



A Communication Framework for Family Literacy

*Bridging differences,
planning, and
building skill sets*

by

**Jean Fowler
and Sydney Hook**

June 2005

Acknowledgments

Family Literacy work creates a community network that involves many individuals. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of each.

A special thank-you is extended to the following individuals whose support and encouragement sustained us in our development work.

Alva Jenson, Family Literacy Consultant, Vancouver School Board, for helping us get started. Alva has been influential in bringing a Family Literacy perspective to the Vancouver School District.

Michelle Droetboom, Speech Language Pathologist and Hanen Trainer, for many conversations and much encouragement. Her expertise confirmed our thinking and guided us to extend the use of Hanen Principles¹ to our work in Family Literacy.

We wish to acknowledge individuals within the administration of the Vancouver School Board: Valerie Overgaard, Associate Superintendent/Learning Services; Bruce Ratcliffe, Administrator; and Anna Maria Niccoli-Mullett, Education Co-ordinator/District Learning Services. These individuals were instrumental in providing support and time to implement our work.

Community support for our work has been essential. From our initial explorations in Family Literacy, Jean Rasmussen, Director of Community and Family Development and Training, Literacy BC, has been a mentor. Her immense energy and creativity helped extend our perspective and knowledge in this field.

In addition, we would like to acknowledge Literacy BC, and ABC Canada Literacy Foundation/Honda Canada, and *The Vancouver Sun* Raise-a-Reader Program for their financial support.

Our sincere appreciation to Charlie Naylor, Research and Technology, British Columbia Teachers' Federation, for his skills in editing, and most importantly, his never-ending

encouragement, and to Anne Field for her assistance with document preparation.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) UBC/BCTF/VSB project “From Literacy to Multiliteracies: Designing learning environments for knowledge generation within the new economy” is supporting the publication and dissemination of this report.

In closing we would like to thank those schools in Vancouver who invited us into their communities and especially the families who shared their knowledge and stories with us. We have been privileged to be participants in this process.

¹ Many of the language interaction skills we describe are based on the Hanen program materials *It Takes Two to Talk*, and the more recent version, *You Make the Difference*. These program materials were intended to support parents of children who are at risk for communication delays during their early years. The program was designed for teaching adults the principles and strategies for facilitating oral language interaction, which in turn enhance the development of language and thinking skills.

In our experience, the basic principles outlined in the Hanen materials are also relevant for facilitating language and interaction skills for children across the developmental range. They are appropriate to share with all families. They are as effective for use with children in the school context as they are in the home.

Preface

Who we are and why we became involved in Family Literacy

We are Speech Language Pathologists working within a large urban school district. Our training included coursework in child and language development. Working in schools, we have the opportunity to interact with children, their families, teachers, and support staff. We also have the opportunity to work in a context of cultural and linguistic diversity that now richly comprises and shapes our schools. It is our background knowledge in child and language development and our experience and opportunity to work with children and their families from diverse backgrounds that provide the foundation on which we began to share observations and ask questions together. We began our collaboration in Family Literacy in the spring of 1998.

We were given the opportunity to run several Family Literacy programs in schools. Programs were flexible to meet the needs of the families involved, they were participatory, and they provided structured learning opportunities.

We were also given the opportunity to coach teams within schools in the development phase of creating a Family Literacy program for their particular contexts.

In the context of our work in Family Literacy we have had opportunities for professional development. We received training in the Four Component Approach, a model developed by the National Centre for Family Literacy in Kentucky (National Centre for Family Literacy, 2000). In October 2001, we attended a week-long course in order to become regional trainers in Foundational Training in Family Literacy (Foundational Training in Family Literacy, Centre for Family Literacy Society of Alberta, 2002). This training was part of the Inter-provincial Territorial Foundational Training in Family Literacy Project. The goal of this “train the trainers” model is to develop a comprehensive training program for facilitators involved in family-literacy work in Canada.

This guide contains:

- An introduction which provides a discussion of the definitions in Family Literacy and the role of interaction as fundamental to adult/child relationships.
- A discussion of the Communication Framework, which includes bridging the differences in interaction styles between home and school and balancing facilitators' knowledge and family perspective in order to share information.
- Considerations for planning and implementing a Communication Framework in Family Literacy.
- A description of skill sets in the Communication Framework that can be incorporated in a Family Literacy Program.
- Appendices that include our philosophy for Family Literacy practice, exploring aspects of interaction style, organizing sessions and follow-up, and parent questionnaires.

We offer this guide as one step in furthering understanding about the importance of a Communication Framework as an underlying process when working with families and their children within a school context.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	1
Preface	
Who we are and why we became involved in Family Literacy	3
Introduction	
What is Family Literacy?	7
What is a Communication Framework for developing Interaction, Language, and Thinking?	10
The Communication Framework: Bridging the differences in interaction styles between home and school	11
Balancing facilitator knowledge and family perspective	13
What are the families' beliefs about learning and the development of the reading process?	
What are the families' language interaction styles?	
What are the families' experiences with literacy?	
What are the families' school experiences?	
Six key considerations for planning and implementing a Communication Framework	
1. Encourage belonging, commitment, and continuity	17
2. Make sure everyone understands.....	18
3. Be ready to adapt.....	18
4. Consider teaching and learning styles	19
5. Choose materials/activities that support the concepts.....	20
6. Facilitate the use of language development and interaction strategies in the home and community	21
Three key skill sets in the Communication Framework	
1. Skills for enhancing Interaction	23
i. Being close to the child's eye level	
ii. Turn-taking	
iii. Observe, Wait, Listen	
iv. Offering choices	
2. Skills for enhancing Language.....	29
i. Commenting	
ii. Modelling	
iii. Expansion	
iv. Asking questions	
3. Skills for enhancing Thinking.....	34
i. Labelling and describing	
ii. Categorizing and comparing	
iii. Sequencing events	
iv. Explaining and predicting	
Final thoughts	43
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Our philosophy of Family Literacy.....	46
Appendix 2: Exploring aspects of interaction style	48
Appendix 3: Key components of a two-hour Family Literacy session	49
Appendix 4: Beyond the sessions	55
Appendix 5: Parent questionnaires	56
References	61



Introduction

What is Family Literacy?

Family literacy can be defined in many ways.

Janet Shively and Adele Thomas note that the way we define family literacy can have a strong impact on how we develop Family Literacy programs.

Some core principles shared by many definitions of Family Literacy are:

- Family Literacy encompasses the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community. (International Reading Association's Commission on Family Literacy, 1994)
- Family Literacy refers to the many ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy to accomplish everyday tasks within the context of their own culture and community. (Shively & Thomas, 2002)
- Family Literacy is the intergenerational sharing of experiences and meanings, which enhance the development of language and numeracy skills. (Literacy BC, 1999)
- Family Literacy projects and programs recognize the influence of the family on the literacy development of all its members, and support families in building expertise in language development, reading, and writing. (Shively & Thomas, 2002)

- A goal of Family Literacy includes promoting “...reading and learning as valued family activities that encourage positive interactions and shared experiences.” (Literacy BC, 1999)
- A Family Literacy approach recognizes the interconnectedness of literacy with other issues affecting families, and encourages cross-sectoral community collaborations that build on existing programs and services for families. (Shively & Thomas, 2002)
- At the heart of a successful Family Literacy Program is time devoted to parent/child interaction. (Thomas *et al*, 1999)

Underlying many of the family literacy definitions is the concept of the importance of language development and interaction between adults and children in the process of learning.

As adults, we stimulate children’s development through interaction. We foster children’s physical, social/emotional, and language/cognitive development through play and interaction. There is a body of literature that provides evidence that the processes of language development and interaction are fundamental to cognitive development, forming the foundation for reasoning, social development, and academic learning.

The following quotations reflect this fundamental adult/child relationship:

“Oral language enables us to reflect and discuss our thinking and understanding.”

(Rothstein & Goldberg, 1993)

“Children constantly build concepts about the world around them; language supports that concept development.”

(Hayden & Kendrick, 2002)

We believe that the language interaction style between adult and child is *the foundation* of the development of the child’s language, thinking, and literacy.

“Interacting in conversations sets the stage for developing reading and writing skills. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are interrelated.”

(Rothstein & Goldberg, 1993)

“The foundations for literacy and learning to read are based on oral language development...Although the tasks of written language differ, the processes by which they are learned are the same as for oral language learning—those of approximation, trial and error, constructing meaning, making sense of one’s world.”

(Hayden & Kendrick, 2002)

“Parents play a key role in mediating their children’s oral language and literacy development. When children have the opportunity to talk about and explore their world with interested adults, they are positioned to experience the world in meaningful and purposeful ways.”

(Hayden & Kendrick, 2002)

Therefore, we highlight a Communication Framework for developing oral language and interaction skills within our definition of Family Literacy.

Further, we argue that in order to enhance the learning process, it is not sufficient to focus family-literacy work on providing information, skills, and materials for developing school readiness and literacy. As adults we need an awareness of children’s developmental progress and the role of interaction in supporting that development. Instead, the focus in family-literacy work should be to make explicit to participants the underlying communication processes, which enhance adult/child interaction and the development of language and thinking skills.

What is a Communication Framework for developing Interaction, Language, and Thinking?

A communication framework describes the many strategies that enhance the process of interaction between individuals. In family-literacy work, this means focussing on strategies for developing interaction, language, and thinking skills with children.

The Communication Framework includes skills and strategies for enhancing interaction, language, and thinking.



The Communication Framework: Bridging the differences in interaction styles between home and school

Children's readiness for school and literacy learning will be affected if there are differing expectations for interaction at home and at school, if children do not have the necessary oral language interaction skills needed at school, and if families have a different understanding of school expectations.

In the school community in which we work, we've heard from educators concerned about children's readiness for schooling and readiness for literacy. We've observed children entering our schools with language differences. These differences were not only about speaking languages other than English, but were about differences in interaction styles.

At school, learners are expected to sit in a group, to look at and listen to the speaker, whether it is a teacher or a peer, and to participate in discussions. The nature of the oral language and interaction skills expected match the nature of interaction in our communities at large and specifically in our educational systems. These expectations are common

in educational environments across the developmental age-range from preschool to post-graduate learning. Thus, in school contexts, proficiency with oral language interaction skills means that children are able to listen, and to use a variety of words and sentence structures. Further, they are able to ask and answer questions and to use language for various functions such as expressing needs and feelings and making social connections through conversing with others. Additionally, the curriculum assumes that in the early years, children are ready to add print to their language repertoire.

We noticed differences in terms of the children's experiences in participating in group discussions, listening, having conversations, and asking and answering questions.

In reflecting upon these differences, we began to wonder if children were, in fact, experiencing very different expectations between home and school in terms of interaction styles. For example, while at school children may be asked to express opinions or answer questions. At the same time, the family may be encouraging children to listen to adults and not to express their opinions frequently. When children are being asked to interact in school in a way that is unfamiliar or considered to be disrespectful at home, it can be confusing for the children.

Our experiences with families informed us that families wished to participate in their children's learning and wanted their children to be successful learners. However, due to a variety of factors (e.g., cultural, linguistic, social, educational), families may have a different understanding of the role of oral language and interaction in their children's learning. All these variables may affect a particular family's interaction style.

We came to believe that providing families with information about the concept of different interaction styles, and more specifically the interaction style of school, is critical.

As part of this process, we should attempt to discover what a family's style is, through observation and discussion with the families. That is, we should not assume that families have a particular interaction style based on culture or socioeconomic status. We should explore the similarities and differences between interaction styles with families. In doing so, families can be empowered with what Edwards calls "the cultural capital to deal in the marketplace of school." (Edwards, 1994 in Shively & Thomas, 2002.)

Balancing facilitator knowledge and family perspective

As we see families as the primary context within which children learn, we wondered about how to bring our knowledge about oral language, interaction, and literacy both at home and school, to the adults in the family, in a way that respects different understandings and beliefs.

Traditionally, many programs have been developed in which the facilitators set the topics of a session and teach the participants specific skills identified by the facilitators. This is referred to as the "Transmission Model" of learning. More recently, an approach called the "Participatory Model" of learning has been promoted. In such an approach, facilitators and participants engage in joint topic-setting and discussion (Chambers & Bright, 2002).

We believe that the art of running Family Literacy programs is to find a balance in sharing knowledge, beliefs, and practices between facilitators and participants. In our view, facilitators have specific topics and knowledge to share with the participants. The participants also have knowledge, experience, and questions, which they should be encouraged to bring to the sessions. Through interactive discussions in which facilitators and participants ask questions and listen attentively, knowledge is shared. This process also serves as a model for the interaction strategies we want to share with families.

Consider a situation in which program facilitators observe that families are not reading with their children. The facilitators believe that families need to begin doing so. As a response, a three-part lecture/demonstration series is developed to teach families “How to read to your children.” If there is no opportunity for discussion with families within such a series, then the facilitators may never know how families understand this information or what impact it has on family reading practices. For example, is the process of reading that was modelled compatible with family beliefs and interaction practices?

Alternatively, if the facilitators were to reflect on their initial observations, their approach might change. The following questions may help guide reflection in this scenario:

What are the families’ beliefs about learning and the development of the reading process?

Do families believe that reading is something that children learn and do at school?

- How do we² elicit the families’ knowledge and beliefs about children’s learning and the development of the reading process?
- How do we share our beliefs about the role of the family in children’s learning and development of the reading process?

What are the families’ language interaction styles?

Could there be a mismatch between the language interaction styles of the family and those modelled in the demonstration of the reading process?

Could there be a mismatch between the language interaction styles encouraged at home and in school?

- How could we elicit the families’ knowledge about language interaction styles?
- How could we better share our knowledge about language interaction styles?

² “We” refers to facilitators in this section.

- How do we elicit families' opinions on the style of language interaction that schools encourage?
- How do we share our knowledge about the style of language interaction that schools encourage?

What are the families' experiences with literacy?

Are the families literate in their primary language?

What is the family's literacy and/or oral proficiency in English?

Are the families comfortable interacting around print materials?

- How do we elicit from families their experiences of literacy?
- How do we acknowledge families' experiences with literacy?

What are the families' school experiences, in Canada or elsewhere?

Have family members limited, negative, or significantly different school experiences from their children?

- How do we elicit from families their experiences of schooling?
- How do we acknowledge families' experiences with schooling?

In summary, if the facilitators create a series that extends over a period of time and if they incorporate discussion-time into each of their sessions, the opportunity to engage in interactive learning is enhanced. The process of developing a relationship with families, as well as creating time for discussion and mutual reflection, creates the opportunity to balance the facilitators' knowledge with the families' perspective. It is this exchange of ideas that we believe should shape program development.



Six key considerations for planning and implementing a Communication Framework

1. Encourage belonging, commitment, and continuity.

Being personally invited to join a group that met regularly helped many families to develop a commitment to their participation in the program. For some participants, we found we needed to help bridge their connections to each other and to other individuals within the school and/or community in order to address questions that arose.

At times, we found ourselves facilitating conversations between the adult participants. For example, in more informal moments such as at snack time, we would initiate topics of conversation to encourage interaction amongst the adults. Involving the adults in leadership roles also helped support their participation in the process. For example, adults would translate discussions or share stories and songs in the group.

2. Make sure everyone understands.

It is important to find a means by which everyone understands the content.

Understanding the concepts is critical.

We found we had to extend explanation of concepts by providing additional examples that were meaningful to the participants. For example, we learned that “following a child’s lead,” a concept that is commonly used in many language interaction programs, frequently required elaboration. Rather than relying on an idiomatic expression, we redefined the concept by describing the explicit behaviour that we were encouraging adults to use. We created what we called “The Talking Rules” (see Appendix 3).

Providing translation for second-language participants is critical.

In order to ensure that concepts were understood by different language groups, we found it was critical to include the translator in the planning process. It was also important to consider how many different language users were involved in our session. We found that working with a multilingual group increased the complexity of ensuring that participants understood the concepts. We found adding translation for only one language group at a time to be optimal.

3. Be ready to adapt.

It is important to be flexible in terms of program content in order to meet the needs of different groups. As the communication framework includes a variety of strategies which enhance interaction, groups may focus on any one (or more) of the different strategies.

In order to decide which strategies might form the focus of initial sessions, we considered those strategies from which group participants might benefit.

We used the continuous reflections of the facilitators and participants during discussion times to guide the decision on whether to stay with one strategy in order to explore it in more depth, or to explore other strategies.

We learned the importance of modifying and evaluating our content in response to each group of families, their questions, and the outcomes of each session. We used observation, personal interviews, and group discussions to gain understanding into families' perspectives and needs.

4. Consider teaching and learning styles.

Families may benefit from a variety of discussion opportunities and teaching strategies because they have different questions and learning styles.

Our approach included discussion, demonstration, and practise. The intended outcome was to increase the adults' awareness, ability, and flexibility to incorporate interaction, language, and thinking skills in play, learning, and literacy experiences with their children. Adults were engaged in discussion around the rationale for direct instruction and practise of these skills.

We found the following approaches to be useful:

Modelling

We explicitly modelled what we wanted families to try. For example, when introducing a specific oral language or interaction skill, we discussed the skill and modelled the strategies while using the same materials we gave to families. In addition, we described the process being modelled. See examples under "Three key skill sets in the Communication Framework."

Explanation

We discussed why a certain process or teaching practice is used for every concept explored. For example, we explained and taught families the processes of using

role-play and freeze-frames as a teaching practice before using these techniques.

(Freeze-frames is an instructional process used in role-play where the action is stopped at a critical point in order to discuss the content.)

Practise and feedback

We encouraged families to practise new or different skills directly with their children. Our role in this process was to observe their interactions and provide feedback.

Fewer concepts, and repeated instruction

We found it to be more effective to focus on fewer concepts and have repeated opportunities to practise and reflect upon the concepts, rather than to discuss a large number of concepts with limited opportunities for practise and reflection.

5. Choose materials/activities that support the concepts.

Materials/activities should support the concepts shared within the group. That is, materials/activities should not be products and goals in themselves.

Any materials/activities that suit the context and goals of the group are appropriate. Some materials/activities, however, are better suited to the demonstration and practise of specific skills. There may be a need to talk about how interaction strategies can be applied with different materials/activities.

We found that for some families, a discussion of how to select materials/activities that interest their children and how to offer an appropriate number of options of materials/activities for their children proved helpful.

We also found that repeated use of materials/activities over several sessions was necessary in order to meet outcome goals.

In our sessions, materials/activities included:

Toys: cars, balls, dolls, puzzles, playdough

Writing tools: crayons, paper, large pencils

Craft materials: paper, scissors, glue

Books: wordless picture books.

6. Facilitate the use of language development and interaction strategies in the home and community.

It is useful to brainstorm where and when language development and interaction strategies could be used at home and in community contexts.

We found that it was important to link the contexts mentioned by the group to more general contexts. For example, in one group the families discussed the question, “When might adults find time to focus on an interaction with a child?” The participants commented that bedtime is an opportunity. We used this example of a specific context to have the group think about what other types of activities could also be suitable to share with children at bedtime. In order to link the specific context to a more general one, we then asked, “When else in the day, or in what other contexts, could the same activities be incorporated?”

We then encouraged the participants to notice how the same interaction strategies and activities could be incorporated in a variety of contexts throughout the day.



Three key skill sets in the Communication Framework

In this section we provide a Communication Framework that can be incorporated into Family Literacy programs.

The Communication Framework includes skill sets for enhancing:

1. Interaction
2. Language
3. Thinking.

Each section is organized into rationale, strategies, and messages which can be used as guidelines for introducing the skills within the Communication Framework to groups. At the end of each section, focus and reflection questions for group discussion are provided.

1. Skills for enhancing Interaction.

This section includes four skills for enhancing Interaction:

- i. Being close to the child's eye level.
- ii. Turn-taking.
- iii. Observe, Wait, Listen.
- iv. Offering choices.

i. Being close to the child's eye level, and making eye contact.

Rationale:

Being close to the child's eye level: Because of their size, adults may overwhelm children when standing while talking with them. Adults need to consider repositioning themselves to be closer to a child's height and eye level.

Making eye contact: Different cultures have different opinions about the social rule of "make eye contact with the person with whom you are speaking." Developing this skill in the school context is encouraged in children because it lets the teacher or others know that the child is paying attention to what the teacher is saying.

Strategies:

Have the adults and children sit on the floor, a couch, or at a table. The children should be beside the adults, in their laps, or across from them, depending on the activity. Adults should be encouraged to look at children when interacting.

Messages:

Get down to your child's level.
Look at your child when talking or playing.

ii. Turn-taking.

Rationale:

Learning to take turns is a critical skill for effective interactions. In turn-taking, we say something, then we stop and wait while the other person takes a "turn" and talks. Then we start the process over again. Children learn to take turns through talking and playing games.

In our schools, there are many times when children are asked to take turns talking. They may need to take turns when working or playing with a partner, speaking privately with their teacher, or when they are part of a group discussion.

Strategies:

Play games such as rolling a ball, board games, or use songs and stories that require chanting or repeating patterns.

When playing a game, help children learn to take turns. Ask: “Whose turn is it?” Say: “Wait,” or “Wait for your turn.”

When singing or reading, pause and wait expectantly for children to repeat the language pattern or point to the appropriate picture in a book.

Messages:

Take turns in talking, playing, singing, or reading.

Wait for children to respond.

Help children learn to wait for their turn.

iii. Observe, Wait, Listen (OWL).

(Manolson, 1992)

Rationale:

Observe, Wait, and Listen is a set of skills that affects interactions between adults and children. Observing means to watch what a child does, says, or is interested in. Waiting gives children a chance to do something or say something about their interests. Listening means to hear what the child says about an event before the adult makes a response. As adults, we can support children’s interactions by observing, waiting, and listening to them in any context.

Teachers know that children learn new things and remember information best when they are interested in a topic. In our schools, teachers often watch what children choose to do, listen to what they are talking about, or ask them what they would like to learn about, in order to plan some lessons. For example, children can learn to count by using objects they are interested in such as toy cars or animals.

Strategies:

Observe

Put out a variety of activities and encourage adults to notice what the child looks at, does, says, or asks about.

Wait

Encourage adults to count to ten in order to give children a chance to initiate an interaction. If the child doesn't initiate, have adults do something or say something to start an interaction.

Listen

Encourage adults to respond to what children are engaged in rather than changing the activity or topic. Responding can be verbal or non-verbal. For example, an adult can join in talking about what the child has indicated an interest in or join in playing or doing an activity the way the child has started it.

Messages:

Observe

Notice what your child looks at, does, says, or asks about.

Wait

Slow down. Count to ten. Let your child have a chance to direct the action, activity, or conversation.

Listen

Listen to what your children say, or notice what they direct your attention to. Respond to your child by:

- Joining in the activity the way your child has started it.
- Joining in talking about what your child is interested in.

iv. Offering choices.

Rationale:

Choices are part of everyday experience for all of us. Children need to make choices at home, when playing with friends, or at school. They are often expected to make choices about what to do or say.

Giving children choice whenever possible helps them to learn to compare situations, make decisions, and become more independent. When they are not given opportunities for choice, some children may react by arguing, having a temper tantrum, or refusing to do anything at all.

Sometimes there isn't an option for children to make choices. When this is the case, adults need to let children know this is not a time for choice.

Young children are often better able to make choices when they are given two to three options. They often need to see the options from which they may choose. For some children, the question "What do you want to do?" is too difficult to answer. If this is the case, it is better to provide them with the options. For example, ask "Do you want to play with a car, a puzzle, or a doll?"

In our schools, most teachers try to find opportunities to give children some choices during the day. For example, the teacher may make the decision that it is time to read. The teacher might then give the children choices of books they could read.

Strategies:

Have adults predict three activities that their children might like to do. Have the adult practise the language of offering choices with their children.

Messages:

For children who need supports in choice-making:

— When it is possible to offer choices, show children choices and ask them:

Do you want to play with a car or a puzzle?

For children who can make choices independently:

— When it is possible to offer choices, ask them:

What would you like to do?

Focus questions³ for group discussions on Interaction

Is there a time in the day you could spend interacting with your child? (e.g., Before bedtime we can try...)

What are some of the things you could use in interacting with your child?

- things around the home such as pots and pans, garden tools, toys, books, etc.
- things your child likes to do such as colouring, playing with cars
- activities that encourage turn-taking, such as card games

Where is the best place to sit for the chosen activity?

What are some situations or times when it is all right for your child to make choices?

What is the best language to use with your child when you offer choices?

Reflection questions⁴ for group discussions on Interaction

What is your experience with using the specific interaction skills introduced?

- Being close to a child's eye level?
- Making eye contact while talking together?
- Observing, Waiting, and Listening to children?
- Playing games as a way of helping children learn?
- Having children rather than adults choose activities?

Do you have any strategies you could share with the group that you find work well for your family?

³ Focus questions are used with a group prior to the family's starting a particular activity in a home setting.

⁴ Reflection questions are used to ask members of a group how they view the concept, and how it worked in the home setting.



2. Skills for enhancing Language.

This section includes four skills for enhancing Language:

- i. Commenting.
- ii. Modelling.
- iii. Expansion.
- iv. Asking questions.

i. Commenting.

Rationale:

Commenting can be used when children are interacting with any type of activity. In this situation, the adult offers a comment on what the child is doing or noticing at the time. This skill provides children with the opportunity to hear language in context. The adult focuses on making factual observations. For example, “You’re pushing the car.” The child is not required to respond; however, adults should wait to allow time for any type of response from the child.

Strategies:

Have adults practise making comments while watching children engage in activities. It is often easier to demonstrate commenting while in non-reading activities.

Messages:

Talk about what the child is doing.
Don’t tell the child what to do.
Make a comment, then wait.
Don’t talk too much.

ii. Modelling.

Rationale:

Modelling helps children develop appropriate language structures. When modelling, the adult notices what the child is attempting to communicate. Depending on the child’s needs, there are two different approaches to using the skill of modelling.

When children are not expressing themselves verbally, provide them with a direct language model of what to say. For example, when a child is looking at a car with interest, but not asking to play with it, the adult would say, “If you want the toy, you can say, ‘Can I play with the toy?’ ”

OR

When children use incorrect language structures, the adults acknowledge what children have said, and then repeat the message using appropriate language structures. The trick is to provide the language model after the child without telling them that they made a mistake. Adults should use a sentence that is about the same length as the child’s. For example, if the child notices Kevin’s car and says “Kevin gets a car” the adult says “Yes, Kevin *has* a car,” emphasizing the correct word.

Strategies:

Provide the group with scenarios where modelling could be used. Have the group members suggest appropriate language models.

Have adults practise modelling while watching children engage in activities.

Messages:

Provide your child with the language to use.

Repeat your child’s comment using appropriate language structures.

Don’t add too many words.

Don’t point out mistakes.

iii. Expansion.

Rationale:

Expansion helps children develop longer sentences or add more information. When using expansion, adults add a few words or concepts to what children have already said. For example, if a child says “Kevin has a car,” the adult can say “Yes, Kevin has a *new red* car.”

Strategies:

Use group work to look at expanding language structures. Give the group a variety of examples and have them suggest appropriate expansions. Provide examples of varying sentence lengths such as one word, two words, etc. When adults begin to practise expansion with children, it is best to use play-based materials or picture books because opportunities for expansion occur more readily in these contexts.

Messages:

Add a new word or concept to what your child says. Don't add too many words or ideas at one time.

iv. Asking questions.***Rationale:***

Asking questions is a key skill that can help to promote an on-going interaction. When adults ask questions it is important that they wait in order to allow children time to respond.

In our schools, children are asked lots of questions. They are also expected to ask questions as part of their learning. Adults can help children by encouraging them to ask questions.

There are two major types of questions.

One type is called *closed* questions. These are questions that ask for "yes" or "no" answers ("Do you like *cars*?"), or for correct information only ("What is this?"). These questions do not encourage an on-going interaction.

The other type of question is called *open-ended*. An example is, "I wonder what will happen?" This type of question may not have a correct answer. Open-ended questions usually require more than one word to answer. Therefore, open-ended questions engage children in a reciprocal interaction.

Strategies:

Use group work to contrast open-ended questions with closed questions.

Brainstorm a list of open-ended questions/comments, such as:

What do you think about...?

What were some things you noticed...?

Tell me about...?

I wonder if...?

When adults begin to practise asking open-ended questions with children, it is best to use picture books, because opportunities for redirecting the commonly-asked closed question “What’s this?” occur more readily in these contexts.

Messages:

When you ask a question, wait.

Encourage your child to ask questions.

Use open-ended questions.

Questions

Focus questions for group discussions on enhancing Language

Is there a time in the day you could spend enhancing language with your child? (e.g., Before bedtime we can try....)

What are some of the things you could use to support enhancing language with your child?

- things around the home such as pots and pans, garden tools, toys, books, etc.
- things your child likes to do such as colouring, playing with cars
- activities that encourage talking such as card games

Where is the best place to sit for the chosen activity?

Reflection questions for group discussions on enhancing Language

What is your experience with using the specific skills for enhancing language introduced?:

- Commenting
- Modelling
- Expansion
- Asking questions

Do you have any strategies you could share with the group that you find work well for your family?

What skill do you think you would use most often with your child?

Would the skills demonstrated work well for you? Why?

When you were a child, were you encouraged to ask adults questions?

What do you think about children asking adults questions?

What could you say if a child asked questions that you felt weren't appropriate?

3. Skills for enhancing Thinking.

This section includes four skills for enhancing Thinking:

- i. Labelling and describing.
- ii. Categorizing and comparing.
- iii. Sequencing events.
- iv. Explaining and predicting.

i. Labelling and describing.

Rationale:

Labels are the words which are names of things, actions, or concepts, such as “dog,” “run,” or “big.” Labelling is the process by which children learn to understand and say those words. Children are most likely to learn the labels for things in their world and experiences that catch their attention or are important to them, such as “mommy,” “daddy” or “me/I,” or perhaps “hungry,” “milk,” or “want.” Children learn word labels by listening to adults use them. By the time they are three years old, most children have lots of labels, which they combine to form sentences such as “Mommy, I’m hungry. I want milk.”

When children acquire a number of labels, they can begin to describe. Describing is a process based on observations of things in our environment. We notice critical details and then we label them. We often describe what we see, hear, feel, or think. Describing involves using specific language to label those observations. Here is a list of some of the critical details we describe:

Critical detail	Example
Labelling <i>Function</i> or <i>Use</i> :	A <i>banana</i> is for <i>eating</i> .
Labelling <i>Parts</i> :	A banana has a <i>peel and a stem on the outside. It has the fruit inside.</i>
Labelling <i>Colour</i> :	A <i>banana</i> has a <i>green or yellow peel</i> and is <i>white inside</i> .
Labelling <i>Size</i> :	Some <i>bananas</i> are <i>big</i> and some are <i>small</i> .



Children who learn a variety of labels are better able to understand and describe what they hear and read at school. Learning to label and describe things, actions, or concepts in *one* language makes it easier to learn the same labels in *another* language.

Strategies:

At times, children will ask for labels and/or descriptions of things. Examples are when they point at things, bring an object to an adult, or ask “What’s that?” In these contexts, the adult can easily provide the labels and/or descriptors for things, actions, or concepts. At other times, children may not ask for labels. Adults can still provide labels and descriptions to children by using skills described in the sections on interaction and enhancing language. For example, labelling and describing are highly dependent on the skills of commenting and expanding. In order to support the adults to develop the labelling and describing processes in natural contexts, review the skills for interaction and enhancing language, and focus on having them add labels and/or descriptions where appropriate. Adults should consider how they might encourage their children to label and describe. For example, using the phrase “Use your words” supports children in learning to label and describe events. Using a role-play process may facilitate this discussion best. In order to facilitate the adults thinking about describing critical details, have them brainstorm a description of an object. Use the critical details list, above, as a reference.

Messages:

Notice what your child looks at, does, says, or asks about. Provide them with the labels and descriptions.

Encourage your child to label and describe things, actions, or concepts.

Say: “Use your words.”

Ask a describing question.

Say: “What things do you notice about a ...?”

ii. Categorizing and comparing.

Rationale:

Children begin to notice how things, actions, and concepts are the same and how they are different. When children begin to notice similarities and differences in their world, they begin to learn the necessary labels and descriptions. Children who learn a variety of labels and descriptions can better understand how these labels and/or descriptions are grouped and relate to each other. This is the basis of thinking in categories. Learning to categorize requires children to learn more labels and descriptions and helps them to remember a larger number of labels. It is part of the process of thinking with language.

We also use our observations of similarities and differences as well as our knowledge of categories when we make comparisons between things.

As children learn to categorize and compare, they are entering into the process of becoming critical thinkers. They are better able to understand the language used to learn and think about new information.

Strategies:

Have adults group a number of objects or pictures. Ask them why they put items in each group. Ask them if there is an additional way to group items. Have adults put items into two groups and then compare the groups. Ask the adults to think about how they could explain to children the difference between letters and numbers or between plants and animals. Point out how in completing each of these tasks, they have used the processes of labeling, describing, categorizing, and comparing. Point out how as adults, the language of thinking is an automatic process and is called “inner language.” For young children, this thinking process needs to be explicit until they have developed inner language.

Messages:

Notice what your child looks at, does, says, or asks about. Prompt them to think about and label different categories.

Encourage your child to categorize and compare things, actions, or concepts.

Ask a categorizing question:

What group does a *banana* belong in?

Give the category if a child doesn't know what to say:

A *banana* is a type of food/fruit to eat.

Extend the category by asking a categorization question:

What other things can we think of in that group?

Give some category members, if a child doesn't know what to say:

I can think of *oranges* and *kiwi*. What about you?

Ask a comparing question:

How are a *banana* and an *orange* alike?

Make the comparison, if a child doesn't know what to say:

A *banana* is like an *orange* ... **because** ... they are both fruit, and you have to peel them both.

iii. Sequencing events.

Rationale:

When families talk through their experiences, either common day-to-day events or recalled experiences, they are modelling the language of sequence for children.

Learning to sequence is part of the process of thinking with language. Developmentally, young children have difficulty understanding sequence. They have a difficult time knowing if and when certain events may occur. They tend to focus on events in their immediate environment or experience, i.e., "the here and now."

Giving children information on the sequence of events that will occur in their day helps them learn to understand concepts of location and time. For example, "*First* I go to school, *then* I go to daycare."

In English, sequence words include: First, Then, Next, After, Finally, etc.

Learning to understand and relate a sequence of events is also the basis of story (narrative) structure.

Strategies:

Have adults practise skills of relating sequences. Brainstorm when and why we sequence events for children. Topics which lend themselves to sequencing around the home include what events will happen during the day, when children can watch TV, or when they will go to bed. Remind adults that children need concrete events to indicate time and sequence. For example, “First we eat dinner, then you can watch one show on TV.” Model the language frames for sequences (e.g., First, Then, Next, After, Finally, etc.). As a group, role-play some examples of relating sequences using these language frames.

As a group, discuss how relating a personal event or sequence of events, even one with only two or three short details, is in fact a story, and why family discussions can help children develop their understanding of story, events, and sequences. Have the group share events of their day.

Have families practise sharing photograph albums, drawing stories together, and looking at picture storybooks.

Messages:

Ask questions that encourage children to tell a sequence of events:

What did you do today? Do you remember when...?

Relate things in a sequence if a child doesn't know what to say:

First, I.... Then, I.... Next, I....

iv. Explaining and predicting.

Rationale:

Learning to give explanations for why things occur is part of developing thinking skills. This type of thinking skill is called “cause-effect reasoning.” It is the type of thinking needed for making judgments or decisions and justifying opinions. In English, the words “Why” and “because” are often used to help this type of thinking. For children, understanding and using these words appropriately often occurs around the age of five. Before that age, children often have difficulty asking and answering logical cause-effect questions.

Understanding the cause-effect relationship leads to the ability to make logical guesses or predictions about things that might happen. It requires the ability to think about past experiences, and predict what will happen in the future. In English, the words “next” and “if-then” are used to support predictive thinking.

The abilities to give explanations and make predictions are types of thinking that are frequently required in learning situations such as in scientific and mathematical reasoning.

Strategies:

Have adults practise skills of explaining and predicting. As a group, have the adults brainstorm a list of topics. Topics that lend themselves to explaining and predicting include rules around the home. Model the language frames for explaining and predicting. Language frames for explaining include the question and answer pattern, e.g., “Why do you think...?” “Because...” The language frame for predicting is “What do you think will happen next?” As a group, role-play the brainstorm-topics using these language frames.

Have the adults share a book with their children and practise using explaining and predicting techniques.

Messages:

Encourage your child to explain why things happened and to predict what might happen.

Ask a question that requires an explanation:

Why do you think *the banana....?* I think *the banana...because....*

Explain why, if a child doesn't know what to say:

We need to...put the banana on the top of the backpack **because....**

Ask a prediction question:

What do you think will happen next...to the banana?

What would happen if...we put the banana on the bottom of the backpack?

Predict what will happen, if a child doesn't know what to say:

If we *put the banana on the bottom of the backpack,* ...**then...**I think *the banana will get squished.*

Questions

Focus questions for group discussions on enhancing Thinking

How might labelling (or, describing, categorizing, comparing, sequencing, explaining, predicting) be used in conversations? For example, when shopping, making dinner, at the park, on the bus (or other topics relevant to the context).

When would the language frames used for enhancing thinking be useful for helping children manage their behaviour? (e.g., relating the sequence of events that will occur or giving an explanation, etc.)

What stories do you remember adults telling you when you were a child?

Could you tell your child these stories?

Are there family events or stories that your family tells?

When are some times that you could use stories with children?

Reflection questions for group discussions on Thinking

What is your experience with using the specific skills for enhancing thinking introduced?:

Labelling and describing

Categorizing and comparing

Sequencing events

Explaining and predicting

Do you have any strategies you could share with the group that you find work well for your family?

What skill do you think you would use most often with your child?

Would the skills demonstrated work well for you? Why?



Final thoughts

We hope this guide contributes to the thinking in the field of Family Literacy work in the school context.

Before starting a family-literacy program, it is important for facilitators to reflect upon Family Literacy philosophies in order to determine which principles will guide program process and practice.

By incorporating the Communication Framework as an underlying principle in Family Literacy work, opportunities for dialogue as well as specific skill-teaching can be created. Using this process allows for balancing facilitator knowledge and family perspective. Within this framework, the communication skills for developing interaction, language, and thinking can be used for creating program content.

We have attempted to share our fundamental belief about the importance of a Communication Framework as an underlying process in this work. We have offered a Communication Framework as an integral step in finding a way to create conversations to improve learning for both adults and children.



Appendices

Appendix 1:

*Our philosophy of
Family Literacy*

Appendix 2:

*Exploring aspects of
interaction style*

Appendix 3:

*Key components of
a two-hour Family
Literacy session*

Appendix 4:

Beyond the sessions

Appendix 5:

Parent questionnaires

Appendix 1:

Our philosophy of Family Literacy

What do we understand Family Literacy to be about?

There are many forms of literacy.

All forms of literacy-development need to be encouraged and supported.

Literacy and thinking skills are based on oral communication skills.

Interactive oral language skills are basic to all language learning.

Literacy events that may occur in the home may be different from those at school.

Why do we believe it is important to work with families?

We can ensure success for all learners by providing proactive programs for families.

Families include a variety of caregivers.

We recognize that families already support their children's learning and seek to support and extend their roles as educators within the family.

Family involvement in children's education is to be celebrated.

Families are the primary source from which children learn about communication and culture.

Families that feel a sense of competence in their ability to support their children's education will become more actively involved in their children's learning.

Families that understand how parent/child language interaction patterns are the foundations to the development of children's language, learning, and literacy skills will spend more time talking with their children.

Families that have a sense of belonging to school community are more likely to become involved in their child's education.

Families need information about current teaching practices in order to support their children's education.

Upon whom is the focus of instruction in Family Literacy programs?

The focus is on adult learning in order to support the family's involvement with their children's learning.

What do we believe about working with families in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity?

Families that understand how first language and culture contribute to the development of children's literacy and thinking skills will support their children's language and literacy development in both first and second languages.

Families that are given opportunities to discuss child development and learning, from a variety of cultural and personal perspectives, will have more opportunities to reflect on their own family practice in supporting their children.

What do we believe are best practices in working with families within Family Literacy programs?

Families and teachers need to understand and respect each other's roles and practices in order to work together to make them complementary.

Families are at different stages in their learning and have different learning styles.

It is important to integrate the families' interests and questions within the program content in order to provide a proactive program.

We need to build bridges for children and their families that will make the connections between oral and written communication.

It is important to provide time to create a group process in order to build relationships between families, and between families and schools.

Appendix 2:

Exploring aspects of interaction style

Interaction style is about how, as adults, we observe, listen to, and talk with children. It is about how we use oral language to guide children's language and thinking and how responsive we are to children.

- How much do we use language to name things, to describe and explain ideas, and to recall and talk about events?
- Do we ask or do we demand?
- What kinds of questions do we ask children?
- How do we listen to what children are saying and encourage their own thinking through wondering aloud with them?
- Do we try different strategies to stimulate language and learning—novel ways to use toys, invented games, building on the children's ideas, etc.?
- Are we aware of children's play and interests or what they are noticing? Do we participate willingly in children's chosen activities? Do we allow and encourage children's independence and choice of activities?
- Are we expressive with children?
- How do we understand their behaviour?

How do we encourage, or perhaps discourage, children?

- Do we use words of encouragement?
- Do we describe children's accomplishments and encourage them to describe their own efforts? Do we focus encouragement on specific efforts rather than personality? For example, "You put the blocks just where they belong," instead of "You're such a good boy."
- Do we show that we enjoy interacting with children, by not ignoring or rejecting their interactions with us?

(Based on the work of Hart & Risley (1995), and Family Literacy (2000).)

Appendix 3:

Key components of a two-hour Family Literacy session

Organizing training sessions: facilitators and participants

We recommend using two facilitators and a maximum of 10-12 participants.

A. Key components

1. Greeting, and working on scrapbooks. 20 minutes

a. Greeting

Facilitators greet participants (e.g., adults and children) personally, and facilitate family or group interactions, as necessary.

Rationale:

- Promotes interactions between adults and children.
- Promotes interactions between adults.
- Facilitates community-building.

b. Scrapbooks

Participants are given photographs taken in each session to put in their scrapbooks. Including drawings, decorations, or mementos is encouraged as well. Scrapbooks can be used as additional materials for sharing and interaction between family members. Scrapbooks can be introduced in circle time and modelled as a “picture reading” activity. Scrapbooks should be sent home at the last session.

Rationale:

- Promoting interactions between adults and children.
- Creating family stories and memories.

2. Circle time for children and adults to participate together.

20 minutes

The format is that of the traditional school circle time, with participants joining in with poems, songs, and stories. Poems, songs, and stories are repeated frequently. The adults sit with their child either on the floor or in chairs, and are encouraged to join in. Group participants are encouraged to share their own poems, songs, and stories from their own cultural and linguistic group.

The facilitators co-chair the session. One facilitator leads the group while the other uses a “news commentator” approach to tell the adult participants what strategy is being used and what its purpose is, or to comment on anything that arises in the moment. Pauses are built in to the circle time for the commentary to be in the moment. The strategies are recorded on chart paper by one of the facilitators, and reviewed each session.

Examples of the commentary: “We use rhyming patterns in songs and poems because it helps children predict new words. This is how they learn to read.” Or, “Some children like to reach out to touch pictures in books, and that is okay.”

Rationale:

- Many of the interaction, language, and thinking skills that are part of circle time are implicit. Adults may not recognize why these activities are learning opportunities for children. Adults may need an explanation (meta-cognition) of why a certain process or teaching practice is used, as well as modelling of the strategies.
- Repeated instruction of the strategies supports adults to understand and use specific strategies.
- The program should reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the parents/caregivers.



Circle time messages

- Repeating patterns helps children learn
- If children don't join in, you can help by moving their hands—action songs
- When children know a song or story you can pause and let them fill in the missing part
- When children know a song, you can go faster
- When children know a song, you can make up your own words or actions

3. Adult group time.

30 minutes

During adult time, the interaction, language, and thinking skills are discussed and demonstrated. The focus is on discussing and practising one skill with one set of materials/activities. All participants focus on the same strategy and activity during these sessions.

While adults are in this group, children are in a free play group with supervision.

Rationale:

Instruction, explicit modelling, and opportunities for discussion are critical to adult learning. The discussion is focused on the adults as participants.

Adult group messages

- It is how you talk and listen to your children that is important
- It is more important to talk to your child in the language you speak best
- Children who have lots of opportunities to talk in their first language learn English more easily
- At school, teachers want children to talk
- Being face to face is important
- Remember the Talking Rules:
 - Talk face to face
 - Watch what your child is doing
 - Wait (count to 10)
 - Talk about what is happening
 - Ask a question

4. Adult/child shared activity with coaching. **30 minutes**

Participants explore the target skills with their children. The facilitators move around the group and join participants in their interactions in order to answer questions and provide feedback. (The adults are aware that the facilitators will join in their activity-time with their child during the sessions.)

Rationale:

Opportunities for practise, questions, and feedback facilitate adult learning.

5. Snack and clean-up. **20 minutes**

Children are provided with snacks. Facilitators model the language of interaction in context. Facilitators encourage family or group interactions, as necessary.

Rationale

- Adults have repeated opportunities to observe strategies for enhancing language interaction and thinking.
- Promoting interactions between adults facilitates community-building.

B. Example lesson plan for Circle Time and Adult Group Discussion

1. Circle Time discussion

- Facilitators, adults, and children sit on floor in a circle.
- Greeting song: “Hello My Friends, Hello.”
- Review Circle Time Messages and model specific new message.
- For example: Using the song “Hello My Friends, Hello,” say “Hello my friends,”, then pause to fill in the missing part—“Hello.”

- Have the group decide on two songs/poems to do; use picture cues to help prompt recall.
- Review the song/poem, “The Moon is Round” (1992).
- Introduce the message of making up your own words to songs by changing “The Moon is Round” to “The Sun is Round.” Focus on making up your own words.
- Model picture-reading strategy from a large-format book.

2. Adult group discussion

Review previous session activity.

Ask if anyone had a chance to play or colour with their children.

- What did you notice?

Ask if any of the adults had a chance to try these strategies with their children.

- What did you notice?

3. Review adult group messages

- Today we are going to talk about reading pictures.
- Books tell stories.
- They have pictures and print.
- We want to discuss with you ways of reading the pictures.

How to read pictures

- use the language with which you are most comfortable
- talk about the pictures, don’t read the words
- comment about what you see or what your child notices
- don’t ask your child “what’s this, what’s that?”

What you do (the process)

- sit side by side
- watch what your child is noticing (child may point to a picture or say something about a picture)

- comment about what the child notices, or...
- if the child doesn't notice something,
you comment about the picture
- picture-read the story.

- Model the activity using a large-format book.
Picture-read the story to the group.
- Any questions?

4. Explain the adult/child activity

We are going to give you the same story in a small book, and we want you to sit side by side with your child and picture-read the story with your child.



Appendix 4: *Beyond the sessions*

1. Debrief with program staff. 1.5 hours

Facilitators debrief following each session. The discussion focuses on planning the next session, based on the facilitator's observations and feedback from participants.

Rationale

- Programs need to be modified/evaluated in response to each group of learners and outcomes of each session.
- The facilitators should respond to all questions and observations from the adults in the group in order to be responsive to identified needs for each group.
- The program should be flexible in order to develop weekly sessions based on those needs identified by the group facilitators and the adult participants.

2. Keeping contact with families.

Facilitators make regular phone calls to remind adults of the up-coming group or as a follow-up for missed sessions. The focus of the phone call is to encourage adults to feel part of the group as contributing members.

Rationale

- Create a sense of belonging in a community or school.

3. Adult questionnaires.

Interviewing adults through the use of pre- and post-session questionnaires provides insight into the adults' knowledge and questions in order to plan program content and to provide program feedback and evaluation.

See examples of pre- and post-session questionnaires in Appendix 5.

Rationale

- Adults are at different stages in their learning and have different learning styles. Instruction needs to consider these factors.

Appendix 5:

Parent questionnaires

Pre-program Parent Questionnaire

Jean Fowler and Sydney Hook

Your name: _____

Child's name: _____

Child's birth date: _____

Does the child have any allergies? _____

If yes, to what? _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Best time to reach you by phone: _____

What languages are spoken and read in the home (by mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, siblings, etc.)?

What language does the child understand and speak the most?

How many children live at home? _____

What are their names and ages? _____

What do you want your child to learn in this group? _____

What do *you* want to learn about the development of your child's ability to talk and listen?

Do you have any concerns about your child? _____

If you have a question or concern about your child, who do you ask? _____

How well do you think your child talks? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not well at all		OK		Very well

How well do you think your child listens? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not well at all		OK		Very well

How much time every day do you have available to talk with your child? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not much at all		Some		A lot

How much do you think talking with your child helps them learn in school? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not much at all		Somewhat		A lot

How much do you think talking with your child helps them to read? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not much at all		Somewhat		A lot

Have you gone to any other community programs with your child? _____

If yes, what ones? _____

What other services and programs do you know about? _____

In schools _____

Preschools _____

Community centres _____

Libraries _____

Others _____

Post-program Parent Questionnaire

Jean Fowler and Sydney Hook

Your name: _____

Child's name: _____

Child's birth date: _____

What kind of activities do you do with your child? _____

What songs, folk tales, or familiar stories do you share with your child? _____

What toys or games that were introduced in the group does your child like to play with?

What is your child's favourite toy? _____

What did your child learn in this group? _____

What did *you* learn about how to talk with your child? _____

How well do you think your child talks? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not well at all		OK		Very well

How well do you think your child listens? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not well at all		OK		Very well

How much time every day do you have available to talk with your child? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not much at all		Some		A lot

How much do you think talking with your child helps them learn in school? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not much at all		Somewhat		A lot

How much do you think talking with your child helps them to read? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not much at all		Somewhat		A lot

What was most helpful about this group for you as a parent or grandparent?

How satisfied were you with this program? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not much at all		Somewhat		A lot

Have you noticed a change in the way you talk with your child? Describe this change.

Would you recommend this group to other parents? _____

1	2	3	4	5
Not much at all		Somewhat		A lot

Would you be interested in attending other parent groups to learn about helping children with reading?

What other information would you find helpful to learn about?



References

- Chambers, C., & Bright, R. (2002). "Chapter 3: The dynamics of working with parents," in *Foundational training in family literacy*. Centre for Family Literacy: Edmonton, AB.
- De Feo, A.B. (ed). (1995). Parent Articles 2, Communication Skill Builders, a division of The Psychological Corporation, Tucson, AZ.
- Edwards, P. (1994) in Shively, J. & Thomas, A. (2002). "Understanding Family Literacy," in *Foundational Training in Family Literacy*. Centre for Family Literacy: Edmonton, AB.
- Family Literacy: Training and staff development for family literacy practitioners: Participants' manual. (2000). National Center for Family Literacy, 325 West Main Street, Suite 200, Louisville KY, 40202-4251.
- Foundational Training in Family Literacy Trainer's Guide: Centre for Family Literacy, Edmonton, AB. (2002).
- Fotheringham, S., Marek-Thorton, P., & Olezsko, B. (July 2000). *Talk with your child in your First Language*. Primary Language Literacy Project Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and First Words Preschool Speech and Language Program.
- Hart, B., & Risley, T. (1995). "Intervention to equalize early experience," pp. 191-217. In *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD.
- Hayden, R., & Kendrick, M. (2002). "Understanding emergent literacy," in *Foundational Training in Family Literacy*. Centre for Family Literacy: Edmonton, AB.

- International Reading Association's Commission on Family Literacy. (1994). *Family Literacy: New Perspectives New Opportunities* (Brochure). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Literacy BC (1999). *The B.C. framework of statements and standards of best practices in Family Literacy*. Prepared by Jean Rasmussen, project manager, Literacy BC, in collaboration with Jo Dunaway and the Provincial Family Literacy Working Group—Training and Standards Sub-committee. Vancouver, BC.
- Manolson, A. (1992). *It takes two to talk: A parent's guide to helping children communicate*. Hanen Centre: Toronto, ON.
- Manolson, A., & Ward, D. (1995). *You make the difference in helping your child learn*. Hanen Centre: Toronto, ON.
- Schrader, M. (ed.) (1988). *Parent Articles, Communication Skill Builders: a division of The Psychological Corporation, Tucson, AZ*.
- Shively, J., & Thomas, A. (2002). "Understanding Family Literacy," in *Foundational Training in Family Literacy*. Centre for Family Literacy: Edmonton, AB.
- "The moon is round, and other rhymes to play with your baby." The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program. (2002) Toronto, ON.
- The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program Teacher Training Manual*. The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program. (1994). Toronto, ON.
- The Phonological Awareness Companion: Linguisystems*, 3100 4th Avenue, East Moline, IL, 61244. (Out of print.)
- Rothstein, V., & Goldberg, R. (1993). *Thinking through stories, Grades K to 6—Language Lessons for the Curriculum*. Linguisystems. Psycan, Toronto, ON.
- Thomas, A., Fazio, L., & Stiefelmeyer, B. (1999). *Families at school: A guide for educators*. International Reading Association, Newark, DE.
- Weitzman, E. (1992). *Learning Language and Loving It: A Guide To Promoting Children's Social and Language Development in Early Childhood Settings*. Hanen Centre: Toronto, ON.

Notes

Notes

TFEU

RT05-0015
June 2005