



Workshops Work! Hosting Literacy Workshops for Families of Preschoolers

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POLL

The Influence of Home

- Homes vary on a wide variety of dimensions.
- Many of these dimensions are associated with literacy learning, for example:
 - bedtime stories
 - discussion of letters and sounds
 - amount of language
 - nature of language
 - books in home
 - experiences in community.

Family Literacy Programs

- Research on the impact of family literacy programs is mixed.
- Some interventions have shown no effect.
- Others have shown positive effects (e.g., Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Jordan, Snow, & Porche, 2000; Lonigan, Shanahan, Cunningham, & The National Early Literacy Panel, 2008; Roberts, 2013; Sénéchal & Young, 2008).

6 Key Areas of Early Literacy

- Comprehension
- Concepts of Print
- Letter-Sound Knowledge
- Oral Language
- Phonemic Awareness
- Writing

Comprehension

- The ability to make sense of the things that we see, read, and hear in the world around us
- The purposes of reading
- Thinking about what we know, believe, experience or feel, and how that relates to what we are seeing, reading, or hearing
- Thinking about what the author, illustrator, or speaker wants us to know



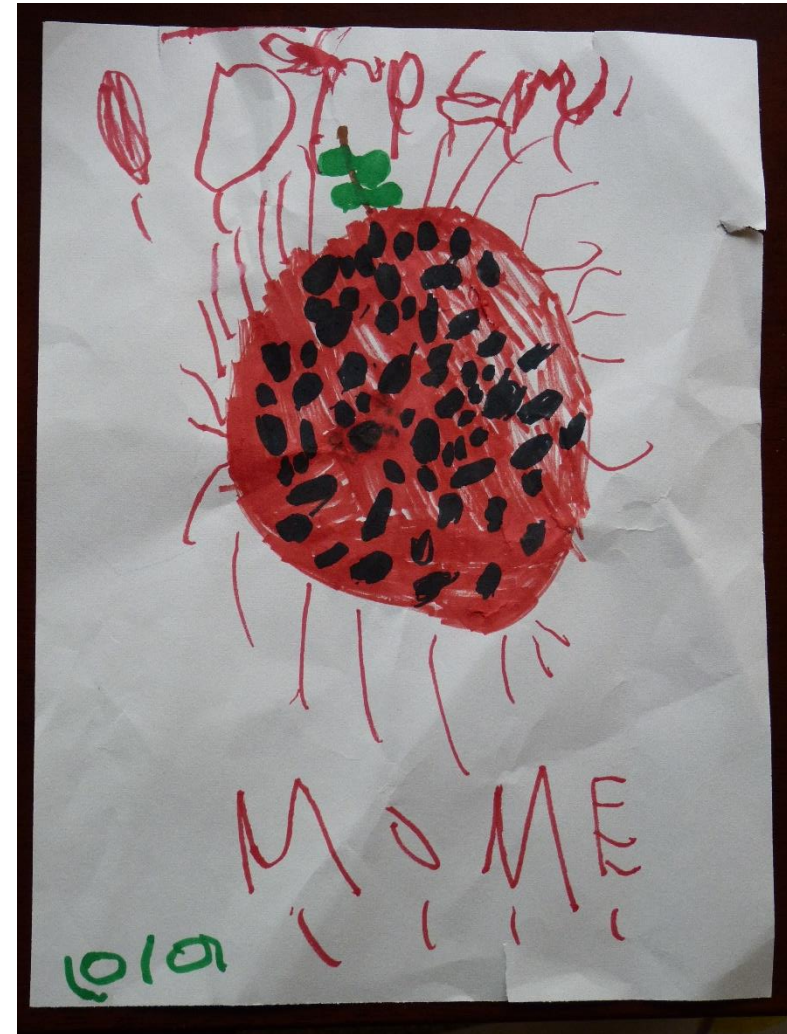
Concepts of Print

- The basic things that readers need to know about books and print.
- For example:
 - Books have a front and a back
 - In English, we read from left to right and top to bottom
 - The letters on a page make up words that have meaning
 - Pictures can also help us understand what we're reading.



Letter/Sound Knowledge

- Knowing the names and sounds of letters
- For example, a child knows this shape—M—is called the letter “M” and stands for the mmmmm sound as at the beginning of *moon*
- This can be tricky because there are 26 letters in the English alphabet that can be used alone or in combination to make about 44 sounds.
- Eventually helps children to use letters to read the words that others have written and to represent the sounds they hear when writing words



Letter Names in English can be Confusing!

Sometimes:

- The sound the letter represents isn't in the letter's name!
- The sound the letter represents comes first in the letter's name.
- The sound the letter represents comes second in the letter's name.

And

- The vowel in the letter's name varies. (e.g., *b, f, j, q, r*)

Oral Language/Vocabulary

- Oral language has two parts:
 1. the ability to talk, to communicate with language
 2. the ability to understand the language you hear
- Vocabulary is a big part of oral language—children learn vocabulary but hearing words often and in rich contexts
- The strength of a child's oral language has a powerful influence on how well children learn to read and write



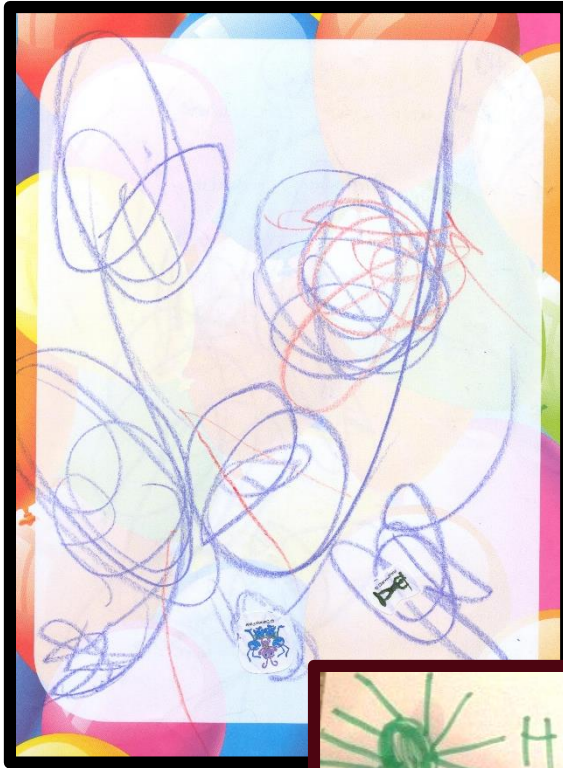
Phonological Awareness

- The ability to separate sounds and groups of sounds that make up words, such as the three sounds /sh/, /ee/, and /p/ in the word *sheep*
- Does not directly involve letters—it has to do with hearing and making sounds within words
- When children have strong phonological awareness, they can recognize and create:
 - rhymes
 - words that start with the same sound
- They can also **blend** and **separate** individual sounds within a word
- These skills eventually help children to use sounds to read and write words



Writing

- Expressing meaning by drawing, scribbling, using pretend letters, using familiar letters and words, and using their best guesses at how words might be spelled
- Allows children to communicate and to share their thinking with people who may not be present when they write



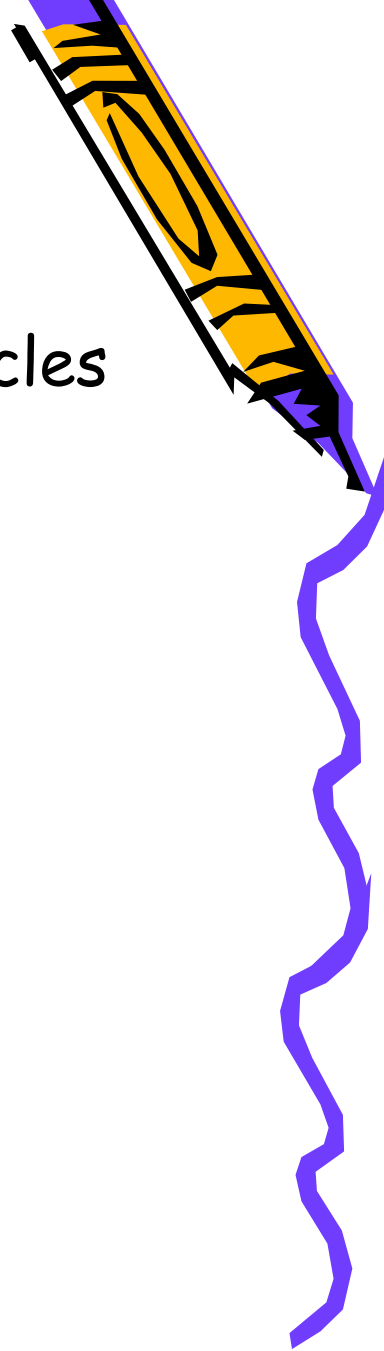
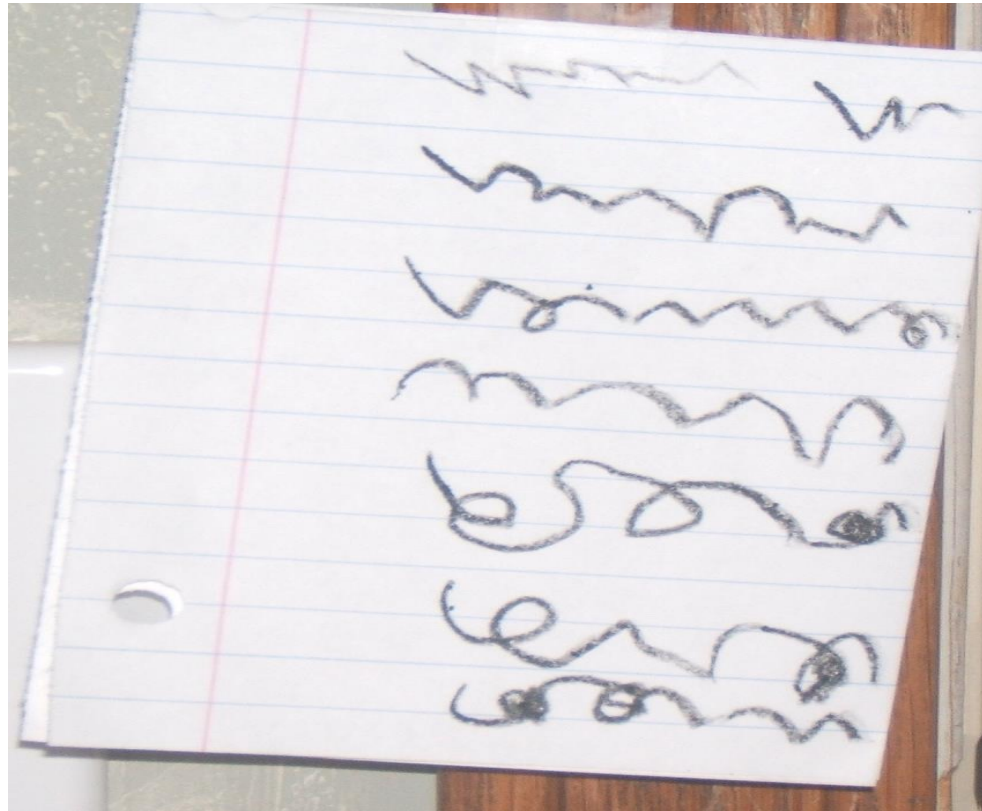
Writing Through Drawing

- One of the first ways that children express their thoughts and ideas on paper



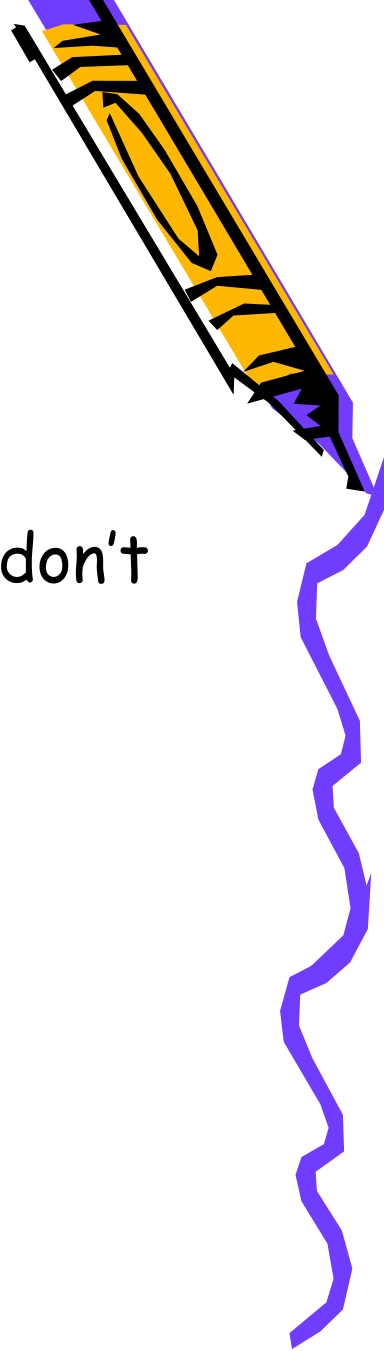
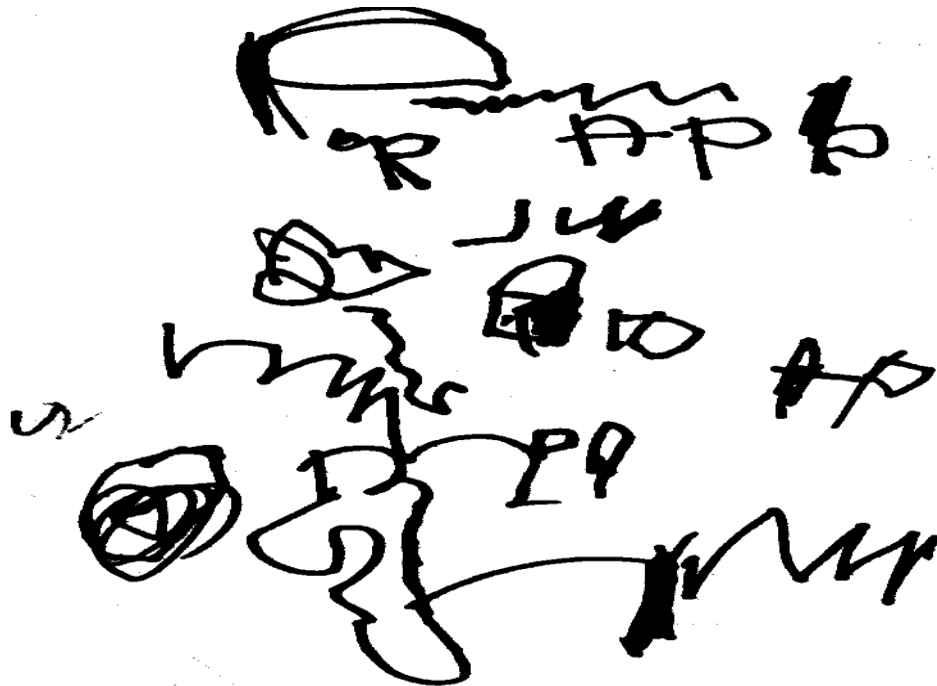
Writing Through Scribbling

- Writing (squiggly lines) starts to differ from drawing (circles and scribbles)
- Writing may follow a structure (e.g., looks list vs. a story)



Writing Through Letter-like Forms and Letter Strings (2 Stages)

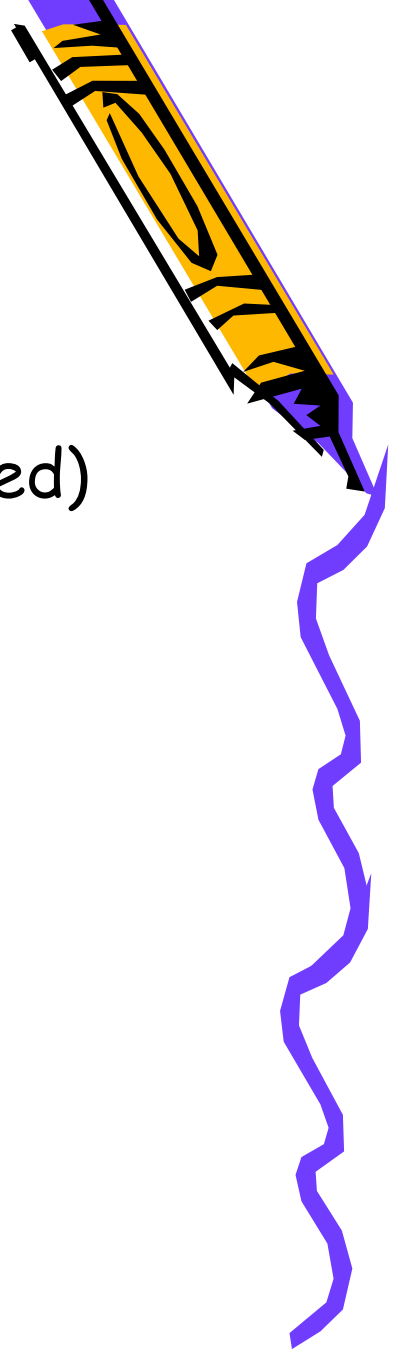
- Letters and letterlike forms start to appear
- Writing may include strings of letters put together (that don't necessarily form words)



Writing Through Estimated Spelling

- Writing includes more letters (more conventionally formed)
- Uses knowledge of sounds to help in writing

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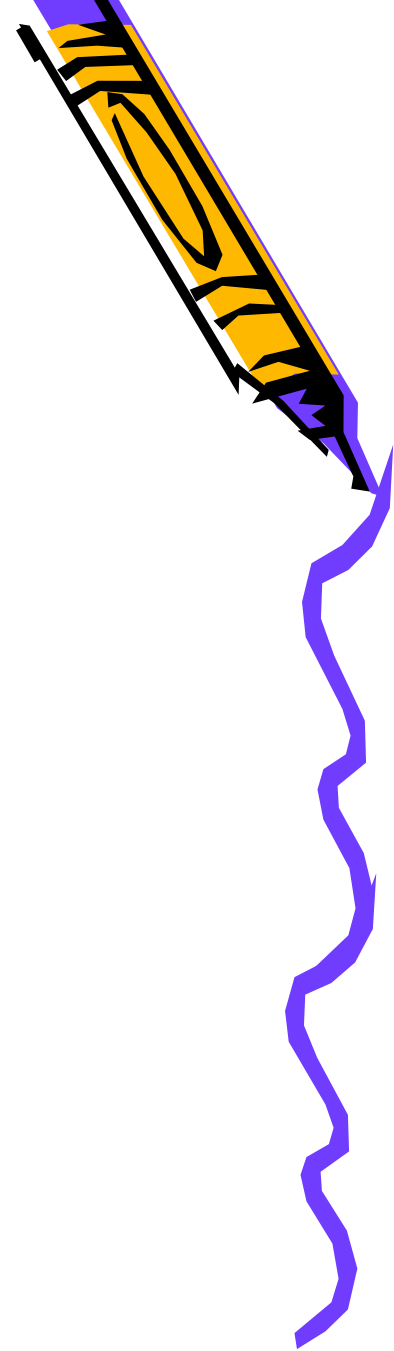
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BUDER!



Writing Through Conventional Spelling

- Word spelled as in the dictionary
- Not expected until well after formal school entry



Family Literacy Fast Facts

- The “achievement gap” starts to form for many children during their first years, and is already apparent at kindergarten entry (e.g., Hart & Risley, 1995; Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 2000)

Family Literacy Fast Facts

- High-quality early education can play a role children's literacy learning (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).
- However, much of young children's time is spent with their families.

So what do we know about parents, guardians, and other family members?

- Most of them are not trained early childhood educators
- When families do get support, it is often just recommendations to do things like “read with your children often” and “teach them the alphabet”, but there is typically little advice as **how** to do these things
- There are also so many important things beyond reading aloud and naming letters that are not commonly recommended.

What else do we know about parents, guardians, and other family members?

- They want the best for their kids
- They have capacity to support kids' learning
- They are our partners; we have complementary roles
- Many are waiting on us to make the first move

Summary: The Challenge

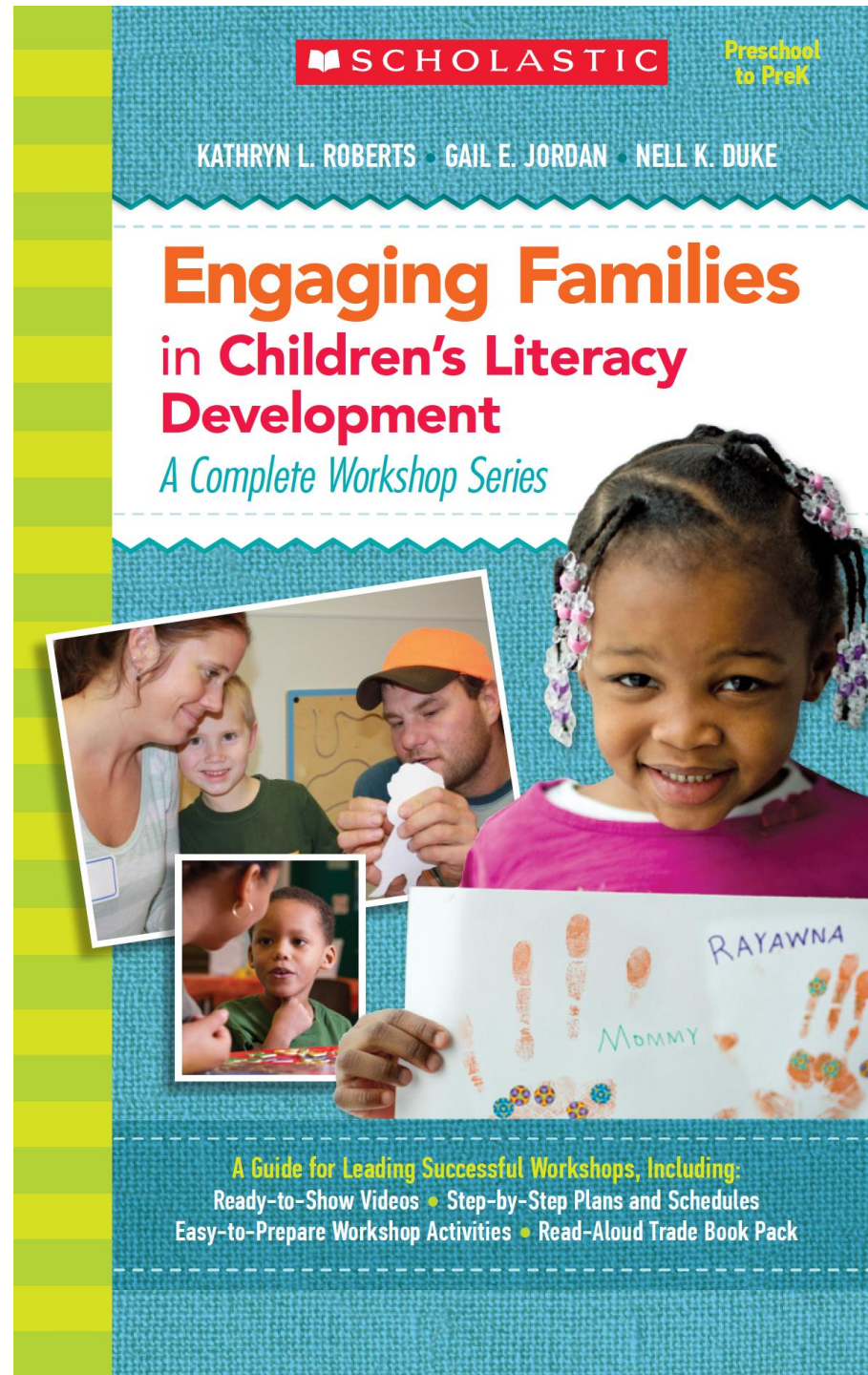
- Parents, guardians, and other adult family members of children under the age of five are their children's first teachers, and what happens at home is highly predictive of later literacy (and school) success.
- Families often have the far fewer resources than teachers to take on this job (e.g., knowledge, materials, literacy skills).

Addressing the Challenge with a Growth Mindset (Dweck, 2006)

- These are NOT obstacles that are beyond our influence.
- We can affect each of these types of resources (among others):
 - Knowledge
 - Materials
 - Literacy Skills

*The Engaging
Families . . .
Workshop
Series**

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“Engaging Families”: An Overview

- Five workshops
- Designed to fit activities to families lives, not the other way around

“Engaging Families: An Overview

- Session 1: Introduction: Literacy Happens in the **Home**
- Session 2: Literacy Happens in the **Living Room**
- Session 3: Literacy Happens in the **Kitchen**
- Session 4: Literacy Happens in the **Bedroom and Bathroom**
- Session 5: Literacy Happens **Out and About**

“Engaging Families”: An Overview

- Focused on 6 key areas of literacy development
- Very intentional about affective pieces of the program (invitations, environment, consideration of families needs)
- Takes a strengths-based perspective

Session Structure

- Dinner and Social Time (30-40 minutes)
- Welcome and Introduction (10 minutes)
- Video Viewing and Discussion (15-20 minutes)
- Literacy Activities Overview (10-15 minutes)
- Activity Time with Children (45-50 minutes):
 - CHOICE of activities for each area of literacy
 - Activities designed for easy transfer to homes
 - All necessary materials provided; many sent home

Key Factors in Family Involvement:

- Self-efficacy: *I know what to do and I can do this.*
- Value: *Doing this matters.*



I know what to do.

- We asked ourselves:
 - What do we want our families to know how to do with their children?
 - What are the differences between how educators approach these things, and appropriate ways for families to approach them?

I can do this.

Do

- Adjust your language to your audience
- Try to make activities fit with family life
- Provide families with opportunities to practice with support of peers and educators

Do NOT

- Scare families off with jargon
- Make family life bend to school activities
- Tell families what to do and expect they will be able/willing to take it from there

Sample Video Clips From the Workshop Session *Literacy Happens Out and About*

Out and About:
José, Ángel, and Felix



Concepts of Print & Writing in the Kitchen

- Snack Recipes



- Grocery Lists



Doing this matters.

Do

- Explain the important role that families play
- Explain why you are asking families to do each thing that you ask them to do

Do NOT

- Scare families into thinking their child's entire educational future hinges on their teaching skills
- Deliver a master's level course in early childhood education

Did it work?

- After the workshops, adult family members reported more involvement with their children at home around all areas of literacy learning, but showed statistically significant growth in:
 - Writing
 - Reading Aloud
 - Oral Language
- Children also experienced gains in many areas, significantly so in:
 - Comprehension
 - Expressive Vocabulary
 - Print and word awareness

Planning For Action:

What is it that you want families to know or be able to do?

Who is best qualified to help them learn these things? (This is the "Team")

What supports do the Team need to design and implement a sustainable plan?

What is it that you want families to know or be able to do?

- Food for thought:
 - What (ideally) makes a student “kindergarten ready”?
 - What areas are the children you work with having the most difficulty with?
 - In what areas have families asked for help?

Who is best qualified to help them learn these things? (The “Team”)

- Food for thought:
 - What areas of expertise does your organization have?
 - What areas are not as strong?
 - Think about designing, planning, implementation, recruiting families, running the activities, preparing materials, etc.

What supports do the Team need to design and implement a sustainable plan?

- Food for thought:
 - What are the physical needs (space, materials)?
 - What are the curricular needs (expertise for design, consultants, resources to purchase)?
 - What are the economic needs?
 - What are the logistical needs (childcare, transportation, communication, scheduling)?

Ask Yourself:

- What do you have?
- What do you need?
- Who can you partner with to get what you need?

Select References

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