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The Effects of Home Literacy Bags on Kindergarteners' Concepts of Print

BY ANNE M. KAMAN

Vision and Targets

Parents have a significant influence on a child's learning and development. They are the first teacher of their child and play a critical role in the development of early literacy skills. They may offer support such as helpful hints at home to initiate reading, library programs that specifically offer programs for the preschooler and kindergarten age group, and community programs (Weissbourd, 2010). Initiating reading at home is an example of how parents can support literacy. However, some parents may have difficulty finding time to read with their child because of work schedules and childcare. Barbour (1999) states, "Parents who read regularly to their children promote positive attitudes towards reading and reading achievement" (p. 71). The use of home literacy bags is an example of how parents can increase their child's early literacy skills. Home literacy bags can be a positive change for student and parent.

I feel that a change needs to be made at a suburban school in Livonia involving parental support and early literacy skills in the kindergarten program. I feel that this change is necessary because I had conversations with the kindergarten teacher, third-grade teacher, eighth-grade teacher, and the principal at this school regarding these factors. They had noticed a decline in parental involvement, most noticeably with homework. They saw the daily impact on their students' academic progress. I taught at this school for 8 years and was aware of the decline in parental involvement and the impact on academic success when I left 3 years ago. The eighth-grade teacher commented, "If only the parents could start early and see how important it was for them to get involved in their child's education."

Also, I observed in my preschool practicum last year that the 4s and early 5s students were not always confident in handling books. The children did not know where to begin reading when I opened a big book and pointed to a page. They were also unaware of the author and where to find the author's name. I was frequently asked by the students, "What is that squiggle?" as they pointed to a question mark. The teacher remarked that the parents were very busy and some children were not being read to at home. She commented wearily that she was doing her best but needed to work on social skills more.

I reflected back to when my three children were ages 4 and 5. Our children loved curling up in a chair with us and reading books together. We were introduced to many new adventures through literature during this special time. It was then that I decided to make a difference in a child's life and targeted the kinder-

garten level because it was the first school experience that was required for all children. I wanted to involve the parents, and what better way to do so than by having them read a book to their children. I made the decision to use home literacy bags because kindergarten children love to have "homework" and enjoy reading a book with their parent. I decided to incorporate the Concepts of Print skills because these early literacy skills are needed for a student entering kindergarten to begin reading. These concepts include:

- Book concepts
- Reading concepts
- Directionality concepts
- Concepts of word
- Concepts of letter
- Punctuation

A new set of Concepts of Print skills within an easy activity for parents would be included in the literacy bag that would build on the previous week skills. I asked the kindergarten teacher and she wholeheartedly agreed because she had been noticing that in the last few years the students were coming in with little or no Concept of Print skills. She felt that this would be a great springboard for her goals and benchmarks at the beginning of the year.

I will use three different types of assessment in this change project. First, I will use the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) Concept of Print skills test as a pre- and post-test. I chose this test because it was a widely recognized test used in Michigan.

Two kindergarten teachers agreed that the test was easy to administer, that it clearly listed concepts of print with appropriate prompts, and that it was useful in assessing the child in the Concept of Print skills. I will use two different books at the same level with large print for each test.

Next, I will use information from parent and student survey sheets each week. I chose this method of survey because I want to observe if a pattern emerges about the length of time spent reading the books and the number of times the books was read. The first question will ask about the duration of time spent reading to their child. The second question will address the frequency of time the books were read. The parent post-survey will address the parent point of view regarding the helpful reading tips used weekly. These reading tips are, in fact, the Concepts of Print. The kindergarten students will fill in a face referring to how well they liked the book. I chose this method to include the children each week. These responses will allow me to make changes in the future about the selection of books used in the home literacy bags.

Lastly, I will use a teacher checklist regarding the Concepts of Print skills observed in the classroom, before and after the home literacy bags are used. The worksheet consists of 22 concepts of Print skills. I chose this method because the classroom teacher's observation is valuable due to the fact that she observes skills being used throughout the day. These three different types of assessment will be used in this change project. I am confident that this vision can become a change and make a difference in a child's life.

Research Review

A change was needed in a kindergarten classroom, in a suburban school in Livonia, Michigan. This change involved promoting parental support and early literacy skills in a kindergarten program of twenty-four students by incorporating Home Literacy Bags.

These two research questions guided this change project:

1. Do kindergarten students have increased literacy skills in Concepts of Print MLPP scores when parents read to their child using home literacy bags?
2. Do parents feel that they have supported their child's early literacy skills by using the home literacy bag?

Parents as the Primary Teacher

Parents have long been recognized as being an important person in the development of their child as well as their child's primary teacher. Home has been viewed as the child's first classroom (Barbour, 1999). Educators value parents and the important role that they play in the education process of their child. Children are exposed to two types of literacy at home/natural environment, informal and formal (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). Informal literacy activity deals with reading a book to their child for the meaning of the print or story. A child may ask a question or the parent may point out a word or illustration, however this is done in an informal setting. The formal literacy activity also focuses on the child reading a book with the parent. However, the parent can read a word, give examples of other sounds or meaning, and make connections to illustrations or other words. This information was important to this change project because informal and formal literacy activities are an effective way for parents to spend time with their child and impact their child's literacy skills.

Two studies, Bennett, Weigel, & Martin (2002); Senechal & LeFevre (2002) both agreed that joint book reading positively influenced young children's achievement of language and literacy skills. Bennett, Weigel, & Martin (2002) focused on three models that included Family as Educator, Resilient Family, and Parent-Child Care Partnership. All three models were tested; however, the Family as Educator model directly correlated to child language and literacy. This was due to family environment considerably affecting the child's language and literacy outcomes. Senechal & LeFevre (2002) discussed three objectives that directly related to literacy, one of which was language and early literacy skills correlated with home reading activities. This study found that parents reading orally to their child and writing words that their child dictated was directly related to the development of early literacy skills.

This change project focused on parents reading orally at home to their child without addressing writing skills. Both studies suggested that parents play a key role in early literacy skills when they read to their child within the home/ natural environment and implement the strategies discussed above. Both of these areas informed the design of this change project because parents can support their child's literacy skills with oral reading and activities that directly correlate to literacy.

In reviewing the literature, the child and parent benefits from positive involvement while reading literature jointly. The school benefits by involving parents early in kindergarten, which will instill the importance of being involved in their child's literacy. Parental involvement can continue onto the next grade and throughout their child's education.

Home Literacy Bags

One of the great tasks of educators today is to involve parents in their child's education. A few examples of parent involvement are volunteering at their child's school, attending school meetings and parent-teacher conferences, and interacting with their child during homework (Battle-Bailey, 2004). This change project specifically focused on the component of parental involvement during homework.

One way to involve parents with their child's homework is the use of literacy bags. Literacy bags may include one book, activities for parents to use while reading to their child, and parent/child reading logs placed in a bag that the child takes home from school. Literacy bags also connect home and school. This home activity gives the child more exposure to books and specific activities that can increase literacy skills. Two specific studies, Battle-Bailey (2004) and Barbour (1999), incorporated a home literacy bag program that parent and child worked on nightly. Both studies discussed the success of the program, positive child and parent comments, and the increased literacy skills that were noted.

Barbour (1999) used actual manipulatives that were included in each bag and were purchased by the Title One San Antonio, California area. Each nylon bag contained four books that pertained specifically to one topic, manipulatives, formal strategies that parents can use, and a journal for the child and parent. The manipulatives included puppets, board games, puzzles, sorting/matching cards, counters, and dramatic play props.

Battle-Bailey (2004) used home literacy bags in an Interactive Reading Homework (IRH) model. The IRH model used bags with varied books and instructed the parents in low socio-economic status environments to have natural conversations after reading the book with their child and record the comments. The written comments about their conversation were given to the teacher for further review. This study concluded that parental involvement alone cannot achieve a desired academic outcome (Battle-Bailey, 2004).

This change project included sending home literacy bags with two books for the parent to read to the child. The bag included basic strategies for parents to use before, during, and after reading that directly related to concepts of print, unlike the two studies mentioned. The Barbour (1999) study used a journal that stayed with each family during the duration of the 2-month program to record observations and reflections about the stories and activities. Unlike the previous study mentioned, this change project used weekly parent/child surveys for 10 weeks. This change project included incorporating helpful reading tips for parents. However, unlike the previous studies, the concepts of print were used as a structure for the parent activities presented in the literacy bag. The Barbour (1999) study included manipulatives; however, due to financial constraints, this change project did not use manipulatives. Instead, oral activities for parents that directly related to concepts of print are used.

In reviewing the literature, students benefit by taking ownership of their homework by transporting the Home Literacy Bag between school and home. They have more exposure to literature and have more opportunities for their parents to read aloud them. Parents benefit by receiving two quality pieces of literature weekly without going to the library. They also share the enjoyment of reading a quality literature with their child. The school benefits by watching this program grow and used in subsequent grades to increase literacy skills while involving the parents.

Concepts of Print

Concepts of Print are an early set of literacy skills needed to become a successful reader. Some examples are when a child turns a book around when handed it upside down. Another skill is where to begin reading on a page and the direction of reading from left-to-right and top-to-bottom. According to International Reading Association (2005), there are five characteristics that are closely linked to early literacy achievement: oral language development, phonological/phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, print knowledge, and invented spelling. This includes the knowledge of print awareness and book handling skills. This study uses Concepts of Print because it is one of the first literacy skills needed when entering kindergarten. The Concepts of Print, which include book handling skills and print awareness, are specific areas assessed on The Michigan Literacy Progress Profile.

The Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP; Michigan Department of Education, 2001) is an

assessment tool used to trace the child's literacy progress of kindergarten through third grade. One of the six Enabling Assessment components of the MLPP includes the Concepts of Print. Lagrou, Burns, Mizerek, & Mosack (2006) indicated that the Concepts of Print MLPP assessment tool was used to assess the students' scores for Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension of Narrative Text in their study. A significant difference between fluency and comprehension of two groups confirmed the validity of the MLPP. Lagrou & et al (2006) worked with third-grade students that were reading independently and had mastered Concepts of Print. However this change project implemented the Concepts of Print component because the participants are kindergarteners unlike the third graders from previous study that used the Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension of Narrative Text within the MLPP. In another study, Paris (2002) stated Informal Reading Inventories (IRIs) were designed to give teachers information regarding a child's comprehension, retelling, and oral reading fluency. They provided text of different levels, an area for collecting miscues, retelling, and running records. Because of high stakes testing, Michigan has used the MLPP because Michigan has passed legislation requiring annual documentation of the reading progress. The MLPP strengths are recognized by teachers and administrators. These teachers and administrators "preferred assessment of individual students with a flexible battery of tasks identified as either milestones or enabling skills" (Paris, 2002, p. 168). Paris discusses the problems with the IRIs and the drawbacks of the MLPP. The MLPP drawbacks include what data to collect and how to report and use it (Paris, 2002). For the purpose of this study, the MLPP test was used because of the thorough Concepts of Print component and the brief diagnostic, authentic tasks that can be used by a teacher.

This change project implemented the Concepts of Print in the MLPP assessment before the literacy bags were introduced and after the students read orally with their parents. This study also included strategies for the parents to use at home that directly supported the Concepts of Print.

In reviewing the literature, the Concepts of Print benefits the students because it directly relates to early skills needed to become a successful reader. They spend time with their parents reading and apply the home activities to their classroom work. They also have the opportunity for

their parents to read aloud to them while supporting the Concepts of Print. The parents benefit by becoming empowered to support their child in literacy. The school benefits by involving parents in their child's education and increased scores on the MLPP.

Action Implementation and Data Collection

Based on conversations with a few staff members and the principal, it was determined that change needed to be made in a kindergarten classroom, in a suburban school in Livonia, Michigan. This change involved parental support and early literacy skills in a kindergarten program of 24 students by incorporating Home Literacy Bags.

I created and set up a bulletin board labeled, "Home Literacy Bag Center" in the kindergarten classroom. This classroom was connected to the main kindergarten room. There were seven large pictures of parents and children of different cultures reading together. A sample home literacy bag was displayed on a hook with a two books inside directly in the middle of the



bulletin board. A laminated chart with the names of books and names of students was posted within the area. This chart allowed me to keep track of the books that come back weekly in an organized manner. Below the bulletin board was a shelf that has a large box with a label "Home Literacy Bags" and a real photo of the bag. This area was designed to increase curiosity and model parents reading with their child. I chose the different cultures to include all children in the classroom and help them to feel comfortable. This area was also created to direct the children to the place where the home literacy bags will be returned each Monday.

An informational letter was sent home including an introduction of me and my educational background, a detailed description of the 10-week Home Literacy Bag program, and information regarding the importance of reading to one's child. A permission sheet was attached. This letter was distributed during the third week of school in September (Appendix A). The teacher placed the letters in the students' Home folder. Permission sheets that were signed and returned were kept by the teacher until I picked up the permission sheets at the end of the fourth week. Seventeen parents out of 24 returned the sheets after the first day. This response indicates that the parents want to support their child's literacy skills and help them to become a more successful reader. At the end of the week, all 24 parents were interested in the Home Literacy Bag program for their children in kindergarten.

Before all parent communications went out, I sought approval from the principal to proceed with this Home Literacy Bag program over a period of 4 months that included two different meetings. I had numerous meetings and phone conferences with the classroom teacher to communicate the program's goals and support her benchmarks and objectives within the kindergarten classroom. Through these discussions the need for a change in more parental involvement and increase of support in Concepts of Print surfaced. The Home Literacy Bags could connect these two areas and allow children to have more opportunities to have literacy experiences.

Three sources of data were used within this change project. First, the existing source refers to the Teacher Observation checklist of the Concepts of Print. These students came from different educational backgrounds such as preschool, day care, and early 5s. Therefore, the teacher's observation of the Concepts of Print skills exhibited within the classroom were the base of my existing data. Next, the tools for capturing everyday life includes weekly par-

ent and child surveys. This data illustrated the duration and frequency of reading the books in the Home Literacy Bag and the child's opinion of the book. The last data source, tools for questioning refers to the pre- and post-Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) assessment, Section VI, Concepts of Print Enabling skills section. Also, the post parent survey with open ended questions for parents to answer is another tool for questioning.

An observation checklist that consisted of 22 Concepts of Print was given to the teacher (Appendix B). Her task was to observe the class throughout the week and note any Concepts of Print being used within the classroom. I designed the sheet with every other line shaded so that the Concepts of Print could be read easily. A four-choice Likert scale was given so the teacher could circle how often she observes these skills in her classroom. The teacher and I agreed on what constitutes a behavior that she is observing for Concepts of Print skills in the classroom. This is the pre-teacher-observation checklist before the Home Literacy Bags go home. This information gave me the classroom teacher's observation of the Concepts of Print that she notices her class using throughout the week. The children will be in their comfort zone and may exhibit strengths and weaknesses without being in a testing situation. This pre-observation checklist was the first area of triangulation of the data process. The teacher's response was favorable about the Home Literacy Bags going home. Any extra support that could help the parents become involved as well as supporting their child's literacy was appreciated.

The entire kindergarten class was given the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) assessment, Section VI, Concepts of Print Enabling skills section before the literacy bag program began (Appendix C). I administered this assessment in a quiet connecting room to the main kindergarten classroom. I chose the MLPP because it is recognized in the state of Michigan as an assessment tool that measures literacy skills and writing skills. Also, two other kindergarten teachers recommended that I use this assessment because it specifically measures the Concepts of Print. Each child was tested independently while using the prompts that are given in the Concepts of Print Enabling skills section. This was to ensure that the children are asked the same prompts during the testing. The book that was read to the students while giving the assessment was selected by the requirements in the MLPP assessment booklet. The same book was read to the students during this test. All data was recorded on the Concepts of

Print-Individual Score Sheet for each student. This pre-MLPP Concept of Print skills assessment was the second area of triangulation of the data process.

Before the MLPP was administered, I utilized two kindergarten teachers' experience and background using the MLPP. During these meetings it was determined that the entire MLPP test was too large to administer. It was decided that the Concepts of Print section IV would be used because it directly related to the early literacy skills that the kindergarten students needed support within the classroom.

Home Literacy Bags went home the first Monday of October. Two books were placed in a sturdy nylon mesh bag with their laminated name card and "Kindergarten Home Literacy Bag" tags attached. The children whose parents returned the permission sheet participated in this program. The books rotated weekly between the students as I kept record on a chart to track the books. The 50 books were chosen from the kindergarten library. The criteria for choosing these books were determined by reading level, vocabulary, and readability (Appendix D).

These bags were purchased, tagged with a laminated school name and blank name card before the school year began to save time. The bags were brought in and sent home each Monday. A "Parent Helpful Reading Hints" sheet accompanied the bag each week that was used as a resource at home. These color coded sheets had useful Concepts of Print activities for the parents to use as they read the story aloud to their child (Appendix E). Each sheet reviewed the previous week activities while adding new Concepts of Print. A color-coded parent survey using the Likert scale was included weekly with two questions about the frequency and duration of reading the stories to their child. Four responses were given as a choice to circle. I chose these questions so that the parents would simply report the amount of time spent. I did not want the parent to answer specific questions related to the Concepts of Print because of the pressure they may put on their child. A child survey using a Likert scale was included for the students indicating how well they liked the story by coloring one of three faces. A professor recommended that I explain the middle face K to the class. The students understood the emotion of the happy and sad face. I wanted the students to have ownership of the program by filling in their own survey at a simple level. The responses helped me to determine about the types of books for future use. Both parent and child survey sheets placed in the bag with the books were changed weekly. These surveys were

anonymous and kept confidential. I changed the books, parent sheet with helpful reading tips, and parent and child surveys weekly for 10 weeks. The collection of the parent and child survey sheets was kept in a confidential locked file that was shared only with the researcher and classroom teacher. These parent and child surveys were the third area of triangulation of data.

Before the surveys, parent note with permission sheet, and Parent Helpful Reading Tips were included in the Home Literacy Bags, I sought approval from two Madonna University professors. Recommendations were made to increase the validity and reliability of the surveys. Modifications were also made to the parent note to make the information clear and succinct. This collaboration with the professors was important because it gave this change project a higher level of professionalism.

The classroom teacher was given a post Concepts of Print checklist identical to the pre Concepts of Print checklist at the end of the 10 weeks. Her observations were recorded by choosing from four different choices about each of the 22 Concepts of Print that she has observed in her classroom. I compared the two checklists and noted any patterns or improvements. This concluded the first area of triangulation of the data process.

The literacy bag program was 10 weeks total. At the end of the 10 weeks, the entire class was re-administered the MLPP assessment, Section VI, Concepts of Print Enabling skills section by me. A different book was used from the pre MLPP assessment as I read aloud to each student. The book was chosen by the requirements in the MLPP assessment booklet. The results were recorded on the Concepts of Print Individual score sheet for each child. I compared the student's results from the MLPP who participated in the Home literacy Bag program to the students who did not participate. I also compared the pre-test and post-test results of all 24 students. This was the conclusion of the second area of triangulation of the data process. This was beneficial to me because I looked for an increases, patterns, and deficits that still remained. These results were shared with the teacher that gave her additional information regarding the Concepts of Print skills.

During the 10th week of the Home Literacy Bag program, the parents were given a survey that included three questions (Appendix E, week 10). This was the conclusion of the third area of triangulation of the data process. The bags were collected and all books were accounted for.

Reflection and Data Analysis

A change needed to be made in a kindergarten classroom, in a suburban school in Livonia, Michigan. This change involved parental support and early literacy skills in a kindergarten program of 24 students by incorporating Home Literacy Bags.

The triangulation of data in this change project includes the following. Three sources of data were used within this change project. First, the existing source refers to the Teacher Observation checklist of the Concepts of Print. These students came from different educational backgrounds such as preschool, day care, and early 5s. Therefore, the teacher's observation of the Concepts of Print skills exhibited within the classroom were the base of my existing data. Next, the tools for capturing everyday life includes weekly parent and child surveys. This data illustrated the duration and frequency of reading the books in the Home Literacy Bag and the child's opinion of the book. The last data source, tools for questioning refers to the pre and post Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) assessment, Section VI, Concepts of Print Enabling skills section. Also, the parent survey with open-ended questions is another tool for questioning.

Duration and Frequency

First, the duration and frequency of parents reading to their child showed an interesting trend. Nine weeks of this study show that as the durations (the 30 minutes and 30-60 minutes groups) increased, the frequency (2 times and 3-5 times) also increased. Refer to Table 1 and Table 2. The 30 min. and 30-60 min. duration groups, when added together showed an increase from 62% to 69% over the 9 weeks. Parents read longer as the change project progressed. Interestingly, the 2 times and 3-5 times frequency groups also totaled a change from 62% to 88% over the same 9 weeks. Parents read longer and read more often as the change project progressed. This relationship is based on data from the majority of the parents who read orally to their child. Perhaps the parents found it more gratifying to read longer and more often with their child. The parents remarked in the final survey that they enjoyed the close reading time with their child and felt they were engaging their child in the literacy process. The child may also have given the parents positive feedback for reading longer and enjoyed spending quality time with their parent.

There were two other groups that represented a few parents. As the weeks progressed, the more than 60 min. group decreased. This is exhibited in the data

showing a change from 33% to 19% over the 9 weeks. Likewise for frequency, parents reading more than 5 times decreased. The 9 weeks of this study show a change from 29% to 0%. Refer to Table 1 and Table 2. Fewer parents read for more than 60 minutes and read less frequently than 5 times a week. Possibly parents read more often in smaller time increments. They may have found that when reading for long periods of time it was difficult for their kindergarten child to stay focused.

Table 1. Parent Survey - Duration (Minutes read aloud during the week)

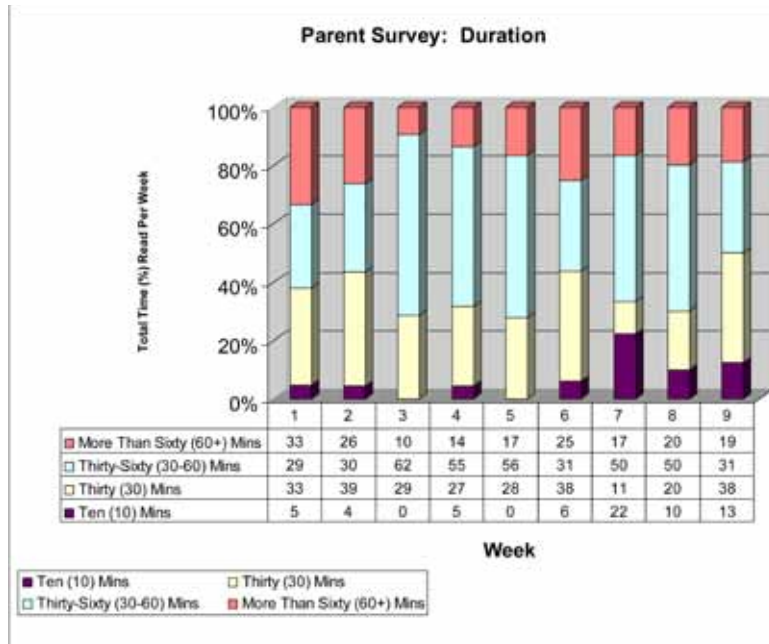
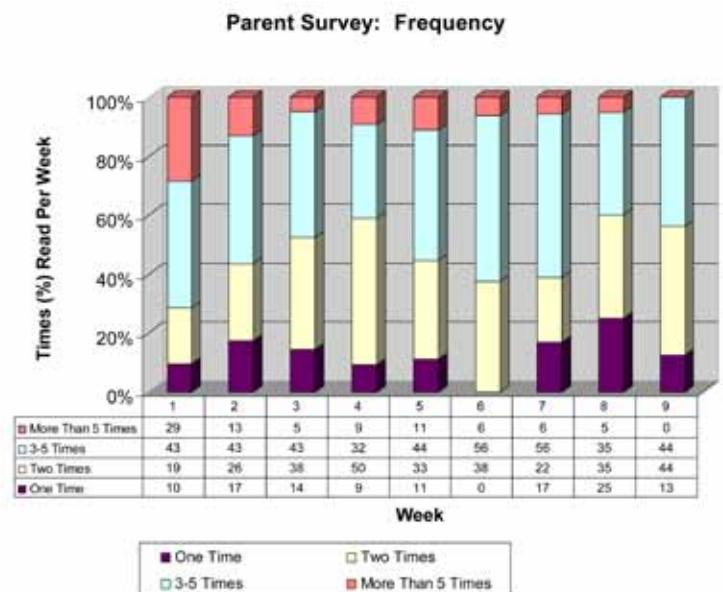


Table 2. Parent Survey - Frequency (How often a book is read during the week)



Children's Book Preference Survey

In the child portion of the survey, the child filled in one of three face symbols depicting: Not Liked, No Preference, or Liked Preferences. The survey was distributed and collected over 9 weeks. The blue stickered book had a developed story plot, challenging vocabulary and lengthier text. The red stickered book had a simpler story plot, basic vocabulary, and limited words on each page. These are beginning stories, written for emergent readers to have success reading.

For the following data, refer to Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Child Survey - Child preference for Blue book

Book Preferences - Blue

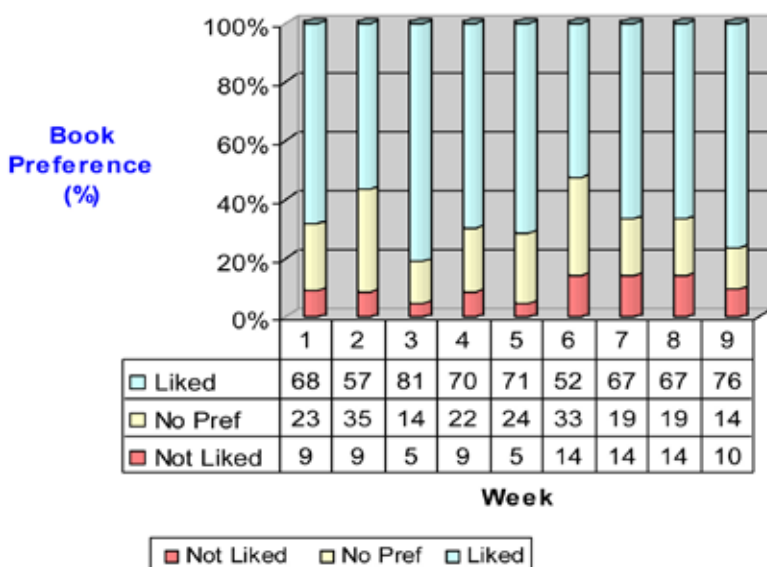
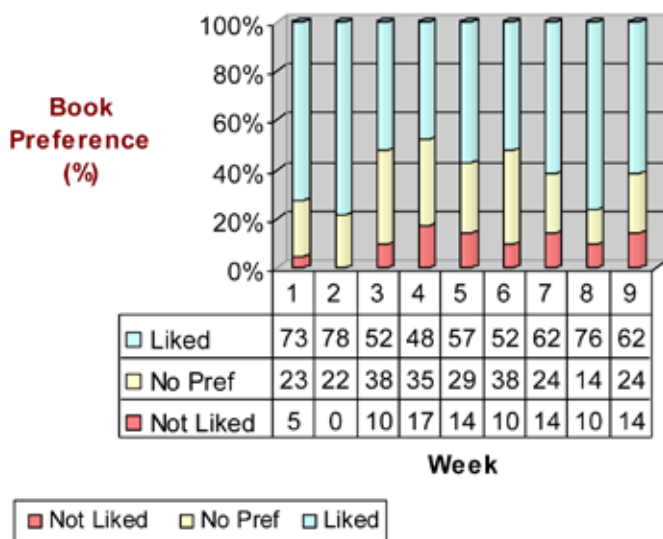


Table 4. Child Survey- Child preference for Red book



Regarding the blue stickered book, the "Liked" group J showed only a slight increase from 68% to 76% and the "Not Liked" group L remained unchanged. The "No Preference" K group showed a decrease from 23% to 14%.

Regarding the red stickered book, the "Liked" group J showed a slight decrease from 73% to 62% and the "Not Liked" group L showed an increase from 5% to 15%. The "No Preference" K group had little change, starting at 23% and ending at 24%.

The data demonstrated a slight shift in "Liked" preference from the red stickered book to the blue stickered book. The children seemed to prefer their parents reading the blue books possibly because the blue books held their attention longer and gave them a richer reading experience. An overriding theme suggests that the students enjoyed their parents reading aloud both books to them.

MLPP Concepts of Print Pre- and Post-Test

The pretest MLPP data suggests that a few Concepts of Print tasks were mastered by the kindergarteners before the test was administered. Two means of presenting Concepts of Print data were chosen, a data table (Table 5 on page 35) and a visual chart (Table 6 on page 36). Book Concepts that includes front cover, back cover, and the title range from 79% to 83% of students had mastery of this concept. The Concepts of Word that includes first word data was 75% mastery. And the Concepts of Letter that includes first letter in a word data was 88% mastery and small letter data at 75% mastery. The remaining Concepts of Print data was below 75%. Refer to Table 5 and Table 6.

The classroom teacher completed an observational checklist before the Home Literacy Bag program began. The teacher's observations coincide with the data stated above except for two Concepts of Print. These include the Concept of Print "First Word," which was observed by the teacher as "never" and the Concept of Print "Capital Letter," which was observed by the teacher as "always." This disparity could be due to the teacher observing these Concepts of Print in only the 3rd week of school and not knowing the students strengths and weaknesses well.

The posttest data revealed improvement in most Concepts of Print tasks. An immediate conclusion can be seen from viewing Table 6. The posttest MLPP showed notable improvement in four Concepts of Print. "Notable" was defined as pretest data being at 30% or less and posttest improving to 75% or more. A large increase occurred in Print Carries the

Message with an increase of pretest 29% to post-test 92%. The Beginning of Text Concept of Print increased from pretest 29% to posttest 75%. The Period Concept of Print increased from 8% to 83%. The Question Mark Concept of Print increased from 29% to 92%. This is an indication that involving parents in Home Literacy Bags while supporting the Concepts of Print has positive effects on their child's understanding of the Concepts of Print. Also, students grow in understanding of the Concepts of Print by being immersed in a literacy environment.

The remaining areas of the teacher post-observation checklist at 10 weeks correlated with the post-test data. The post-observation revealed that more students were in the "often" and "always" category much more due to the modeling of reading daily and having special time set aside with the parents to read and support the Concepts of Print.

Out of 22 Concepts of Print, only two areas remained unchanged. The areas are Quotation Marks 0% and the Comma 4%. This is probably due to the fact that

Table 5. Concepts of Print Data

Concept of Print Categories	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	N	%	N	%
BOOK CONCEPTS				
Front Cover	20	83%	24	100%
Back cover	20	83%	24	100%
Title	19	79%	24	100%
READING CONCEPTS				
Print Carries the Message	7	29%	22	92%
DIRECTIONALITY CONCEPTS				
Beginning of Text	6	25%	19	79%
L to R & Top to Bottom	10	42%	21	88%
Return Sweep	9	38%	22	92%
READING CONCEPTS				
1 to 1 Match	3	13%	13	54%
CONCEPTS OF WORD				
First Word	18	75%	24	100%
Last Word	13	54%	22	92%
Word	15	63%	24	100%
CONCEPTS OF LETTER				
1st Letter in a Word	21	88%	24	100%
Last Letter in a Word	14	58%	23	96%
1 Letter/2 Letters	15	63%	22	92%
Letter names	16	67%	22	92%
Capital Letter	10	42%	17	71%
Small Letter	18	75%	23	96%
PUNCTUATION MARKS				
Period	2	8%	20	83%
Question	7	29%	22	92%
Exclamation	2	8%	14	58%
Quotation	0	0%	0	0%
Comma	1	4%	1	4%

Note: Data represents assessment of 24 kindergarten students using the MLPP, 22 Concepts of Print.

these are more difficult Concepts of Print to master and understand. These areas will be introduced again in subsequent grades. The teacher's observation agrees with these results.

Parent Survey with Open-ended Questions

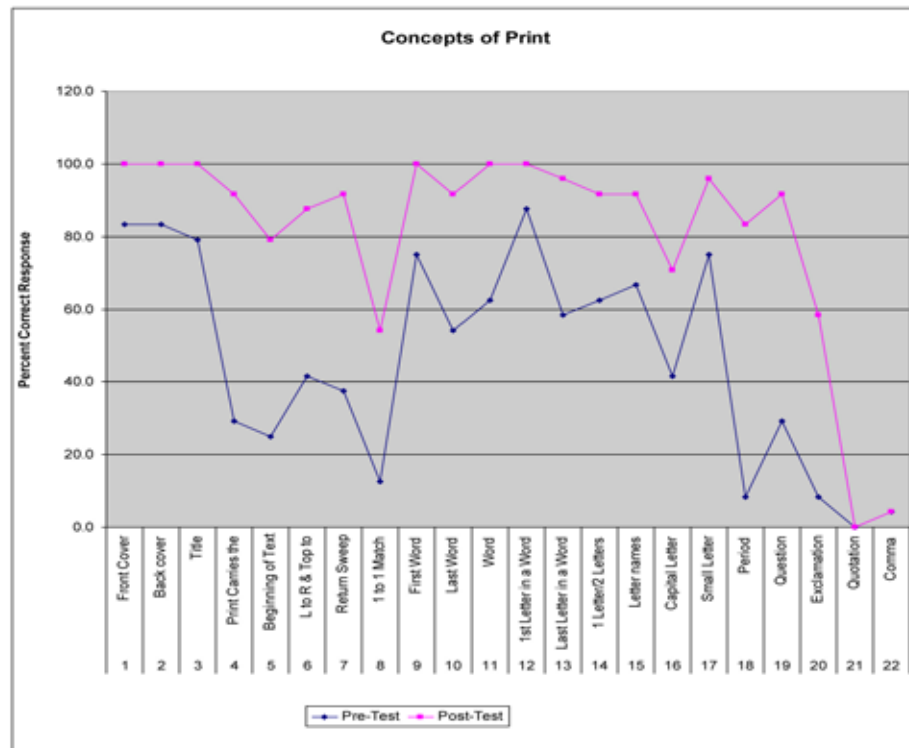
The parents were given a 3-question, open-ended survey at the end of the 10-week program.

1. Did your child enjoy the special reading time spent with you? Give a brief explanation.

2. What helpful reading tips were useful?
3. Do you have any suggestions as to how I could make this program more helpful in the future?

Highlights of the sampling of comments revealed that the children enjoyed the time spent reading with their parents. Parents also shared that it was an important and enjoyable part of the day or evening when they read the books with their children. They enjoyed the cuddling and reading a story together. A parent described how younger and older

Table 6. Concepts of Print Visual Chart



Number	Description	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	Front Cover	83.3	100.0
2	Back cover	83.3	100.0
3	Title	79.2	100.0
4	Print Carries the Message	29.2	91.7
5	Beginning of Text	25.0	79.2
6	L to R & Top to Bottom	41.7	87.5
7	Return Sweep	37.5	91.7
8	1 to 1 Match	12.5	54.2
9	First Word	75.0	100.0
10	Last Word	54.2	91.7
11	Word	62.5	100.0
12	1st Letter in a Word	87.5	100.0
13	Last Letter in a Word	58.3	95.8
14	1 Letter/2 Letters	62.5	91.7
15	Letter names	66.7	91.7
16	Capital Letter	41.7	70.8
17	Small Letter	75.0	95.8
18	Period	8.3	83.3
19	Question	29.2	91.7
20	Exclamation	8.3	58.3
21	Quotation	0.0	0.0
22	Comma	4.2	4.2

siblings would listen as the story was read aloud. One mother said that her “son and husband (who worked many hours) spent time reading, which created an opportunity to be together.” Another parent described their daughter as “proud to show us what she had learned by pointing to punctuation marks and pointing to words as we read.”

All parents stated that the helpful reading tips (Concept of Print) were useful. They explained how their child pointed to punctuation marks, pointed to words as parents read aloud, and understood the first and last word on the page. One parent stated, “Weekly tips were useful since they reinforced the lessons the kids were learning at school. It kept the students focused and helped them to learn faster.” Another parent shared, “Our daughter began to understand that there were spaces between words, now she points to each word when we read.”

There were many favorable comments about the program. Parents felt the program was beneficial. A few comments were made about the Home Literacy bags. One mother stated, “My child felt responsible for transporting the bag to and from school.” Along the same theme of feeling responsible, a parent commented, “My child enjoyed coloring in the faces (on weekly child survey), he loved how he got to decide for himself.” Another parent shared, “My Child enjoyed bringing the bag home every week.” Another parent commented that the “book bag was a great idea and a special place to put books in.” Another common theme was keeping the program going, feeling sorry that it had to end, and hoping they could be part of the program in the future.

Some suggestions were made for making this program more helpful for the future. One parent thought that the children should have the opportunity to express their opinion about how they liked the story, their favorite part, or why they like one book better than the other. Also, one parent thought that 10 weeks was too long to be involved in a reading program. The final suggestion for the program was including worksheets so that the child could find actual examples from the story about commas or punctuation marks.

In conclusion, the majority of the parents enjoyed the program, felt that they were contributing to their child’s early literacy skills, and enjoyed spending special time with their child. The children expressed positive comments to their parents, enjoyed spending time with their parents reading, and enjoyed the books selections.

Adjustments for the Future

Based on the results and data collected, adjustments will be made on this change project. First, some parents added comments in the margin of the weekly surveys about the story and how their child enjoyed the experience of reading. These comments make me wonder if the parents would benefit from having a reflection journal to write down these comments. They may want to express their joy of reading to their child and dictate their child’s thoughts into the journal. The child could draw and color a picture to add to the dictation. Children may enjoy expressing their feelings about the book instead of filling in a face to express how they liked a book. Also, the child could draw a picture of their favorite part or dictate to their parents and parents write down their words.

Next, the MLPP post- and pre-test data suggest that students could use more support with the One to One Match Concept of Print. This is a difficult skill to follow along and touch each word as the story is being read aloud. It may be helpful to include a pointer that the child holds and touches the word as the story is read. A “magic pointer” (a decorated tongue depressor) that is decorated in school by the child could be added to the Home Literacy bag. Then children can use their “magic pointers” to touch each word as the parent reads. One to One Match is a hard concept to master and needs lots of practice.

These adjustments may help the Home Literacy bag be more meaningful for the parent and child.

Challenges

Two challenges that I have faced in making this change were not having my own classroom to implement this change project and writing the surveys and questions. Not having my own classroom was by far the biggest challenge. I had kept excellent communication with the school where I previously taught. I talked directly to the kindergarten teacher and principal, and both were positive and excited about implementing this change project in kindergarten. I had already established a professional peer relationship with the classroom teacher so, including the parents and students while supporting the teacher’s goals and objectives was a win-win situation. According to Fullan (2008), “When problems or conditions are complex...purposeful peers are more effective” (p. 46). Without my own classroom, I knew that I would need to work with someone with whom I could collaborate. I knew that the classroom teacher and I would learn from each other by using peer interaction (Fullan, 2008).

I also overcame this challenge by working with the classroom teacher's schedule, the kindergarten goals and objectives, and support her program within the classroom. I remained extremely flexible and allowed her to pick the day and time I would come in weekly. I made it clear that I would take care of all the bags, surveys, books, and recording the information weekly. We spent many hours during the summer discussing how this program would work before it actually started in the fall. I appreciated her constructive criticism as a "critical friend" (Sagor, 1992). The challenge of not having my own classroom actually became a strength because I gained a "critical friend" in the classroom teacher.

My second challenge was constructing the surveys and questions that would be used in the data analysis. This was a new area as I had no prior experience making surveys. Each question I wrote for the surveys were not answering the research questions that were stated at the beginning of this change project.

To overcome this challenge, I decided to begin my thought process with the end result in mind. I thought about what points that I wanted to make on the graphs. From this point I began to formulate the type of data that I would collect (Sagor, 1992). I used the classroom texts as examples about the Likert scale. As a result, I was able to construct survey questions for the student and parent.

I also sought guidance from three professors at Madonna University, Dr. Karen Obsniuk, Dr. Stewart Wood, and Dr. Mary Tomczyk. This network of committed individuals helped me to understand surveys and questions through their experiences (Senge, 1999). Their well-grounded advice was helpful because they had professional experience with surveys and questions. They shared practical tips and perspectives that made the surveys more professional.

A Systemic Change

This change could become systemic if the classroom teacher decided to continue this project. I recommend that letter and sound recognition become the focus (e.g. What word can you find in the story that begins with the letter b? Name three things at your house that begins with the letter b). The classroom teacher is in agreement that this could be a natural progression from Concepts of Print. The Home Literacy Bags are already in place with each student's name within the classroom. The students enjoy taking them home weekly and finding new books. The books can still circulate because there are 50 books in all. The aide can change the books weekly and keep a record on the

chart that I provided. The teacher can add her letter recognition activities to the parent helpful hints letter format. The parents are already accustomed to books coming home and activities to follow.

Lastly, I feel that a journal needs to be added to the Home Literacy Bags. Journals are ongoing tools for parent and child to reflect on stories read from the beginning to the end of the year. The teacher would not remove them from the bag except to comment periodically. The child could dictate his or her thoughts and ideas to parents, and the parents could write down their words. The child could also draw a picture of his or her favorite part of the book (Zemelman, 2005). On survey sheets returned, parents wrote in the margins notes about how their child liked the book. They wanted a venue to express their feelings about the book. A journal is an appropriate tool for both student and parent in the Home Literacy Bag.

This change project could become systemic by adding these components. They are: using letter and sound recognition activities instead of Concepts of Print, making use of the classroom aide to change and record books, adding a reflection journal to the Home Literacy bag, and the continued support of the administration.

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Appendix B

Classroom Teacher Checklist of Concepts of Print

Child's Name _____ Date _____

Front cover	never	sometimes	often	always
Back cover	never	sometimes	often	always
The title	never	sometimes	often	always
Beginning of text	never	sometimes	often	always
Left to right/top to bottom	never	sometimes	often	always
Return sweep	never	sometimes	often	always
One-to-one Match	never	sometimes	often	always
First word	never	sometimes	often	always
Last word	never	sometimes	often	always
Word	never	sometimes	often	always
First letter in a word	never	sometimes	often	always
Last letter in a word	never	sometimes	often	always
One letters/Two letters	never	sometimes	often	always
Letter names	never	sometimes	often	always
A capital letter	never	sometimes	often	always
A small letter	never	sometimes	often	always
Period	never	sometimes	often	always
Question	never	sometimes	often	always
Quotation	never	sometimes	often	always
Comma	never	sometimes	often	always
Print carries the message	never	sometimes	often	always

Appendix C

Concepts of Print–Individual Score Sheet

Number correct = score for Concepts of Print

Student's Name _____

Code:

☐ √

Correct response

Date _____

☐ •

Incorrect response or no response

Grade Level _____

	Score	Comments
The student POINTS to:		
1. the front of the book		
2. the back of the book		
3. the title		
4. the text		
5. where to begin reading the story		
6. the direction in which to read (left to right)		
7. where to go next at the end of the line		
8. words one-to-one as the teacher reads one page (voice-print matches)		
9. the first word on the page		
10. the last word on the page		
The student FRAMES:		
11. one word/two words		
12. the first letter in a word		
13. the last letter in a word		
14. one letter/two letters		
15. The student points to and names any three letters on the page (_ _ _).		
The student POINTS to or FRAMES:		
16. a capital letter		
17. a small letter		
18. a period (.)		
19. a question mark (?)		
20. an exclamation mark (!)		
21. quotation marks (" ")		
22. a comma (,)		

SCORE: Total Number Checked ☐Adapted from: Clay, M. M. (1993). *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*. Heinemann

MLPP 2001

6.3

Concepts of Print

No.	Concepts	Prompts	Responses/Scores
1.	FRONT COVER (Book Concepts)	Show me the front of this book.	One point for the correct response
2.	BACK COVER (Book Concepts)	Show me the back of this book.	One point for the correct response
3.	THE TITLE (Book Concepts)	Show me the name of this book or story.	One point for pointing to the title on the cover or title page
4.	PRINT CARRIES THE MESSAGE (Reading Concepts)	Show me where I start reading.	One point for print, zero points for the picture
5.	BEGINNING OF TEXT (Directionality Concepts)	Show me with your finger where I have to begin reading.	One point for pointing to the first word
6.	LEFT TO RIGHT; TOP TO BOTTOM (Directionality Concepts)	Show me with your finger which way I go as I read this page.	One point for moving left to right on the page with a finger
7.	RETURN SWEEP (Directionality Concepts)	Where do I go then?	One point for return sweep (top line to bottom line)
8.	ONE-TO-ONE MATCH (Reading Concepts)	You point to the words while I read the story. (Read slowly but fluently.)	One point for one-to-one matching of print with the spoken word
9.	FIRST WORD (Concepts of Word)	Use your finger to show me the first word on this page.	One point for pointing to the first word on the page
10.	LAST WORD (Concepts of Word)	Use your finger to show me the last word on this page.	One point for pointing to the last word on the page
11.	WORD (Concepts of Word)	Move your fingers (or the cards) until I can see one word. Now show me two words.	One point for BOTH correct responses

Concepts of Print (Cont'd)

No.	Concepts	Prompts	Responses/Scores
12.	FIRST LETTER IN A WORD (<i>Concepts of Letter</i>)	Show me the first letter in a word.	One point for the correct response
13.	LAST LETTER IN A WORD (<i>Concepts of Letter</i>)	Show me the last letter in a word.	One point for the correct response
14.	ONE LETTER/TWO LETTERS (<i>Concepts of Letter</i>)	Move your fingers (or the cards), and show me one letter. Now show me two letters.	One point for BOTH correct responses
15.	LETTER NAMES (<i>Concepts of Letter</i>)	Show me three letters that you know on this page, and tell me the name of each one.	One point for pointing and correctly naming three letters
16.	A CAPITAL LETTER (<i>Concepts of Letter</i>)	Use your finger (the cards) to show me a capital letter.	One point for pointing to or framing a capital letter
17.	A SMALL LETTER (<i>Concepts of Letter</i>)	Use your finger (the cards) to show me a small letter.	One point for pointing to or framing a small letter
18.	PERIOD (.) (<i>Punctuation Marks</i>)	What is this called? or What is this for?	One point for naming and/or demonstrating an understanding of what a period means
19.	QUESTION (?) (<i>Punctuation Marks</i>)	What is this called? or What is this for?	One point for naming and/or demonstrating an understanding of what a question mark means
20.	EXCLAMATION (!) (<i>Punctuation Marks</i>)	What is this called? or What is this for?	One point for naming and/or demonstrating an understanding of what an exclamation point means
21.	QUOTATION (" ") (<i>Punctuation Marks</i>)	What are these called? or What are they for?	One point for naming and/or demonstrating an understanding of what quotation marks mean
22.	COMMA (,) (<i>Punctuation Marks</i>)	What is this called? or What is this for?	One point for naming and/or demonstrating an understanding of what a comma means

Appendix D

Booklist for Home Literacy Bag

Group 1 (Basic vocabulary, few words to a page RED)

<i>Quick as a Cricket</i>	by Audrey Wood
<i>Things I Like</i>	by Anthony Brown
<i>The Bus</i>	by Joaquin Alvarez
<i>Farmer Duck</i>	by Martin Waddell
<i>Golden Bear</i>	by Ruth Young
<i>Penguins to the Rescue</i>	by Tony Mitten
<i>Amazon Sun, Amazon Rain</i>	by Xmenu de la Piedra
<i>When I Get Bigger</i>	by Mercer Mayer
<i>Spots Feathers and Curly Tails</i>	by Nancy Tafuri
<i>I Love Animals</i>	by Flora McDonnell
<i>ABC and You: An Alphabet Book</i>	by Eugenie Fernandes
<i>Hunky Dory Found It</i>	by Katie Evans
<i>Faces</i>	by Shelley Rotner & Ken Kreisler
<i>Mouse Count</i>	by Ellen Stoll Walsh
<i>Better Not Get Wet, Jesse Bear</i>	by Nancy White Carlstrom
<i>Together</i>	by George Ella Lyon
<i>Three Little Kittens</i>	by Paul Galdone
<i>School Bus</i>	by Donald Crews
<i>It Looked Like Spilt Milk</i>	by Charles G. Shaw
<i>Mr. Grumpy's Outing</i>	by John Burningham
<i>Ten in a Bed</i>	by Mary Rees
<i>Two Bear Cubs</i>	by Ann Jonas
<i>Sheep in a Jeep</i>	by Nancy Shaw
<i>The Potluck Supper</i>	by Becky Winter
<i>This Is the Bear and the Picnic Lunch</i>	by Sarah Hayes

Booklist for Home Literacy Bag**Group 2 (Longer sentences, more developed story plot, challenging vocabulary BLUE)**

<i>The Farmyard Cat</i>	by Christine Anello
<i>A Day at the Fair</i>	by Katherine Holabird
<i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i>	retold by James Marshall
<i>Me, Too!</i>	by Mercer Mayer
<i>Watch Out, Billy Bear</i>	by Patsy Becvar
<i>Where Are Mary's Pets?</i>	by Clive Scruton
<i>Mother Goose's Animal Farm</i>	by Modern Publishing
<i>Jamaica's Find</i>	by Juanita Havill
<i>On Monday When it Rained</i>	by Cherryll Kachenmeister
<i>Curious George Gets a Medal</i>	by H. A. Rey
<i>Curious George</i>	by H. A. Rey
<i>A Birthday Basket for Tia</i>	by Pat Mora
<i>Deep in the Jungle</i>	by Dan Yaccarino
<i>What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?</i>	by Shari Halpern
<i>I Have a Pet!</i>	by Shari Halpern
<i>The Rain Puddle</i>	by Adelaide Holl
<i>The Bear Under the Stairs</i>	by Helen Cooper
<i>Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present</i>	by Charlotte Zolotow
<i>Gilbert the Great</i>	by Jane Clarke
<i>Diary of a Worm</i>	by Doreen Cronin
<i>Snow Day</i>	by Moira Fain
<i>Owl Moon</i>	by Jane Yolen
<i>The Puppy Who Wanted a Boy</i>	by Jane Thayer
<i>Oh, Bother! No One's Listening</i>	by Betty Birney

Appendix E

Week 1 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: Front Cover, Back Cover, Title

Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Begin by finding a quiet area for you and your child to read. Place the book between the both of you so that your child can see the pictures and print. Read one book at a time. Explain that a book has a front and back cover, take your finger and point to the words on the front cover and read the title. Allow your child to look through the pictures of the story first and ask you questions. As you read the story, place your finger under the words as you read. Read both books to your child. This is the beginning of mastering the Concept of Print skills. Enjoy this special time with your child. J Don't forget to fill out the next page and return with the Home Literacy Bag on Monday. Thank you for your support!

Parents, please circle your answers and return this sheet with your child's Home Literacy bag on Monday.

1. How many minutes during the week did you spend reading the books to your child?

10 minutes 30 minutes 30 min. to an hour over 1 hour

2. How often during the week did you read the books to your child?

1 time 2 times 3-5 times more than 5 times

On back cover of each book there is a blue or red sticker. Please read these questions to your child and have your child color in a face for each answer.

How well did you like the blue book?



How well did you like the red book?



Week 2 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: Reading Text vs. Illustrations, Directionality

Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Find a quiet area to read to your child. Read one book at a time. Allow your child to look at the pictures and ask you any questions. Explain that there is a place on the page to begin reading. With your finger point to the place and begin reading the story aloud. As you move your finger to read explain that you are reading from the left side of the page to the right side. Explain that you read one line and move to the next line until you get to the bottom of the page. Finish reading the story and try these reading tips with the next book. Enjoy this special time with your child. Don't forget to fill out the next page and return with the Home Literacy Bag on Monday. Thank you for your support!

Week 3 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: One-to-One Correspondence

Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Find a quiet area to read to your child. Remind your child about last week's reading tips that included reading from left to right, and reading from the top to the bottom of the page. Allow your child to look at the pictures and ask you any questions. When you begin reading place your finger under each word as you read. When you turn to the next page, ask your child, "Now where should I begin reading?" Point

to every word as you read so that your child understands that the words on the page match with what you are reading. Finish reading the rest of the story and know you are giving your child the gift of reading. J Don't forget to fill out the next page and return with the Home Literacy Bag on Monday. Thank you for your support!

Week 4 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: One-to-One Correspondence

Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Ask your child to point to the title of the book. Read the title and allow your child to look at the pictures and ask you any questions. Explain to your child that there is a first word on the page (point to first word) and a last word on the page (point to last word). Read the story aloud to your child using your finger to point to each word. Enjoy this special time with your child. Don't forget to fill out the next page and return with the Home Literacy Bag on Monday. Thank you for your support!

Week 5 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: Words and Letters

Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Hand the book to your child, as your child touches the title read the title of the book aloud. Ask your child to touch the first and last word on the page on the story. If he/she doesn't remember, gently remind them. Explain that a word has letters. Touch the first letter of a word and the last letter of the same word. Remember this activity is for you to read to your child. Allow your child to look at the pictures and ask you any questions. Finishing reading the story and read the next book. Don't forget to fill out the next page and return with the Home Literacy Bag on Monday. Thank you for your support!

Week 6 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: Capital and Lowercase Letters

Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Allow your child to look at the pictures and ask you any questions. Ask them to point to the first and last word on the first page of the story. Ask them to point to the first and last letter in a few words. Gently remind them if they have difficulty. Explain that words have capital and small letters. Point out a capital and small letter in a word on the page. Read the story using your finger to point to words as you read. Read the next book. Enjoy this special time with your child. Don't forget to fill out the next page and return with the Home Literacy Bag on Monday. Thank you for your support!

Week 7 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: Punctuation Marks- Period, Question

Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Review some tips from the last few weeks. Allow your child to look at the pictures and ask you any questions. **As you begin reading and come to a period stop and point out this punctuation mark. Tell your child that a period makes you stop when you are reading. Ask your child to point out a period (.) on the page. While reading either book, point out a question mark (?). Tell your child that a question mark lets the reader know that someone is asking a question.** Ask your child to find a question mark when you are reading. Read the next story using these tips. Don't forget to fill out the next page and return with the Home Literacy Bag on Monday. Thank you for your support!

Week 8 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: Punctuation- Period, Question, Exclamation

Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Allow your child to look at the pictures and ask you any questions. **Have your child look at the pages and find a period (.) and a question mark (?).** Gently remind if they fail to remember. With your finger point to each word as you read. When you see an exclamation mark (!) point to it and tell your child that you read it sounding very excited. Allow your child to point to an exclamation mark if possible within the book you are reading. Read the next story using these tips. Don't forget to fill out the next page and return with the Home Literacy Bag on Monday. Thank you for your support!

Week 9 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: Punctuation- Period, Question, Exclamation, Quotation

Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Ask your child to open a book and point to a period (.), a question mark (?), and an exclamation mark (!). Gently remind if your child points out incorrectly. Allow your child to look at the pictures and ask you any questions. Read pointing to each word and point out quotation marks (""). Tell your child that these marks mean that someone is speaking in the story. Continue reading and point out quotation marks throughout the story. Have your child point to a quotation mark as you read the story. Read the next story using these reading tips. Don't forget to fill out the next page and return with the Home Literacy Bag on Monday. Thank you for your support!

Week 10 Activity for Home Literacy Bag: Punctuation- Review All

Final Helpful Reading Tips for Parents: Review all punctuation marks from the last few weeks. They are the period (.), question (?), quotation (""). Ask your child to point to each one in a story. Allow your child to look at the pictures and ask you any questions about the story. Read the title of the story and begin reading the story with your finger placed under each word. When you read a sentence and notice a comma (,) point out to your child that this is where a reader slows down. Ask your child to point to a comma while you are reading the story. Use these tips with the next book. This is the final helpful reading tips sheet for parents. Thank you for participating in my research project. Please fill out and return the next page with the home literacy bag. I hope you have enjoyed the literature, the activities, and most of all, spending time with your child.

Parent Survey

1. Did your child enjoy the special reading time spent with you? Please add a brief explanation.
2. What helpful reading tips were useful?
3. Do you have any suggestions as to how I could make this program more helpful in the future?