, such as newspaper or magazine articles and children's books.[25] These techniques can be very helpful in determining whether a particular book or reading passage is appropriate (at least in terms of skill level needed).

    - Dale-Chall Readability Formula – Most effective with upper-elementary materials, this formula provides a two-year "band" of estimated readability.
    - Flesch-Kinkaid Formula – This is the formula used in Microsoft Word to estimate reading difficulty. To use it, type or scan your text, go to "Tools" and click on "Spelling and Grammar." Once the checking is complete, a readability score is displayed.
    - Fry Readability Formula – This is one of the simplest means of calculating readability manually. The number of syllables and sentences within a 100-word sample are graphed to determine the approximate grade level of a text. The Web site school.discovery.com/schrockguide/fry/fry.html

[25] Allington, R. L. (2001). pp. 48-49 – reviews common readability formulas.

provides directions for using the Fry Readability Graph.

- Commercial computer-based programs allow the user to use a variety of readability formulas.
  - *Readability Calculations* uses nine popular readability formulas to determine if your target audience can read your materials with ease. (Cost $69.95 for 1-5 copies.) www.readabilityformulas.com/mlp001.html
  - *Readability PLUS* is software for Macintosh or Windows that figures readability using eight formulas and includes *Vocabulary Assessor*. Available from Micro Power & Light Co., 8814 Sanshire Ave., Dallas, TX 75231, 1-214-553-0105. (Cost $119.95 for one copy.) www.micropowerandlight.com/

- Curriculum-Based Measurement Warehouse: This site includes training materials, actual probes, and scoring forms to address early literacy, fluency, comprehension, emergent English skills, and mathematics. www.interventioncentral.org/htmdocs/interventions/cbmwarehouse.php

  The following three tools are available through this Web site:
  - The *CBA Assessment List Builder* allows you to build English or Spanish curriculum-based assessment lists of letters, sight words, or numbers to measure skills of emerging learners.
  - *OKAPI!* allows you to type or paste text into a form, which is converted automatically into a set of Examiner and Student Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA) reading probes. *OKAPI!* can compute a Spache or Dale-Chall readability index for the sample.
  - *ChartDog* lets you enter a student's CBM data to make progress-monitoring graphs. *ChartDog* graphs are images that you can print, save to your computer hard drive, or e-mail as attachments.

- The Web site www.sedl.org/reading/rad/chart.html provides reading assessments appropriate for use in Grades K-2 (and older grades when an overlap with the targeted grades existed) summarized in a Reading Assessment Database, which includes costs, target grade levels, and skills assessed.

Criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessments are included.

- The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring provides reviews of a variety of assessment tools, including a chart that identifies psychometric standards met (reliability and validity) and progress monitoring standards (with reading broken into a variety of subskills). www.studentprogress.org/chart/chart.asp

- *Book Adventure* is a Web-based free reading motivation program for children in grades K-8. Children create personalized book lists from over 7,000 recommended titles, take multiple-choice quizzes on books they have read, and earn points and prizes for their literary successes. Book Adventure was created by and is maintained by Sylvan Learning. The Kids Zone includes a "help me find a book" feature. Here the student lists his grade level, chooses his preference for books at, below, or above that level, and selects topics of interest, leading to a list of books for which the site has end-of-book quizzes. The "five finger test" students can use to independently determine the appropriateness of selected books is explained at this site. www.bookadventure.com/index.asp

- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. www.dibels.org

- DIBELS testing materials for kindergarten through sixth grade may be downloaded free of charge at http://dibels.uoregon.edu/. An online data system that generates reports and analyses is available at the cost of one dollar per student.

- *High-Frequency Word Assessment* is a reading assessment developed by an elementary school teacher in Maine and designed to measure the number of high-frequency words a student can recognize. (The main site is an example of a collection of teacher-made assessments aligned to state standards.)

www.elm.maine.edu/assessments/teacher/sketch.asp?indexID=8

- *Informal Reading Inventory* is a tutorial to assist teachers in developing an informal reading inventory. http://lrs.ed.uiuc.edu/students/srutledg/iri.html

- Lexile Framework in a system for determining text complexity and reading skill. Lexile measures are based on *semantic difficulty* (word frequency) and *syntactic complexity* (sentence length). Students' reading scores can be measured in Lexiles and matched with a variety of reading materials.[26] The Lexile database includes 450 publishers' titles. www.lexile.com/

- *Running records* are guided reading assessments performed by using a book that is close to the child's developmental level and documenting the child's reading behavior as he or she reads from the book. *Reading A-Z* provides benchmark books for this purpose. A running record form accompanies each of the benchmark books. www.readinga-z.com/newfiles/levels/runrecord/runrec.html

- Scholastic *Reading Counts!* provides leveled, measurable, independent reading practice for K12 students. http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/readingcounts/index.htm

- *STAR Reading* assesses students' reading progress in grades 1-12. Students complete a computer-administered assessment in less than 10 minutes to determine the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), which is "the reading level range recommended by the Institute for Academic Excellence for optimal growth in reading without frustration. The ranges are approximate."[27] *www.renlearn.com/starreading/*

[26] A Colorado teacher conducted action research using Lexiles to document student growth. See Bassoff, T. C. (2005). *How can I improve reading achievement among my highly mobile and homeless fifth grade student population?* Retrieved August 25, 2005, from *www.crsllc.org/pdfs/Chapter%207.pdf*.

[27] Explanation of ZPD included on student's performance printouts.

STAR Reading was used by the Kenosha site with an adaptation. Instead of working independently on the computer, the student is paired with a tutor and reads all passages aloud. The tutor monitors on task behaviors and documents the student's use of strategies or other observable behaviors (e.g., notes common decoding errors, lack of attention to punctuation, and word by word reading).

- *TASA Literacy Online* is the link to The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Program, a line of criterion-referenced reading comprehension tests for students in grades 1-12+. The tests allow tracking of a student's reading development over time. DRP test results are reported using the same scale that is used to measure the reading difficulty of printed material. By linking students' DRP test scores with the readability values of books, teachers are able to locate, assign, or recommend textbooks, literature, and popular titles of appropriate difficulty to their students. Touchstone Applied Science also offers software with over 12,500 texts and trade books rated by difficulty using the DRP level that aligns with their assessment tool. A conversion is available to translate the DRP level to grade level; such equivalents are not recommended, however. (DRP is used in the Accelerated Reader program.)

In summary, a wide variety of tools are available to determine student strengths and needs and to document student growth. In selecting or developing a program, the assessment and evaluation tools must meet budgetary constraints, provide needed data within a reasonable time frame, and as much as possible, be respectful of a student's stress level with testing. Finally, people in the program must have the needed skill set to administer and interpret the assessments. This can be accomplished by collaborating with schools and coordinating with experts in the community.

Chapter 5

Promising Instructional Practices

Volume 1 of *Reading on the Go!, Students Who Are Highly Mobile and Reading Instruction* reviewed current literature on reading, especially as it relates to students living in poverty, since current research specifically on mobility and reading is largely anecdotal and based on practitioners' observations. Chapter 5 of that document provides an overview of instructional practices that form the basis for the examples presented here.

This chapter provides sample activities that highlight key components of reading described in Volume I (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). Thus, it adds practical suggestions to the content in Volume I based on the visits and an ongoing search for promising practices. Finally, additional instructional considerations, beyond the five key literacy elements, are discussed. Resources to support these instructional practices are included in Chapter 7 with contact information.

Preschoolers and Literacy

While the primary focus of this project has been the elementary years, the population of young children who experience high mobility and homelessness is growing and beginning to gain greater attention. Certain early literacy skills build the foundation for mastery of the components that follow. Before a child enters a classroom, many skills have begun to emerge: naming objects, understanding and following directions, making your needs known verbally, and even enjoying books and playing with sounds and rhyming words. Young children living in poverty often have limited exposure to the language experiences (including access to books) than more affluent children. Providing the rich language experiences necessary to ensure readiness for learning to read involves supporting families and their young children. Readers are encouraged to review the site visit for the Mobile Parent-Child Home Program in Appendix A-1 for greater detail on serving this population.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to distinguish and manipulate the smallest units of sounds in language (e.g., phonemes). It is a subset of a broader skill, namely, phonological awareness, which includes the ability to distinguish and manipulate larger sound

chunks, such as syllables and words. Children from culturally diverse backgrounds may have particular difficulties with phonological awareness. Exposure to language at home, exposure to reading at an early age, and dialect all affect the ability to understand the phonological distinctions on which the English language is built. Teachers must apply sensitive effort and use a variety of techniques to help children learn these skills when Standard English is not spoken at home[28][29]

Phonological and phonemic awareness are *oral* language. Correlating written letters with sounds is a different component, called phonics. Preschool games and young children's literature are full of activities that subtly expose youngsters to the sounds of our language. Instruction to support the development of phonological (and phonemic) awareness begins with demonstrating the relationship of parts to wholes. Begin with concrete objects – pizza slices, orange sections, pop bead necklaces, petals on a flower, pages in a book, etc. – then move to verbal language. The teacher models and demonstrates how to segment short sentences into individual words to show how a sentence is made up of words. Using blocks, Unifix cubes, chips, or other manipulatives with Elkonin sound boxes (see Vol. 1, Chapter 5) to represent the number of words in the sentence, place the units right next to each other (one block for each word). As you say the sentence slowly enough to distinguish each word, move the blocks apart. For starters, use short sentences and one-syllable words, and be sure to select common words. Common words with more than one syllable may be added, so long as care is taken to avoid confusion between words and syllables. "Lemon is longer, but /lem/ doesn't mean anything by itself. We need 'lemon' all together to make a word." In addition to manipulatives, students can segment sentences by clapping. You can even incorporate some gross-motor skills for children who need to move around. Use carpet squares for each word. Place them side-by-side and segment the sentence orally while spacing the squares. Students can "jump the sentence." A variation of hopscotch is another option.

Once the students understand part-whole relationships at the sentence level, proceed to the word level, introducing multi-syllabic words for segmentation into syllables. Finally move to phoneme tasks by modeling a specific sound and asking the students to produce that sound both in isolation and in a variety of words and syllables. The

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[28] Lyon, G. R. (1994). *Research in learning disabilities at the NICHD.* Technical document. Bethesda, MD: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.

[29] Torgesen, J. K., & Mathes, P. G. (2002). *Assessment and instruction in phonological awareness* (2nd ed.). Retrieved October 8, 2004, from the Florida State Department of Education Web site: www.firn.edu/doe/commhouse/pdf/phonoman.pdf

same segmenting activities can be used at each level. As students move to phonemes, the transition to phonics skills and beginning to associate letters with sounds can occur.

S*egmenting words.* Five characteristics make words easier or more difficult to segment.[30] The following list can help you incrementally increase the difficulty of segmenting tasks for students.

1. The size of the phonological unit. Shorter sentences, syllables, and words are easier to manipulate.
2. The number of phonemes in word. The fewer sounds in a word, the easier it is to segment.
3. The position of the phoneme in a word. In the word "map," /m/ is easiest to segment and identify, then /p/; the middle vowel sound /a/ is most difficult to identify.
4. The phonological properties of words. Sounds that can be produced and maintained (such as /m/ or /s/) are easier to pull out of a word than sounds that are brief and that we cannot "stretch out" such as /t/ or /b/.
5. Phonological awareness challenges. Tasks such as rhyming and initial phoneme identification are easier than blending and segmentation. Table 4 in Volume I summarizes these challenges.

Additional ways to manipulate sounds in words. Besides segmenting sound units, sounds can be manipulated in other ways. For example:

- Have fun rhyming. Dr. Seuss books are still a staple for this!
- Practice deleting a phoneme: "What is 'map' without the /m/?" "/ap/"; "What is 'boat' without the /t/?" "/bō/"
- Match words with the same beginning or ending sound: pie – pen; sit – sail; write – hit (remember, we are matching sounds, not letters)
- Blend phonemes: Given /m/, /i/, /s/, /t/, say it quickly for "mist"

As noted in Volume 1, as preschoolers, homeless and highly mobile students are less likely to have been exposed to rich language environments that nurture the development of phonological and phonemic awareness. Therefore, it may be necessary to revisit these

[30] Smith, S. B., Simmons, D. C., & Kameenui, E. J. (1995). *Synthesis of research on phonological awareness. Principles and implications for reading acquisition.* (Technical report No. 21, National Center to Improve the Tools of Education). Eugene, OR: University of Oregon.

skills, even with older students. With an older student, be careful to make materials and activities age appropriate.[31]

The Wilson Reading System uses a technique for segmenting and blending phonemes that works well with older students and can be used for decoding words and spelling later. Do you ever catch yourself trying to remember something or a series and notice that you are tapping your fingers sequentially, thumb to each finger? The technique uses physical cuing. The sounds are tapped out from pinky to index finger – one finger per sound to segment – and the student then counts the number of phonemes. If segmented, "slur" the tapping to quickly blend the sounds. For older students, this works because the student can tap without being too obvious. A student might tap with a hand in his lap or modify the technique and tap his fingers or pencil (quietly) on his desk.

Another segmenting/blending technique that applies to decoding and spelling uses larger muscles. For example, words with fewer phonemes or syllables can be "chopped" by a using one-hand "Karate -style" to chop the sounds or syllables onto the wrist, elbow, and shoulder of the opposite arm. Students in primary grades find this fun.

Because phonemic awareness does not include print, it appears less academic and may feel more like a game. If the student is struggling with reading, working on this component is critical to check on any difficulties that may be preventing reading success. It is often a less stressful activity to begin engaging the student.

Phonics

As noted in Volume 1, phonics involves matching sounds and letters, known as the alphabetic principle. It is most effective when introduced early. However, students who have moved frequently may not have mastered the sound-symbol relationship and will require direct instruction to strengthen this reading component. Weak

[31] Ivey, G., & Fisher, D. (2005). Learning from what doesn't work. *Educational Leadership, 63*(2), 8-14.

decoding skills were noted in the site visits, and phonics instruction was incorporated in the work with elementary-grade students.[32]

Many of the activities listed with phonemic awareness can be used with letters rather than manipulatives (or start posting the letters on the manipulatives). In addition, many of the supplemental programs approved by state departments of education for reading instruction have a strong phonics component. If this is an observed need for the students you serve, you may want to explore programs approved by your state. The sites visited as part of this project used a variety of games to reinforce phonics skills. Again, if these skills are being taught to older students, consider the developmental appropriateness in terms of visual presentation and content when selecting materials.

The Kenosha site, whose teacher had an extensive background in teaching students with learning disabilities, used Orton-Gillingham techniques and materials based on this approach. Orton-Gillingham is highly structured and explicit phonics instruction using a multi-modal approach (visual-auditory-kinesthetic-tactile). Early on, teacher resources for this method provided suggested activities and materials teachers could make to teach the sound-letter relationship. Over time, more materials have been published based on this approach to lessen the need for teachers to create the entire program.

The *Wilson Reading Program* is an example of a program based on the Orton-Gillingham techniques that offers ready-to-use materials. Barbara Wilson originally designed this program to work with adults who had not learned how to read, so these materials can easily be used with older students. The program also has been used widely with elementary school students, leading the author to adapt the program and offer a version that is more appropriate for elementary school. Implementation of both Orton-Gillingham and Wilson requires special teacher training, but instructional techniques from these programs can be taught to tutors.

[32] This is consistent with a study in which principals in high-performing elementary schools were interviewed. Many continued to incorporate phonics-based instruction. See Izumi, L. T., Coburn, K. G., & Cox, M. (2002). *They have overcome: High-poverty, high-performing schools in California.* San Francisco: Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy.

Examples of Activities Used in Orton-Gillingham Instruction

Here is an example of multi-modal teaching for phonics. Individual letters of the alphabet are printed on heavy paper or cardstock. Place a line of glue to trace the letter's shape or cut the letters out of sandpaper, velvet, or felt. Purchased letters with a texture also can be used. Start with lowercase letters, since they occur most frequently in words. Capital letters can be added later. To add tactile (touch) and kinesthetic (movement) input, students trace the letter as they say the letter name and letter sound aloud. The number of cards used will depend on the student's mastery. Start out with letters the student knows and a few new letters that are being introduced. If the student provides the correct name and sound, place the card in the "know" pile. If the student is unsure, provide the answer and place the card in the "don't know" pile. The "know" pile can be counted and graphed.

If time and student attention allow, review the cards from the "don't know" pile. Practice tracing the letter, trace it in the air, take off your shoe and trace it with your foot (if the student is comfortable with this) or write the letter large on a chalkboard or whiteboard. Some programs add concrete nouns as a cue to the letter sound, such as "apple" for short "a". Make up stories to help students associate the letter and its object or create a visual mnemonic (memory trick), such as turning the letter "a" into an apple. Let the student help you create a mnemonic that has personal meaning.

"Diving for the vowel" is an example of an Orton-Gillingham technique for decoding words. Long and short vowel sounds are associated with a key word. While learning how to decode one-syllable words, students "dive" for the middle of the word to find the vowel, state the key word and its sound, blend the ending sound, and then add the initial sound to read the whole word. Here is a simple example using the word "tan":

Dive for the vowel (a) – "apple ă"
Add the final sound – "an"

Add the first sound – "tan"

Students may create syllable books with such syllable families. The "ap" family, the "ig" family, etc. Because nonsense words are included, syllable is used rather than word book. These syllable families can then be linked to form multisyllabic words.

Students are taught the six types of syllables that help determine vowel sounds to assist with proper decoding:

- Closed syllables have a vowel followed by a consonant. This makes the vowel "short" (e.g., map, top, in).
- Open syllables end with a vowel. This makes the vowel "long" (e.g., be, me, so, she).
- VCe syllables have a vowel-consonant-silent e pattern. The first vowel is long and the "e" is silent (e.g., write, plane, bone).
- A syllable with two adjoining vowels makes one sound. This can be a long vowel sound or a completely different sound (e.g., pain, way, free, out, boy, book).
- The -Cle (consonant-le) syllable is found only at the end of words. The consonant always goes with the "le," which makes the previous syllable open or closed and explains why table (ta-ble) has a long "a" while scribble (scrib-ble) has a short "i".
- R-controlled vowels are found in the sixth type of syllable. R is a powerful letter that can change vowel sounds that are neither long nor short (e.g., car, firm, worm).

We often think about decoding words when we hear the word "phonics." However, the sound-symbol relationship is a two-way street. Remember that encoding, or spelling, is an important element, too. Students must sound out words given the letters in a word as a prompt *and* sound out words given verbally and translate those sounds into written words. The tasks are reciprocal and support growth and understanding of the alphabetic principle.

Vocabulary

As with phonological awareness, vocabulary growth is affected by exposure to language. The richer the verbal and textual

environment, the more likely the student is to have an understanding of the meaning of words. Children in families who are highly mobile often have fewer opportunities to hear extended conversations and do not have the personal libraries and weekly trips to the public library that children in more affluent communities take for granted.

Not surprisingly, limited vocabulary was cited as a major concern in the three sites visits. Students need exposure to a print-rich environment. The Central Islip site worked with the family to build vocabulary skills in a naturalistic parent-child interaction. Word meaning was addressed through Word Study, including the teaching of prefixes and suffices, games, and guided questions during reading in the Austin and Kenosha sites. At the Kenosha site, direct instruction to build background knowledge was part of the program as well. This took place at group lessons that addressed a wide variety of academic disciplines.[33]

Background knowledge includes early literacy exposure to nursery rhymes and fairy tales and other classic stories for young children. To create age-appropriate activities with such materials, you can teach the historical context of nursery rhymes (e.g., Mother Goose was making fun of the rulers at the time). Preparing older students to read to younger children gives these students a reason to read and practice using books that they may enjoy, but would be uncomfortable or embarrassed reading for themselves.

Increasing vocabulary was reinforced further through writing activities. There was much guided practice and scaffolding to help students take basic sentences with limited vocabulary and create more interesting, complex sentences with more descriptive and specific language. In oral and written language, the students tended to use very general terminology. "I saw the thing over there" versus "I noticed the blue car in our parking lot." "It's good" versus "The cookie I had at snack was delicious." Program staff modeled richer language and encouraged students to become more expressive.

Fluency

Fluency encompasses rate of reading, accuracy, and expression. At the sites visited, fluency was addressed through one-to-one practice with tutors modeling, helping students attend to punctuation, and using repeated readings. Students might "read along" with the tutor (dyad reading) or repeat small chunks after the tutor (echo reading). Tutors offered reminders such as, "Let you voice drop when you get to a period. Your voice goes up at a question mark."

[33] The tutoring guide from Kenosha with sample lesson plans is referenced in Chapter 7.

In the sites visited, fluency was noted as an observation in tutoring notes. In addition, CBM can be used to measure reading fluency systematically. The examiner sits down individually with the child and asks the student to read aloud for one minute using reading passages from three separate passages randomly chosen from a reading book. During the student's reading, the examiner makes note of any decoding errors made in each passage. The examiner then calculates the number of words read correctly in the passage. Next, the examiner compares the total number of words read correctly for the three passages and selects the middle, or median, score. This median score serves as the best indicator of the student's "true" reading rate in the selected reading material.[34]

Some supplemental reading programs focus on fluency, such as *Read Naturally*. Fluency should be a part of any comprehensive program. To become a fluent reader, children have to read A LOT! Providing a safe, supportive, and motivating environment in which the student experiences success (using materials at the instructional level) increases the likelihood the student will read more.

Comprehension

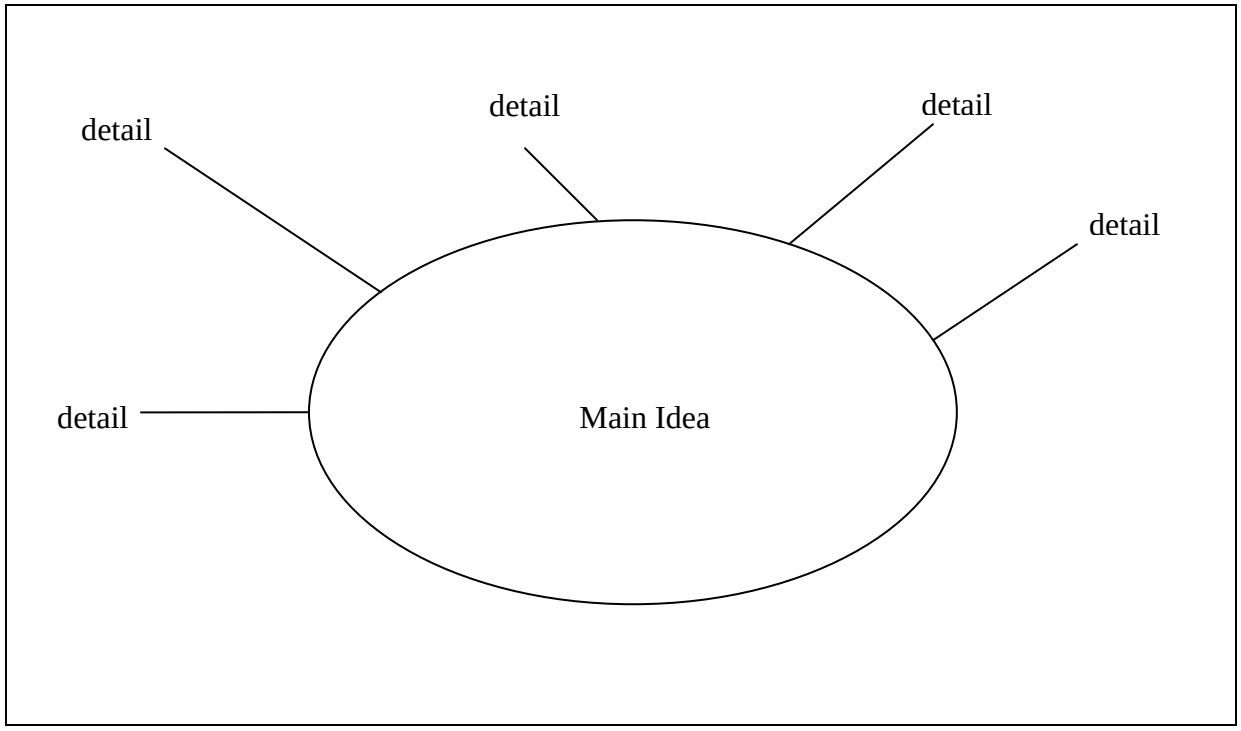
We read to gain information, to learn something new, to understand another's perspective, and sometimes just to be entertained. For any of this to occur, we must understand what we read, making comprehension the culminating component of reading. Retelling a story or summarizing expository text were common comprehension activities used at the sites visited. The sites also used graphic organizers to help students understand the structure of texts.

[34] Wright, J. (n.d.). p. 1-6.

Figure 3
Wheels and Reading

Wheels and Reading

Karen Rooney[35] has created a series of graphic organizers that can be used with a variety of reading materials. For example, *Wheels for Reading* is intended for expository text. The student draws a "wheel" or oval on his/her paper. As the student reads, the main idea is written in the oval and important details are written on "spokes" around the outside of the oval. When the details no longer "match" the main idea, it is time to create a new oval.

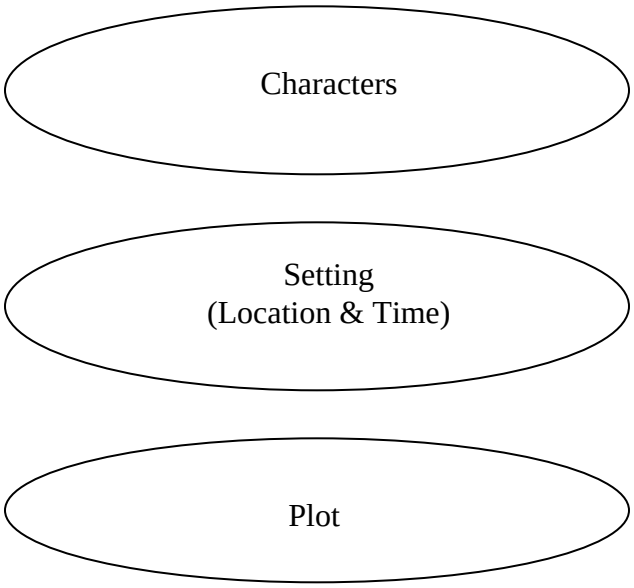


[35] Rooney, K. J. (1998). *Independent strategies for efficient study – Upper elementary/middle school edition.* Richmond, VA: Educational Enterprises.

For a narrative story, *Wheels for Literature* can be used. The title and author are written at the top of the page with three wheels below. The students write the names of characters around the first wheel, the time and location (setting) on the second wheel, events from the plot around the third wheel. Older students reading longer stories must write at least one detail for each page read.

Title

Author



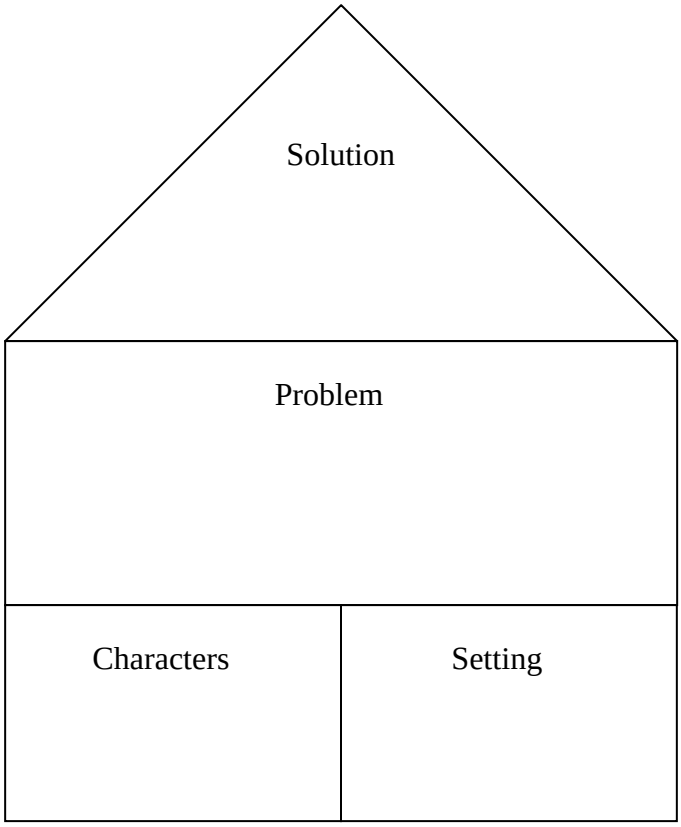
For a variation, the plot wheel can become a "clue wheel" if reading a mystery. Possible clues are listed on the wheel, which can be shaped like a magnifying glass. The difference between an actual clue, explicit in the text, and a prediction based on the facts may emerge from this process. Students can write the predictions on the back of the page to keep hypotheses and facts separated. In addition, these wheels can be used in reverse to create compositions. The reciprocal strategies are included in Dr. Rooney's book.

Figure 4

The Story House

The Story House – A Graphic Organizer from the Austin site:

The story House is used to teach story structure after reading narrative text; it is recommended for students in K-2. To prepare, the tutor uses a template of a house to cut out construction paper sections or draws an outline of the Story House on a large piece of paper or dry-erase board. The child and tutor read the story. The tutor discusses the meaning of each component as the story is read and points out that every story includes these four components. The tutor models the completion of the Story House until the student can complete it independently. After reading and filling in the Story House, the tutor and student review the components.



Comprehension skills may be strengths for homeless or highly mobile students. It may not be the type of skill measured by a standardized test, but "… their interpretive skills are sometimes remarkable. When discussing inference or engaging in comparative studies of literature, they reveal more insight than we expected."[36] These students may have lots of experience with day-to-day problem solving. They may have considerable empathy and be able to understand characters' motivation and struggles. In addition, these children often take on adult roles to support their parents during time of stress. For example, they may be quite adept at filling out forms or translating information for a parent who speaks limited English. This requires sophisticated skill in synthesizing and explaining information. "Homeless students, like all students, learn best when their background knowledge and strengths are recognized, valued, and used as building blocks for further learning."[37]

Balance

While the five components listed above (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension) have been identified as critical elements of effective reading instruction, this does not mean equal time is spent on each. Some drill and practice is important in mastering phonic skills and building fluency, for example, but this does not mean half a tutoring session should be spent on such drill. Short, targeted drills based on careful observation and assessment of the student's needs followed by opportunities to read and discuss rich, exciting literature, learn about new places, history, or current events is far more effective than spending the majority of time drilling and completing workbook pages. Furthermore, if the student has mastered the basic phonics rules and decodes with ease, or reads smoothly with expression, specialized practice is not needed. This is true both in the classroom and in supplemental programming.

Additional Instructional Considerations

Richard Allington, the 2005-06 president of the International Reading Association, suggested five additional "pillars" of effective reading instruction.[38] These additional pillars were important for the sites visited as well.

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[36] Noll, E., & Watkins, R. (2003). p. 364.
[37] Ibid., 367.
[38] Allington, R. L. (2005). The other five "pillars" of effective reading instruction. *Reading Today, 22*(6), 3.

Classroom organization that uses a variety of whole-group, small-group, and individualized instruction is more meaningful than relying totally on whole-group instruction. With an after-school program for highly mobile students, the number of students present can vary. It is difficult to staff enough tutors to reach all the students without being left with tutors who come regularly and find the student they were ready to work with has left. By varying grouping arrangements, you can create flexibility between the numbers of students and staff. Having strong classroom management skills is an additional consideration. Not only will the need to vary groups occur, you must be able to transition between such arrangements with minimal time and disruption. Limit "down time" to the needed chats and relationship-building and make the most of every minute of instruction. Good management skills keep students on task and the more on task the behavior, the more learning that occurs.

In a subsequent article, Allington[39] described the disparity in the *length of the school day* between high-poverty and more affluent schools. Not only are more affluent students in school longer, but academic coaches and tutoring are added to their day. Furthermore, an earlier article discussed the lack of summer access and reading activities for students who live in poverty.[40,41] These findings can be a point of discussion when making scheduling decisions. Do we have different expectations for our homeless and highly mobile children? Are we sending the message that less is expected?

The third "pillar" requires having *materials at the students' instructional level*. Students need a variety of texts that are interesting, as well as written at different levels. Giving students a choice about which texts to use and giving them the opportunity to collaborate with peers while reading had significant impact on reading achievement. Students must be reading materials at their instructional level. If the student is reading below grade, texts with the same/similar content are needed to ensure the student truly benefits. Additionally, if the school has limited resources to find materials at multiple levels, creating a program that helps match the students you serve to resources they can use in their classroom could be a means of attracting the involvement of the school and increasing coordination.

Fourth, *reading is not taught in isolation*. Writing and reading are reciprocal. By practicing spelling and composing, the student grows in decoding and comprehension, and vice versa.

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[39] Allington, R. L. (2005). Urgency and instructional time. *Reading Today, 23*(1), 17.

[40] Allington, R. L. (2003). The impact of summer setback on the reading achievement gap. *Phil Delta Kappan, 85*(1). 68-75.

[41] See also, Neuman, S. B. (1999). Books make a difference: A study of access to literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly, 34*(3), 286-311.

Finally, Allington suggested the *need for expert tutoring*. The research on the impact of quality tutoring indicates significant student gains. In fact, more than 20 years ago Benjamin Bloom wrote about the impact of having a high quality tutor as resulting in an increase in learning of approximately two standard deviations as compared with traditional instruction.[42] Consequently, struggling readers need access to experts to identify their needs and design appropriate interventions to support such gains.

The voices of staff at the site visits offer an eleventh "pillar" for consideration to complement the five components of reading and Allington's additional five. It is not a new concept. In fact, it was included in the Reading Excellence Act that preceded No Child Left Behind. While difficult to quantify and measure, student motivation is a powerful factor to consider while planning instruction. Two subthemes related to motivation were evident. The first was the importance of the teacher-student relationship. A positive, caring, respectful relationship with an adult was valued in all sites. The students responded well to having someone special who listened to them with full attention. The students also thrived when they encountered consistency and had a chance to work with the same person. When students move frequently, making personal connections is difficult. You no sooner get to know someone and it is time to leave again. With so many people coming and going in their lives, opportunities for stability are uncommon. One student's comment when seeing his tutor the following week illustrates this point eloquently. He said, "You came back!"

The second subtheme related to motivation was attention to student interests. Tutors looked for ways to make the work meaningful to the student on a personal level. For example, a student at the Austin site was interested in tennis. She worked with her tutor to research Serena Williams and even read books to learn some tennis tips that were practiced outside.

Reading is a form of communication, a way of connecting with others. The personal connections between students and teachers, including tutors, are a recognized necessity.

[42] Bloom, B. S. (1984). The search for methods of group instruction as effective as one-to-one tutoring. *Educational Leadership, 41*(8), 4-17.

"What People Need is a Good Listening To"

Mary Lou Casey[43]

[43] As cited by Cole, C. (2004). *Motivational interviewing network of trainers* Retrieved February 4, 2006, from www.cathycoletraining.com/archive.php?id=1&issueID=2

Chapter 6

Administrative Considerations

Successful programs require leadership – leaders to bring the right people into the program, leaders to create a structure and environment that supports staff and students, and leaders who can look beyond the program at larger issues that affect student mobility and who can be a voice in community actions that can minimize or exacerbate such movement.

Personnel Considerations

Whether your program will use existing staff, volunteers, or new employees, identifying the person responsible for oversight of the personnel involved in the project is critical. This individual may have programmatic and training responsibilities or may focus on staffing issues and coordinating the program and training with other experts. The importance of selecting the right individuals to work within the program cannot be overemphasized. The work of William Sanders and others on value-added assessment has demonstrated the powerful impact highly effective or ineffective teachers have on their students.[44] While supplemental instruction is not the same as the general education classroom, it would be hard to dispute that the person delivering the instruction makes the most difference in student achievement. The main questions to be considered with regard to personnel are: Who should work with our students? How can we increase the likelihood of success (for our students, our personnel, and our program)?

Given the many legal considerations when hiring and removing personnel, including background checks, selection and evaluation criteria, using the school district's human resource office to assist in developing or reviewing your policies and procedures is recommended.

Volunteers. Volunteers are frequently used in community-/shelter-based programs. A common challenge for these programs is the difficulty in providing consistent service delivery when relying solely on volunteers. Family or other personal emergencies inevitably arise that prevent volunteers from participating. If the volunteers are students, scheduling will be limited by the academic calendar and turnover each semester may occur. Quality control can be a concern as well.

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[44] Research reports on value-added assessment may be found at www.sas.com/govedu/edu/research.html.

The following suggestions address some of the above concerns.

- When recruiting, target groups that are likely to have the skills and commitment required. Project sites used current and retired teachers, education majors, college students involved in service learning, church and community groups, and Key Club high school students. The Kenosha site had high visibility in the community and the teacher had networked with a wide array of groups and agencies. With a large pool of potential volunteers, the teacher was able to be selective when bringing in new volunteers.
- During the induction phase, provide training that includes background knowledge about homelessness and high mobility and poverty as well as the basic skills needed to participate in the program. Plan for ongoing training to allow volunteers to discuss their successes and challenges and to build additional skills.
- Be sure to embed a structure to increase the likelihood that volunteers will stay. This includes providing meaningful training, access to appropriate resources, ongoing support when problems arise, and recognition that shows the volunteers are valued. Think about the times you volunteered with a project but did not stay. Chances are the work was not clearly explained, the project seemed disorganized, you felt your time was wasted, and you did not see that your efforts made a difference. How can you help your volunteers see the impact they have had? How do you celebrate successes, including incremental progress?

Paid staff. The funding source may dictate the skills needed for program staff. For example, The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires highly qualified teachers and paraeducators to work directly with students when certain Title funds are used, including Title I, Part A set-aside funds for serving homeless children and youth. Due to the complexity of such requirements, the local school district federal programs administrator and others who are familiar with the school's literacy programs should be consulted as job descriptions are crafted and hiring takes place to ensure compliance with NCLB. Further, hiring school personnel to work in the program can alleviate some of the challenges in meeting the highly qualified requirements, including the knowledge base of educators who are familiar with the school's literacy program. Such staff also can guide communication between the program and the schools since they will be able to "translate" any differences in terminology used and help both groups understand some of the realities of each setting.

In addition to working directly with students, school personnel may be involved with the project by fulfilling a number of other roles.

Consider including a reading specialist from the early stages of planning. The reading specialist should be able to evaluate reading programs that are considered for the program based on their ability to meet student needs, support local and state literacy goals, and complement school-based programs. Further, the reading specialist is usually a resource for other teachers and may be able to provide instructional training for staff and volunteers.

Faculty from a local college can be another source of expertise. Education faculty may be able to provide training. Professors whose research interests involve literacy may be interested in using the program in their inquiry (another potential funding source). Do not feel limited to seeking education faculty. Professors in economics or sociology may have a commitment to exploring issues of high poverty and mobility. Such expertise can shape the larger context of the program in crafting your message about the need for the program. Similarly, professors with expertise in evaluation can be valuable in creating data collection systems that provide accountability information for program improvement and justification for continuation.

Americorps and AmeriReads programs at local colleges may be able to provide personnel to work within your program. By coordinating with such a program, the Austin site had access to paid workers (whose salaries did not affect their budget) who received initial training.

How many paid staff will be needed to increase the likelihood that program fidelity/quality is maintained? This will depend on the resources available and the size of the project. Building a trusting relationship with the children participating in the program was the most salient theme across the sites visited. Relationships require consistency of time and personnel. Given the amount of change children who are homeless and highly mobile experience, looking closely at the turnover of personnel in your program is important. Tracking the number of staff who provide instruction to each student and the number of sessions with each also may be useful as future staffing decisions are made. Are we targeting groups for recruitment that can "stick with" our children? When staff and volunteers leave the program, consider using an exit interview to gain information from their perspective by asking for commendations and recommendations about the way the program supports students and staff.

Staff and volunteer training. Training is a powerful retention tool, as noted in the discussion of volunteers. The project sites visited included professional development that provided knowledge about the population served, the logistics of the program, and instructional

techniques. Local shelters are a logical resource when working with students who are homeless. Many shelters have developed training modules to introduce new staff and volunteers to the characteristics and needs of their clients that can be adapted for literacy programs, for example. Such training should include confronting stereotypes of homelessness, domestic violence, sensitivity activities that simulate the loss of valued belongings or budgeting for a family if you made minimum wage, and ethical considerations such as confidentiality and personal boundaries. Sample Form 1 is an example of guidelines for professional and ethical behavior developed by Dan Murphy, chair of the Oregon Coalition on Housing and Homelessness. It is based on the work of Ken Kraybill of the Health Care for the Homeless Clinician's Network.

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR OUTREACH WORKERS[45]

"Ethics is how we behave when we decide we belong together"

The overriding philosophy of these guidelines is to treat others as you would want to be treated. This applies not only to interactions with clients, but with co-workers, supervisors, and staff from other agencies, policy-makers, etc. At the very least, do no harm. It is expected that outreach workers will consistently treat others in a respectful manner and provide competent and compassionate care to clients in whatever forms that care my take.

It is prudent for workers to anticipate and identify ethical dilemmas that arise in outreach and to discuss these issues with supervisors and peers. Some of the guidelines below are intended to prompt such discussions with hopes that adherence to the outreach philosophy of care and practice within proper boundaries will result. These guidelines are to serve as an adjunct to agency-specific codes of ethics and other relevant policies.

- Commit yourself to being well prepared physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually for doing this work.
- Develop an awareness of the causes, experience, patterns and politics of homelessness.
- Continually increase your knowledge about homelessness-related health conditions and care, including social service needs and resources.
- Present yourself in a genuine, hospitable manner.
- Maintain a perspective of objectivity with clients. Avoid being judgmental.
- Be respectful of others' desire for privacy and need to keep secrets. Be assertive but not intrusive in your outreach.
- Maintain confidentiality in your relationships.
- Keep your word. Be trustworthy and reliable.
- Respect people as ends, not means. Never exploit clients for personal or agency gain.
- Educate others about behaviors that can enhance their health and well being. Also, inform them of behaviors that might cause them to be susceptible to disease and/or bring harm to themselves and others.
- Do not attempt to intervene in areas in which you are not trained or competent.

[45] Reprinted with permission of the author.

- Do not withhold information from clients about other resources and services from which they could benefit.
- Devote some part of your time, no matter how little, to use your knowledge and experience to inform public planning and policy-making processes,
- Refrain from imposing your moral and religious beliefs on others.
- Refrain from having social or emotional relationships with clients outside of work.
- Do not use your own home to shelter clients or give out personal information.
- Never engage in sexual activity with clients.
- Do not accept cash or gifts from clients.
- Refrain from giving personal gifts or cash to clients.
- Never carry weapons.
- Never use alcohol or drugs on the job.
- Develop practices of self-care and renewal within and outside the work setting.

Information about the literacy program may include a brief history of the project, including the identified needs that led to its inception, the program's goals, and the rationale for the programming approach. During this part of the training also is the time to review reporting requirements, forms to be completed, and how to get help should behavior be challenging or additional resources are needed. While confidentiality and personal boundaries may be addressed under basic knowledge, specific procedures should be reviewed as part of the program overview. For example, volunteers and staff must know how to get immediate assistance if they cannot control a child's behavior and what to do if children share sensitive information that may affect their safety. In addition, volunteers and staff need access to someone who can help explain and offer suggestions to address learning challenges, such as a potential learning disability.

Access to training should be considered when adopting a literacy program. Does the literacy program provide initial and ongoing training? What level of technical assistance can tutors or other staff in the project expect? Does the expertise to provide the literacy training needed to implement the program exist in our community or schools? If the literacy program is locally developed, the same considerations must be addressed. Effective professional development should include the context and rationale for instructional strategies, modeling of the instruction, opportunities for simulated and guided practice, and a

system for adult learners to voice their needs and concerns. All project sites visited included ongoing training and supervision.

Supervision. Whether all students receive their instruction in one room, in rooms throughout a building, or at sites across a county, there should be a mechanism for supervising instructors. A schedule of visits can be prepared for direct monitoring along with review of lesson plans and student records that are maintained as part of the program. Depending on the skills of participating personnel, this responsibility may be shared among the instructors using a peer support model or remain with a lead contact who oversees the project. Consider how you would proceed if it becomes necessary to remove a worker. Establishing clear expectations at the start can alleviate awkward situations down the road.

Linking expertise to the project. Expertise can be found in local reading teachers and reading coaches, special education teachers with a strong reading background, and students and faculty at local colleges and universities. Such individuals can be tapped to enhance the quality and smooth workings of the program.

- Consider using such experts to conduct more formal assessments. Develop a procedure for determining when greater intervention is needed. Have a system in place to refer students who require more intensive assistance for screenings and other evaluations that can lead to adjusted instruction or document the need for a referral for a special education evaluation. Identify who in the program should be contacted when a question arises and how the information will be communicated to the school and to whom.
- Involve experts in training tutors and developing lesson plan formats and checklists for tutor use.
- Engage experts in monitoring the program by reviewing tutoring notes and assessments, such as CBM, and offering suggestions to tutors for future lessons. Use such reviews as a springboard for staff meetings and ongoing program evaluations. Experts with research skills can guide the data collection for more formal evaluation as well.
- Determine whether experts can act as liaisons between classroom teachers and program staff.
- Remember that expertise includes knowledge of the causes of student mobility. Homeless education, shelter staff, and other community agencies that serve highly mobile students and their families can provide insight into the lives of these children beyond their reading skills. Such information can increase the sensitivity

and understanding of tutors, teachers, and others in the program. In addition, it may lead to non-literacy strategies to address the causes of mobility.

Supporting Effective Communication

Administrative support is vital for the key people in a student's life to communicate effectively. Countless barriers can prevent us from communicating effectively. Common barriers, such as lack of structure, lack of trust, and lack of time can be lessened when built into the program's design.

In aligning program goals and instruction, partners must talk to each other. They need to know what kind of instruction the students are receiving as they move from classroom to tutoring or enrichment program and from school to school. They need to develop a system for sharing information about the student who moves. This should include a discussion of what data will be shared and what the data mean; that is, how they will inform future instruction.

Consider ways to build informal relationships. Are tutors or other program staff invited to visit the schools? Are teachers invited to visit the program? Appreciation breakfasts or luncheons, student plays or other classroom performances, and parent-teacher conferences can be opportunities for school and program staff to meet. Such events could be conducted at the school, or similar events can be orchestrated as part of the program. While we often joke about it, bringing people together around a meal makes a difference when we try to collaborate. A special meal reinforces the message that those involved are valued and creates a time for relationship building that cannot occur without conscious effort. Don't forget notes of appreciation. Teachers, tutors, and parents learn a lot from their students. The teacher who gets a note from a tutor commenting on how excited Sal was about yesterday's science lesson may need that extra smile the next day. The tutor who learns that Tia read the story they had practiced together beautifully to her second grade class may be floating home that evening. Personal touches and mini-celebrations keep programs and people energized.

An early procedural and trust issue to consider involves obtaining formal parental permission to release information and share that information. Schools and many community programs have forms that allow parents to give permission to share information about their child across agencies. In addition to having parent permission forms, the agencies that will be participating in the program should reach agreement on what information may need to be shared and how confidential information will be communicated, used, and stored.

Issues and concerns surrounding protecting information and the need to share confidential or personal data must be addressed. Information sharing can be an especially sensitive issue when domestic violence is a factor. A defined process for information sharing can alleviate potential trust barriers, especially when partners have not worked closely before or have had difficulties in this area in the past. In addition, a clearly articulated process will help workers obtain permission from parents who may be reticent to sign such a permission form. In developing procedures, it may be appropriate to consult with the school or agency attorney to ensure that the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) or Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requirements that may apply are properly addressed.

Communication between the program and the classroom. Information sharing between after-school or community programs and the schools is often limited. Both sides have data that can inform practice. If a student has been assessed by the reading specialist, the information can be used to assist a tutor. If the tutor has been using an instructional strategy that is working well for the student, notifying the classroom teacher can help the student generalized the strategy more effectively.

Teachers have not traditionally received training designed to build awareness of homelessness and other forms of high mobility. This lack of knowledge was voiced as a concern in the site visits (and across the country in informal conversations) and reduced the likelihood that teachers would be contacted. This reluctance to contact teachers must change. The response should not be, "We won't tell the teacher," for fear that expectations may be lowered for the student. Being able to partner with a student's teacher can be a powerful means of targeting instruction. Teachers need training to better understand the mobile lives of their students and relevant confidentiality procedures. Teachers must be given the tools to participate meaningfully rather than being avoided as possible barriers. Hiring teachers to work in the program also can be a means of bridging community and school and increasing a sense of trust among program partners.

Sample Form 2 provides an example of a teacher-parent communication form. While tutors and teachers can create informal means of communicating, a simple format that structures the correspondence decreases the time needed to report and addresses the question, "What should I say?" The level of technical detail may vary for parents and teachers or the same form may be used if a triplicate form were developed. Consider transmitting updates by e-mail or

internal LAN if information were considered sensitive. If a computer-based program is used, discuss whether school personnel (the reading specialist or classroom teacher) can access students' performance records.

Sample Form 2

Communicating With Teachers and Parents

Session Date: Length of session: Tutor: Student: Summary of session activities: How engaged was the student during the session? What was challenging for the student? What did the student do well?
Notes to the teacher: Student's interests, homework, questions
Notes to the family: Ideas for family reading, daily activity to reinforce reading, a tip for reading with your child

Creating a case management system in which a single point of contact is assigned for each student is another way to lessen concerns regarding confidentiality, trust, time, and commitment. For example, could the supervisor of the program and a school contact, such as a reading specialist, be responsible for reviewing the progress of students in the program? The case managers would act as links between the school and the program with occasional face-to-face meetings, e-mails, and weekly phone calls.

Communication between the program and community agencies. Staff from community agencies that work with highly mobile families (such as shelters) can be a great resource. These agencies should be involved in discussions about information sharing throughout the planning and development of a program. From a training perspective, such agency personnel are the experts who can help others understand the broader life issues that the children and their families face while moving frequently. Shelter staff can provide an overview of their shelter structures and routines, how families are placed, and roles and responsibilities of staff within the agencies that interface with your families. Their understanding and direct involvement with homelessness and high poverty can help educators better understand learning challenges and reasons for behaviors and reactions they may observe when working with students.

Be sure to include such agency staff in the literacy training. Provide an overview of the literacy program and resources you will provide students. Even literacy tips such as modeling good reading and how to read a book with children of different ages or strategies that enhance parent-child interactions should be shared with personnel who work with the parents. Agency staff may be the best way to communicate with a parent who is facing many stressors. If a mother's case manager is familiar with your program, she can help Mom understand the benefits of allowing her child to participate and reinforce how Mom can support her child's growth in reading.

Communicating with parents. Some parents are overwhelmed with survival responsibilities and need the assistance of a case manager to become engaged in their children's reading program. Others parents may have limited literacy skills themselves or negative memories of school that prevent them from being comfortable reading with their child or participating in school activities.

Family literacy programs such as Even Start or Head Start for preschoolers and the research on increasing parent participation offer suggestions about effective ways to engage parents. The New York-based Mobile Outreach Parent-Child Home Program described in

Appendix A-1 includes a wealth of strategies for involving parents in their children's literacy development. The commitment to reach out to the family and to be nonjudgmental and persistent in offering assistance that characterizes this program has led to high levels of trust and may be adapted beyond the original preschool population.

If you wish to involve parents in the program, consider sponsoring events that are hands-on, fun, and low pressure such as arts and crafts night built around a favorite book, making your own sundae on Sunday afternoon while watching Arthur (the aardvark) videos, or baking cookies to accompany reading *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*.

Many parents of highly mobile students had childhoods similar to their children's and may not have experienced a parent reading to them on a regular basis. If your parents need support to read to their children, offer suggestions and tips in small chunks. A five-minute introduction to a strategy that consists of a brief rationale, description of the strategy, and modeling followed by parents practicing with their child (before doing that art project) is more meaningful than a one-hour lecture with parents while the children are in another room.

Another example of providing tips in small chunks is the series of bookmarks developed by Project HOPE-VA. Rather than creating a flyer with a "top ten" list of suggestions for reading with your child, we separated the tips to have one printed per bookmark that could be copied on colored paper or poster board. The tip was summarized on one side with a short phrase (and the agency contact information), and the tip itself was described in greater detail on the back of the bookmark along with the Web site for Talk Reach Read, a project of the Child Care Action Campaign that offered the suggestions and has many other activities to help parents get involved with reading and their children. Sample Form 3 shows the front and back of one bookmark. A PDF of eight bookmarks formatted to print on 8.5" X 11" paper may be found at www.wm.edu/hope/infobrief/readmarks.pdf

Sample Form 3

Parent Reading Tip Bookmark

Talk About the Story as You Read

Project HOPE-Virginia, Education for Virginia's Children and Youth
www.wm.edu/hope 757-221-4002; Toll free 877-455-3412

If the story is set in the city, talk about how the pictures of buildings in the book look like buildings in your town. If there are things the child doesn't understand, explain as you read. Listen to the child's comments and insights. Let her know that her thoughts are valuable. The talk surrounding a book is important, too.

A tip from: Child Care Action Campaign;
www.kidsandpolitics.org/taxonomy/term/338

You may find a short list of reading tips on one bookmark another option. The Reading Connection developed a bookmark with 11 short phrases (e.g., read every day, get cozy, share the pictures) and listed "21 Read-Aloud Books for the 21st Century" on the back (titles and authors).

Be sure that the student and parent have ways to collect and retain information about the student's reading progress. The National Center for Homeless Education has a "Parent Pack" pocket folder to help families maintain records needed for future enrollments. Create a "Reader Pack" or add a section to the Parent Pack with a manila envelope with samples of student work, the charting of reading progress and tutor/teacher notes that can move when the student moves. Keep a second copy at the school or with the program and establish procedures to make sure the information reaches the next teacher.

Establishing a Homework Policy

Tutoring and homework help are not the same thing; they serve different purposes. Table 4, developed by SERVE, contrasts tutoring and homework. Note that the table implies the need for a more long-term relationship under the tutoring column. Articulating the difference between true tutoring and homework help, exploring how many of the tutoring elements can be incorporated if turnover is high, and clarifying the differing roles staff will fulfill is important in developing a program and training staff.

Programs that occur outside the regular school day face the question: How will we address homework? Is it fair to have a student in class all day, in tutoring for another hour or more, and then have him sit down later in the evening to complete homework? If the student needs specific remediation, is doing homework correcting the weaknesses that are causing academic challenges? If homework is not part of project, are there times when completing it would be appropriate?

Program staff, parents, and students' teachers may be involved in answering these questions. Even when the decision is already made, the practice and rationale should be communicated. The sites visited approached homework differently. The Austin site did not include homework support but the Kenosha site did. Homework was completed first but considerable time was not spent on homework at the student's frustration level. Such homework was completed quickly, leaving time for targeted instruction. If the homework aligned with student goals in the program, it became part of the day's lesson. Having completed homework submitted each day often improved students' grades and that success motivated the student to keep working. (See Appendix A-1.)

Table 4

Comparing and Contrasting Homework Help and Tutoring

Homework Help	Both Homework and Tutoring Should:	Tutoring
• Immediate goal is assignment completion. • Helper may work with more than one child in one session and/or different children each week. • What the homework helper does is determined by the assignments the children are given and the degree of help they need (but looks for "teachable moments"). • Children get help as needed; amount of help varies from child to child, and from day to day. • Informal conversation is minimal. • Relationship between student and homework helper is, for the most part, temporal. • May not know the students very well • Will work with children on social skills and interactions.	• Help children improve academic skills. • Make a child feel successful and valued. • Allow self-determination (e.g., students have a voice in setting learning goals, selecting activities, selecting on which assignments to work). • Model and reinforce good study habits. • Pay attention to the whole child by trying to determine learning style, listening to what he or she says (or doesn't say), and being attentive to moods and behaviors. • Reinforce critical thinking, not just rote memorization. • Use a mix of levity and firmness.	• Goal is to address academic deficiencies over time. • Will work with the same child during each session. • The tutor develops learning goals with the student, creates a lesson plan each week, and assesses progress toward goals. • A child gets one hour of undivided attention. • Tutoring session involves informal conversation to get to know the student and for the student to get to know the tutor. • Tutor builds trust and rapport with a student over time. • Tutor gets to know the student personally. • In the one-on-one setting, there is less opportunity to work on social skills and interactions.

Leadership to Increase Student Stability

While the primary focus of any literacy program is increasing students' reading skills, when those students are highly mobile, administrative considerations should include attention to increasing stability. Reducing the causes for high mobility to keep children stable in your program, in school, and in housing is an added challenge.

For students experiencing homelessness, the McKinney-Vento Act requires that students be permitted to remain in the school of origin when it is feasible and in the child's best interest. Work with school and shelter staff to ensure families are familiar with this option. If many of your students are homeless, consider how the location of your program can be coordinated with school transportation.

Chicago developed a "Staying Put" initiative to inform parents that moves disrupt education for their children.[46] Do your families have options that could reduce residential moves or limit them to times that work around the academic calendar? An ad campaign like Chicago's may be a way to reach families. To address a similar challenge of student mobility, Rochester, New York, worked with landlords to create leases that coincided with the academic calendar.[47]

At the program level, consider giving students access to services beyond any time limits in their current placements. This is a policy and resource issue. If we have students long enough, we can make a greater difference. This may justify a policy change if acceptable to funding agencies. If current time limits to your program or other programs in which the family participates are restrictive due to limited resources, consider how transportation could be arranged (if needed) and whether you will have sufficient staff if there is less student turnover.

The Kenosha site is experimenting with extended access to its program. If the program is not at maximum capacity and transportation can be arranged, students can continue to attend even after the family has left the shelter. The gains made by students who remained in the program have been impressive.

Celebrating Successes

A program with a culture that acknowledges success in all its iterations is more likely to have staff and students who see the value of

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[46] Heinlein, L. M., & Shinn, M. (2000). School mobility and student achievement in an urban setting. *Psychology in the Schools, 37*(4), 349-366.

[47] Stover, D. (2000). Schools grapple with high student mobility rates. *School Board News.* 11, 1-8.

their efforts. Consider establishing rituals to celebrate the accomplishments of students and staff in the program. These can include personal and academic aspects. For example, you might:

- Create a bulletin board with photos and student work.
- Publish a newsletter highlighting achievements as well as reminders of upcoming events and deadlines.
- Write "Gotcha" notes – thank-you notes that can be completed for and by any staff or the children to acknowledge that "little extra effort" or identify an accomplishment.
- Start training sessions or staff meetings with a roundtable of celebrations.
- Write a news article for the local newspaper that highlights accomplishments in the program.
- Organize gatherings to build community, especially when you bring food.
- Prepare certificates or pins to build an identity and sense of pride for participants.
- Ask students and staff for ways to increase their commitment to the program.

Just think about how we celebrate children's first words and even their first sounds…Think about how we celebrate children's first steps. Again, we are exuberant. We have them demonstrate this new skill to everyone. We are happy at first just to see them stand with balance. Then one step delights us. Two steps is even more exciting. And when a child takes several steps between two loving parents she receives support from start to finish.

Reading needs this same attention to celebration. It is equally as complex a task as speaking and walking. Find ways to celebrate each tiny accomplishment along the way to mastery. Bring in other children and teachers to listen to the group story your class has written. Build and develop class cheerleaders. Children are very interested in peer approval. Be sincerely enthusiastic about children's ability to hear rhyming sounds. Encourage children to use a checklist to check off skills as they accomplish them. Have a Green Eggs and Ham Party when children become competent at injecting the predictable lines in the story.[48]

[48] Schiller, P. (2003, Nov/Dec). A joyful journey to literacy. *Child Care Information Exchange,* 8.

Chapter 7
Resources to Get Started

This chapter offers potential resources for consideration. When published materials are included, this is not intended to be an endorsement, nor is the list inclusive of all options. Items that were referenced in earlier chapters are repeated here for easier reference. The resources are divided into five parts: funding sources, programs and lesson planning, teacher resources, accessing books, and miscellaneous.

Funding Possibilities

A list of potential sources for grants and other donations follows. Discounted and free books are found in Table 8.

Table 5

Funding Possibilities

Funding Source	**Description**
Federally funded programs www.ed.gov	Programs funded through the U.S. Department of Education may be considered. These programs are awarded to school districts; therefore, a community program would need to partner with the school system to access these funds.
Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs	In-school and out-of-school academic support Set-aside funds for serving homeless students not attending Title I schools Schools that do not make AYP must offer supplemental education services (SES) as an option. If your students attend such schools, explore SES access.
Title I, Part B: Reading First Early Reading First Even Start Family Literacy	These competitive grants are awarded by state departments of education to school districts to establish research-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through grade 3. Early Reading First supports efforts to enhance early language, literacy, and prereading skills of preschoolers. Integrates early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education and parenting education into a unified family literacy program for low-income families.
Title I, Part C: Migrant Education	Additional academic support for children of migrant workers during the academic year and through summer programming

Funding Source	Description
Title I, Part D: Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or at Risk of Dropping Out	School districts can use these funds to improve educational services to children in local institutions for neglected or delinquent children and youth to meet the same state content standards and student performance standards that all children are expected to meet. Subpart 1 addresses state agency programs; Subpart 2 is funding to LEAs.
Title V: Innovative Programs	Funding to school districts that is often used for school libraries. There is a great deal of flexibility in how these funds can be used. For example, Virginia was able to use a state Title V grant to develop training materials and purchase children's books that were distributed to shelters.
Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)	The 21st CCLC Program awards grants to rural and inner-city public schools, or consortia of such schools, to enable them to plan and implement activities for students and their families to continue to learn new skills and discover new abilities after the school day has ended.
Title X, Part C: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	Subgrants to local school districts may be used to fund personnel, transportation, and materials for supplemental reading programs for students experiencing homelessness.
Other agencies that provide, support or fund literacy initiatives	
American Library Association www.ala.org/ala/olos/outreachresource/servicespoor.htm	The American Library Association is committed to ensuring equal access to information for all people. Local libraries have developed a variety of community initiatives, such as issuing guest cards to people experiencing homelessness.
AmeriCorps www.americorps.org	AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, an independent federal agency created to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. AmeriCorps is a network of local, state, and national service programs that connects more than 70,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet our country's critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment.
Dollar General www.dollargeneral.com	Offers community grants and back-to-school grants that may be used to cover costs of new programs and the purchase of equipment, materials, and software.
International Reading Association (IRA) http://reading.org/association/awards/index.html	The IRA Research Grant Program offers nearly 40 grants and awards, including a "Teacher as Researcher" grant of up to $5,000 available to preK-12 teachers.

Funding Source	Description
National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) www.famlit.org/	NCFL works to create educational and economic opportunity for the most at-risk children and parents. Services include professional development for practitioners in literacy fields; model program development; policy and advocacy support to sustain and expand literacy services for families; and the Family Literacy Alliance.
National Endowment for the Arts The Big Read www.neabigread.org	The Big Read will involve libraries and other community and school partners across the United States to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment. (2006 and 2007 grant deadlines have been established.)
Starbucks, All Books for Children Book Drive www.rif.org.uk/supporters/casestudies.htm#Starbucks	This Web site describes an initiative in the United Kingdom that involves Starbucks and RIF. Starbucks collaborated with *The Washington Post* and a local radio station to carry out a book drive for The Reading Connection in Northern Virginia/DC area.
Verizon Foundation http://foundation.verizon.com	The foundation accepts proposals from schools and certain nonprofit organizations focusing on literacy or domestic violence.
Wilbooks www.wilbooks.com/	Offers books for kindergarten through grade 2. Discounts for Title I schools, sales (buy one get one free), and free book options exist. Books also available in Spanish.
Sources to Locate Potential Funders	
Children and Youth Funding Report www.cdpublications.com/shop/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=48	Monthly newsletter highlighting available federal and state grants on topics related to children and youth.
GrantStation http://grantstation.com	The *GrantStation Insider* provides information on funding programs, deadlines, conferences, trainings, and relevant information for grantseekers. The *Insider* is sent to members of such organizations as the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. Full membership includes a searchable database of grant opportunities.

Sample Programs

The following list includes reading programs that may benefit students who are highly mobile and programs specifically designed for homeless students that include "how to" materials.

Table 6

Sample Programs

Program	**Description**
Academic Engagement Enhancement (AEE) model www.nrcres.org/REAL.htm	AEE, part of the Rural Early Adolescent Learning Program, provides a framework for improving skills of older students who struggle with reading acquisition and development. This model is part of a broader intervention program aimed at promoting academic and social competence of youth at risk of school failure. The strategies are based on best practice and are designed to actively engage students in the development of reading skills. The AEE model requires no special materials.[49]
Accelerated Reader www.renlearn.com/ar/ overview/ default.htm	Accelerated Reader (AR) is reading management software that provides teachers with methods to monitor guided reading practice.
Glass Analysis www.glassanalysis.com	Glass Analysis is a decoding skill building program that uses a clustering approach to get students to identify letters and clusters in whole words, visually and auditorily, to promote correct sounding out at the automatic level.
America Reads www.ed.gov/inits/americareads/kids_rwn.html	Read*Write*Now encourages children to read throughout the summer. Activities from previous summers have been archived and can be downloaded.
Links to Literacy I'm Always Smart When I'm With You! A Handbook for Short-Term Literacy Intervention www.utdanacenter.org/literacy/handbook.html	The handbook, available online, includes a description of the tutoring program developed for use in short-term settings, such as shelters. The manual includes step-by-step descriptions of tutoring session components, including activities, graphic organizers, and resources in a user-friendly format.

[49] Gut, D. M., Farmer, T. W., Bishop-Goforth, J., Hives, J., Aaron, A., & Jackson, F. (2004). The School Engagement Project: Academic Engagement Enhancement. *Preventing School Failure*, *48*, 4-9.

Program	Description
Motheread, Inc. www.motheread.org/	A private, nonprofit organization combining the teaching of literacy skills with child development and family empowerment, Motheread offers classes for adults and children. Adult participants learn to be story readers, writers, and tellers. Classes encourage parents to be reading role models for their children. For children, Storysharing provides a structured environment for learning reading, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills.
National Education Association Read Across America www.nea.org/readacross	Read Across America is a national reading celebration that takes place on March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. Year-round reading, activities, and resources are highlighted.
Reading Connection www.thereadingconnection. org/	The Reading Connection is a Virginia-based nonprofit organization that brings books and a life-long love of reading to children in housing crisis. Goals include exposing children to books and encouraging them to spend more time reading; providing children with free books to keep; increasing language input during critical stages of literacy development; and encouraging parents and children to value independent home reading.
Read Naturally www.readnaturally.com	A fluency program with a home component and leveled "one minute reader" books used with reading probes of words read correctly per minute. The program uses a computerized reading application (fluency building includes timed repeated readings and repeated readings with recorded books). *Read Naturally*'s One Minute Reader won the 2006 Teachers' Choice Award for the Family from *Learning Magazine.*
Reading Recovery www.ndec.us/AboutRR.asp	A short-term intervention for children who have the lowest literacy learning in the first grade. Children meet individually with a specially trained teacher for 30 minutes each day for an average of 12-20 weeks. The goal is for children to develop effective reading and writing strategies in order to be able to work within an average range of classroom performance. Reading Recovery is also available to children whose initial reading instruction is in Spanish; Descubriendo la Lectura (DLL) is well established in a number of sites across the United States.
Supplemental Instruction for Struggling Readers, Grades 3-5: A Guide for Tutors www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/products/TutoringGuideGr3-5.pdf	This document, available online, contains 60 sequential lessons that include fluency, word study, instructional reading, and writing/spelling. Developed by the University of Texas Center for Reading & Language Arts.

Teacher and Parent Resources

The following provide tips for parents and teaches to nurture literacy and increase interest in reading. Resources that teachers and parents can use with children are included.

Table 7

Sample Resources

Resource	**Description**
Between the Lions http://pbskids.org/lions/	Award-winning 30-minute episodes designed to support literacy skills for children ages four to seven (and grades K-2). Supplemental activities and suggestions for teachers and parents are posted to the Web site.
Book Links: Connecting Books, Libraries, and Classrooms www.ala.org/ $36.00/year; professional rate $24.97/year for six issues (effective July 2006)	American Library Association magazine designed for teachers, librarians, library media specialists, booksellers, parents, and other adults interested in connecting children with books. *Book Links* publishes bibliographies, essays linking books on a similar theme, retrospective reviews, and other features targeted at those educating young people.
Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement www.ciera.org	Free information about early literacy acquisition and effective strategies for teaching reading, including research, practical suggestions for teachers, and a schedule of events and conferences that provide professional development opportunities.
e*Literacy www.nifl.gov/nifl/eliteracy/archive.html	An electronic newsletter from NIFL with information on activities to improve adult and family literacy.
Family Involvement Storybook Corner www.gse.harvard.edu/~hfrp/projects/fine/resources/storybook/index.html	The Storybook Corner offers resources to help educators, families, and those who work with families promote the awareness, discussion, and practice of family involvement in children's education in a wide range of settings. The Web site describes family involvement storybooks and how they can promote family involvement, offers a compilation of read-aloud storybooks with family involvement themes, and provides research on family involvement in children's early literacy. A planned addition will include resources for Latino families.
Kurzweil Educational Systems www.kurzweiledu.com/	Software designed to provide access to print to individuals with visual impairments and blindness. Includes additional resources with scanning, reading, and writing options for individuals with learning disabilities or other reading difficulties.

Resource	Description
Ladybug for Parents www.cobblestonepub.com/index.html	The magazines *Babybug*, *Ladybug*, and *Cricket* are designed for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, respectively. The Web site includes resources for parents and educators, including books and related activities and songs.
Looseleaf Book Company www.booksense.com/llbc/archive/index.jsp	This Web site complements the weekly public radio program for adults that addresses children's literature.
The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) www.nifl.gov/nifl/publications. html	Publishes documents on a variety of literacy-related topics, including research on effective practices and resources written for parents to support language and early reading skills. Many documents are available online. Hard copies may be ordered by calling the National Institute for Literacy at EDPubs at 1-800-228-8813 (TDD/TTY1-877-576-7734), visiting www.edpubs.org, or faxing 1-301-470-1244. Please refer to the document number listed with every publication when ordering a hard copy.
Oriental Trading Company www.orientaltrading.com	Source for arts and crafts and other incentives (personalized pencils, stickers, toys, etc.) that can be purchased in bulk at reasonable prices.
Phonemic Awareness: Playing With Sounds to Strengthen Beginning Reading Skills (Phonemic Awareness) (Paperback) by Jo Fitzpatrick List price $15.99	Recommended to tutors by the Austin site for phonemic awareness activities.
Put Reading First Series (NIFL) www.nifl.gov/nifl/publications. html	Teacher and parent booklets summarize the findings from the National Reading Panel Report and subsequent research and offer suggestions for teachers and parents to apply these findings to early literacy activities. The documents may be downloaded or hard copies may be ordered. Available in English and Spanish.
Raz-kids www.raz-kids.com/ Free samples and subscription rates	Talking books online with interactive books, quizzes, and online management system.
Reading A-Z www.readinga-z.com/ Free samples and subscription rates	Includes professionally developed downloadable leveled books, lesson plans, worksheets, and reading assessments.

Resource	Description
Reading Rainbow http://shopgpn.com/stores/1/RR_Index.cfm	Book lists, videos of the show, classroom, and library resources are posted. The programs feature the reading of a children's book paired with a real-life exploration of the book's theme. *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting was the featured book in the episode on homelessness.
Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers www.readingrockets.org/	In addition to videos and PBS programming, the Web site explores different reading strategies that help young children learn to read, including tips for parents and teachers.
Reading-tutors http://reading-tutors.com/ Free samples and subscription rates	Variety of resources for tutors, including books, lesson plans, games, assessments, etc.

Access to Books

The following list of publishers and Web sites offer a variety of suggestions for children's books by topics, ages, and reading levels. Discounted and free books are listed at the end.

Table 8

Books, Books, and More Books

Source	Description
The Bookcase www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/storybook/storybook.html	Offers descriptions of read-aloud storybooks with family involvement themes. Family involvement is defined broadly here as families engaging in activities at home, at school, or in the community, with the purpose of supporting children's school education or more general learning. The Bookcase currently focuses on children's picture books, both fiction and narrative nonfiction, written for children from about 4 to 8 years old.
Children's Literature www.childrenslit.com	Web site provides information about children's books, awards, authors and illustrators, literacy organizations, and special literacy events.
Children's Literature Network www.childrensliteraturenetwork.org/	Booklists, author biographies, and literacy events such as book talks and conferences are highlighted.
Connections www.fcps.edu/cpsapps/ connections/	Fairfax County Public Schools' online, searchable database of children's literature aligned with VA Standards of Learning.

Source	Description
Dear America Series http://aol.kidsreads.com/series/dear-america.asp	Scholastic's "Dear America" books are fictional diaries written from the viewpoint of a young person and based on actual events in American history. The books include historical notes and photographs, which provide the historical basis for the diary.
thebestskidsbooksite www.thebestkidsbooksite.com	Web site includes a monthly newsletter, suggested books by topics and ages, crafts and activities and links to additional web resources.
Eyewitness Books http://.us.dk.com	Illustrated reference books on social studies and science topics.
EDCON Publishing Group http://edconpublishing.com/	Publishes high-interest books for students with limited reading skills. Titles include classics and Shakespeare.
Fountas and Pinnell http://fountasandpinnellleveledbooks.com/	Searchable database of leveled books for grades K-8 and video clips of exemplar guided-reading lessons. Minimum order: 20 logins for $15.00.
KidsReads.com http://www.kidsreads.com	Web site for children to find information about their favorite books, series, and authors; includes descriptions and age ranges.
Free and Discounted Books	
FirstBook www.firstbook.org	A national nonprofit that works to ensure children from low-income families have opportunities to read and own new books.
Literacy Empowerment Foundation (LEF) www.colorcodedbooks.org/lef/index.htm	Provides schools and literacy projects with free books. Allocations are on a first-come, first-served basis. A variety of programs, including multicultural book collections and matching grants may be explored at their Web site.
Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) www.rif.org	The National Book Program allows children to choose and keep several free paperback books each year.
Reading Recycling Project www.lefbooks.org/reading_resource_project/	An ongoing program that runs throughout the year and distributes new and gently used books for grades K-3 *free* of charge for Read Across America Day and other literacy programs.
Scholastic Literacy Partners www.scholastic.com/literacypartners	Program through Scholastic to support efforts of nonprofit organizations involved with literacy, including special discounts and free shipping of their children's books.
Star Bright Books www.starbrightbooks.com	Provides book discounts to literacy organizations including books in Spanish and books with children with disabilities.
Student Literacy Project (SLP) working name for Reading Offers Amazing Rewards, Inc. (ROAR) e-mail: SLP337@aol.com	As an eighth grader, Kay Lauren Miller began a student literacy project in Northern Virginia to encourage reading by distributing books to needy children throughout the world. Creation of local chapters is encouraged.

"All children deserve books of their own. All children deserve bedroom libraries where they have at least a handful of books of their own."[50]

[50] Allington. R. L. (2001). p. 66.

Chapter 8

Designing and Implementing a Literacy Program – A Checklist of Considerations

The checklist that follows outlines the considerations discussed throughout this handbook. It is intended to provide a quick reference for discussion and planning.

I. Early Considerations Before a program to work with highly mobile students is implemented, care must be taken to clearly identify the students to be served, their needs, and the desired outcomes. The following questions are broadly framed and may be used across the curriculum. The questions can be made more targeted to address one focus, such as literacy. While these questions should be asked early in the planning process, they also need to be revisited as the program matures to ensure changing needs are addressed.	
	I.1 Who will be served? (Define and describe the population.)
	What is our mobility rate?
	How does this mobility impact accountability measures (AYP)? (Disaggregate AYP data by mobility.)
	Which children are most mobile? Why?
	What types of mobility are we experiencing? Is it predictable, seasonal, erratic?
	What is the average length of time and range of times our mobile children remain with us before they move?
	What ages/grades are experiencing the highest rates of mobility? Does this correspond to weaker achievement scores?
	What common needs have been identified? (Review report cards and assessments: meet with school and community support staff; meet with parents).
	How many mobile children (at any given time) need extra support?
	If there are limited resources, which subgroup(s) will be our priority? (How will we

	do the prioritizing?)
	I.2 What goals make sense for this population? Given the amount of time we have to work with these students, what outcomes will be meaningful?
	Academic
	Affective – motivation, student engagement
	Social
	Family supports
	I.3 How will we measure progress?
	What evaluation tools can be used? Standardized tests Observational data and checklists Satisfaction surveys Other anecdotal data Reduction in mobility rates
	Along with outcomes, what inputs are most critical? (This question can be part of ongoing program evaluation that may be used to support allocation of resources (e.g., "We have evidence this makes a difference for our students and their families …")

II. Identifying Resources Chances are that whether a current program is used or a new project is initiated, some expansion and adjustments will be necessary. Resources, including funding and staff expertise, influence the decisions that are made.	
	II.1 Do we already have programs that can address the needs of our mobile students?
	Are mobile students accessing these programs? If not, what are the barriers to participation and how can they be reduced or eliminated?
	Do we need to expand our current programs? (more staff, more sites, etc.)
	II.2 Are there programs that we can adopt that have been successful working with similar students and that address our goals?
	Can we adjust existing programs to better meet the needs of highly mobile students using elements from existing program? (instructional, organizational, logistical)
	Are there packaged programs that align with our district's standards and that have effectiveness data that we can use?
	II.3 Who will provide services?
	Who are our partners and how can they be involved? (e.g., staff, materials, training expertise, financing).
	Can we pay staff? Do we have a highly qualified teacher(s) to develop/implement/oversee the program? Is there a local college with a faculty member interested in our project? (could be a research or service requirement for higher ed.) Do we have highly qualified paraeducators who can carry out the program? How many paid staff will be needed to increase the likelihood that program fidelity/quality is maintained?
	Do we need volunteers? How many?

	What will be our sources for recruiting needed personnel? School staff – elementary teachers, reading specialists, special education teachers, paraprofessionals Retired teachers and related services personnel College or high school students Community volunteers – organized groups or individuals
	What training must be provided? About the population being served? About the program? To provide the instruction? What will be included in the initial training? How will ongoing support/training be conducted?
	Who will conduct the training? Do we have staff with the needed expertise? Does the expertise exist in the community? Is there a local college or university that can assist us?
	How can we maximize retention of quality staff and volunteers in the program? Training meets needs – resources provided for volunteers to develop lesson plans and conduct activities Communication is effective – volunteers have access to advice regarding specific learning problems demonstrated by students Successes are celebrated; program is recognized (people are valued) Ongoing monitoring of staff turnover – use of exit interviews
	Is there a process to remove ineffective/inappropriate staff and volunteers?
	II.4 What are our space requirements?
	Is there a location we can use or do we need to seek out one?
	What will it take to create a "print-rich" environment that acknowledges the value of our students, staff, and volunteers?

	Can we have study carrels, cozy places to curl up with a good book, comfortable areas for group work, computer access, storage space for materials and student records, display space for a wide variety of reading materials and student work?
	II.5 How can we fund the initiative?
	Are there federal program funds that can be used for this purpose? Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently NCLB) title programs such as Title I (Parts A & C), Title V, Title X, Part C, Reading First , Early Reading First, Even Start
	What foundations might be interested in our work? Are there businesses or corporations in our community that would support such a project? Are there other federal, state, or local grants?
	What local community groups would support our project with donations, money, materials, or people? (e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Club, Women's League, social service agencies, continuum of care for homeless services, local government entities, faith-based groups, schools).

III. How will we assess our students? Consider initial, ongoing, and final evaluation of student progress	
	III.1 Will we use formal, informal, or a combination of assessment types?
	What is the cost? Does it work in our budget?
	How long does it take to administer?
	What training is needed to be qualified to administer the assessment?
	How well do the items align with our state/local standards and project goals?
	What initial/baseline data are needed to inform beginning instruction?
	What final data do we need to evaluate our project goals?
	III.2 How will the assessment data be used?
	Who has access to the assessment results and how do we share student data? Initial data for lesson development Ongoing assessment for lessons and student monitoring Posttest data for student growth and program evaluation
	How can individual student progress be documented at *each* session? (including involving the student to see his/her progress) Observational notes Checklists Graphs Curriculum-based assessment and curriculum-based measurement (CBM)

IV. Instructional Practices Does the project balance the essential elements required for an effective reading program? Does the staff have the training and tools/materials necessary to teach and reinforce these reading components?	
	IV.1 Are the essential components of effective reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel included in lessons using age-appropriate activities and materials while working with students at their instructional level?
	Phonemic awareness
	Phonics
	Vocabulary
	Fluency
	Comprehension
	How well do program components complement the instructional practices adopted in the general education classroom? (Are we speaking the same language or confusing students with too many strategies and differing terms that mean the same thing?)
	IV.2 Are additional instructional considerations incorporated in the program?
	Are student engagement and motivation considered in planning? Teacher-student relationship Attention to student interests

	Is there a structure to the program that supports the essential elements of classroom organization and management? Organization of materials and space Established rules and procedures that are taught and reinforced Consistent structure Blending of whole-group, small-group, and side-by-side instruction (more applicable to the general education classroom)
	Are the reading materials matched to students' instructional levels?
	Is there access to a variety of reading materials? How are books and other resources selected? Is there a selection of high-interest low-vocabulary materials for struggling readers? What sources of booklists are available? How are books organized/classified for age and reading level appropriateness?
	Are writing activities included in lessons (given the reciprocal nature of reading and writing)?

V. What else can administrators do to support highly mobile students and the project? Administrators can increase the likelihood of a project's success by ensuring that resources are available and policies and procedures support the project.	
	V.1. Are there policies and procedures to link expertise to the project?
	Are reading teachers and other literacy specialists invited to participate and supported in the efforts to work in the program? Administering additional formal assessments to increase diagnostic data available Training tutors Developing lesson plans and checklists for tutor use Monitoring program Reviewing tutoring notes and CBM Liaison with classroom teacher Determining when greater intervention is needed
	Do parents and staff have opportunities to provide insight into the experiences of the children to be served? For example, homeless education/shelter staff can provide McKinney-Vento training to introduce homeless issues to project staff and volunteers.
	V.2 Are there systematic means of communicating and sharing information across the many settings that serve highly mobile students? Across schools and after-school programs Between after-school programs Intra- and inter-district discussions Between teachers and tutors Between tutors and parents Between reading program and shelter staff

	Have we discussed what kind of instruction students are receiving and what assessment data will be meaningful as they move?
	Do staff members from programs serving our highly mobile students meet with each other and discuss instructional practices used and how student data are maintained?
	Is there a procedure to collect student information (such as a reading portfolio) that can move with the student?
	Is there an established homework policy?
	If no homework is done during the program, have other arrangements been made to support homework completion, if needed?
	If homework is completed as part of the program, is there a policy to ensure most of the program time is spent working with students at their instructional level and meeting the program's literacy goals?
	V.3 What can be done to lessen to the mobility of our students?
	Do we have procedures to extend students' participation in the program after they move?
	Do students remain in their school of origin, if feasible, when a residential move occurs?
	Have we worked with parents to help them recognize the value of children staying in one school? (For example, Chicago's "Staying Put" initiative informs parents that moves disrupt education for their children.)
	Have we worked with community groups that could reduce residential moves? (For example, Rochester Public Schools worked with landlords to change policies that lessened moves during the academic year.)

Chapter 9

Concluding Thoughts

Children who are highly mobile and the educators who serve them face very complex issues and challenges. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort that spans community and schools and includes direct service providers (including teachers and tutors), administrators, and policymakers. While there is a plethora of information on effective reading instruction with varying levels of scientific support, there is limited research focusing specifically on students who move frequently. The emerging body of literature on highly mobile students has focused on explaining the phenomenon, describing its effect on schools and classrooms, and identifying policies and practices at the school and district level. What needs to be done instructionally has been highlighted less frequently.

This handbook looks at reading from multiple perspectives. Some of the information is of greatest interest to program developers and administrators and offers considerations for program development and improvement and involves moving beyond reading and looking at the broader perspective of mobility and the need to reduce rather than just "treat" the existence of high mobility among the students we serve. Information related to instructional practices and specific resources will be of greatest interest to those delivering instruction. Altogether, the suggestions are a blend of the insights provided by practitioners, the existing research base, and additional resources and practices that are consistent with these sources.

A colleague, Ron Walker, shared a comment in a keynote address a number of years ago that struck me when I first heard it. He said, "We are a society drowning in information and thirsting for wisdom." As I began this project, his words often haunted me. The boxes of books, the piles of reports, and link after Internet link to be explored were often daunting. Having now "come up for air," I hope readers will find some "sips" of wisdom that will make the joy of reading and learning come to life for a student.

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) is a national resource center for research, information, and technical assistance enabling communities to successfully address the needs of children and their families who are experiencing homelessness and unaccompanied youth in homeless situations. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, NCHE provides services to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for homeless children and youth in our nation's school communities. NCHE is housed at the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Website: www.serve.org/nche

HelpLine: 800-308-2145

Contact: Diana Bowman, Director
NCHE at SERVE
P.O. Box 5367
Greensboro, NC 27435

Phone: 336-315-7453 or 800-755-3277
Email: dbowman@serve.org or homeless@serve.org

U.S. Department of Education Website: www.ed.gov

Appendix A-1

Site Visits

Methodology for Site Visits

To learn more about programs that work with homeless and highly mobile students, several site visits were included as part of this project. A nomination form was developed to help identify programs that were improving the literacy skills of elementary school-aged children who were homeless or highly mobile. The form was distributed to state coordinators for the education of homeless children and youth, to migrant education coordinators, and institutions of higher education with programs that addressed literacy for this population. Four programs were nominated. Ultimately, three sites were visited based on scheduling availability.

Two programs involved supplemental after-school tutoring. The third program emphasized support for literacy skills development of preschoolers. While not the primary focus for this project, the growing numbers of young children experiencing homelessness and the research-based practices being incorporated provided an opportunity to explore the needs of younger children as a preventive measure to combat later reading struggles. The sites included:

- Long Island, NY: preschool home-based literacy project
- Austin, TX: after-school short-term literacy project housed in a short-term shelter
- Kenosha, WI: after-school tutorial program

The protocol used for the site visits was adapted from a questionnaire developed by Chapin Hall[1] to study after-school programs and literacy development. The selected questions were modified to be open-ended. Further, questions that addressed reading programs and instructional practices, based on the literature review from Volume 1, were added. The protocol was sent to the program contacts in advance of the visits. If more than one program representative were available, questions about successes experienced and suggestions to improve the program were included for short interviews.

The key contact person from each program met with the researcher at the program site. An opportunity to observe each program for approximately one hour was arranged. An exception was the preschool program, which is conducted in the home. For this site, a meeting was held in the contact's office; however, approximately 20 minutes of videotaped home visits were shared at the end of the interview. The protocol was used to conduct a semi-structured interview that lasted approximately two hours. The key contacts at each site gave permission for the interview to be taped. Discussions with any additional staff were not taped and remained informal.

The taped interviews, written notes, and documentation shared by the participants were used to develop the following case studies. All participants who met with the researcher received a copy of the description for their site

[1] Spielberger, J, & Halpern, R. (2002). *The role of after-school programs in children's literacy development.* Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

and were offered the opportunity to offer suggestions, corrections, or clarifications, which were considered in the final case descriptions.

Overview of Site Demographics

Demographics/Site	Long Island, NY	Austin, TX	Kenosha, WI
Location for service provision	Home/wherever the child resides	Shelter	Shelter/community center
Number of staff	1 full-time 6 home visitors	1 full-time coordinator	1 full-time teacher 1 paraprofessional position (shared by 2 staff)
Number of volunteers	Not applicable	6-12 tutors	Approx. 30
Funding sources	McKinney-Vento; Community grants	McKinney-Vento; AmericaReads; Americorps	McKinney-Vento; Title I, Part A; other school district funding
Length of operation	4 years	3 years	11 years
Services provided	Family literacy	Reading tutoring	Academic tutoring (reading, writing, mathematics, basic concepts/world knowledge)
Frequency of services	1 45-minute visit/week	1 hour + activities twice/week	3 hours 4 days/week
Ages served	18 months to 4 years (rising kindergarteners)	K-8; most are elementary	Preschool through high school; most students are elementary
Number of students/year	35-40	Approx. 60	150

Mobile Outreach Parent-Child Home Program

Central Islip, New York

The Reading Mother
You may have tangible wealth untold,
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.
Richer than I you can never be –
I had a mother who read to me …
S. Gillilan[2]

Key contact: Sarah Benjamin
Title: Teacher coordinator

General Program Description

The Mobile Outreach Parent-Child Home Program (MOPCHP) is based at the Eastern Suffolk Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), Equity Support Services. BOCES provides regional services that school districts could not as efficiently and economically provide on their own, such as special education services, adult education, and vocational education. Other programs based in the office include Even Start and the New York State Technical Assistance Center for the McKinney-Vento homeless education program. Co-location is valuable because all the programs work with families and preschoolers.

MOPCHP has operated for four years and is designed to serve families with children from 18 months to 4 years of age in a two-year relationship. Many of the families have not been able to provide experiences that prepare children for school, and many of the children have had no preschool experiences. From September through June, home visitors meet with families weekly and bring age-appropriate books and toys for the family to keep.

The research of Hart and Risley (1995) provides a context for understanding the potential impact of this program. The researchers recorded over 100 hours of verbal interactions for preschoolers in professional families and those living in high poverty. They found that the children of professionals were exposed to approximately 215,000 words wherease children living in poverty were exposed to 62,000 words. Hart and Risley projected that the accumulated language exposure by age four would amount to 45 million words for the children of professionals contrasted with 13 million words for the children in families who were poor. In addition, the parent-child interactions were qualitatively different. Children in more affluent homes received more encouraging statements whereas the children who were poor received more prohibitions. Providing parents living in poverty with models to increase verbal interactions and the types of interchanges

[2] Gillilan, S. *The reading mother*. Retrieved July 26, 2005, from http://www.geocities.com/midcontinentsdbv/may05.htm.

they use is intended to "level the playing field" for their children when they enter school.

MOPCHP provides home visits, parent support, early literacy activities, and advocacy to support the social-emotional well-being of the family. The $107,500/year budget is funded through a variety of grants, including a local McKinney-Vento homeless education subgrant and a grant from the Long Island United Way. In addition, the Suffolk County legislature provided a small grant to buy books. New funding sources are continually sought.

MOPCHP is a pilot project that has adapted the Parent-Child Home Project (PCHP) to work with families experiencing homelessness. The original program began as Phyllis Levenstein's doctoral study in Freeport, NY, during the 1960s. The study was designed to provide children in poverty with enriching opportunities to develop pre-literacy skills during their early years to prevent later school failure. This early study has evolved into a systematic program with a national center in Port Washington, NY, that provides training and certification to sites around the United States. The National Center supports the site with fundraising and ongoing technical assistance. To become a certified site, which takes three years, a PCHP receives initial training over several days with ongoing assistance and site visits. MOPCHP has been certified for one year.

The goal of MOPCHP is to support parents in becoming the most important teachers for their children. As the teacher coordinator stated, "We try to get the parent and child to have a moment together … Talking, verbal interaction, is the beginning of literacy … We bring things in that will stimulate conversation and reading. We work on early literacy, language development, and parent-child relationship. I'm strongly devoted to the importance of the early years for learning, and developing attachments, and the impact this has on brain development."

Program Staff and Volunteers

The teacher coordinator is a former preschool and kindergarten teacher with a master's degree and certificate of advanced graduate study in Infant, Toddler, and Parent Development, who has completed coursework towards a master's in social work as well.

Six home visitors serve one or two families each. Four are Caucasian, one is African American and one is Hispanic and speaks Spanish as second language; however, Spanish is not needed on the job. Five of the home visitors have high school diplomas and one, recruited to work with a specific family, has a master's degree. The teacher coordinator conducts weekly staff meetings and provides one-to-one reflective supervision.

The program does not use volunteers; however, the pay for staff is limited. "They do it because they love it." The teacher coordinator has avoided the use of volunteers because "they come and go and the families need more stability." All home visitors undergo a thorough background screening and are fingerprinted and registered with the state.

Children and Families Served

As noted above, the original program was developed to serve poor families. The program targets families who are or were initially experiencing homelessness. During the past year, seven children were Caucasian, eight were Hispanic and 20 were African American. This year was the first year the program served a child with limited English proficiency. Over 100 children have been served in the four years of operation. Some may have lived in homes where Spanish was spoken, but the children could speak English. To be served through Emergency Housing, families must be documented American citizens; therefore, few immigrants are found in the system.

The application process includes an intake form. As long as there is room, most families are served. "If they show up, then they are in." However, certain parameters are considered based on the teacher coordinator's experience. For example, if families are not available and working until late at night when trying to start the program, MOPCHP may not be a good fit. Also, if a parent is in some form of recovery, working on the parent-child interaction may be too much to handle along with the challenges of recovery.

MOPCHP serves about 35-40 families each year. Word of mouth is one avenue to access the program. In addition, the teacher coordinator provides outreach to shelters to publicize the program. Case managers are familiar with the project and flyers are distributed.

The average duration of time receiving emergency services is two years. "We are not seeing homelessness as a short-term emergency situation. We are seeing more generational and chronic homelessness with families who grew up experiencing episodes of homelessness themselves and now, as young adults, they have children and are going through cycles of homelessness again." The program sees many families who are doubled up but unable to access other homeless services because the definitions for homelessness used by service agencies outside education do not recognize doubled up as homeless.

To understand some of the needs of the families they serve, the teacher coordinator discussed an article by Linda Richter (2004), who proposed that Maslow's Hierarchy is not sequential but simultaneous for families that are poor or homeless. "You can't wait for basic needs to be met before addressing other needs such as belonging." The families served are often disconnected from the community.

Amazingly, the retention of families for the two years is strong, with approximately 95% completing the program. Much effort is put into following the families regardless of the multiple moves caused by their homeless status. It takes about six months for parents to recognize that the home visitor truly is interested in supporting them. It takes a lot of energy to build the necessary level of trust. Parents sign a release of information permission form that allows the teacher coordinator to contact the Department of Social Services to find out where a family has been placed when moves occur. She will obtain phone numbers for any family members, if available, as another means of tracking a family that moves without notice. "We try to give each child 24 books and toys per year and most receive all, but we may occasionally only give fewer because the family is not there at the scheduled

time each week. But you keep going back and the family learns to trust. The program will stick with them no matter where they are … From the beginning working with babies through helping get children enrolled in kindergarten or help getting special education services if a disability is expected."

On the day of the interview, the teacher coordinator has just made a visit to a mother and three children living in the basement of a relative's home. The oldest child was in kindergarten and had participated in the MOPCHP. The teacher coordinator helped the mother enroll her child in school. "Mom didn't want to tell the school she was homeless." The teacher coordinator obtained the necessary forms and explained the situation to the school (with the mother's permission). She spent a lot of time teaching the school how to deal with a child who was homeless and who had no other preschool experiences. "The school couldn't believe they had a child who was homeless. The schedule was adapted with the coordinator's advocacy, to a half day because a full day was too long for him. He didn't know how to behave with a large group and wanted to go home. The first good day happened when his teacher pulled out *Brown Bear*. He knew the book from the Parent-Child Home Program and was able to talk about the book and won over his class and his teacher. Soon he was able to complete the whole day with the rest of his class and finished the school year successfully."

Program Activities

The emphasis of the home visits is "pulling the parent in rather than doing the activity for the parent." This is discussed weekly in staff meetings and reinforced through modeling when the home visitor is being supervised. This is referred to as using a "light touch." "You bring them [parents] in through positive experiences. These parents are very sensitive to correction, so you don't want to tell the parent she's doing something wrong. If the parent is not participating in the activity or appears to be reluctant, we would say something like, 'Mommy we're waiting for you.'"

"It's harder for parents to become comfortable with the program given their circumstances and current stressors, but once they are well into the program, the parents enjoy it. The home visitor may be the only stable contact in the family's life as they move from shelter to shelter or other living arrangement. They develop a relationship and that relationship is the key. It's nothing huge or profound, just somebody walking beside."

The visit can be an opportunity to "take a breath, turn off the TV, and really spend time together." This can have a calming effect for the parent, and the children learn quickly that they get a new toy each week. Parents receive a sheet of suggestions that describe ways of interacting with their child and the book and toy provided that week. "We just give them some ideas. They don't think about the fact that you can look at the colors, things that we would do without thinking -- because somebody did it with us. These moms didn't have that experience and they need somebody to share ideas with them." During the next visit, the previous week's book, toy, and activities are reviewed. The home visitor completes a form after each visit that describes the parent and child response to their time together. These forms are reviewed and kept on file with the teacher coordinator. Currently, she is working with the National Center to begin analyzing these data.

The books, toys, and activities are selected to teach concepts common in preschool and kindergarten programs, such as "on," "under," and "over." An early game that is played with a ball requires each person to roll the ball to another and say their name. Extra directions are then added, such as, "Put the ball on your head, on nose…" This is a way to build the child's vocabulary using basic preschool activities that is often a new idea for the parent.

The teacher coordinator reinforces appropriate early childhood practices and helps staff and moms to understand "why" certain activities are used. Activities are multimodal. When alphabet letters are used, for example, it is not to teach letter names and sounds but to give the child a chance to feel, touch, and play with the letters – to use his hands to get to know the shapes and begin attending to the unique characteristics of the letters and their orientation in space. Playdough is used to work on fine-motor skills and develop muscles for writing. One of the books introduced as the child reaches kindergarten age is *Going to School* by Anne Civardi. The illustrations include Playdough in the classroom and the teacher reading a book to the class. These are things they have been doing through the literacy program and this helps alleviate some of the fear of the unknown.

Lesson format. The procedure used was adapted from the traditional PCHP visit.

Example of a traditional home visit:

When Liliana [home visitor] begins program visits in October, she brings a copy of *Goodnight Moon.* She sits down on the floor, inviting Mrs. P. [Mom] to do the same, and reads it to Moises [two-year-old]. Mrs. P. has never heard anyone read a book like this before. Instead of just reciting the words, Liliana speaks in a gentle, singsong voice. This is like a soothing lullaby to both Moises and his mother. She says words like "author" and "illustrator" to Moises, and engages him in the story by asking what he thinks is going to happen next. She points out interesting little details in the pictures—things Mrs. P. never had the chance to notice before—and makes the story a game by asking him to find a tiny mouse hidden on some the pages. Moises is thoroughly entranced, and seems utterly surprised and delighted that

> he gets t keep the book when Liliana leaves. (Allen & Sethi, 2004, p. 38)

Traditional PCHP programs visit a family twice a week with 30-minute sessions for two years. A book is shared at one visit and a toy is used in a similar manner during the second visit. Because of the distances that have to be traveled, the mobile outreach program was modified to have one 45-minute session per week. The program operates all day – sometimes until 8 o' clock in the evening. The home visitor may work with two children in the same family if they are in the same age bracket, but makes sure each child gets some special time with the parent.

The home visitor will meet with families wherever they reside. "As long as they are in the county we follow them." When the home visitor arrives, everyone gathers and finds a place to sit, which may be on the bed or wherever there is space. The child is anxious to see the new toy first. The home visitor gives the book or toy to the mother to introduce to the child. "Then we start playing. And we read. About halfway through, when the child is starting to get bored, I will model different things to do and talk about what is on the guide sheet." Parents may be uncomfortable about their own reading skills and be reluctant to read to their child. "They need lots of time and trust to be comfortable reading to the child in front of the home visitor." Singing, art, and other activities vary based on the toy. The home visitor reviews playing with the toy from the previous visit; however, having the toy 'there' is often a challenge." Keeping track of possessions is difficult for many of the families as their life is not their own in a shelter, so they may not have the toy any longer. Also, families are asked to move often and lose their possessions repeatedly in the process due to shelter storage problems. Finally, the home visitor "will chat about mom's life for a little bit, offer support, talk about the next week, and then leave."

The activities, toys, and books are sequenced and prepared for the home visitors to take with them each week. Books and toys may be altered from year to year based on the availability of items. Also, activities can be modified based on availability of materials or parent and child interest. The visits are parent-and-child led, so activities can be changed. For example, if a child really enjoys acting out stories , this can be incorporated. "We need to make it a good experience for everyone. Some families really love music and they sing frequently, others prefer not to sing but may love to draw, so paper and crayons and other art materials are given to the family." Children and adults read for pleasure and talk about the books they read. One or two children have reached the point where they are starting to sound out letters and starting to read.

The teacher coordinator is not a reading teacher, but focuses on many similar skills at the prereading level. The program staff works on phonemic awareness with older children but the approach is incidental. Repetition and rhyming games are played. Verbal vocabulary development is a focus of the program. Oral comprehension also receives much attention. "Parents don't do this automatically. They don't often spend the time to teach their children this way. For example, parents don't use wait time. Parents tend to give

information in a more rapid-fire way: 'See the bus,' 'See the canoe,' rather than, 'What is that?' They'll read the words in the book, but don't automatically ask, 'Do you know what a canoe is?' 'Where is it going?' 'What do you think happened?' 'What do you think will happen next?'" Parents need to see a model to learn how to ask questions and increase the length of verbalizations. The parents do not understand this is the opportunity to teach children and elaborate. Parents need to be taught the importance of open-ended questions and that "the more you talk to your children and the more you explain things, the more they are eager to learn. 'Read a book' doesn't mean 'read all the words and then you're done.'" (Home visitors require extensive training at the beginning to learn how to ask a question and practice using wait time.)

The teacher coordinator serves as an advocate when children are going on to school, even if the child is not currently in the program. This is done on a small scale at the parent's request. The teacher coordinator fields phone calls as part of her technical assistance to families. She will go to IEP meetings and eligibility meetings. "It's walking alongside and it's also being an extra pair of ears. It's also being an extra presence with the district, so people realize there is a professional who is keeping track of what they are doing with that family and sometimes just that presence is enough to help them to work a little harder. And sometimes they [school district personnel] will call me because they're not real good with communication with these families, so I'll act as a liaison. I wouldn't say it happens with more than 10% of my families."

Assessment. Children's skill levels and progress are documented by the teacher coordinator and home visitor. Often the young child is only using a few words at the beginning of the program. "We keep a close eye on how the child is progressing – monitor to see if a referral may be needed for special education." Pre- and post-evaluations are completed using the Child Behavior Traits and Parent and Child Together Assessments developed by Levenstein (see page App 6). The teacher coordinator is trained to administer the observational tool, which includes data that focus on the child and the parent and child together. (Samples are included in Appendix A-2.) This tool is administered about three months into the program to allow the family to become comfortable with the program and make the home visit observations more valid. To complete the observation, an extra visit is arranged. The pre-post-evaluations are not required by the National Center; however, the program is interested in being able to identify outcomes, recognizing this is a requirement of new grants that are being pursued. This year, a mid-term observation was added.

A variety of formats for developing a satisfaction questionnaire are available from the National Center for families to complete; however, "giving families something to fill out and send back doesn't work with this population. It's better if it's read to them." To address this challenge, the teacher coordinator used an end-of-the-year party as a time to collect feedback using a "simple form and making completion an optional activity to be done during the event." This was a very successful approach.

As the program is becoming more established, the teacher coordinator has begun looking at possible research questions to explore in the future while working with a researcher to apply appropriate statistics with assistance from the National Center.

Program Materials

The books for the program are bought in bulk, and only new books and toys are used. $6000/year is spent on books and toys for all 40 families (approximately $150/child). A container for families to store the items they receive also is provided. The program receives donations and schools do book drives. Items from these efforts are sometimes given to siblings of children in the program so that everyone gets books. Siblings are often in the same room where the activities take place, and the family is never asked to separate. Everyone benefits from the program.

Toys include games, puzzles, farm animals, musical instruments, and dramatic play items. Free-art activities are preferred over pre-made craft projects. The moms enjoy these activities as much as the children and often had not experienced these things as children themselves. Alphabets may be used "for fun at the end of sessions – only to get used to them. They're for touching and singing and putting on the refrigerator. They're used for preschool activities like looking at shape and direction."

Members of the program staff, with input from staff in other BOCES programs, select the books and toys. At first, the teacher coordinators relied on the selections colleagues were using, but then she started adding some personal favorites and books her children liked growing up. Wooden puzzles, board books, and books with lots of color, repetition and a less busy, clean format tend to be successful. Items that are engaging with the children shape future choices. In addition, the National Center provides each site with criteria to guide selection of books and toys:

> The criteria are quite specific. Toys, for example, must elicit or at least permit language, and must have a readily discernible goal. Another important criterion is that the materials be like those that children will see in preschool and kindergarten, so that they will feel familiar with such items when they confront them later on. For these reasons, puzzles are a common PCHP gift. Books are expected to have many large, colorful, detailed illustrations and should be within the reading level of most parents. Books should be appealing to boys and girls and should "widen the child's experience," but not cover topics that might make a child anxious. (Allen & Sethi, 2004, p. 39)

Board books are often used with 18-month-olds. Having more words in a book is not always better, "especially for moms who are in a bad situation. They are very shy about their reading and often had bad experiences themselves in school." The teacher coordinator shared that there are times when she thinks the mother cannot read, "but they are just so shy – it may take two years to earn the trust so that mom will try to read in front of me."

The teacher coordinator is assisted by area churches and civic organizations to provide holiday gifts, food, clothes, and school supplies for the families. She coordinates the distribution to families in the program and views this as an added benefit of a home visiting program.

Favorite children's books used in the program include:

- *My First Word Book* – board book for toddlers with pictures of items found in daily life from DK Publishing
- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr., illustrated by Eric Carle
- *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Clement Hurd
- *Going to School* by Anne Civardi and Stephen Cartwright
- Usborne's *First Experiences books* (non-fiction with lots of common pictures to describe, label and discuss)
- *Spot* books by Eric Hill
- *Corduroy* by Don Freeman
- *The Big Red Barn* by Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Felicia Bond

Program Strengths

The most important strength of the program is "being able to follow the families and build a relationship with them and support them while they're raising their children." Relationship is the underpinning for success. "All components are important, but they grow out of the relationship." The program helps children enter school at the same level as other children not living in poverty and homelessness. Studies by the National Center and outside researchers support claims that children who have been through the program are on a more equal level with their more affluent peers.

Wish List for Potential Improvements

It has been difficult to encourage families to be more consistent with books and toys without being critical of the families. "I haven't figured out how to make this more of a priority for the families. Families in poverty tend to have less attachment to things than middle-class families. Objects come and go more easily. Maybe that's better. It's happened to them – they don't have control over any of their things – we're talking two different languages. Nevertheless, the program is able to be successful despite book losses."

Also, the teacher coordinator would like to reach more children. She stays involved with all the families but families become very attached to their own home visitor. Going over 35-40 families would make it impossible to have that kind of relationship.

There are challenges with parent expectations and scheduling. At first, the parent expects the home visitor to be a tutor, to come in and "do it." There is a written agreement with family to be on time and participate, which underscores that the home visitors are not there to be teachers but to support the parent in being the teacher. This needs frequent reiteration. If shelter staff pressure families to join, it will not work. The parent has to buy into the program. Participation must be voluntary. Scheduling is always a problem due to the mobility of the families.

PCHP includes data collection systems to follow children through school. There is a wealth of data for a program that has been tracking children for more than 35 years. The Mobile Outreach program has children who are just reaching the age level where these data will be collected. Elements to be tracked include grade retention, services provided by school, and high school graduation. A current challenge is determining how to track these data and keep these children in the system when cell phone numbers change every six months. The teacher coordinator is interested in knowing what kind of data would be good to collect and is interested in ideas others might suggest, such as monitoring the students' school stability and how school of origin under McKinney-Vento affects programs and children.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered to improve teachers' ability to work with families and children experiencing homelessness:

- Try to work hard at making a connection with the parents.
- Be extra open and extra welcoming.
- Conduct a home visit, even if this is not usually done.
- Just make contact with the family to show you are very interested in the education of their child.
- Help the family realize that they need to tie into the school and that their involvement is important.
- Go out of your way to understand what is going on the family's life. Instead of saying, "What's the matter with them?" when the child misses four schooldays in a row, you may need to realize the family had to take several buses just to get to the school.
- Learn more about homelessness and what kind of problems the parents are up against so you can be more supportive.

> Homeless people are so mobile. They don't have a community or neighborhood. They don't know anybody anywhere. Each time they move, they must begin again. There is no consistency. To have a relationship with someone is the first step towards getting to the work of helping your child to succeed. Teachers of homeless children need to go out of their way. They need to make a connection and may have to make special concessions. This can motivate families as they realize, "Someone is trying to help me."

Sometimes you need an advocate in the schools to help educators understand the family's experience. The teacher coordinator of MOPCHP has been characterized as a pit bull because she hangs on in her advocacy efforts and will not let go until the school understands the child and family. "The schools need to know Homelessness 101. Teachers today need to be a lot more savvy about what's going on in the world and what their students are experiencing outside the classroom. They may be failing in school because of everything else that is going on in their lives."

The teacher coordinator believes the program is "perfectly doable." Technical assistance from the National Center, McKinney-Vento, and private grant funds can be found. The National Center will help identify funding sources. We need to put resources into prevention with children." The teacher coordinator offered support to anyone interested in starting such a program.

Final Thoughts

During the last decade, there has been a great increase in scientific findings that support the importance of early experiences in brain development. "Neurons are there, but they have to be used. Neural connections come from human connections. If we want to help reading and

have children ready to read and be prepared to read and have the capacity to read, we cannot keep ignoring the parent-child relationship and early care-giving relationships and what science tells us about the brain and what goes on zero to 3. Children do not start preparing to learn at age 3 or 4; they begin the time they gaze at a parent's face. It's just a message that has to get out."

"What is done to children they will do to society."

(Karl Menninger quote on office bulletin board)

Links to Literacy Program

Austin, Texas

> The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards. – **Anatole France**[3]

Key Contact: Amy J. Buczynski
Title: Training Specialist II for ACEE – acts as coordinator for the project
Additional participants: tutors and shelter staff

General Program Information

The *Links to Literacy* Program (Links) in Austin, Texas, is a collaborative project between the Americorps for Community Engagement and Education Project (ACEE) and the Texas Homeless Education Office (THEO) located at the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin. *Links to Literacy* is a short-term, after-school tutoring program that provides academic support and promotes positive engagement with literacy. The program is conducted at a short-term shelter for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

The program began with a one-year pilot project in 2002-03. The literacy program developed by ACEE for kindergarteners and first graders was adapted to serve multiple grade levels and to be conducted in a shelter setting. The shelter invited to participate in the pilot had worked with the Texas Homeless Education Office on an earlier grant initiative. When the opportunity to start the literacy initiative came about, THEO and the shelter were able to start the program quickly. At the time of the interview, Links was completing its third year of operation. While Links is located in one shelter in Austin, the training specialist is responsible for conducting workshops and sharing the program with other localities that may be interested in starting a similar program.

There are three program goals for Links: (a) increase student engagement in literacy; (b) bolster academic confidence; and (c) reinforce specific literacy skills. A fourth unofficial goal involves mentoring, recognizing that tutoring provides children with an opportunity to form a relationship with a positive adult who will listen and "be there" for the student. As a staff member explained, the short-term nature of the shelter led to a thoughtful discussion regarding how to measure success. What would be concrete and meaningful? Questions the staff asks to document success include: "Is the student willing to come again? Is he/she excited?" Another anecdotal indication of success occurs when parents ask staff, "Who is Miss A (a tutor's name)?" The staff has observed that the children are talking to their parents about their tutors and sharing their excitement.

[3]Retrieved October 30, 2005, from http://quoteworld.org/quotes/4898

The program follows the school district's academic calendar. Children are tutored twice a week on Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday, depending on the class schedule of the tutors. Tutors work one-to-one with children residing in the shelter.

Program Staff and Volunteers

Links employs one full-time staff member, the training specialist. The training specialist has a bachelor's degree and has worked with children for five years, the last three years as a tutor and coordinator for the literacy program. Funding for tutors is provided from alternate programs. The tutors are students from the University of Texas in work study programs through AmericaReads and AmeriCorps volunteers who are part the ACEE program. The shelter requires 12 hours of training before any volunteers or tutors can work with the children. This includes a general introduction to domestic violence and sexual assault and the shelter's behavior management program. All literacy training for Links is provided by the training specialist. Tutors who are part of ACEE receive additional training through the regular ACEE program.

The training specialist is onsite during the tutoring sessions and provides technical assistance regarding lesson planning and behavior management, as needed. Tutors are provided with a training manual, *I'm Always Smart When I'm With You* (available at http://www.utdanacenter.org/theo/toolkits.html#linksliteracy). Ongoing training is provided for the tutors, with more sessions scheduled early in the school year. Consistent with the current literature on effective professional development, which favors ongoing support over "one-shot" training sessions, this approach is preferred to a lengthier single session that inundates the tutors with information. Information can be shared in smaller units as the tutors develop skills. The tutors are introduced to ice breakers, how to create an "All About Me" poster, how to do a read-aloud with their student, and the beginning of comprehension activities. Subsequent sessions introduce guided reading and additional components of the lesson plan and basic activities that can be used with students. After all components have been introduced, additional activities and resources are covered during the training sessions.

Children and Youth Served

Children residing at the shelter must sign up to participate in after-school activities and be served by the tutoring program. Parent permission is required, and the child must agree to attend on a regular basis to participate in Links. On some occasions, a child may be referred to the program by a teacher.

When behavioral concerns are significant, such as very aggressive or oppositional behavior, the child may not have access to the tutoring. When aggressive behavior occurs, the child advocates employed by the shelter intervene to ensure the tutors feel safe. Staff members have observed a number of instances where there was a concern that a child's behavior would prevent participation; however, the child had no difficulty behaving

appropriately when placed in the one-to-one tutoring situation. Efforts are made to match tutors and children to increase the likelihood of a positive tutoring experience for both the tutor and the child.

The number of children served depends upon the availability of tutors. The number of tutors varies by semester. To-date, the least is 6 and the most is 12. Within a semester, 24 to 32 students have been served, with tutors providing 157 to 182 lessons. Children may receive 1-22 lessons with the average being 6-7 lessons. This translates into a 1.5 month stay, which is the average for shelter residents.

The constantly changing shelter population is a challenge for the program. On occasion, there are more tutors than children present. When this occurs, other children at the shelter may be asked if they would like to read with a tutor and are served less formally for the day. When there are more children than available tutors, a waiting list may be started. Priority is given to children with the greatest academic needs and those who are interested and willing. The training specialist will tutor a child if the need is determined to be significant and a tutor is not available.

Children must be five or older to participate in Links. Younger children are served by the shelter day care or are with their mothers. While the program is accessible for youth through high school, the majority of children served are in kindergarten through fifth grade. Occasionally, the program has served several sixth or seventh graders. Many of the younger children develop intense bonds with their tutors. Older students may not be ready to develop such bonds, and it may take more time to break down the walls the child has built to protect him/herself from developing an emotional tie that will not last. This may partially explain the lower participation rate among middle and high school students.

The majority of children served are Hispanic, followed by Caucasian and African American. The children are from a variety of cultures and mixed cultural backgrounds. After English, Spanish is the most common language spoken by the children. While Spanish may be spoken in the family, most children are competent in English. There have been instances when a child arrived at the shelter speaking no English but within a few months was able to carry on a conversation in English. Several tutors speak Spanish and are paired with a child whose English skills are limited.

The training specialist noted that the students seem to have weaknesses across reading components that seem to be the result of a transient lifestyle and family stressors. Writing is *very* challenging. “It’s hard. They know they are not good at it and may want to avoid writing.” The children tend to pick up easily on comprehension skills and they tend to engage in opportunities to be creative and tell stories. Doing these activities orally works well as the children like the opportunity to place themselves in a “different reality.”

Program Activities

Work study tutors arrive at 2:30 p.m. and prepare a lesson for the student they plan to see. Students arrive at 3:00 p.m. for snack. Tutors use snack time to connect informally with the students. The tutoring is scheduled

for 3:30 to 4:30. Individualized lessons are conducted in several rooms at the shelter. The tutors and children spread out as well as they can to reduce distractions. From 4:30 to 5:00 the tutors and children rejoin as a group. This is an opportunity to do an arts and crafts project, play a game, or just have some free play time and informal conversation.

The one-hour lesson time can be shortened for younger students, adding more free time or arts and crafts. In addition, lessons may be shortened if students have had a "bad day;" for example, if there is something going on in their family, or they are ired that day. If the child wants to read a book and then go play, the tutor can make the final decision regarding how much of the lesson to pursue. When students are engaged, lessons can extend beyond the hour.

In addition to literacy instruction, tutors take on an informal mentoring role. Tutoring is a time with a positive adult who is giving the child his/her full attention. This is a powerful attraction for many children, especially those coming from large families where parents are often in survival mode as they face the challenges of dealing with abuse. These challenges may make the parent less "available" to interact with the child. "Just having someone ask, 'How are you doing? How was school today?' makes a difference. A lot of the kids are drawn to that … Even if it's tied to literacy, they'll sit through the literacy just to get the attention."

The shelter organizes afternoon trips to the new public library, which is within walking distance. The children participate in story time and arts and crafts activities held at the library. Tutors accompany the children on these visits.

Instructional practices. The format of lesson plans varies slightly depending upon the student's age. (A sample was shared, and is included in Appendix A-2.) Basic steps include a read-aloud led by the tutor, the child reading at his/her instructional level, word study/phonics, and a writing activity. Homework help is not part of the Links program. For children in kindergarten through grade two, the tutor reads a book to the child and then selects a guided reading book for the child to read aloud. For children in grades three and higher, the tutor begins with a chapter book. The tutor and child take turns reading aloud with the tutor acting as a reading model. While reading, comprehension questions are embedded in the activity. Sample comprehension questions are found in the training manual. "Once into the story, the book will tell the tutor what kinds of questions make sense (why did that happen, what do you think will happen next)."

Following the shared reading time, the lesson moves to word study or phonological awareness for the younger children. Tutors make sure the students can identify the letters and know their sounds. Next they work on building word families, and then prefixes and suffixes. File folder games (board games created on manilla folders) have been developed to reinforce these skills.

Writing about personal experiences is handled carefully to avoid taking on a counseling role for which the tutors are not trained. Writing activities, "which are probably the most difficult to engage the child in," also are presented in a game format whenever possible. Examples that have been successful include:

- Story starters – teacher materials provide the start of a story that the child completes or old magazine pictures are used to spark a student-generated story
- MadLibs –the pages from the popular word came are laminated; by using an overhead marker or grease pencil, they can be re-used
- Graphic organizers – such as, KWL (know-want to learn-learned) charts and Story Houses
- Dice game – using one die, the tutor and student take turns rolling. The number tells the tutor and child how many words to add to the story. The tutor and child practice the words orally before writing. This way the tutor can model the process and ensure all components of a story are addressed. The game builds on the concept of a think out loud before writing, which reduces the need for editing and proofing. This game has been an effective way to increase the amount of writing that the children generate.

The program uses journal books to reflect on stories and attempts to build on student interests. For example, a student was interested in tennis, so the tutor found a variety of books on the topic to research; they created a poster about Serena Williams and even went outside and practiced different swings based on reading the books. Tutors "try to cater to the student's interest. That's the first spark of engagement. You *can* learn tennis from a book – it makes it interactive – and the student has a purpose!"

Assessment. Informal assessment is conducted by the tutors when students begin the program. No standardized assessments are used. Through third grade, the tutors use resources from Book Buddies, an America Reads one-to-one community volunteer reading program that provides supplementary reading and writing instruction, to assess recognition of capital and lowercase letters and letter sounds. (For more details about this program, visit http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/reading/projects/bookbuddies/what.html.)

Links incorporates the Austin Independent School District (AISD) sight word list developed for each elementary grade. Following the format of an informal reading inventory, each grade level's list is typed on a separate page and used to estimate students' instructional level. Words that are not known are used to create a memory game such a Bingo, Memory, or "find a word" activities during subsequent lessons. The "All About Me" poster is used to learn about the student's interests. The student's involvement in the lesson is noted on a pre/post "response to tutoring" form. (A sample is provided in Appendix A-2.)

Student progress is monitored through the tutor's reflection on lesson plans and his/her general observations. The training specialist has created grade-level checklists of basic skills based on the state standards that the tutors use to identify what skills the student had when starting and to track new skills that have emerged during the time of the tutoring. (A sample js provided in Appendix B2.) Data from these checklists have been collected for two years but no formal analysis of the data has been performed to date.

Tutors can take notes during the lesson and/or go back after the student leaves. They must complete a reflection section in each lesson plan that provides additional qualitative information and observations from the lesson, including academic skills, student engagement, and behavior (e.g., "Jake has learned 2 more letters;" "Tanika was reluctant and refused to read as we began. After 15 minutes, she started to offer to take her turn reading; enjoyed the book;" "Joe was a little shaky on the plot, read very slowly – need to focus on fluency next time;" "The book was too hard;" "The book was too easy."). Completed forms are reviewed and maintained by the training specialist. This informal review helps the tutor identify growth and areas of weakness to address in future lessons. After the last lesson, the tutor notes skills the student has mastered on the checklist and complete the pre/postresponse to tutoring.

Interaction between tutors and teachers occurs in informal conversations: "We have a new student. What do you think he needs to work on?" Links is not involved in monitoring reports cards or other formal assessment. Tutors do not interact with parents. Communication is done through the shelter's child advocates.

The training specialist noted several strengths of the current informal process: It is simple, tutors do not require a great deal of training to conduct assessments, it covers the basics, and tutors can catch earlier skills that have not been mastered and need to be reinforced before moving to grade-level skills. She also noted that it "would be wonderful if we could do a more formal assessment with older children to identify specific challenges you might not see otherwise – but it doesn't fit – given the short-term nature of the program. Is it worth spending the money on a formal assessment tool if we won't be able to posttest? If we have the students for such a short time, should we spend it in formal assessment or having a positive literacy interaction with the tutor? We have gone for the positive experience."

Program Materials

Using the Internet, teacher resources, and materials collected over time from her own tutoring, the training specialist has stocked a large storage closet with materials categorized by grade and topics. There are books of fiction, non-fiction, Spanish read-alouds, and books addressing different cultural groups. The program also subscribes to several popular children's magazines, including *Ranger Rick, My Big Backyard, Sports Illustrated for Kids*, and *National Geographic for Kids*. Some children enjoy looking at the illustrations and talking about the pictures. The training specialist noted that some tutors are less comfortable with this resource and have not incorporated magazines into lessons.

Links also has a variety of crossword puzzles and folder games (that address skills such as initial sounds, blends, prefixes, and suffixes). There is a blank grid that can be completed to form a word search. Other games include Bingo and board games that may be used during the closing activity time. The books from the program cannot be borrowed by the children. However, the shelter has a supply of donated children's books that can be borrowed. Pens, pencils, crayons, paper, character journals and blank notebooks are available for children's writing activities. Computers are outdated and do not work well; therefore they are not used. The program has a dictionary but no encyclopedias.

Student artwork completed during free play is displayed along the walls in the rooms used for tutoring and throughout the shelter. Stories written by the children, including MadLibs style fill-in-the-blank stories are shared with other tutors, child advocates, and other shelter staff. The children enjoy this sharing and re-read the work to multiple staff and volunteers who provide positive reinforcement and acknowledge their efforts.

The program is funded through a McKinney-Vento Homeless Education grant, which covers the salary for the training specialist, travel for conferences and trainings, printing of the training manual, as well as tutoring supplies and books. Approximately $500 was budgeted from McKinney-Vento funds for books during the past year. The training specialist orders the books for the program based on favorites known her time tutoring and working in schools. Talking with teachers and seeing what books the children find engaging also shapes new selections. Finally popular books are identified by looking at Scholastic books orders, asking the children what books they like, and visiting the children's section of local bookstores. Favorites include:

Miss Nelson is Missing by Harry Allard
Junie B. Jones series by Barbara Park
Catherine, Called Birdy by Karen Cushman
There was an Old Woman Who Swallowed a Fly by Simms Taback
Magic Tree House series by Mary Pope Osborne
Captain Underpants series by Dav Pilkey

> "Every child has a favorite and they love to re-read those books. Sometimes we take out a book to read and the child says, 'Oh, I had that book!' It's heartbreaking to hear."

The training specialist observed that the short-term nature of the shelter has been a challenge for book selection. There are wonderful children's books available, but the reading level is often too difficult for children who would enjoy the content based on age. For example, *Harry Potter* poses two challenges: the advanced reading skills and the length of the text prevent students from completing the book while at the shelter. Even nonfiction books often have too much material, overwhelming both the child and the tutor. There is a need for something simple but engaging. High-interest/low-vocabulary books often are written at a reading level which is too

low. Materials that would appeal to a fifth grader reading on a third-grade level are difficult to find, which is frustrating.

Program Strengths

The training specialist believes the greatest strength of the program is having someone on site to support the tutors with the initial and ongoing training. Other important factors are the good communication between program and shelter staff and the allocation of a space at the shelter to work. This sends a message to the tutors and children that the activity is valued.

Given the domestic violence shelter setting, staff noted that being at the shelter may be the first time children feel safe enough to express feelings, but they still need support to know how to express those feelings appropriately. The tutors find themselves working on behaviors as well as literacy skills. For many of the children, staff and tutors observed more growth in social skills than literacy-specific skills. That is, the children became more confident, expressed themselves more appropriately, and used better problem-solving approaches.

The program's emphasis on creating a positive experience, especially for the older the child, was seen as an asset. "The more behind they know they are, the more resistant they are to being engaged. Combating this with a tutor who will be there, ready to listen, and willing to find strengths and focus on positives, even if it's a behavior for starters – something concrete you can praise – this has a positive effect that can spread to other areas for the child."

All participants in the on-site visit emphasized the value of the relationship between the tutor and the child. Given the one-to-one attention, children "personally blossom" and the excitement generated, including feeling special, enhances self-esteem, which is a key issue in connection with domestic violence and homelessness. The tutors commented that they were friends to the children as much or more than they were teachers. The program was seen as child-centered, built on trust. One tutor mentioned a student who was a reluctant reader who really grew and became engaged in reading when they began using resources related to tennis. While having fun, the student also was learning basic research skills. The tutors noted that the time to "hang out" with the children during snack and free play was important. "They get to see us as fun people."

The power of the relationship also was expressed when tutors noted one of the challenges as seeing the children come and go and saying goodbye. "I have to tell myself, 'They're going to a better place.'"

Several stories of children were shared:

> Joey, a seven-year old boy, had already been in and out of shelters a number of times. He had had a bad experience at this last school and the new school had been "warned" that his behavior was hard to control. Joey was matched with a tutor near the end of the school year. Even though he hated school, he enjoyed the tutoring and was excited to work with his tutor. Joey returned to the shelter the next year. There were no comments about behavior from the school, and one of Joey's first questions was, "When am I going to get a tutor?"

> Jerome was known for being very active and "scattered." During a field trip to the library, his tutor stayed close and praised him for helping her. Everyone saw a significant change as Jerome came to be described as "a little gentleman."

> A kindergarten student, Leo, was reluctant to go to tutoring. When the second lesson was ready to start, he lit up, gave his tutor a hug, and said, "You came back!"

Wish List for Potential Improvements

Not having a background in teaching was a challenge for the training specialist. "It would help to have someone with these skills who could support the program. I would like to have more consistency working with the children – the nature of the shelter prevents this."

Staff would like more tutors and more resources for children who are bilingual. Having the program last a year with the same tutors, rather than a semester commitment, would increase the knowledge base of the tutors and allow more effective pairing with students. Also, expanding the program to serve children participating in the transitional housing program and being able to have children stay with the same tutor for the extended time were seen as ways to enhance the program.

Recommendations

When asked for recommendations for classroom teachers, the training specialist voiced her concern that teachers already "have so much on their plate." However, "teachers tend to forget there may be reasons why homework was not completed – lack of supplies, an emergency in the home, maybe lack of support at home to complete the work. There needs to be some adjustment and awareness of homelessness and domestic violence and how that affects a child's learning."

Teachers can assist by providing instructional approaches and tips to help tutors be more effective. Examples include offering activities, strategies, resources, and identifying students' needs for tutors to address.

Recommendations for starting a literacy program also were discussed. For the program itself, it is important to establish attainable goals (e.g.,

bringing a child up to grade level in one month is probably not realistic) and finding a fit for the children's environment and schedule. "It can be a challenge to find an hour for a full lesson plan. You need to determine what will work in the setting." Finally, it is critical that tutors are trained. "They need to be supported and guided if they don't have a teaching background."

When asked if any other issues should be considered, the training specialist noted that finding funding sources is a challenge. "Not having staff or money to do it is a problem." Some options for tutors were AmericaReads, higher education, and M-V funding.

Shalom Center After-School Tutorial Program

Kenosha, Wisconsin

> Reading transports me. I can go anywhere and never leave my chair. It lets me shake hands with new ideas. – **Rolfe Neill**[4]

Key Contact: Fran Anderson
Title: Teacher of the homeless, through the Kenosha Unified School District

General Program Description

The Shalom Center After-School Tutorial Program is funded by a McKinney-Vento homeless education subgrant through the Kenosha Unified School District. The shelter-based after-school program has been funded for 11 years. When the program began, its focus was to provide enrichment activities. When the current teacher, who has been with the program for six years, began, she was asked to change the focus to academics in order to increase the impact on participating children's school performance.

The program operates weekdays for three hours, usually from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Students in middle school may stay an extra hour (to 7:00 p.m.) since they are released later and do not arrive until almost 4:00 p.m. Children who live at the shelter are required to come to tutoring during the school year on Monday through Thursday. Fridays and summers are optional. During the summer, the program follows the school district's eight-week summer school calendar. While the summer school program operates in the morning, tutoring is scheduled for four hours each afternoon on Monday through Thursday. This allows students to attend regular summer school and receive extra instruction in the afternoon. The "extra dose" has helped some students make significant academic gains.

> The teacher worked with three little boys whom she picked up at school every day. The boys were two years behind in reading. After the extra support and six months in the program, including the summer session, the boys started the next year on grade level.

The program is divided into two parts. Half of the time is dedicated to one-to-one tutoring at the child's performance level followed by a second time block for group lessons and associated group activities to build environmental (general) knowledge.

Program goals are to improve homework scores and regularity; improve reading, writing and math skills; and improve environmental understanding. This includes giving students basic conceptual knowledge to

[4]Retrieved November 19, 2005, from http://quoteworld.org/quotes/9348

help them create mental files. Using an information processing model of learning, when students are exposed to new information in school, especially science and social studies, unknown information has a place to be stored. For the students the teacher sees in this program, "there is no file cabinet. I try to teach the basics, the seven continents, the animal kingdoms, plants. Even the basics are very difficult and new, even to middle schoolers."

When asked why students had not mastered such basic knowledge by middle school, several possible explanations were posed. The students may not have been engaged when the content was covered in class. Perhaps, with all the moves, they kept missing the lessons. Another possible explanation is that children may not be "emotionally in school, worried about mom or the situations they've been in for the last two years. If they can't read, they can't read the textbooks and they'll zone out." This is noted more frequently with students in middle school. By that age, if non-readers, the students are gaining very little from being in school with multiple teachers who do not know them. They are failing for not producing.

Children and Youth Served

The average client at the shelter is a 24-year-old African American mother who completed tenth grade but is reading at an elementary-grade level and has three or four children. Students in the shelter can attend tutoring through high school. During the first four years, students were not able to continue tutoring after leaving the emergency shelter. The teacher realized there were times when the program was not full and they could have been serving more children. Now, children who move to the local transitional living program may continue tutoring as long as there are no more than 15 children being served. From experience, the teacher has found that number can be served effectively. It is the teacher's "call" to let children stay in the program.

This opportunity to extend tutoring has allowed the teacher to observe more growth. "I've learned that six months can make a huge difference in the student's achievement." When selecting students for participation, priority is given to those in the emergency shelter, then the transitional program, and then former residents not in the transitional living program. Families who leave without completing the program are not offered access to tutoring. "There are reasons why the family left without completing the program and tutoring has been used as a babysitter. We have to have the parent's emotional support to see success."

Most students participate in tutoring more than one month and less than six months. The program averages 12-13 students at a time, and approximately 150 children and youth are served in a year. The teacher observed that children are remaining in the program longer, partly due to changes in the state's welfare process. "It takes longer to get services, so families need more time. It was 6-8 weeks and now 8-12 weeks for services is common."

Kenosha is located on the highway between Chicago and Milwaukee, and the shelter sees large numbers of residents from the Chicago area since it is the first city over the Illinois border. About 70 percent of the students

tutored are in elementary school. Middle school students account for 15 percent, 10 percent are preschoolers, and 5 percent are in high school. The shelter does not require students in high school to attend the program. Students may not be comfortable in the program because of their age, besides, many are working after school. About 90 percent of the children who receive tutoring are African American, 8 percent are Caucasian, and 2 percent are Hispanic. "Most Hispanic families are supported by their families and will double and triple up rather than seek shelter." The tutoring program rarely includes children who speak a second language.

Program Staff and Volunteers

The tutoring program is staffed by one full-time teacher and one part-time assistant. Title I and other funding sources support the assistant position. An assistant is always present for security reasons. This ensures more attention for the students and an extra person for escorting young ones to the bathroom, etc. The teacher is Caucasian, as is the assistant. Assistants also have been Hispanic and African American. The Hispanic assistant spoke Spanish.

The teacher has a master's degree and taught for 21 years prior to joining the tutoring program. Usually several people share the assistant's slot. Most assistants have high school degrees and many are attending the University of Wisconsin or Carthage College. The length of time assistants remain with the tutoring program often depends on their education. One student/assistant has been with the program for three years. Another began as a volunteer in high school and has been with the program for five years. Some leave after two years to attend a course of study at a different college. Many assistants go into social work or education even though this was not their intention when they began tutoring.

The teacher provides assistants with three hours of initial training, followed by hands-on opportunities with students. The teacher supervises closely and "trains them as I go until I feel they're really top notch." Assistants are encouraged to read *Different Brains, Different Learners* by Eric Jensen and the writings of Ruby Payne, which helps explain the children in the program. Videos of Payne's work are available for the staff to watch.[5] "It helps them understand the child is not just digging in their heels. It explains that children's behavior is not necessarily an indication of being oppositional. For example, one nine-year-old is 'the mother' to her three younger siblings [mom is not available emotionally] and it takes time – an hour in the program – for her to smile and become a 'kid' again."

The program involves about 30 volunteers a year, many of whom come from colleges and retiree church groups. To recruit, the teacher works with staff who run service learning programs at colleges and with education and sociology professors. The teacher visits the colleges and the staff visits the tutoring program. "That 'sold it.'" The teacher meets with retired church groups who are available during the day. "Retired teachers and people in

[5] Jensen's book is included in the reference list; information about Ruby Payne and links to her books and video may be found at http://www.speakersrus.com/speakers/payneruby.htm.

their sixties and early seventies are wonderful to work in the program." In addition, the teacher does staff development in the school district, which allows her to increase awareness of the program and learn who is retiring and may be interested in joining the program. Further, National Honor Society and Key Club high school students and people who volunteer at the shelter and request working with children may participate in the tutoring program. "They must have strong reading and strong basic math skills and must be mature enough to understand confidentiality. They need to trust me in behavioral management issues and ask questions later when the children aren't there. There has to be one authority figure – children will play one against the other and having clear authority avoids that. I'm very picky about who I get. I have enough tutors without having to 'settle' for weak skills or people doing it just to 'feel good.'"

The teacher explains the history of the students and their families to assistants. Confidentiality is reinforced. For example, the volunteers are told that when they see these children in the community, they should not make eye contact unless the child initiates it. Students may not want to explain the connection to the people with them. "It helps explain the 'why.' It doesn't mean you're less strict, but it does mean is that you handle the children differently." The teacher models how to respond to the students.

The teacher meets with the case manager daily and information is shared on a need-to-know basis without breaking confidentiality. "It took a long time to build that trust with the shelter staff. The case manager will work with the parents when support is needed. This has worked better than having the teacher interact directly with the parents since she has less authority in the parents' arena than the case manager.

The teacher has written a tutor handbook and tutor manual to assist training. The handbook is an introduction to homelessness. This part of the training can screen out some candidates who are not comfortable with the reality of the lives the children have experienced. "You can't say, 'You know better than that.' They might not. Many have been abused." Often the children are not tactful, but the children are taught what is appropriate and learn the social skills. Also, the students tend to belittle themselves and others. "We need to affirm constantly – it's not cheap, it's real – but it needs to be done in concrete ways. We affirm the attitude, not 'Oh you're so smart!' but 'Look how hard you worked on that sentence. You've written three more lines than last week.'" This type of reinforcement is explained in the manual. A second manual provides instructional practices for reading, writing, and mathematics.

Program Activities

The classroom is an open room so there is never a time when the room is quiet. On a good day, there may be 10 students and ten tutors, with each child reading aloud to a tutor. During free time, students can find a place to read.

Since there are no vans available to take the children and they are busy working on academic skills, there are no field trips during the school year except several tied to academics and going to the gym once a quarter.

Field trips that have been conducted through the program include trips to the supermarket, which follows an eight-week nutrition unit. Here the children go on a scavenger hunt to reinforce terms such as "poultry," what comes from a cow or pig, milk products, and the value of beans and lentils. The students also go to parks. One has an actual forest in it. "It's like Disneyland to them. We fly kites, go hiking, there is a stream, ride bikes, learn to skip rocks, roast marshmallows – make S'mores." In addition, they visit all the free library programs in the city, go down to the waterfront, learn what a harbor is, swim at the beach, and play in sand. "Even middle schoolers have never built a sand castle." The students also visit the water treatment plant, fast food restaurants, and a nearby jelly bean warehouse that gives tours – "anything that's free."

The program includes a visit to the pool twice a week during the summer. Going swimming provides outside time and physical exercise. The teacher noted that, "Moms are so down and in survival mode and exhausted. Taking the children out doesn't happen." The children also have vegetable garden that they tend.

The students read and write every day. The basic components of reading instruction are addressed. Phonemic awareness may be addressed with flash cards and games that also reinforce vocabulary. The teacher's training in Orton-Gillingham-based strategies, designed for students with learning disabilities, has shaped the approach to phonics, which includes a structured, sequenced approach to teaching letter sounds, blends, and the four vowel rules. Students are taught how to break words into syllables and the basic rules for doing so. For fluency, the teacher has found that having the tutor track with her finger at a slightly faster pace than the student is reading works well. Vocabulary is reinforced throughout the hours of tutoring sessions, to ensure the students understand what is being read. For example, tutors are to ask five questions for each page the child reads.

The greatest challenges for the students in the program in learning how to read include a lack of vocabulary, reliance on the casual register and low familiarity with more formal language, and environmental misunderstandings. "They need to learn the rules in order to respond appropriately." Street knowledge can be a strength in the ability to problem solve when the information presented is within their knowledge base.

Writing is always overseen by a tutor who is with a student the entire time. The teacher noted that her experiences using a whole language approach have not been positive and has not been appropriate for the students she serves. The children at the shelter are very similar to students with learning disabilities. They need to see the correct model and not practice the wrong thing. The teacher cautioned against use of "find the correct spelling" multiple-choice exercises. In most cases, this just leaves the student with more incorrect models in his/her memory.

On the first day, a prewriting sample is obtained. During subsequent sessions, the tutor walks through every sentence orally with the student so she learns how to think and learn formal language, how to write complete sentences, how to write in a more formal register, how to indent paragraphs, and how to develop a comprehensive paragraph with an introduction and conclusion. "This is a brand-new concept for these students … Writing is

usually the most painful process for my children." While a generalization, the teacher has found students have to erase and correct their writing, they give up easily. With the method used, the correcting is done mentally through the verbal model. This mental process uses visualization to establish the correct order of words and spelling before the idea goes on paper. If the word is hard to spell, the tutor asks the student to spell it aloud. By the time the student writes it down, therefore, there is not a lot of correcting to be done. This is much faster than editing written text, and the students feel better about themselves. Elaboration of ideas can be reinforced, similar to the process used with young children and oral language development. For example, if a student proposes the sentence, "Jimmy cried." The tutor would respond, "OK, How can we make that more interesting? Maybe we could say, 'Jimmy cried when he tripped on the stairs.'"

The prewriting sample for most middle schoolers "is a page of verbage with absolutely no punctuation. It's the way they speak." The teacher commented on her about students' limited vocabulary which includes only very essential words of the English language and a casual register. The samples generated suggest a 1,500 word vocabulary. Therefore, the program emphasizes writing as well as reading. "Reading is easier to teach than writing. Once their reading improves, their writing improves. But once they start creating correct sentences in their brains, their writing improves dramatically."

A lesson learned: All tutors are taught to drop their voice when they come to a period. Students are never allowed to skip over the period. "It's amazing how this forces the child to see complete thoughts and how this leads to improvement in writing. We can do that because the children are reading one-to-one with their tutor.

The program has a policy regarding homework. "I guarantee that every child will have an A+ on every homework assignment while in the program." Part of the teacher's responsibility is to contact the child's school counselor within 24 hours of coming to the shelter, usually by phone. There may be many more times during the week when communication occurs. The teacher has inserviced the counselors in the school district and they are knowledgeable of the homework policy. "If the child is able to do the homework, we walk through the assignment, help them, and make sure it's right. If the child cannot do the homework we get it done lickety-split. That means, if the child can't multiply and has double-digit multiplication problems, I'll give the answers. They put their name on the paper and put it in their bag for the next day and we'll go over to the math corner and work on multiplication facts. Usually, I don't call the teachers right away. I'll call the counselors first. It's improving but I've found teachers don't always understand confidentiality, especially in more affluent communities with less experience with poverty. They love to talk about these kids because they're so unique. It's not so unique anymore in many places."

"We do homework first. It's always right, and then we'll go and work on what the child needs. If the assignment reinforces what the child needs,

then we will make a lesson out of the homework and work really hard on it. If they're capable, we'll work with the child and teach. If it's way over their head, it makes no senses to spend a lot of time on the assignment. Some teachers won't modify homework. They don't understand you can modify work without an IEP." The teacher has made a modification chart to help teachers realize this is OK. "Many teachers are quite scared" and do not know how to grade with the modification, for example. "It's a big challenge … The teacher may say, 'He's reading on a first-grade level in fifth, but it's not my fault and he's not special ed." The adopted homework policy is "making it work for kids in poverty."

For about 20 percent of the students, especially older students, getting good grades in homework can be enough to get them to start trying again. This is especially true if the teacher praises the change. "With just two weeks of positive grades, I can see a change in the effort."

The afternoon sessions include about 25 minutes of free time. This is time for the children to play games that reinforce academic skills. It also gives the students an opportunity to play with an adult in a positive relationship and helps students master social skills such as taking turns. "Teachers know that the worst time is unorganized down time, like recess. If you watch these students on the playground for a few days, you see that they don't know the rules."

Assessment. Formal and informal methods are used to determine initial levels and academic growth through the tutoring program. The S.T.A.R. system is used with Accelerated Reader (see below). This is a computerized, multiple-choice assessment that takes about seven-to-eight minutes to administer and provides a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky's ZPD[6]) for optimal growth in reading. The description is consistent with the concept of instructional level used with informal reading inventories. While designed for students to read passages independently and answer the multiple-choice comprehension questions, tutors sit with the students one-to-one during the assessment to encourage them to keep working and to collect observational data regarding the way in which students approach the task, the application of phonic skills, understanding of idioms, and vocabulary usage. The assessment can be used with students from kindergarten through 12th grade and seems to correlate well with the Illinois Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the California Achievement Tests (CAT) when these results are available from school data. The program costs about $500; another $500 was used to purchase the software for Accelerated Reader (AR). AR uses the same format, but children's books are read (in this program one-to-one with a tutor rather than independently) and then the book is keyed into the computer where the appropriate list of comprehension questions are posed to which the student responds. A score is received immediately upon completion of the task. Writing is assessed informally, as noted above when describing the instructional process.

[6] Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Each student has a folder, which includes checklists and charts of skills that have been targeted. The same chart can be used for multiple observations by color-coding the date for the student's responses. For approximately 37 percent of the students posttest results are available. Other indicators monitored for progress include students on the Honor Roll at school, report card grades, and the informal "in my head" knowledge that an experienced teacher retains about her students. Eight students were on the Honor Roll this year. These were students who had been in the program five to seven months. "That's really exciting!"

Program Materials

Books used in the program reflect fiction and nonfiction, including books about other cultures. There are no magazines, but there are crossword puzzles, board games, audio-taped books, and donated books that are not part of Accelerated Reader program. Students receive three books when they enter the program. If they ask, they can have more. Books are acquired through donations, including books drives by local schools. Boxes are placed in schools at the end of the school year to collect old calculators, rulers, notebooks, etc., that can be recycled. The program often receives 30 boxes of books at a time.

The teacher sorts donated books into books that are part of the Accelerate Reader program, those that are appropriate for students to take, those that can be used for group lessons, and others that can be donated to the shelter. Early on, the program purchased books, but it is not necessary any more due to the quantity and quality of donations. Children visit the library in the summer; however, it is hard to obtain library cards for the children, partly because they do not want to give the shelter as their address.

When asked what types of books interest the children in the program, the teacher noted that books with a Caucasian child in a fantasy world with a story line geared for upper-middle-class background have not worked and are, therefore, not included in the program's library. "The book about the ballerina isn't of interest; judo would have more interest." The teacher has noticed that most of the students in the program do not select books about African American children. "They don't have a sense of their ethnicity and don't want to read about poor children … Most understand they are kind of poor, but that's it. They don't see themselves as homeless." This understanding of their housing status changes with middle school, however.

The teacher has come to the conclusion that if you have the option of giving a fiction book or a nonfiction book, give nonfiction. She noted current research showing that nonfiction appears disproportionately less frequently in elementary classrooms than fiction, yet understanding the structure of nonfiction is critical as students progress, especially in the content areas. "Our kids are so deficient in models and understanding the environment around them and history – like the Wright brothers and Anne Frank. The number of new books that are simple nonfiction has increased. There's lots of good nonfiction, and I have the luxury of getting paperbacks which are inexpensive … The life lessons in the nonfiction is what I'm after."

While the program goals are academic, it is "so much more than that. It's teaching middle class rules needed to be successful in school, like no

hitting and pouting isn't acceptable. Homeless children are fantastic giver-uppers and pouters, which is a normal reaction to pain and suffering but so often it stymies the children. The values are almost more important than the academics – not giving up, manners, the importance of asking for help. They usually demand things. That's how they get their needs met. Here, they have to ask. Demanding doesn't get the need met."

Other instructional materials that the teacher prefers include Orton-Gillingham-based activities found in *Angling for Words* (Carolyn Bowen), *Solving Language Difficulties* (Amy Steere), *The Language Toolkit* (Rome & Osman), *Spellbound* (Elsie Trak), and other materials published by the National Institute for Learning Disabilities (NILD) and Educators Publishing Service (EPS).

Children usually take their artwork with them rather than using it to decorate the classroom. "They want to take it." Arts and crafts projects include items that can be used to decorate their rooms or new homes such as jewelry boxes that can hold materials. While models of children's writing are posted in the room, most work is sent with the students each day.

Program Strengths

The most critical element for the success of the tutoring program is to provide reading instruction at the student's performance level and then "upping it as fast as you can." Because the instruction is conducted one-to-one, the student can be taught at the appropriate level. Direct, explicit instruction is used, and the sessions are highly organized to leave little down time. "There is no time to waste for these children."

The one-to-one tutoring also provides a "constant dialogue with an adult for one hour every day. Relationship is key!" The combination of caring and respect with high expectations for academic growth has been powerful. Many students have progressed more than one level in reading during the relatively short time (less than half a year) they attend the program. Extensive gains in the mastery of basic math facts have also been documented.

Wish List for Potential Improvements

The teacher would like to have an additional assistant to allow daily Orton-Gillingham instructional groups. Currently this type of instruction cannot occur each day, due to staffing and the number of students in the program.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to be firm but to constantly affirm positive attitudes and to insist on a formal register when students speak and write in class. Volunteers in schools and after-school programs need effective training. Without training, the impact of the program is limited.

When asked for recommendations for other literacy programs, the teacher reiterated that the student-teacher relationship is crucial. The

emotional component also must be addressed. “It’s a combination of structure, discipline, and love – love is the most important.” Finally, the teacher must have an understanding of phonics.

Appendix A-2

Sample Forms Shared by Local Sites

Sample forms that are used in the Parent-Child Home Program may be viewed by visiting *http://www.en-visions.com/pchp/forms/forms.htm*

Excerpt from **Child-Behavior Traits (CBT)**: Full form includes 20 behaviors.

Instructions: Circle the number at the right of each parenting activity, which you judge to be the best description of that activity in PCHP home sessions. Your ratings can range from 1 (Almost never) to 4 (Frequently), according to code: (1) Almost never, (2) Seldom, (3) Moderately often, (4) Frequently

1.	Is well organized in work and play	1	2	3	4
2.	Seems generally cheerful and content	1	2	3	4
3.	Refrains from physically aggressive behavior towards others	1	2	3	4

Each item is described in greater detail through the CBT guidelines form:

ITEM AND EXPLANATION	**EXAMPLES**
1. Is well organized in work and play. Thinks through ahead of time the materials or activities he will need and then uses them to proceed with the requirements of accomplishing the task in orderly sequence. Appears to be reflective about task.	**Home Session (HS):** Empties all the pieces from a puzzle before starting it, and then fits them into logically possible spaces. In frequent pauses, s/he seems to be thinking about which piece should come next. **School (S):** Prepares his/her desk with pencil, paper, or other materials s/he needs to copy and complete arithmetic problems. Heads paper correctly and leaves spaces between problems.
2. Seems generally cheerful and content. Gives an impression of being satisfied and even happy most of the time. Seems tension-free, and negative feelings (ex. sadness, fear, anxiety) generally appear to be absent.	**HS:** Smiles, laughs, perhaps claps hands occasionally during session. OR Seems relaxed and involved in play even if face doesn't show any feelings. **S:** Seldom cries or complains. Smiles or laughs occasionally. Facial expression generally does not convey fear, worry, or other negative feelings.
3. Refrains from physically aggressive behavior toward others. Hostile motor activity is not directed against people around child. Child is able to channel such feelings into appropriate angry words, or curb them altogether.	**HS:** Does not throw blocks at others instead of building with them (may have to be reminded). **S:** Does not hit or push other children unprovoked.

Additional details and forms available at http://www.utdanacenter.org/theo/toolkits.html#linksliteracy

Student: _____ Date: _____ Age: _____ Lesson # _____

Tutor: _____

Shelter Tutoring Lesson Plan

Read Aloud:	
The child reads:	
Word Study/Phonological Awareness:	
Writing Activity:	
Reflection:	

In the reflection section, please note whether the child enjoyed the activity, if it was the appropriate level, and ideas for the next section.

Links to Literacy has developed checklists for grades K-5 based on local literacy expectations. This sample is for first graders.

Child's name: _____ Date of last lesson: _____

Read Aloud:

Author/illustrator: the author writes the words, the illustrator draws the pictures

Parts of book:

- _____ Cover
- _____ Title page
- _____ Spine
- _____ Table of contents (if applicable)

Direction of print: read left to right, top to bottom

Difference between fiction/non-fiction: fiction tells a story/non-fiction gives information

When prompted, can make predictions in the story and is able to support those predictions

Activities to use for comprehension:

- _____ Story House
- _____ Retell with and without props
- _____ Descriptive web
- _____ KWL chart
- _____ Person, place thing
- _____ Story/character journals
- _____ Venn diagram

To keep in mind throughout the lesson:

Does the child have difficulty completing the activity?
Is the child having difficulty understanding?

(If the child is having difficulty, the tutor should model the activity until the child has a better understanding and can do it independently.)

Child Reads:

Can identify a letter/word/sentence/paragraph

Automatically recognizes sight words

Knows and uses strategies when an unknown word is reached

Suggested leveled reading: 4 (beginning of year) – 17 (end of year)

Uses inflections while reading:

-s, -es, -ed, -ing

Improves fluency: reading smoothly, reading like we talk

Word Study:

Can spell first and last name

Automatically recognizes letters (capital/lower case) and sounds

Distinguishes differences between consonant and vowel

> ***Words Their Way*** **Appendix (starting pg 384) has lists of words for the following patterns that are very helpful to the tutor in planning word study**

Word families: (use suggested sequence)

- Can delete and change initial consonant (When –p is deleted from pig, what sounds are left? –ig; when you replace the –p with a –b, what word is made? –big

Blends: bl, br, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gl, gr, pl, pr, sl, tr, sc, sk, sp, st ,sw

Digraphs: ch, th, sh, wh *(also called the "h" brothers)*
Diagraphs can be used at the beginning (shell, chop, that, when) or at the end (math, cash)

Able to add diagraphs and blends to word families: st-op = stop, th-at = that

Difference between short and long vowels: the vowels say their name (cape, boat)

Vowel combinations: *"When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking."*
ai, ee, ea, ei, oa

Silent "e": *"The 'e' kicks the vowel to make it say its name."*
CVCe pattern (made, take, hope)

Antonyms/synonyms

R-controlled vowels: *When a vowel is followed by an "r," it takes over the vowel sound.*
car, stir, blur (*also called the bossy "r")*

Child Writes:

Can write a complete sentence using descriptive words.
(I like black and white cats.)

Demonstrates proper use of punctuation:

- Names, first letter in sentence

Brainstorms before writing

Edits writing

Response to tutoring:

Date: _____ First Lesson

_____ **Positive:** (Willing to go with tutor; likes to be read to or to read; engaged in lesson; participates in activities; easy to work with)

_____ **Neutral:** (Goes with tutor when told, listens; but does not actively participate; less engaged)

_____ **Negative:** (Refuses to go with tutor; does not want to read or be read to; does not participate in any activity; difficult to work with)

Date: _____ Last Lesson

_____ **Positive:** (Willing to go with tutor; likes to be read to or to read; engaged in lesson; participates in activities; easy to work with)

_____ **Neutral:** (Goes with tutor when told, listens; but does not actively participate; less engaged)

_____ **Negative:** (Refuses to go with tutor; does not want to read or be read to; does not participate in any activity; difficult to work with)

What has it been like working with this child? *(easy to engage, difficult to engage, positive experience, etc.)*

Describe the progress you have seen over the course of lessons academically. Please be specific. *(Examples: learned to recognize two letters and their sounds, became more comfortable giving his/her opinion of the books we read)*

Multiple evaluations can be listed on same form by using a different colored pen for each date. The form includes numeracy and literacy skills due to the broader focus in this program.

Student Checklist Name:

1. Colors

   green red blue yellow orange white black
   purple pink gray

2. Shapes

   circle square rectangle triangle diamond oval
   pentagon octagon

3. Rhyming Cards

4. Opposite Cards

5. Animal Cards

6. Numbers 1-10

   Count aloud

   Understand the value of numbers

   Identify numbers

   Write numbers

7. Letters of the Alphabet

   Able to sing alphabet song

   Able to identify letters

   Able to write letters; uppercase, lower case

   Able to give appropriate sound for each consonant

   Able to give short and long vowel sounds

Appendix B-1

Focus Group

State Coordinators' Conference Calls

Focus Groups Responses from Conference Calls With State Coordinators and Subgrantees for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
July 2003

Facilitator & Notetaker: Patricia Popp
Conducted via teleconference July 7 and July 10, 2003
States represented: Louisiana, Minnesota, Oregon, Texas

1. **<u>Challenges:</u> What do you feel is the greatest challenge elementary school-aged homeless children face in developing and improving their literacy skills?**

- *Based on data from Wilder Research (comprehensive and multi-faceted) Surveys implemented in MN since the mid-80s, enrollment and attendance have dramatically improved, yet parents are reporting more learning problems and school performance issues for their children.*
- *Comment/question: Is this increase in reported problems partly due to the increasing expectations? Response – that and more awareness and greater accountability.*
- *Based on LEA liaison's and instructional leaders' observation, language development (for most including ELL) and significant gaps in reading skills because of mobility (moving in and out of different districts or schools with varying scope and sequence) have contributed most to students experiencing homelessness not being at grade level in reading.*
- *Lack of parental involvement in reading; children are not being read to.*
- *This is a global issue. It's horrible for all poor children and worse for those experiencing homelessness.*
- *Lack of stimulation as infants and young children.*
- *Lack of access to reading materials – books and magazines.*
- *Lack of a literature-rich environment where reading materials are in use.*
- *Kids in this country just don't read, and therefore, don't write well.*
- *Students don't know how to decode. They have poor backgrounds in phonics. I'm opposed to a whole language approach for poor children who are non-readers. Moving a lot increases the likelihood there is a poor background in phonics.*
- *To improve things we need to put literature in front of these students. Example: RIF in shelters – kids love the books, especially with pictures and high interest and appropriate reading level.*
- *Reading materials at the frustration level are a turn off.*
- *Lack of consistent curriculum and teaching strategies*
- *Liaisons report gaps in scope and sequence that contribute to being at grade level in reading.*
- *Suggestion was made to look at the work of Anne Masten on accelerated skill development.*

    a. **With which reading skills do homeless or highly mobile children seem to have the most difficulty?**

- *Caution/concern posed: This project should take care to avoid labeling and making reading difficulties appear to be intrinsic to the child who is homeless. Emphasis should be on good instruction that supports ALL students and the focus should be on the impact of mobility – an external factor.*

- *Again, mobility has contributed to various gaps in learning-reading skills.*
- *There is a lot of variability; some students can read very well.*
- *Generally, challenges families face suggest differences in language patterns; children without interactions that nurture the language development typical in middle class homes have more difficulty with expected beginning skills for reading, such as basic story structure.*
- *Decoding and comprehension.*
- *The expectations for students even in kindergarten are very high. Therefore, there is a need to accelerate certain aspects of reading.*
- *Suggested resource: Dr. Olivia Melrose and Dr. Lisa Stewart – researchers with Native American and students who are mobile. Have found that children enter kindergarten with weak vocabulary and phonemic skills that will require language development instruction to continue through grade levels. Older students need continued instruction and work in areas where gaps are identified.*
- *Should we contact Even Start folks for their input?*
- *Look at Reading First Initiative; contact national reading organizations to see if they have groups addressing mobility. As this project progresses, try to get on their agendas to disseminate information and build awareness.*
- *Reminder that low parent involvement is not restricted to homelessness. Some of the strategies/needs identified address a variety of groups.*
- *There isn't a big difference among students who are homeless and other Title I students. Mobility exacerbates the problems; gaps between mobile students and their stable peers widen more quickly.*
- *So one of the issues is the need for system change, not so much changes in the skills that are taught. How can we make the curriculum portable and help instructors cue into gaps. We need something that translates from one school system to another.*
- *Schools are at such different points that it is hard to catch up.*
- *If we can keep students in their school of origin, this may become less of a challenge.*
- *We need to be able to assess students more quickly, especially in non-school programs.*

b. Which pre-literacy skills are often lacking?

- *Language development (lack vocabulary and beginning phonetic background).*
- *Emerging decoding skills and phonemic awareness.*
- *Addressed in conversation under point a.*

c. What challenges do schools and classroom teachers face in helping homeless/highly mobile children learn to read?

- *Liaisons say that too much time is spent on assessments. Teachers need assistance with diagnosis and understanding ensuing instructional strategies. The assessment should inform future instruction, not just provide outcome data. Assessment FOR learning not just OF learning.*

- *Too much time is spent tutoring students with homework that is too difficult for them. Efforts are wasteful because students lack understanding. Students are often in education experiences not at their actual instructional level.*
- *Being in school on a regular basis – erratic attendance adds to the challenges.*
- *Having texts and other materials at the student's instructional level. Having extra bodies – extra support personnel to meet individual needs.*
- *Getting families involved and present at meetings.*
- *Sometimes these students have poor social skills and have difficulty dealing with people. They have trouble sitting and concentrating. We need to remember these students are not "stupid." We have to care for their basic needs before the academics can be addressed.*
- *TIME to read. Expectations at home vary greatly depending upon the setting. (We should ask ourselves, "When do **you** read?")*
- *Motivation is another challenge for schools and classroom teachers.*
- *The lack of informal, quick assessments. Need for curriculum-based measures.*
- *Student mobility – sometimes the entire class turns over in a year; 50 percent turnover is not uncommon in some classes.*
- *Staff mobility – sometimes the entire teaching staff turns over in less than three years.*
- *Getting students in existing programs. It takes time to get kids where they need to be. This is related to delays in enrollment, eligibility requirements and waiting lists (e.g., Title I summer school, comprehensive reading programs).*
- *Students experiencing homelessness and high mobility are more likely to have deficits in reading. Accommodations should be made, and these students should be prioritized to access programs.*
- *Inappropriate use of technology that is not well supervised and above students' instructional level. The students end up "pushing buttons" until they get the correct answer but aren't really learning anything. Teachers are not well trained in using individualizing and debriefing with students to increase the benefit of the activities. Teachers may not be using the results of such computerized programs appropriately when making instructional decisions. Teachers are not using the assessment results to identify problem areas for remediation.*
- *Parents' lack of literacy skills.*
- *Lack of decoding and phonic skills that need to be memorized. You need the basic skills, too.*

d. What barriers exist to children and parents participating in available programs?

- *Transportation. Getting the child there.*
- *Having a learning plan in place to engage parents.*
- *Access to books, supplies, and materials for families experiencing homelessness.*
- *Competing with other agendas of families in crisis.*
- *Finding interesting materials.*
- *Ensuring teachers are knowledgeable about reading and can make it FUN.*

2. **<u>Assessment:</u> How do schools and teachers assess the needs of homeless or highly mobile children when they enroll?**

- *A trend of many LEAs is utilizing the computerized NWEA (Deb Pender-Moorhead Public Schools, MN). It can be quickly administered, is reliable, commonly understood, accurately measures growth, can be locally normed, and is aligned to State standards. It has been normed for other states, can be administered several times throughout the year, and provides "assessment of learning and assessment for learning." The characteristics describing this assessment are characteristics that best serve students of mobility.*
- *LEAs need to "buyin" and be comfortable with chosen assessments.*
- *If students are not in a funded McKinney-Vento program, they would be assessed the same way any new student is assessed in that school. If the student is in a M-V project that includes a literacy component, the student MAY receive supplemental assessments over what Title I does for all other Title I students. Students who are homeless are not typically treated any differently with regard to assessment.*
- *There is often a lag in records following students of three to six weeks. We need to attend more to rapid transfer of records. Example of problem: have observed students being identified as bilingual one year and monolingual the next year due to records not being received until October.*
- *Be cautious about spending too much time on assessment. It can take away from instructional time.*
- *Not sure that students are assessed when they enter.*
- *With accountability we are looking at the test. Assessment should drive instruction. Teachers are not adequately trained in interpretation of tests to let it guide their instruction.*
- *Would hope students received a one-to-one reading assessment, such as the Slosson or an informal reading inventory. Also, previous records should be reviewed.*

    a. **What steps are followed to place new students in the school's existing reading program?**

- *See Above #2.*
- *The regular process is used. When students are homeless, no one needs to know and they shouldn't be treated differently. It is hard to identify them unless screening is occurring in the registration process (similar to the form being used by San Antonio).*

3. **<u>Support systems:</u> What programs/resources exist in your state or school district that are effective in helping homeless or highly mobile children improve their reading skills?**

- *Caution noted: Are we talking about programs just for students who are homeless versus programs in general. Response: The project is interested in learning what programs in general may be most beneficial and where/if specialized support should be incorporated into the program.*
- *Should ask reading specialists to assist in responding to this question.*
- *Reading First Grant.*

- *Reading Recovery. Challenge is the program is expensive, geared for first grade, and long-term in structure. Alternative: One district invested in training teachers in the program, who then adapted the techniques to other grades and trained other teachers in the system, using the trainer-of-trainers model.*
- *Open Court.*
- *Direct instruction.*
- *The Letter People.*
- *Multi-sensory language approaches (e.g., Orton-Gillingham, Wilson).*
- *Look at tutoring and after-school programs. What works best? Offer assistance at the instructional level of each student. Meet the child where the child is. This is easier in after-school programs that during the school day.*
- *Use regular teachers for tutoring; extend school day of teachers who can work with their students to provide an tutoring after school.*
- *Ensure communication between classroom teachers and tutors.*
- *In schools rated as "needs improvement," lack of coordination between specialists and classroom teachers has been observed. Teachers may need additional training.*
- *Problem with volunteer tutors: They have little training in reading. It is critical to train tutors to work at the student's instructional level.*
- *Challenge: Volunteer programs become "do good" programs for organizations to send volunteers to. They are well intentioned but not well trained. You need to have the right match of tutors to students.*
- *Need guidelines for working with volunteers and addressing the challenge of sustaining commitment.*
- *Tutors must have a contact person. Without a structure in place, tutoring program is not sustained.*
- *Texas is developing a manual that includes lessons plans.*
- *We should be able to draw a lot from materials that have already been developed (e.g., Imagine the Possibilities).*
- *Some businesses have volunteers visit schools where the students read to them. Maybe this could be expanded to shelters.*
- *Some schools devote 90 minutes just to reading. They use ability grouping during this time. There is ongoing professional development, a reading coordinator. This helps schools climb out of school improvement status. (Example of such a program would be Success for All.)*
- *Every teacher should be seen as a reading teacher.*
- *Preservice teachers receive little training in reading, especiallyfor working with struggling readers. Need to increase commitment that teachers are responsible for teaching all students. Struggling readers should not be seen as the sole responsibility of special education.*
- *Vocabulary development can be increased through leisure reading. More time should be devoted to leisure reading. This can increase reading time and interest.*

- *You have to have the appropriate reading materials. Shelters could benefit from book lists; especially high interest with appropriate reading level books are needed, especially for middle and high school. Shelters also need the books.*
- *We need structured research-based programs to use with tutors that can be adapted for shelters. Include:*
    - *Successful engagement in literacy.*
    - *Success, scaffolding learning for the student to make the experience rewarding.*
    - *Focus on one or two literacy skills in a session (e.g., word study and comprehension).*
    - *Engagement and vocabulary skills take less training to prepare volunteers.*
    - *Guidance in identifying starting points. Have sample lessons in each reading skill.*
- *Physical facilities can be a challenge. Shelters may not have a quiet room, materials, and storage space. Recommend committing space or changing venue to provide an effective reading program.*
- *Dr. Ann Masten's research from the Univ. of MN states (paraphrasing), don't worry about the various subject matter but concentrate on accelerated skill development (because of mobility issue).*
- *Dr. Barbara Taylor, Univ. of MN, is doing research on literacy strategies for at-risk students (not a homeless/mobility initiative but may benefit these subgroups). She is working with the MN Dept. of Education and the Reading Excellence/Reading First Initiatives.*
- *Dr. Olivia Melrose and Dr. Lisa Stewart from MN State University-Moorhead are doing research with Native American students in the western region of MN (many could be identified as mobile or homeless). Deb Pender, LEA liaison from Moorhead, is collaborating with them.*
- *The National Reading Panel Report, Reading Excellence & Reading First programs offer good perspectives. Imagine the Possibilities from/West Ed is another resource.*

    a. **In the school—tutoring, school-based after school programs?**
        i. **How effective are they? What data support the effectiveness of these programs?**

- *Tutoring and after-school programs (according to LEA liaison and instructional leader observation) that offer assistance at the instructional level of each student are the most effective.*
- *How do you evaluate your program when you only have students for 4-7 weeks?*
- *We have after-school tutoring at schools and shelters, but no real "data" to report. We can see that students are doing better in school: report cards, parent perceptions/satisfaction, state assessments. It would be hard to prove that the tutoring was making the difference.*
- *An initial analysis of state assessment data found that many of the students who passed at the proficient level had received tutoring.*
- *A summer remediation program looks promising.*

b. Outside of school—shelter or agency-based after-school programs, library programs?

- *Vocabulary development through leisure reading (example – carts of leisure reading materials; helping children re-gain interest in reading). The research area of "motivation" (within literacy) may offer direction in this area, too.*
- *Tutoring at the shelter.*

i. How effective are they? What data support the effectiveness of these programs?

- *Reporting requirements – Are students attaining incremental steps toward required benchmarks as required in their learning plans?*
- *Again, you can't tease out WHICH program make the difference. This is one cog in all the help.*

c. What features of the school or school district infrastructure address the reading challenges of homeless or highly mobile children?

i. What collaboration exists between schools, shelters, or other agencies to coordinate educational efforts regarding reading improvement?

- *Shelters stay in touch with the schools.*
- *Summer programs across programs. Example: Art Without a Roof in LA provided 250 students with an enrichment program five days week for six weeks. Academics were embedded in drama, art, music, creative writing, etc., and a variety of field trips were used for extra inspiration.*
- *Tutors use supplemental materials and work with the teachers.*
- *Tutoring is delivered during the school day: reading, literacy, and math. This allows the tutor to work with the regular teacher.*
- *After school, business and industry have been involved with tutoring and supporting grants for children to take field trips.*
- *It is difficult to limit to reading improvement; focus has been on improving educational success, in general. Reading has not been a cross-program collaborative effort.*
- *Input into the learning plan goals of students experiencing homelessness (both funded and non-funded programs).*
- *For non-funded LEAs the identification process has to be embedded along with awareness training for staff before collaborations will occur.*
- *When instructional leadership in the district recognizes the needs of students who are mobile, programs improve; my challenge is to make more connections with instructional leaders. Once collaboration unfolds, barriers decrease. This is a challenge that liaisons face, too – how to make the connections.*
- *Even funded programs may have trouble with leadership, while others have liaisons who have been recognized as true instructional leaders.*
- *The new emphasis on cohorts and disaggregating data for AYP could be used as leverage. We need to emphasize that attention to highly mobile/homeless will help the whole district meet AYP.*

ii. Who in the school district or community works to eliminate barriers to reading success?

- *It needs to be addressed at the instructional leadership level. Instructional leaders have to recognize the needs (and implement appropriate services) for students of mobility.*
- *Liaisons should educate reading teachers about the issues of mobility.*
- *Title I coordinators.*
- *Reading specialists.*
- *Would like to say "everybody."*

iii. What resources, assistance, and encouragement are available for *homeless parents* to help their children improve their reading skills?

- *Challenge is breaking the mentality that homeless and highly mobile students are "not OUR kids." This will need increased state leadership to recognize these students belong and to encourage change at the school and district level.*
- *Assistance for parents in understanding the reading issues of their children.*
- *Look at Even Start for a model.*
- *Title I parenting centers; families are allowed to take home computers.*
- *Library program.*
- *Use of grants for technology and literacy and professional development.*
- *Communities with non-English speakers have language and literacy centers, but they don't seem to be very prevalent.*
- *Migrant family literacy program could provide ideas.*
- *Some M-V programs refer parents to literacy programs; some shelters set them up, especially transitional programs that have a literacy component.*

iv. How are *teachers* prepared to help homeless or highly mobile children improve in reading and how are teachers supported in their efforts to do so?

- *There is no special preparation, but they should be prepared.*
- *Teachers no longer teach "to the masses." They should be familiar with:*
    - *Identifying children who are homeless.*
    - *Assessing academic needs.*
    - *Being sensitive to attendance patterns.*
    - *Recognizing that these students also are hungry to learn and know a lot of things. They may need extra help and support at home.*
- *Give people the big picture regarding homelessness. This has implications for preservice education. One deliverable from the project could be a course on teaching highly mobile children. A concern was voiced that this might lead to stereotypes; example shared was Ruby Payne's work. Emphasis should be on what is needed to be a successful reader.*

- *Inservice training for teachers must have direct application to the classroom.*
- *One LEA chose the Boy's Town Reading model because of the professional development component. They thought this was a strength of the model. The needs of the youth (area learning center entity) were different than those addressed in mainstream programs. They felt neither the LEA nor their staff had the capacity to provide professional development. The Boy's Town model provided their teaching staff the professional development necessary to upgrade and implement a strong reading curriculum that fit the needs of a mobile student population. Students average a one-year gain per semester of participation (utilizing the DAR – Diagnostic Assessment of Reading).*
- *Question: Are the results sustained? Response: Developers are conducting research to determine this.*
- *Many LEAs are choosing vendor models but perhaps they should be distinguished from curriculum and be labeled program or intervention models. Reading Week Seminar (decoding) and Read Naturally (fluency) are a couple of models utilized. They are popular because they are effective with mobile students. In addition, the vendor programs offer quality professional development and they are inexpensive in comparison to other vendor programs. (Note: Technology such as Renaissance, CCC, & Lightspan may be good auxiliary tools to increase motivation and exposure to literacy materials.)*
- *There isn't a "magic bullet." No matter what curricula or interventions are chosen, there needs to be "staff buy-in" for these to be effective. Further, professional development is the key. The quality of the staff is the bottom line and sustained professional development ensures or maintains this quality. Additionally, even highly trained and skilled staff in reading are continually searching for effective strategies to better serve students experiencing homelessness. Also, research is improving in the general area of literacy.*
- *Teachers are overwhelmed when asked to teach large numbers of struggling readers. They need others to support them. They can't do it alone.*
- *Districts need to look for external resources to supplement and provide that support.*

4. **<u>Ideal:</u> If funding were not a concern, what would be your vision of effective programs and strategies that would enable homeless and highly mobile children improve their reading skills?**

- *See list of instructional strategies from West Ed's Imagine the Possibilities.*
- *Transportation to school of origin.*
- *Address system issues:*
    - *Portable curriculum and transfer of records.*
    - *Curriculum that aligns in other communities, recognizing the local control issues make this challenging.*
    - *NCLB emphasis on scientifically based programs may increase consistency.*
- *Short-term assessments with immediate feedback to families.*
- *Programs that accelerate learning in a short amount of time.*
- *Ongoing training.*
- *Small class size.*

- *Adequate staffing with thoroughly trained teachers and paraprofessionals.*
- *We need to harness the potential that is there – capacity building.*
- *Providing reading materials to low-income parents. Example: RIF – Reading Is Fundamental, which used to provide books for shelters.*
- *Make sure shelters have appropriate reading and study areas. This impacts what children do in the evenings.*
- *Exposure to daycare and preschool. There is a real need to early childhood programs for ALL. The earlier, the better.*
- *Children should be immersed in literature early on. They start reading much too late. The love of reading needs to be nurtured early.*
- *There should be early detection and early intervention.*
- *Provide a literature-rich environment and teach the basics (phonics).*
- *Have home activities that support the program and can be done in a variety of settings.*
- *Make sure children get the experiences they need to ensure the prior knowledge needed for reading. "The bottom line – if you miss that background, the child may fall through the cracks."*
- *The realistic key will be identifying new strategies outlined in current research. Then identifying curricula, intervention models, and professional development programs, adopting these strategies, and exposing them to practitioners.*
- *Parents need to understand their roles and responsibilities to support literacy within their family systems and the principles of child and adolescent development.*
- *Students themselves need to understand their individual roles and responsibilities.*
- *The goal is to accelerate the learning of students as they are identified as having needs and residing in emergency and transitional housing.*
- *Instructional leaders try to discount mobility. If a child is not there for a full year, the scores don't count; however, you should still be concerned about their progress.*
- *Engage libraries more. Have satellites at shelters, similar to a bookmobile concept. Help libraries involve homeless parents to support their children.*
- *NAEHCY should have a presence at national reading conferences. Offer articles for reading newsletters.*

Appendix B-2

Focus Groups

NAEHCY Conference 2003

Focus Groups Responses from Participants at the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Conference

October 16, 2003
Arlington, Virginia

Facilitator: Stephanie Humphries
Notetakers: Patricia Popp and James Stronge
13 participants: most common positions: state coordinators, local liaisons, shelter providers

1. **<u>Challenges:</u> What do you feel is the greatest challenge elementary school-aged homeless children face in developing and improving their literacy skills?**

- *Reading to children is highly important but reading is not reinforced by parents – may be lack of energy such as in domestic violence situations*
- *HUGE issue – crisis larger than teaching reading; Maslow needs to be considered – these families don't have time*
- *There was a study that taped and analyzed discourses between parents and children – emergent literacy has to do with talking (emotional aspect to literacy; families in stress speak to their less)*
- *Parents don't know how to read themselves*
- *Television is mode of babysitting; concept of books is foreign*
- *Cultural differences – children are taught at home differently (e.g., making eye contact, expect independent skills at earlier ages)*
- *Older students (7-9) harder to have reading involvement of parents due to independent skill expectation*
- *Lack of books*
- *Success of school-age children is based on preschool experiences – materials, emotional needs, needs of moms, academics and relationship of mother and child 0-3 years is critical to brain development and impacts later learning – we must work with these young children*
- *Need to provide support to family relationships – give parents a way to interact*
- *Need for a safe, comfortable, private place to do the reading; the environment must encourage moms to read*
- *If parent is not aware of need to praise and encourage the child, the child may be more timid about learning*
- *Resiliency is an important factor*

   a. **With which reading skills do homeless or highly mobile children seem to have the most difficulty?**

- *Weak sight reading – not commonplace – no one reads to them*
- *Phonemic awareness – haven't heard words and sounds – when under stress people speak less: Ex. Mom and child – one-word utterances to communicate (little elaboration)*
- *Need to help caregivers elaborate in discourse*
- *Elementary – huge problem with comprehension, especially boys (question posed: Is brain development different?)*
- *Finding teachers and resources to make a difference*
- *Skills become weaker with age*

   b. **Which pre-literacy skills are often lacking?**

- *Naming objects – circumlocution is common – can give function but not name of objects*

- *Students become locked in system once labeled (Title I or special education) – concern if this is culturally based – e.g,. eye contact is culture bound but can lead to referral for services*

c. What challenges do schools and classroom teachers face in helping homeless/highly mobile children learn to read?

- *Need to socialize children to school*
- *Some parents don't have respect for school*
- *Increase in Hispanic population – we need to learn to acknowledge their culture*
- *Need to learn to build on what they know – relationship is critical*
- *We don't value what they bring to the table – can't read words but can read body language; don't know "hidden curriculum"*
- *We need to recognize the changing face of our students*
- *Too many children in the classroom and not enough time to remediate – a little extra help is not enough*
- *Teachers don't have tools*
- *Teachers and schools are stressed trying to help all children keep up, AYP – see children as threatening their scores*
- *Orientation of the school system to support or not*
- *All homeless are not behind but used as an excuse*

d. What barriers exist to children and parents participating in available programs?

- *Transportation*
- *Money to get to programs that exist*
- *Economics of schools*
- *Extended school service – drive them home*
- *Using funding properly*
- *Accessing resources they are entitled to (ex., Title I set-aside, family resource centers)*
- *Lack of coordination between shelter and school – need to share schedules among shelters and schools*
- *Before- and after-school programs would be ideal but this is costly – money is a barrier*
- *Latchkey children*
- *Parents and young children need to be together to have healthy children; parent's work schedules and job restrictions, lack of vacation and release time; how do you promote that togetherness AND get the programs – it can be disjointed and take away from needed family time*
- *Problem is the family is struggling to survive in America*
- *Separating boys from families in shelters*
- *Staff cuts – can't conduct outreach the way they need to*
- *Staff and funds; student:staff ratios are unmanageable*

2. <u>Assessment:</u> How do schools and teachers assess the needs of homeless or highly mobile children when they enroll?

- *Look for school research – when there are no school records, place students where they think; may be screened for special ed.*
- *Many children who lag behind get referred for special education*
- *Special education is perceived as the only place to get extra help*
- *Ask parents about reading skills when enrolling children*

- **What steps are followed to place new students in the school's existing reading program?**

- *Varies by school and class [participants could not answer this]*
- *[Asked about informal reading – didn't know, need teachers at meeting to respond]*
- *Interview with parents – outreach at shelters to start process helps*
- *Behavior is addressed quickly; reading takes longer and the student may be out of the shelter before an assessment is done*
- *Skotopic screening – series of overlays*

3. **<u>Supports:</u> What programs/resources exist in your state or school district that are effective in helping homeless or highly mobile children improve their reading skills?**

- *Somebody has to take an interest – "the buck stops here"*

   a. **In the school—tutoring, school-based after-school programs?**

      - **How effective are they? What data support the effectiveness of these programs?**

- *Review Comer model of school reform for parent and community involvement and Zigler model – impact on achievement scores noted*
- *Go into community two weeks before school to build relationship with families*
- **Building relationship is first step – not just teachers but all district leadership, janitors, bus drivers, everyone*

   b. **Outside of school—shelter or agency-based after-school programs, library programs?**

- *Provide books to children 0-4 years and doctors model how to read to your child. Children get a new book as part of every check-up experience. Parents can read or have access to books. This is a national model - longitudinal study showed students doing well academically*

      - **How effective are they? What data support the effectiveness of these programs?**

- *New York program (The Parent-Child Home Program) has data to support effectiveness. See suggestions listed in previous answer)*

   c. **What features of the school or school district infrastructure address the reading challenges of homeless or highly mobile children?**

      i. **What collaboration exists between schools, shelters, or other agencies to coordinate educational efforts regarding reading improvement?**

- *EvenStart everywhere*
- *Collaboration: DSS, school districts, and shelter providers sand homeless coalitions is essential at state and local levels*
- *Training – sensitivity training to understand other agencies*

ii. Who in the school district or community works to eliminate barriers to reading success?

- *Sororities*
- *Other organizations*
- *Some you see only at the holidays try to build linkages throughout the year*
- *Infuse dollars for outreach and sensitivity about what education can be – use whole community*
- *Peer tutors with honor students in high schools*
- *Higher education service learning*

iii. What resources, assistance, and encouragement are available for *homeless parents* to help their children improve their reading skills?

- *Baskets of books – get the children "hooked on books"*
- *Even Start and Head Start with their parent components*

iv. How are *teachers* prepared to help homeless or highly mobile children improve in reading and how are teachers supported in their efforts to do so?

- *This may not exist in many places and is needed.*

4. <u>Ideal:</u> If funding were not a concern, what would be your vision of effective programs and strategies that would enable homeless and highly mobile children improve their reading skills?

- *Have the commitment that, "We'll work with any and everybody."*
- *Give all children books*
- *Help school districts conduct outreach services*
- *Build long-term support relationships (e.g., birth to age 5)*
- *Invest in early years – need human contact*
- *Take services/programs to families – "mountain to Mohammed"*
- *Mentor programs*
- *Independent study*
- *Mobile vans with computers and learning materials*
- *Local library van*
- *"Leadership" – buy a fleet of vans*
- *Parent-child activities with volunteers and experts*

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