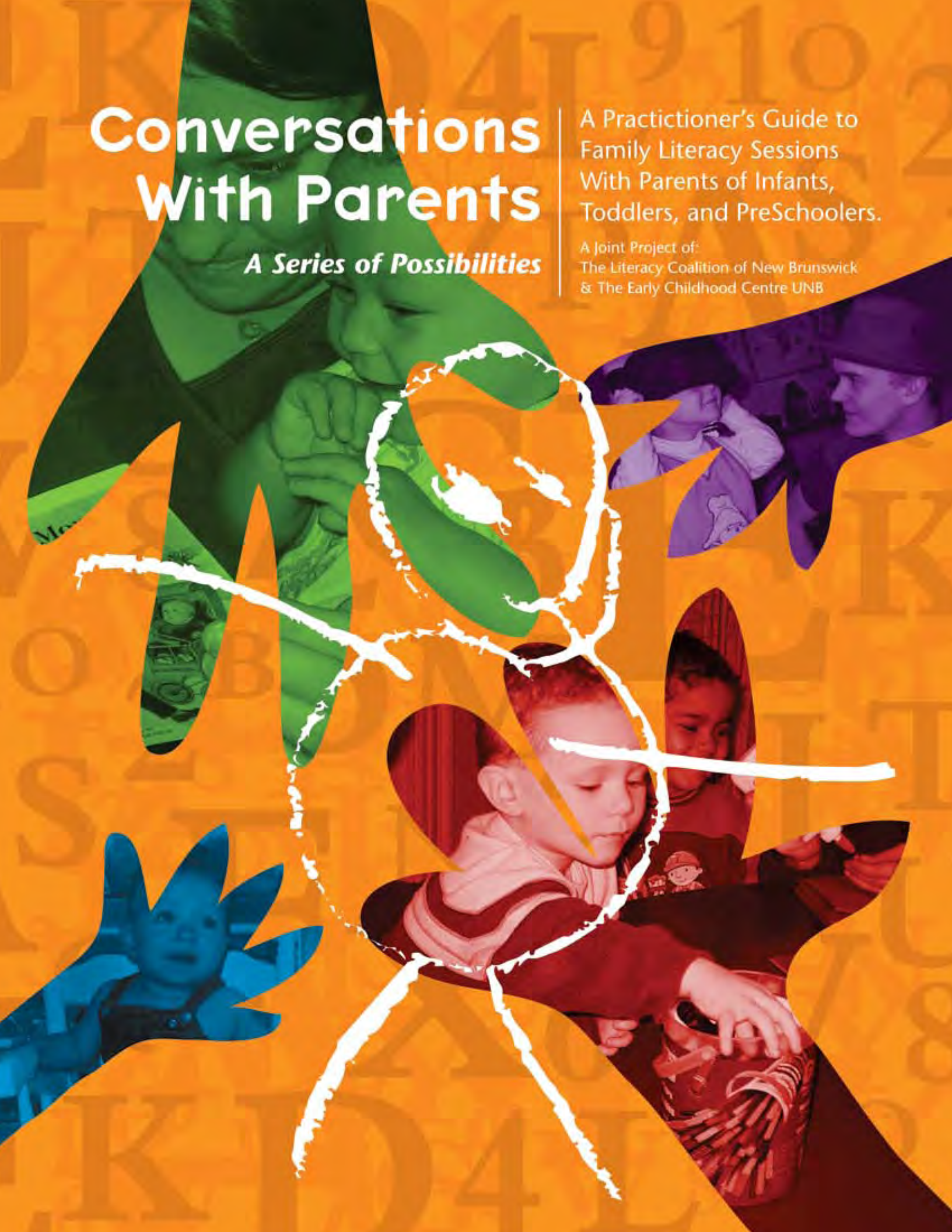


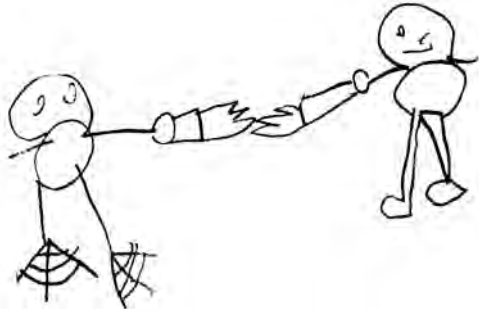
# Conversations With Parents

*A Series of Possibilities*

A Practitioner's Guide to  
Family Literacy Sessions  
With Parents of Infants,  
Toddlers, and PreSchoolers.

A Joint Project of:  
The Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick  
& The Early Childhood Centre UNB





## Acknowledgements

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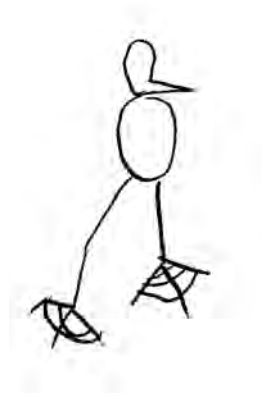
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## Introduction

Lynda Homer

***Conversations With Parents*** is a joint project of the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick and the Early Childhood Centre, University of New Brunswick. It is intended as a guide for community-based practitioners delivering literacy workshops to parents of infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Rather than presenting a “one-size fits all” model, community practitioners are encouraged to tailor their workshops in response to the needs and interests of their particular group and community.

We expect that the audience for the *Guide* will have a range of backgrounds. Community based practitioners may come from schools, community literacy groups, public health, family resource centres, family literacy programs, libraries, ‘VON Rock and Talk,’ social work, early intervention programs, child care centres, and parent support groups such as breast-feeding clinics and pre/postnatal groups. The workshop sessions are to be implemented in a way that brings together community partners, musters community resources, and builds upon existing community capacity.

The *Guide* draws on the ***Parenting for a Literate Community Program (PLC)***, which was developed by the Early Childhood Centre at the University of New Brunswick. *Conversations With Parents* adheres to the principles of empowerment, and embodies a strength-based approach to family literacy. Parents’ strengths and knowledge are honoured and literacy is viewed in its broadest sense. Using this guide, practitioners are encouraged to build upon parents’ knowledge and the diverse literacy practices of home.

The small books highlighted in *Conversations With Parents* are from the Early Childhood Centre, University of New Brunswick *Books for Children and Families* series. These books resulted from a request by the Literacy Secretariat to develop parallel accessible materials to the PLC materials. Through the PLC project, it became apparent that many families were hesitant to borrow books, yet if they were given books through book drives, giveaways, or had access to inexpensive books, these items were valued. Each book represents literacy in the everyday, providing readers with

## introduction

ample opportunities to link daily events in the lives of children to text and illustration. The books were revised by feedback from focus groups where many mothers gave suggestions and directions. They feature NB artists and authors who are well versed in early literacy practices.

The process of creating the *Guide* has been collaborative and consultative throughout. The Literacy Coalition obtained funding for this project via a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat. The Early Childhood Centre at the University of New Brunswick (ECC UNB) was hired to develop the materials. The authors were engaged by the Early Childhood Centre; a project manager was hired, and a joint steering committee provided overall direction.

Once the draft materials had been developed, the authors delivered pilot training sessions to the project community partners consisting of fifteen practitioners from three different communities. Along with providing professional development experience, this was an opportunity to receive both written and verbal feedback from practitioners working in the field.

“Literacy in the everyday” and “access to books” are the two main themes woven throughout the *Guide*. “Literacy in the everyday” focuses on literacy events and learning opportunities that are embedded in daily routines and family life. “Access to books” refers not only to the barriers experienced by families because of financial reasons, but includes those that exist due to culture, class, gender and educational background. Children’s books are a central feature, with emphasis on the conversations and interactions surrounding them, as well as strategies for choosing books and sharing them with children.



# Theory and Practice

Looking at Beliefs, Values and Practices *Pamela Nuttall Nason...* 5

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# Looking at Beliefs and Values

*Pamela Nuttall Nason*

*Conversations With Parents* is designed to be flexible and responsive to family priorities and needs. We encourage the community practitioners to shape each program according to the needs and circumstances of their communities, to best help the families involved in accomplishing their hopes and dreams. In keeping with contemporary approaches to family literacy and community development we:

- Honour diverse family circumstances, values and literacies.
- Recognize parents as children's first and most influential teachers.
- Celebrate the family's own everyday experiences and stories, and draw upon resources in domestic and community contexts.
- Use what parents and children already know as a springboard to launch them into other literate communities.
- Strengthen connections between community-based agencies to provide for effective support and continuities in young children's literacy development.

*In the 21st century 'literacy' is replaced by 'multi-literacies.'*

## Contemporary Theories of Literacy

The very meaning of literacy is changing. Literacy for the 21st Century is no longer just about reading print in books, but about multi-literacies: reading hypertext, icons, multiple screens, moving images and moving text on video games, computer screens, TV and film.

*Literacy is deeply embedded in the fabric of diverse, social lives.*

Literacy is a deeply embedded social practice: actions, relationships, thought, talk, viewing, reading and writing are all intertwined. Practitioners have to understand how particular families use particular literacies in their everyday lives, and build on that. Literacy skills and practices cannot just be laid onto people's lives like a veneer.

All members of a literate society are literate, but they are literate in different ways. We reject deficit models that divide people into 'literate' and 'illiterate' by using pencil and paper tests. We recognize that every event in our lives is connected to, and by, print and multimedia texts. (Try thinking of any activity that isn't.) We assert that everyone has different strengths upon which they can build. We acknowledge that we engage with different texts (written and multimedia) in different ways depending on gender, social class, religion, ethnicity, age, etc.

# Theory & Practice: Looking at Beliefs and Values cont.

Being literate is not just about reading words, but about “reading the world and the word” (Friere and Macedo). The skills of reading are always learned in a social context. The meaning, purpose and pleasure of talking, reading, writing, and viewing are learned through relating with others. Learners need to bring the texts of their lives (their accumulated experience and knowledge) to what they are reading or viewing, in order to understand, critique and challenge ‘the authority of texts.’

*The challenge for community literacy practitioners is to honour and enrich the lives of the families of the families they serve.*

Community-based practitioners start with what each parent or guardian and child knows, not with what they don't know. The familiar language and scripts of parents'/ guardians' and children's everyday lives are central to the educative process.

**Workshop titles**

*Supplementary background pieces offer extra information and tips*

**Workshop authors**

**Supporting Children's Efforts on Beginning Readers**

**Progressions in Children's Reading and Writing**

**Professional Bookends**

**The Mark-Making of Children**

**Background Information**

**Suggestions for Practitioners**

**Extensive book lists provide a wealth of suggested children's books related to the workshop topics**

**The left column offers a series of prompt questions and activities for stimulating discussion**

**The right column provides background information, tips and suggestions for leading the workshop**

**The workshops are colour coded by age group**

**Suggested resources and readings for further professional development and interest**

**A list of materials is provided for each workshop**



## Using This Guide

Lynda Homer

**Organization of the Guide:** *Conversations With Parents* is divided into six sections:

**Section 1:** **Introduction** presents information on the purpose of the Guide, the intended audience, the principles on which the Guide was developed and a brief description of its contents.

**Section 2:** **Theory and Practice** provides an overview of the underlying theory, information on how to organize, plan and conduct workshops, sample templates, and tips for working with the community. You may wish to begin by reading this section first. Understanding the beliefs and values on which this Guide is based is important to implementing the workshops.

**Sections 3 - 5:** **Eight Workshop Outlines** cover a range of literacy topics. Workshop suggestions, background information, professional readings and a list of books for children accompany each workshop outline. Workshop topics are grouped according to child age range.

**Section 6:** **Glossary and Notes on Authors**

**Workshops:** Each workshop outline is divided into two columns. (See key on page 6)

**Left Column:** This column contains a series of possible *conversation points* (discussion topics) with accompanying questions and activities to stimulate discussion. It is organized under three main headings: *Eliciting & Valuing Parent Knowledge*, *Conversing with Parents* and *Accessing Books*. As the order of the headings suggests, parents' knowledge is elicited and valued right from the start. Techniques such as *Book Walks* and *Book Talks* (see glossary) are used to raise questions, make connections with parents' lives, and encourage them to engage in critical dialogue. The little books from the ECC UNB *Books for Children and Families* series are a central feature. The idea is for workshop leaders to choose from among the suggestions provided, keeping in mind the time frame and particular interests of the group.

**Right Column:** The right column provides background information, tips and suggestions for conducting the workshop. A list of professional readings is included for further reading on the topic. You may wish to keep this information handy to use as a reference during your workshop session.

## Planning and Conducting a Workshop

*Lynda Homer*

It may be helpful to keep in mind certain elements which we believe to be vital to delivering these sessions. Literacy workshops for parents of preschoolers should be implemented...



# Theory & Practice: Planning and Conducting a Workshop

## Designing Your Workshop

1. Learn as much as you can about the parents and families you hope to reach. What are their interests, priorities, hopes and dreams? With the parents involved, decide upon the workshop topics, location and timeframe for your sessions.
2. Consider the particular interests and priorities of your parents and your time frame. For instance, you may choose to offer one-hour sessions, or a longer three-hour session.
3. Locate the corresponding workshop section(s) in the Guidebook. Read through the workshop outline. Select from the series of conversation points, questions and activities in the left hand columns or use them as a starting point for other ideas.
4. Blend ideas and activities from the different workshop outlines provided.
5. Make notes and finalize your workshop outline.
6. Use the sample workshop templates on pages 12 & 13 as a guide.

## Preparing For Your Workshop Day

1. Gather and arrange the necessary materials, equipment and books.
2. Be sure to inform the library of your book needs well before the date of your workshop. Give at least 3 weeks advance notice.
3. Ensure that the room you have chosen for your session is inviting and comfortable.
  - Arrange seats in a semi-circle so that parents can see one another and no one is "at the head of the class."
  - Have soft music playing as parents arrive.
  - Provide refreshments.
  - Set up a display of children's books, mark-making & art work (if appropriate).
4. Be ready to greet parents warmly upon their arrival.



# Tips For Leading The Session

*Lynda Homer*

1. Set the stage by keeping your manner relaxed and informal. Thank everyone for coming, briefly introduce the topic and yourself, emphasizing the mutuality of learning.
2. Give parents an opportunity to introduce themselves. (Example activity: Ask people to introduce themselves to the person next to them and then each can introduce the other.)
3. Value and elicit parent's knowledge by encouraging them to speak first. Use parents' examples and stories as a springboard into the literacy topic.
4. Strive to create an emotionally comfortable atmosphere where a wide range of viewpoints are encouraged and respected.
5. Leave lots of time for parents to speak and think. Silence can be productive thinking time.
6. Encourage parents to raise questions, make comparisons, find connections, make inferences and refine their thinking.
7. Use your workshop plan as a guide but do not feel tied to it. Time spent on each topic is not pre-set but depends on the group's interest as well as the leader's judgment. What parents want to know or want to accomplish drives the agenda.
8. Record parents' responses on a flip chart or chalk board. This helps them to focus on what is being said and to listen more carefully. It shows that you value everyone's contributions and also has the effect of slowing down the conversation.
9. Form smaller groups of 3 or 4 for discussion of specific topics. Parents will then be more comfortable to talk. Pairing more confident readers with those who are less confident encourages mutual support and avoids putting people on the spot.
10. With your group, summarize the main discussion ideas at the end of the session.
11. When possible, use the lists generated by the group as a handout. Have someone appointed ahead of time to write the parents' responses from the flip charts on a sheet of paper. If a photocopier is available, make copies for everyone to take home. Otherwise, you can make copies later and send them out as a follow up to your session.
12. Solicit feedback from your group. Find out what they liked and disliked and what they might prefer to do differently next time. Ask parents what they learned from the workshop and what other topics might interest them.

## Theory & Practice: Tips for Leading The Session cont.

### Remember . . .

- Be flexible. Your plan is not set in stone. Remain open to new possibilities that may emerge during your session.
- Use your workshop outline as a tool. If conversation is lagging, refer to the suggestions and background information provided in the right hand column.
- Strive to use inclusive and familiar language rather than professional jargon.
- Take care not to dominate the discussion. Your role is to contribute to the conversation together with everyone else. Parental and professional expertise can complement each other and be mutually informing.
- The goal is to share the collective knowledge of the group, blending parental knowledge with professional knowledge.
- Maintain a non-judgmental conversational tone. The intent is to exchange ideas and share different perspectives rather than come up with a single best answer.
- Be prepared to accommodate the diverse needs of the parents attending the workshop (wheel chair accessibility, allergies, etc.).

*Lynda Homer prepares for a workshop session.*



## Theory & Practice

### Sample Template for a 1 Hour & 15 Minute Workshop

Consult each workshop outline ahead of time for materials needed.



#### Pre-Workshop Set-up

- Arrive early to set up your room, at least 30 minutes before the workshop.
- Place the registration form on the table for participant sign in (if required).
- Have the nametags, pens, paper, and handout packages ready for pick up by participants.
- Check equipment.
- Ensure coffee/refreshments are ready and waiting.
- Have paper ready to record participants' names and contact numbers if available.
- Arrange display of children's books, mark-making and artwork.

#### Welcome & introduction • 15 minutes

This is a time to welcome everyone and briefly mention the focus of the session. Introduce yourself and invite participants to introduce themselves to one another. Remember to emphasize the mutuality of learning and to set the stage by using a conversational tone.

#### Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge • 10 minutes

This is a time to value parents' knowledge and honour what parents already do. See Conversation Point ONE in the left column of each workshop outline for starting questions or use as a springboard to create your own questions.

#### Conversing With Parents • 20 minutes

This is a time to introduce new information and expand the discussion. The goal is to share the collective knowledge of the group, blending parental knowledge with professional knowledge. See the Conversation Points in the left column of the workshop outlines for questions and activities to stimulate discussion. Review the Background Information and Suggestions in the right hand column as well.

#### Accessing Books • 20 minutes

This is a time to focus on children's books. The idea is to look at specific attributes of the books, and share perspectives. Remember that we all bring our own individual experience and knowledge to our readings. See the "Accessing Books" sections in the workshop outlines for suggestions about engaging parents with picture books.

#### Closing • 10 minutes

- Summarize main ideas with the group and ask for feedback.
- Review and refine list of participants' responses from flip chart.
- Whenever possible, have someone appointed in advance to record flip chart lists on paper and make copies for parents to take home.
- Ask for feedback in order to informally evaluate the session.
- Thank everyone for their participation and acknowledge all those who helped out, including community partners. Let parents know how to contact you in the future.

# Theory & Practice

## Sample Template for a 3 Hour Workshop

*Consult each workshop outline ahead of time for materials needed.*

### **Pre-Workshop Set-up**

- Arrive early to set up your room, at least 30 minutes before the workshop.
- Place the registration form on the table for participant sign in (if required).
- Have the nametags, pens, paper, and handout packages ready for pick up by participants.
- Check equipment.
- Ensure coffee/refreshments are ready and waiting.
- Have paper ready to record participants' names and contact numbers if available.
- Arrange display of children's books, mark-making and artwork.

### **Welcome & introduction • 20 minutes**

This is a time to welcome everyone and briefly mention the focus of the session. Introduce yourself and invite participants to introduce themselves to one another. Remember to emphasize the mutuality of learning and to set the stage by using a conversational tone.

### **Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge • 20 minutes**

This is a time to value parents' knowledge and honour what parents already do. See Conversation Point ONE in the left column of each workshop outline for starting questions or use as a springboard to create your own questions.

### **Conversing With Parents • 30 minutes**

This is a time to introduce new information and expand the discussion. The goal is to share the collective knowledge of the group, blending parental knowledge with professional knowledge. See the Conversation Points in the left column of the workshop outlines for questions and activities to stimulate discussion. Review the Background Information and Suggestions in the right hand column as well.

### **Nutrition Break • 15 minutes**

### **Accessing Books • 30 minutes**

This is a time to focus on children's books. The idea is to look at specific attributes of the books and share perspectives. In this timeframe, you will have ample time to divide into small groups for a BOOK TALK. This enables parents to look closely at a wide range of books and critique them. See the "Accessing Books" sections in the workshop outlines for suggestions about engaging parents with picture books.

### **Hands-On Activity • 45 minutes**

This is a time for parents to try their hand at creating items such as homemade games or personal books for sharing with children at home. See workshop outlines for suggestions.

### **Closing • 20 minutes**

- Summarize main ideas with the group and ask for feedback.
- Review and refine list of participants' responses from flip chart.
- Whenever possible, have someone appointed in advance to record flip chart lists on paper and make copies for parents to take home.
- Ask for feedback in order to informally evaluate the session.
- Thank everyone for their participation and acknowledge all those who helped out, including partners.
- Let them know how to contact you in the future.

## Workshop Planning Checklist

**TOPIC:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> audio visual equipment                | <input type="checkbox"/> envelopes (blank)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> children's books                      | <input type="checkbox"/> extension cord            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> samples of children's mark making     | <input type="checkbox"/> markers                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> samples of children's art             | <input type="checkbox"/> paper                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> camera                                | <input type="checkbox"/> pens & pencils            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> certificates                          | <input type="checkbox"/> push pins                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> decorations                           | <input type="checkbox"/> scissors                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prizes                                | <input type="checkbox"/> stapler                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gifts for presenters/host             | <input type="checkbox"/> sticky tack               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> icebreaker ideas/materials            | <input type="checkbox"/> string                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> important phone numbers list          | <input type="checkbox"/> tape                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> posters/flyers/invitations to parents | <input type="checkbox"/> old catalogues, magazines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> media release & contact numbers       | <input type="checkbox"/> used greeting cards       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> music                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> yarn                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> name tags (prepared & blank ones)     | <input type="checkbox"/> hole punch                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overheads for workshop                | <input type="checkbox"/> thank you cards           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> overheads (blank)                     | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> refreshments                          | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> room set-up arrangements              | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> signs                                 | _____  |
|  | _____  |



# Taking the Project to the Community

*Jan Greer Langley*

The key to successfully delivering the *Conversations With Parents* workshops is knowing your community and accessing the many resources and assets your community has to offer.

Parents and families are key partners in *Conversations With Parents*. However, reaching parents of preschool children in order to have them participate in workshops may seem like the greatest challenge. There are many ways to get the word out. Make sure you utilize community partners and their networks, and make personal contacts.

A flyer in the local service club newsletter or an invitation extended throughout the local day care center will reach a wide range of parents with preschool children. In some cases, however, reaching a specific audience may require a special partnership. For instance, the local early intervention worker could extend an invitation to hard-to-reach families. Another effective way to reach specific audiences is by building relationships. You can do this by attending community events and talking about an upcoming workshop or, as one community literacy worker discovered, the local laundromat may be a great place to meet parents who will not respond to flyers or posters. Talking directly with parents prior to the workshop provides an opportunity to discover what they want to know about preschool literacy and how best to respond to their needs.

There are many potential community partners who may wish to support *Conversations With Parents*.

- Libraries
- Early Childhood Educators
- Early Intervention Workers
- Schools
- Medical Professionals
- Service Clubs
- Media Partners
- Literacy Groups
- Family Resource Centres

Role of partners:

- Libraries are key to accessing books.
- Service clubs might provide free space or donations for food and materials.
- Media partners might help inform the public.
- Literacy groups and others might assist in reaching parents.
- Medical professionals might help reach your target group.

Draw from your own experience in your community to extend these lists.

## Theory & Practice:

### Taking the Project to the Community cont.



#### Details:

**Time** *Conversations With Parents* is set up so that you can deliver a number of workshops on one theme, or one workshop on varying themes. Decide the best time to deliver the workshop, taking into consideration the intended audience and availability of space, volunteers and library materials.

**Space** The workshops can be held in a community center, church hall, service club, or other location. Choose a friendly space that is comfortable and that adequately meets the needs of the participants.

**Costs** Costs may include materials, refreshments, rent or books.

**Materials** Workshop facilitators may want to develop materials to hand out at the workshop, such as book lists or recipes. Materials should match the theme or topic of the workshop.

**Success** Some groups might gauge the success of their workshop by attendance. Others might gauge it through a self-evaluation or evaluation through dialogue with the participants.

Remember, the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick is a partner and will assist you in the planning and delivery of *Conversations With Parents* workshops in your community.

*Choosing appropriate books is an important part of preparing for a workshop.*





# Birth to Five: Mainly Babies

*A Series of Possibilities*

Beginning with Babies *Lynda Homer... 19*

Singing & Dancing *Anne Hunt... 25*



## Supporting Literacy Development in Everyday Life

**Materials:** Copies of *Baby and Mommy Go Walking* (Homer & Bogart, 2002). One for the workshop leader and a sufficient number for participants to follow along, either individually or in pairs. Flip chart paper and markers, masking tape. A variety of other books for babies and toddlers on display. (See book list at the end.)

### Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge

#### Conversation Point ONE

*Begin by considering how our babies communicate with us and in turn, how we communicate with them.*

*Think about a specific example of communicating with your baby. What time of day is it? What are you doing and saying? How is your baby responding—body language, facial expression, vocalizing? How do you think it feels for your baby? How does it feel for you?*

*As a parent, what do you do to foster your baby's language and literacy development?*



*Mom, Amanda, and ten-month-old Olivia sharing a conversation.*

### Suggestions for Practitioners

#### Fostering baby's language and literacy development:

The questions in the opposite column are intended as conversation starters. The idea is to elicit parents' knowledge and have parents speak first.

- Record parents' responses.
- Remain flexible and build on the interests and ideas arising from your particular group.
- Review the list with the group, encourage discussion, questions and comments. Accept all answers.
- You may wish to use the list to develop a handout for parents.

(See chart on page 22 for possible responses or additions.)

### Background Information

Babies love hearing their parents' voices. We know that at birth, babies can recognize their mother's voice and distinguish it from all others. From the moment they are born, babies are capable of communicating with us through sounds and gestures.

When we talk to our babies and respond to their coos, gurgles and smiles, we show that what they are communicating has meaning and that it is important to us.



## Conversing with Parents

### Conversation Point TWO

#### Babies and Television

Which TV programs does your child watch?

Which TV programs do you watch?

What do children learn from watching TV?

What don't they learn?

What is your reaction to the following statement released by the American Academy of Pediatrics?

**Children under 2 years old should not watch television, older children should not have television sets in their bedrooms and pediatricians should have parents fill out a 'media history', along with a medical history.**

Mifflin, Lawrie. *Pediatricians Zap Media*. (2003)

## Accessing Books

### Conversation Point THREE

Introduce *Baby & Mommy Go Walking*: (Refer to "Notes to Parents" in back of the book.)

As a group, read the story out loud for pleasure. Look at the different reasons for speaking and the types of language usage shown in *Baby & Mommy Go Walking*.



## Suggestions for Practitioners

### Babies and Television

To start discussion, or as a follow-up to discussion, read the quote in the box on the left from Lawrie Mifflin's *Pediatricians Zap Media* and invite parents' reaction.

Points to reiterate:

- Infants and toddlers are often around when adults or older children are watching TV.
- Many parents say that TV watching is a concern; however, they may not think it is realistic to say no TV watching ever.
- When parents actively watch children's television programs along with their child, it may be a way of having fun together and maximizing children's learning.
- Research indicates that it is important to monitor and limit children's television viewing.

## Background Information

Language is embedded in everything we do throughout the day. Therefore everyday routines, or shared experiences such as going for a walk, can be a rich source for oral language and overall literacy development.

Here are some examples of language usage shown in *Baby & Mommy Go Walking* (Remember to give parents a chance to speak first):

- Mother and baby walking along commenting on sights and sounds.
- Reading the world/naming the world.
- Examining a beetle on the ground and shadows of leaves.
- Parenting/Language of redirecting "Flowers for baby, but not to eat."
- Anticipation questioning: "Where's the big dog that we can't wait to see?"
- Mother providing reassurance when the dog barks: "What do you say when things are frightening?"
- Settling down at bedtime with a night-time lullaby.

## Accessing Books

### Conversation Point FOUR

*In pairs, have participants read the story again.*

*Remember to pay attention to the images as well as the text. The pictures add to the story.*

*This time consider:*

*What are the different purposes for speaking depicted in this book?*

*What different types of language usage are depicted?*

### Conversation Point FIVE

*Discuss in groups of three or four, and share ideas with larger group.*

*How could this book be used with a baby or toddler?*

### Conversation Point SIX

#### Using Books With Babies and Toddlers

*How early did you begin reading to your baby?*

*How did your baby respond?*

*Books provide vital one-on-one time for baby and you. The comforting sound of your voice and the warmth of your body will help your baby to associate books with pleasure.*

*What criteria would you use for choosing books for babies?*



*Amanda and baby Olivia read  
Baby & Mommy Go Walking*

## Suggestions for Practitioners

### Using *Baby and Mommy Go Walking* with a baby or toddler:

Possible responses:

- Read the book through, letting the baby enjoy the rhythm of your words and the sound of your voice.
- On pages with a single picture, point the picture out to your baby as you say the word.
- Use the pages with full pictures as a source of conversation.

## Background Information

It is never too early to begin reading books to babies. In the beginning you can read anything since very young babies will focus more on the parent's or caregiver's voice than on the pictures. Reading provides variety to the language that the baby hears, since adults tend to limit their vocabulary when talking directly to a baby.

As babies begin focussing on pictures they will enjoy books with simple illustrations and minimal text. In time, babies' interest in the physical properties of the book broadens to include the subject matter.

### Criteria for Choosing Books for Infants and Toddlers:

- The book is a match for the baby and the situation.
- You love the book - it appeals to you.
- The book is repetitive and invites children to participate.
- Language and sentence structure has rhythmical or musical quality.
- It contains relevant subject matter.
- It is well constructed and safe.
- It has artistic merit.

*From Books for Babies: Connecting Warmth, Well Being and Books (Lynda Homer, 1999).*

## How Parents Support Babies' Language and Literacy Development

- Talking freely to baby
- Talking out loud about what you are doing or thinking
- Reciting nursery rhymes or other verses with rhythm
- Reading to baby
- Providing baby with books
- Playing body parts games
- Playing peek-a-boo; action games
- Being attentive to the sounds that baby makes and repeating them
- Playing with sounds and having baby imitate
- Supplying language and building on what baby says. (i.e., Baby says "ju ju." Mother says, "Yes, I like orange juice too. We'll have to get some more when we are at the grocery store.")
- Sharing varied experiences and talking in a way that gives meaning to the events and things in the child's environment
- Naming the world
- Naming and pointing to familiar objects i.e., "shoes"
- Singing, playing music or using video tapes, radio or television for music with baby



Jessica and two-year-old Ethan love reading together!

## Books for Babies

There is a wide range of books for infants and toddlers to choose from. (See list of suggested books on next two pages) These include:

- Board Books
- Cloth or vinyl books
- Touch and smell books
- Point and say books
- Alphabet books
- Counting books
- Wordless books
- Simple themes and stories



### Professional References:

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## Supporting Literacy Development in Everyday Life

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**FROM:****Books for Babies (1999)****Connecting Warmth, Well Being and Books****By Lynda Homer**

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## Cadence and Creative Expression

**Materials:** Chart paper, markers, tape, a selection of children's books which are songs (see bibliography), access to glue, scissors, paper and magazines, copies of *Singing and Dancing* (Hunt & Hooper, 2002) for each participant.

### Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge

#### **Conversation Point ONE**

*Music is all around us. Begin by thinking together of places where music is a part of our lives.*

*Where is the music in your everyday life?*

- Radio, CDs, Tapes, TV.

*How do you interact with that music?*

*How does music affect the way you feel?*

- Rhythm and feelings
- Music that soothes; music that excites
- Lullabies and love songs, marches, carols and campfire songs

### Background Information

Music and rhythm fill our world. Parents may need a few examples to jog their minds:

- the clock radio in the morning
- the car radio on our way to and from work
- the background music in the mall
- the jingles on TV while we are making supper
- the musical score for our favourite movie
- the birds at dawn
- the measured crunch as we walk through snow
- the swish of the washing machine
- the steady beat of the rain on the roof
- windshield wipers
- rocking chairs

This music and rhythm can soothe, excite, delight, enrage, or sadden us. In turn, it can help us express or change how we feel.

From putting on some quiet music to help us relax to singing a powerful protest song, we use music and movement to communicate.

Thinking about how this works in our lives helps us to understand and use music and movement with our children.

### Conversing with Parents

#### **Conversation Point TWO**

##### **Where's the Literacy in This?**

*Engage parents in a discussion about the songs they might share with their children.*

*Prompts for use with parents:*

*What is an appropriate song?*

- Your songs, their songs, our songs
- Which of these songs do you share with your children?

### Suggestions for Practitioners

Appropriate songs really depend upon the singers and their context.

Songs come from a variety of sources. Encourage and welcome all suggestions:

- Popular tunes
- Commercials
- Remembered songs from childhood
- Skipping rhymes and chants
- Sunday School
- Library story hour



### Conversing with Parents

#### Conversation Point THREE

#### Engaging Children: Oral Language Development Through Daily Routine and Repetition

Possible examples of activities that may be expanded and shaped by the group.

- Moving with your child to music.
- Singing the same song each bathtime so that your child can begin to join you.
- Changing the lyrics of a song to use your child's name (Rock-a-bye Megan, in the tree top).
- Inventing new rhymes (Down By the Bay).
- Reading books that are songs — see bibliography .
- Making personal song books by taking a favourite song and illustrating it with family photos or magazine pictures.

### Background Information

**Engaging children** in singing and moving to music is usually not difficult. Even very small infants sing sounds and move repetitively. Many children make up their own songs, singing about what they are doing at the moment.

Children also are quick to learn songs that are echo songs, like “Down By the Bay,” where a leader sings a line and the child repeats it. They love to hear their name in a song too, “There was a family had a boy and Peter was his name-o”.

Finding new songs together or making them up can be fun. Sunday School or the public library story hour are also great sources for new songs.

Some songs with prescribed movements, like “The Hokey Pokey” or “Teddy Bear Teddy Bear,” will need to be modelled, but most children are happy to move with the beat creating their own dance steps.

### Accessing Books

#### Conversation Point FOUR

#### Book Walk: Connecting Text with the World

Read Singing and Dancing.

Re-read, this time thinking of songs, jingles, popular songs, songs your mother taught you, that fit the emotions of the text. This is called a “Book Walk.”

- Morning songs
- Happy songs
- Angry songs
- Play time songs
- Bathtub songs
- Sleepy songs

Create a communal list of suggested songs.

### Suggestions for Practitioners

#### Book Walk – a way of connecting text with the world.

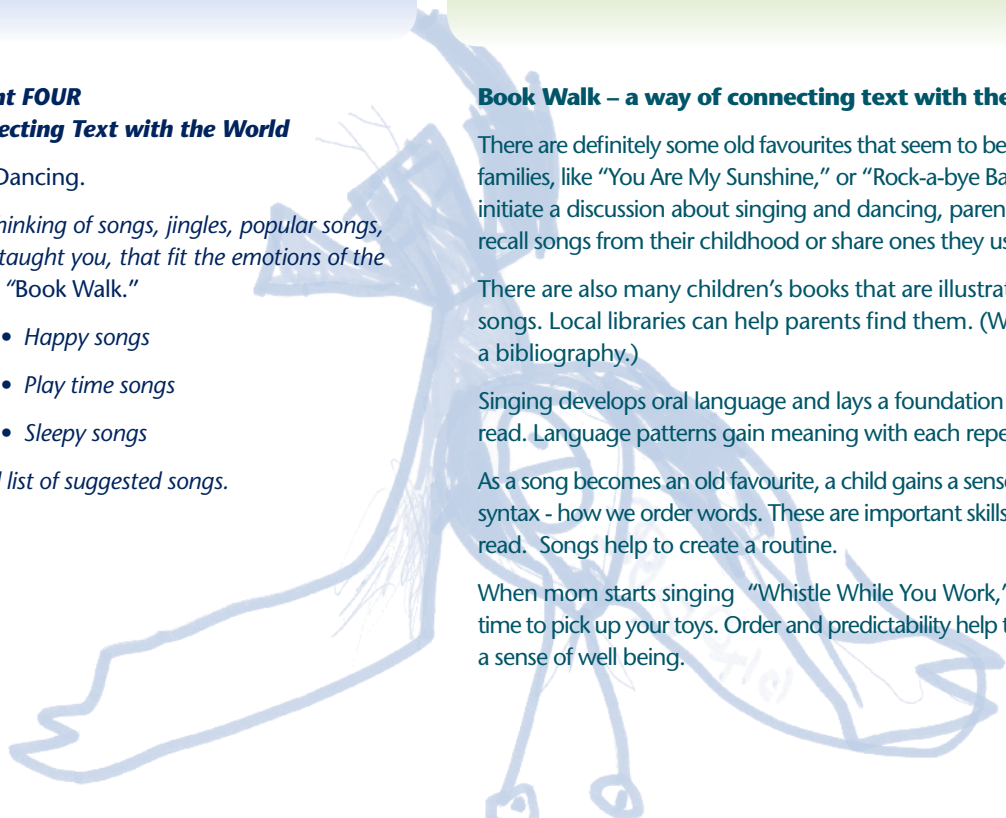
There are definitely some old favourites that seem to be sung by many families, like “You Are My Sunshine,” or “Rock-a-bye Baby.” Once you initiate a discussion about singing and dancing, parents will begin to recall songs from their childhood or share ones they use now.

There are also many children's books that are illustrated versions of songs. Local libraries can help parents find them. (We also provide a bibliography.)

Singing develops oral language and lays a foundation for learning to read. Language patterns gain meaning with each repetition.

As a song becomes an old favourite, a child gains a sense of rhyme and syntax - how we order words. These are important skills for learning to read. Songs help to create a routine.

When mom starts singing “Whistle While You Work,” you know it's time to pick up your toys. Order and predictability help to give children a sense of well being.



## Cadence and Creative Expression

## KID CULTURE

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**Raffi.** Illustrated by True Kelley (1996). *Spider on the Floor*. Crown Publishers, Inc., New York.

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## Cadence and Creative Expression

### RHYMES

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### FROM:

**Singing and Dancing (1999)**  
**Cadence and Creative Expression**

**By Anne Hunt**

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# Toddlers & Preschoolers

*A Series of Possibilities*

Language and Literate Play *Pamela Nuttall Nason... 31*

Literacies in the Home-World *Pam Whitty & Sherry Rose... 35*

Wiggles & Squiggles, Drawing & Writing *Pam Whitty & Sherry Rose... 45*

Predictable Text *Lynda Homer... 55*



# Transforming the Self, Transforming the World

**Materials:** Overhead projector and overheads to show examples of children's writing at play, toy advertisement pages from the *Sears* or *Toys R Us* catalogue, handout.

## Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge

### Conversation Point ONE

- Can you remember what you played at as a child?
- What pleasures and problems do you recall?
- Where's the literacy in that?
- What kinds of things does your child play at?
- How are you involved?
- What do you do?
- What part do you play?

## Suggestions for Practitioners

You may wish to introduce the topic of play with a general statement about the value and pleasure of play—such as the one below. Alternatively you might draw on these points throughout your session.

- Play empowers children to use language on their own terms and in their own ways.
- Play infuses language with pleasure:
  - The pleasure of feeling new sounds, words, phrases, songs and chants roll off the tongue
  - The pleasure of using words, gestures and symbols to create imaginary worlds
  - The pleasure of drawing others into those imaginary worlds with a simple invitation: "Pretend I'm the mommy, right? And you be the baby. Right?..."
  - The pleasure of acting, as the social psychologist Vygotsky said, 'a head taller than themselves', being just a little more competent and powerful than they are in ordinary life.

### Adults support play in many ways:

There are considerable social and cultural differences in the ways adults engage with children's play.

Practitioners must preserve openness to diversity. Emphasize that there are no 'right ways' for adults to behave. It is the differences and the reasons for those differences that are interesting to share, and educative in that they open up new possibilities for parents to consider.

### Adults may:

- Remain relatively uninvolved.
- Play along

### Some Ideas:

- Take turns, and encourage the child to do it again.
- Take on a role and enter the pretend world.
- Expand and extend on the child's ideas.
- Help child to accomplish their own plans.
- Provide props and toys for pretending.



### Conversing with Parents

#### Conversation Point TWO

##### Conversations about Gendered Play

- *What are the differences between boys' and girls' play?*
- *Flyers & Catalogues: Are they divided into boy toys and girl toys?*
  - *What do you think about this sort of promotion?*
  - *Would you buy this (girl's toy) for a boy?*
- *Should we just 'go along' with them, or try to change the way in which play is gendered?*

#### Conversation Point THREE

##### Sharing Information About How Different Sorts of Play Help Develop Different Sorts of Language and Literacy Knowledge and Skills

See Pages 1 to 6 of *Cultivating Language and Literate Play* (Nason and Hunt, 1999). <http://www.unbf/education/ecc/plc> (PDF file). Using this information as a guide, give a brief description and an example of each kind of play.

- *Playing with sounds- developing phonological awareness.*
- *Taking on a role- trying out the language of power.*
- *Deciding who'll play what- the language of negotiation and decision making.*
- *Transforming the world with words - the language of elaboration and possibility.*
- *Inventing stories in action- story structure and grammar.*
- *Literate play- reading and writing in role.*
- *Connecting the scripts of play with books – exploring literary language.*

#### Conversation Point FOUR

##### View Video of Practice and/or Socio-dramatic Play

Create your own video tape of children engaging in this type of play or borrow from the library. One possibility is the video, *Linking Literacy and Play* (Charles Marsh, 1995), which is available from the Harriet Irving Library, UNB Fredericton.

- *Focus on the children: What are they learning?*
- *Focus on the adults: What are they teaching?*
- *Focus on the environment: What is this enabling?*

*Think about how you might change this picture or add to the script to help the child develop language or literacy?*

### Suggestions for Practitioners

#### Boy play, girl play

Some prompts to start, or additional ideas to discuss:

- How does play reflect the gendered roles children see around them?
- Have you noticed the influence of TV on your children's choice of toys?
- Does play with action figures such as Spiderman count as doll play? How is it the same as playing with baby dolls or Barbie? How is it different?
- What about violence in play? Is this gendered?

Invite parents to help make a list of toys that would be equally satisfying to girls and boys. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing such toys.

The idea is to create a 'recognition scene' where parents can say, 'Yes, I've seen my child playing that.' Or 'I remember doing that as a child.' Or 'We play that with our child/ren.' Thus you provide a framework that enables parents to understand their own familiar experience in a new light — i.e., in relation to the development of a particular aspect of language and literacy learning.

As they listen to each other's examples, parents will gain a broader understanding of each type of play, and a broader repertoire of response.

Solicit other examples from the parents as you go.





## Great and Enduring Toys

- Balls to roll, push, kick, throw
- Pots, pans and wooden spoons to make noise, play as musicians or cook an imaginary meal (though some fire marshals are now recommending that you don't, since they think that children may mistake hot pots on the stove for playthings)
- Playdough or plasticine to roll, pat, mould, model
- Dress-up clothes, crowns and hats to transform ordinary children into kings, princesses, mummies, firefighters, police and...
- Papers, pencils, crayons and markers to make a mark, write a ticket, create an imaginary grocery list...



"Jazy" by Colten Munn-Myshrall, 6 years.



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## Connecting the Spoken Word with the Printed Word: A Critical Step in the Literacy Growth of the Young Child.

Materials: Chalkboard, white board or overhead projector and chalk or markers. Copies of *Careful Corey*, (Nason and Fry, 2000). One copy for the workshop leader and additional copies for participants. Book collection from local library for book talk activity. This collection to reflect domestic literacies such as caring, cooking, growing things. (See book list that follows.)

### Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge

#### Conversation Point ONE

- How did your child learn to talk?
- How does your child initiate conversations with others?
- As a parent, what do you do to encourage your child's conversational abilities?
- In what ways do siblings, peers and other adults encourage or participate in your child's conversations?

### Conversing with Parents

#### Conversation Point TWO

##### Connecting the Spoken Word with the Printed Word

- Visualize a space in your home, a place in the community, anywhere you and your child are together.
- Think about conversations that occur in that space.
- What other conversations might arise if you were focussing on different types of print material?



### Suggestions for Practitioners

#### List what the parents say.

Before closing the conversation, return to the list.

Re-read. Add on any other possibilities that come up.

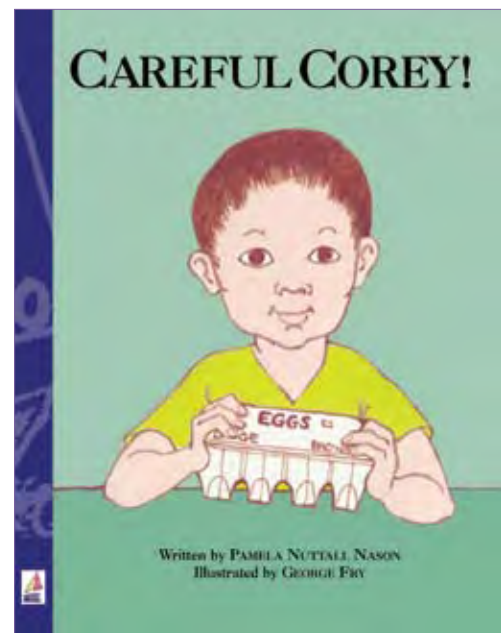
You may find it helpful to use this information to develop a local handout for parents to take home.

#### Record parent ideas.

Possible prompts (See page 40 for more ideas.)

How is print involved if you are:

- selecting a movie?
- following a recipe?
- putting away the groceries?
- walking to the store?



## Accessing Books

### Conversation Point THREE

#### Reading Aloud: Careful Corey

Read the story for pleasure with parents.

### Conversation Point FOUR A

#### Book Walk: Where's the Literacy in That?

Let's read the story again with these questions in mind.

- How does Corey initiate conversation with his mom?
- How does his mom follow Corey's leads?
- How does Corey's mom link the spoken word to the printed word?
- Where is the literacy in that?



Gavin, 3, washes dishes.

## Suggestions for Practitioners

### Modelling

Pay attention to the images. This practice emphasizes the importance of the pictures as a reading tool for children, allowing them to "read" the images and contribute to the story.

### Making meaningful connections

Record parents' responses and connect questions in Conversation Point Four A to the information below.

Corey's initiation:

- Demands to be included in helping.
- Corey's pronounces spaghetti as bscetii.

Mom's initiation: she follows his lead.

- Gets off the phone and echoes back his desire to help, affirming him; re-directs, rather than reprimands.
- "Okay, no need to shout,"—a reminder of socially appropriate ways of making a request.
- Invites him to do a specific task; structures his involvement.
  - Cautions him to value the bread.
  - Lets him carry the bottle.
  - Gets down on the floor.

### Connecting the spoken word with printed word.

She follows his lead in reading labels:

- Bscetii: Celebrates his approximation rather than correcting.
- Points to the label: voice to print match. Asks, "how do you know that?"
- Cereal: Pauses in the work task, explicitly teaches by pointing to the word.
- Reading the story through a picture walk allows for a child's approximations in the same way as bscetii is accepted as spaghetti.

Other examples of printed word seen in functional print are:

- Labels: food items and grocery box
- Church notices
- Memos
- Shopping list
- Numbers on coffee machine

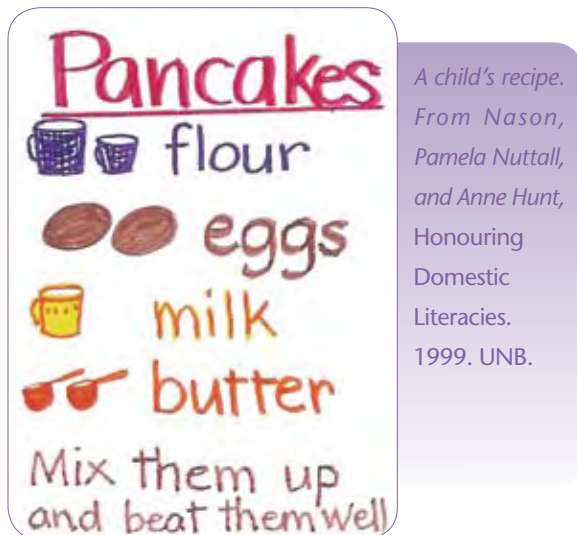
## Conversing with Parents

### Conversation Point FOUR B Children's Involvement in Household Tasks.

As a follow-up activity to the book walk above, try out this brainstorming session.

- What are some barriers to including children in household tasks?
- What are the positives of including children in household tasks?

Review parent notes at the back of Careful Corey for more ideas.



### Conversation Point FIVE More About Literacy in the Everyday

Have you noticed any influence from TV, movies, media, and video games?

- Brainstorm a list.
- Drawing: Writing down the stories of children's TV, video, and/or game-inspired drawings connects spoken words to written words.

## Suggestions for Practitioners

Record parents responses first. List them.

### Barriers (others may emerge):

- Safety
- Pressures of time
- Comfort of the parent
- Appropriateness of task
- Tolerance of mess
- Cost involved with potential loss
- Hygiene
- Tension between helping a child learn and finishing the job
- Relaxing standard
- Number of children

### Positives (others may emerge):

- Including a child in household tasks can build confidence.
- Labels, logos and other print in the environment are often the first words a child reads.
- Answering the child's questions related to various tasks develops oral language.

**TV shows** specific to reading, speaking, stories and letters:

- Reading Between the Lions
- Sesame Street
- Blues Clues

### Differences:

Boys often initiate their own drawings of video games and Superheroes.

Girls will often draw Disney movies; currently, *Finding Nemo* and *Spirit*.

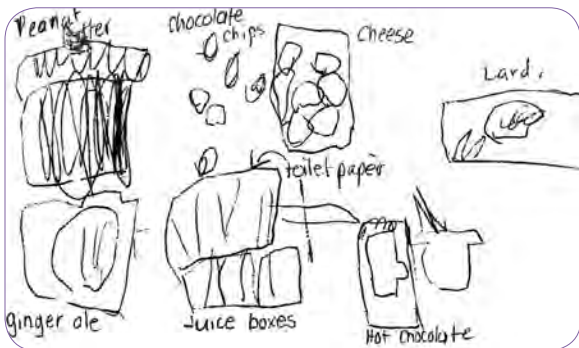
## Conversing with Parents

### Conversation Point SIX A

#### Connecting The Spoken Word with the Printed Word

What kind of print is involved in everyday activities?

How can you help your child connect the spoken word to the printed word in playful ways?



Grocery list drawn by Gavin at 2 years of age.  
Mom (Sherry Rose) printed the words.

## Suggestions for Practitioners

Record the home activities suggested. These can be used to develop a handout for parents.

- Going for a walk
- Picking out a TV show
- Putting groceries away
- The child's name
- Family name games
- Reading the mail, flyers, newspapers, street signs
- Taking a bath, counting, singing and dancing
- Family chores
- Family celebrations - cards and parties
- Family photos
- Letters and notes to family members
- Tooth fairy letters, letters to Santa
- Helping a child print her/his name
- Using markers to draw
- Writing down what a child says about his/her drawing
- Gardening
- Feeding pets, birds outdoors
- Reading calendars
- Interests like knitting, fixing things



Gavin, 18 mos.,  
painting his sandbox.

## Accessing Books

### Conversation Point SIX B

#### **Taking our Learning Home: Generating Ideas for Conversations Between Parents and Children.**

In *Careful Corey*, we saw how literacy was involved in the task of putting away the groceries.

- What other home activities might a parent do that build upon the idea of literacy in the everyday?

### Conversation Point SEVEN

#### **Book Talk: Linking Books with Events in the Daily Life of the Child**

- Review accompanying book lists with a librarian and select 25-35 books for Book Talk activity with parents.
- Place parents in groups of 3 and ask:
  - What do you like?
  - What do you not like?
  - What connections can you make with your own life?

### Conversation Point EIGHT

#### **Connecting with Communities**

Brainstorm ideas with parents on how they can locate books for the home.

## Professional Readings

Nuttall Nason, Pamela and Anne Hunt (1999). *Honouring Domestic Literacies: Caring, Cooking and Other Household Work*. Early Childhood Centre, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB. (pp. 15 - 22).

*Children and Domestic Literacies*. <http://www.unbf/education/ecc/plc> PDF File

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## Suggestions for Practitioners

### Identifying the Involvement of Print in Everyday Activities

List what parents say. The list might include:

- Reading signs
- Naming what you see
- Retelling the story of the walk
- Planning menus
- Retelling family history
- Reading seed package
- Labelling seed or garden rows
- Counting days to a special event
- Sorting, organizing, describing
- Spontaneous singing and chanting

### Locating Books for the Home

Have parents share their likes, dislikes and connection with the whole group. Some Ideas (Take parents' ideas first and add on):

- Family resource centres
- Book mobiles
- Used book stores
- Yard sales
- Church sales
- Local community book drives



The charts below are from *Desirable Literacies*. A few changes have been made from the original to better match Canadian English.

## The Kitchen

- Recipe books
- Calendar
- Money
- Cheque Book
- Written shopping list
- Bills
- Advertising pamphlets
- Plastic bags advertising stores
- Words and messages on mugs
- Cash receipt from grocery stores
- Symbols and logos on kitchen appliances
- Written & pictorial labels on laundry detergent
- Cooking instructions on food cans and packages
- Numbers, letters and symbols on the dials of the stove, microwave, fridge, washing machine
- Items on family notice board: e.g., letters from school, takeout menus,
- Words on storage jars: “Tea”, “Sugar”, “Coffee”
- Children’s pictures and writing stuck onto the fridge
- Magnetic letters and fridge magnets (words, logos)



## The TV Room

- Books & Comics
- Newspapers & Magazines
- Catalogues & Forms
- Birthday cards & Letters
- Radio & TV Times
- Television & Remote
- Telephone book
- Message pad & pencil
- Knitting patterns
- Written words



## The Bathroom

- Words on soap & toiletries
- Words on bath mat, towels, face cloths
- Waterproof books & foam letters for bath play
- Words, symbols, numbers on taps and shower



## A Child’s Bedroom

- Books & Comics
- Magazines & Catalogues
- Postcards & Posters
- Story tapes
- Words and symbols on bedding and curtains
- Toys
- Clothing & Footwear
- Games and their packages



## Connecting the spoken word with the printed word: A Critical step in the literacy growth of the young child

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## Connecting the spoken word with the printed word: A Critical step in the literacy growth of the young child

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## Connecting the spoken word with the printed word: A Critical step in the literacy growth of the young child

### MICE STORIES

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### FRIENDSHIP

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### FROM:

#### Honouring Domestic Literacies (1999)

#### By Pamela Nuttall Nason and Anne Hunt

Book list updated: March, 2004  
The Early Childhood Centre  
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## The Mark-Making of Children

**Materials:** Chalkboard, white board or overhead projector and chalk or markers. Copies of *Wiggles, Squiggles, Lines & Jiggles* (Whitty & Tingley, 2000). One copy for the workshop leader and additional copies for parents; samples of drawings and writings of preschool children; display of alphabet books, Anthony Browne *Bear* books, and Crockett's *Harold and the Purple Crayon* books. (See book list that follows.)

### Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge

#### Conversation Point ONE

*What kinds of marks is your child making?*

- *How does your child initiate her/his own drawing and writing activities?*
- *As a parent, what do you do to encourage your child's mark-making?*
- *In what way do peers, siblings and other adults encourage and/or participate in children's mark-making?*

### Background Information

Mark-making refers to children's efforts at drawing and writing that often are seen as just marks. These marks are the beginnings of drawing and writing.

In the beginning, drawing and writing may all look the same: like wiggles, squiggles, lines and jiggles.

By age three, children begin to make distinctions between drawing and writing, even if we as adults can't discern the differences.

### Accessing Books

#### Conversation Point TWO

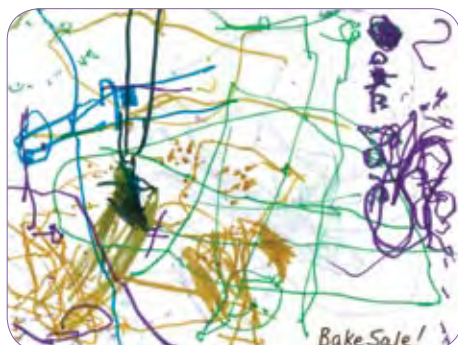
#### Reading Aloud: *Wiggles, Squiggles, Lines & Jiggles*

*There are many ways to read a book.*

- *Read with the child for pleasure, which usually means reading the words.*
- *Picture walk to elicit the child's sense of the story and the child's connections. Children will often make up their story from the pictures.*
- *Talk about the book experience using a Tell Me-Show Me framework: for example: Tell me what you like? Show me your favourite picture and tell me what you like about it?*

### Suggestions for Practitioners

- List what parents say.
- You may find it helpful to use this information to develop a local handout for parents to take home.
- Refer to "Notes to Parents" at the end of *Wiggles & Squiggles, Lines & Jiggles*.
- Before closing the conversation, return to the list. Re-read. Add on any other possibilities that come up.



*Bake Sale by  
Sebastian, 4 years.*



## Conversing with Parents

### Conversation Point THREE

#### Book Walk: Reading with an Eye to Literacy in the Everyday

- What does this book show us about the mark-making of children?
- What kinds of marks does Gert make?
- How does Gert initiate her drawing and writing?
- How do Gert's mom and Gert's friends encourage and/or participate in her mark-making?



Picture by Connor,  
11 mos.



Tadpole drawing by  
Connor, 18 mos.



An elaborate tadpole  
drawing by Gavin,  
3 years.

## Background Information

Points to reiterate when discussing *Literacy in the Everyday*. Others may emerge.

- What kinds of marks does Gert make?
  - Wiggles, squiggles, lines and jiggles, i.e shapes
  - Human form, cat, name, house
  - Voice to print—reading the name
  - Drawing of the self
  - Grocery list
  - Letter and picture to Dad
  - Taking restaurant orders
  - Drawing for pleasure
- How does Gert initiate her own drawing and writing?
  - She is internally motivated to mark whatever she can get her hands on— lipstick and toilet paper and the mirror.
  - Marks on the wall.
  - Demands resources: paper and pens, etc.
  - Scrounges about for the box to write on.
  - Imitates and helps Mom to write a grocery list.
  - Role plays a waitress, recording the order while playing with Mom.
  - Draws and writes while travelling on the bus.
  - Expresses feelings of joy, whoops, gets carried away.
  - Invents and uses colour freely.
- How do Gert's mom and Gert's friends encourage/participate in her mark-making?
  - Provide a place to hang the work: exhibition space in the home.
  - Encourage the social conventions of where to mark and with what tools.
  - Help with access to materials: markers for birthday, sticks outside, bag on the bus, napkin, an envelope on the fridge.
  - Invite Gert to participate in shopping list.
  - Enter role play for the restaurant.
  - Provide a time and place for Gert and friends to write and draw.

## Conversing with Parents

### Conversation Point FOUR Reading Children's Marks - Drawing & Writing

- What do these samples tell us about the mark-making of children?
- What is your first impression?
- Let's take another look.
- What does this child know?
- How do we know that the child knows?

Drawing with letters by Connor, age??



Elspeth by Claire, 5 years.

### Conversation Point FIVE Taking our Learning Home

- How would you encourage and/or participate in drawing and writing in the context of play, work, family care, chores?
- How do you respond? When do you talk, when do you remain silent?

## Suggestions for Practitioners

Collect samples of children's drawings and writings that range from initial scribbles to realistic representations of drawings and writings of older preschoolers. (See accompanying diagrams in this section for ideas.)

Invite parents to bring examples of their children's drawings and writings to this session.

## Background Information

Review the notes to parents at the end of *Wiggles & Squiggles, Lines & Jiggles*.

- Growth in drawing and writing is evident over time.
- Access to a wider range of materials matters.
- Technical control evolves with practice over time through use of a wide range of materials.
- Drawing and writing represent the social content of children's lives—what matters to them.

## Suggestions for Practitioners

Brainstorm with parents about how they do or how they can respond to children's writings and drawings.

Respond to children and their work.

### Some ideas:

- Tell me more about this drawing/writing?
- Where did you get that idea?
- What will you do next?
- How do you know that?
- How can you show . . . ?
- That reminds me of . . .

## Accessing Books

### Conversation Point SIX

#### Book Talk: Linking Books with Events in the Daily Life of Children.

- Review accompanying books list with a librarian and select 25-35 Alphabet books for book talk with parents.
- Group parents in three.
- What do you like? What do you not like?
- How does each book represent a particular letter? (Select one or two)
- What else do these books teach besides the letters of the alphabet?

### Connecting with Communities

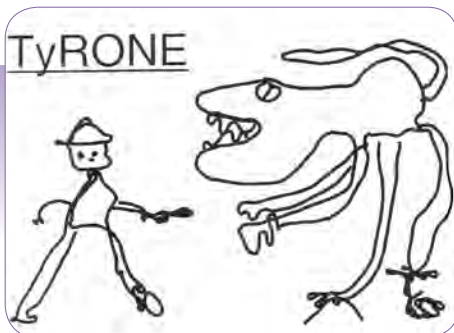
Problem solve with parents about accessing tools and materials for writing and drawing within your community. Help with access where necessary.

### More about Literacy in the Everyday

Have you noticed any influence of TV, movies and media on your child's writing and drawing?

- Brainstorm a list.

By Alex, 6 years.



By Meredith, 7 years.



## Suggestions for Practitioners

Make a list of ideas from the parents' book talk. This list can go home with parents to use when they read images, words, letters and words in alphabet books with their child.



### Some Suggestions for Accessing Community Resources (take parents' ideas first, then add on):

- Offices can donate used binders and computer paper.
- Printing shops for paper ends.
- Newspaper publishers for end of paper rolls.
- Hotels where conferences have been held may have left-over pads and pens.
- Bookmobiles.
- Family Resource Centre.

## Background Information

**Drawing:** Children often use TV and movie characters in their play, drawings and writings.

**Differences:** Boys and girls differ in the content of their stories and also in how they draw and write. For example, boys often are active and vocal when they draw, writing in groups. Their text is often brief, cryptic. Girls write more independently and follow once upon a time stories, and typically have better fine motor control.

**Children's Books & Mark-Making:** Anthony Browne's "Bear" books and Crockett Johnson's *Harold and the Purple Crayon* are books that model children at play with writing and drawing. Encourage parents to seek out these books.

## Roles of the Adult in Developing Children's Engagement with Environmental Print

- Supplying** ◦ Supplying crayons, markers, writing tools, paper, cardboard, side walks, snow, etc.; the space to write, be it a table or a bit of floor. Children like to work on the floor. Friends and siblings to share writing and drawing experiences.
- Supporting** ◦ Supporting and valuing children's literacy learning, whether it is a spoken comment about a sign or a letter or their mark-making on a piece of paper. Helping children to interact with their mark-making by asking questions about their pictures and recording their stories. Entering their stories in a playful way. "I wonder...", "Tell me..."
- Scaffolding** ◦ Helping children to achieve tasks that they may not yet be able to do on their own, e.g. read the signs around them. Talking with children about the signs and symbols they see. Asking questions and commenting about the print around them so that children start noticing the print and use the context to make meaning of the printed matter around them.
- Sharing** ◦ Providing a space for children to share their works. A fridge, bulletin board, wall or album. Inviting children to participate in making birthday cards, grocery lists, to do lists, etc.
- Showing** ◦ Providing a role model for children. Showing ways of using print, e.g., "Look, this sign tells me that I should wash my hands now." Showing the importance of using the print around us to fulfill particular tasks, e.g., reading recipes when cooking, writing a grocery list.
- Saying** ◦ Praising the children's efforts to create pictures and print.
- Seeing** ◦ Noticing when your child is writing or drawing, recognizing their efforts to spell words, create stories and celebrating their accomplishments. "Look you spelled your name!", "Yes, bird starts with b." "Tell me who lives in this beautiful garden you drew."

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The 7S structure is borrowed from Jackie Marsh and Elaine Hallett. The writing ideas are provided by Sherry Rose and Pam Whitty.

From *Desirable Literacies: Approaches to Language and Literacy in the Early Years*. Ed. Jackie Marsh and Elaine Hallett. Paul Chapman Ltd., London. 1999.

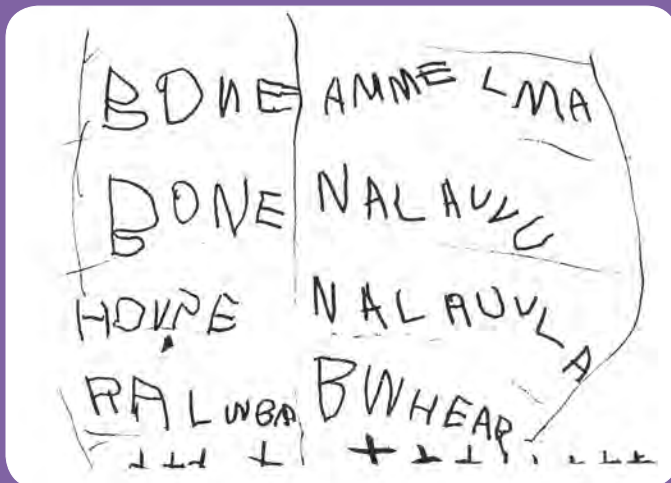
## information to Guide Practitioners

For her master thesis, Robin Adeny observed her two pre-school daughters drawing and writing over a four-year period. She was particularly interested in the role of children's talk as they were drawing. She defined six categories of talk that her children engaged in while they were drawing. We thought these categories might prove helpful to you as you speak with parents about children's drawings and the importance of talk and play on the page as children draw.

### 1. Storytelling:

A child tells a story while drawing. Often these tellings begin with "Once upon a time", a bit of character development, plot and a resolution.

*Prescription for a broken bone by Abby, 4 years, 6 months.*



### 3. Singing and Wordplay:

Vocalizations that were sung, words that were chanted repeatedly or poetic word play as children drew.

From the study of Robin J. Adeny (1996).  
Masters Thesis. *Children Talking to Themselves While Drawing.*  
University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan.



*Wicked Witch by Emma, 3 years, 11 months.*

### 2. imaginative Play:

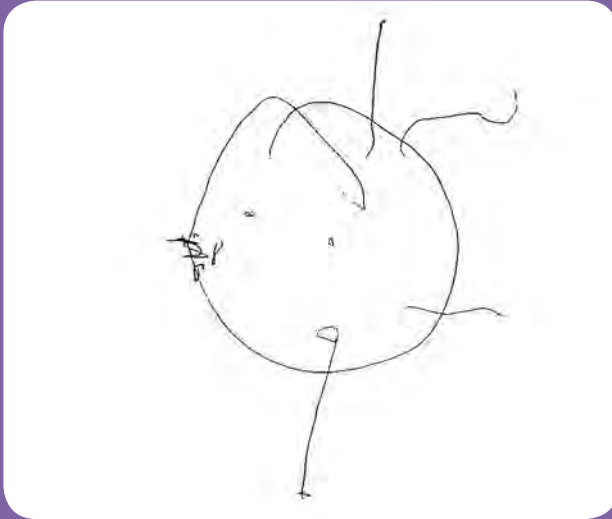
These drawing-talking episodes were spontaneous and imaginative. This is dramatic play on the page, and in this way acts as very fertile ground for early literacy behaviours to emerge. (p. 32). This was the largest category.

*Singing girl by Abby, 5 years, 9 months.*





## Information to Guide Practitioners



"This is you Emma!" by Emma, 2 years.

### 4. Description and Labelling:

Children describe what they are doing and label or identify what they have drawn. Lev Vygotsky made some important observations about drawing. A specialist in children's early language development, he argued that young children draw first and then describe what they have drawn. Later, children name their drawing while drawing. Finally, they decide beforehand what they will draw. At this last stage, speech precedes actions and enables children to plan an idea.

### 5. Focusing on Letters:

Includes drawings where letters are embedded within the composition or where the children speak about alphabetic symbols while drawing.

"Snail letters" by Emma, 3 years, 9 months.



"Alphabet House" by Abby, 4 years, 3 months.

### 6. Self Coaching:

When children show self-praise and self-reinforcement. This category differs from the others in that their speech is directing their actions and providing encouragement as they do difficult tasks.

## The Mark-Making of Children

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### FROM:

#### **Where Does Fonix Phit? (1999) Connecting Sound, Sense and Rhythm**

**By Pamela Nuttall Nason and Anne Hunt**

Updated by Sherry Rose & Pam Whitty, March, 2004  
The Early Childhood Centre  
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## Supporting Children's Efforts as Beginning Readers

**Materials:** A selection of predictable books—approximately 20 books for a group of 15. A few predictable books for the workshop leader to read out loud: preferably Big Books. Flip chart, markers and masking tape. Materials for making a home made book i.e., old magazines, catalogues, paper, yarn, hole-punch, scissors, packages of crayons & markers, stapler, glue.

### Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge

#### Conversation Point ONE Predictable Text in the Everyday Environment

Have on display everyday items from the environment such as:

- Cereal boxes, toothpaste
- Stop sign, MacDonald's logo
- Cake mix, exit sign.
- Which of these do you think your child can already read?
- What else can they read?
- What is the connection between children's awareness of print in the environment and learning to read?



### Background Information

The term 'environmental print' refers to the print found on street signs, billboards, restaurants, grocery stores, bathroom doors, and the logos on products we use every day, such as cereal boxes, cake mixes, milk cartons and toothpaste tubes.

#### Knowledge of Print in the Environment: A Basis for Developing an Understanding of Letters and Words

Children can very often read environmental print at an early age, since it is meaningful in their lives and is usually accompanied by familiar shapes, colour and pictures. This engagement with print helps children to construct their understanding of letters and words. As they gain the insight that symbols have meaning, they begin to develop concepts about print, and eventually about books.

Children gain confidence as readers when they can already read many things in the world around them. This knowledge of print in the environment serves as the basis for further progression in reading.

#### Predictable books serve as a bridge to independent reading.

Young children's favourite books are often highly predictable. The ability to 'predict' what comes next in a book allows the child to actively participate in the reading of the book. Predictable books serve as a bridge to independent reading.

Many predictable books are available in 'Big Book' form. This makes them ideal for group reading. Children can see the pages and follow along as they are being read.

*Print in the environment*

### Conversing with Parents

#### Conversation Point TWO

##### What Makes a Book Predictable?

Read 2 or 3 predictable books out loud, asking the group to chime in where they can. Selections might include: *Brown Bear* (Martin), *I Went Walking* (Williams), *How Do I Put It On?* (Watanabe).

- Which characteristics of these books make it easier for you to chime in and predict what comes next?
- What do you think is the benefit of reading predictable books with children?



Faith Anne, 4 years, reads a predictable book.

### Suggestions for Practitioners

#### What Makes a Book Predictable?

Some possibilities (remember to have parents respond first) :

- Rhyme
- Rhythm
- Repetition
- Illustrations
- Logic, sequence
- Cumulative elements
- Arrangement of words
- Familiarity (familiar songs, stories, or nursery rhymes)

#### Why Read Predictable Books?

Elicit parents' ideas first. Some points to stress:

- Repetitive segments make it easier for children to chime in and read along.
- As children learn parts by hearts they may start to recognize some words by sight.
- Reading predictable books can eventually lead to independent reading.
- When children are first beginning to read, text that is easy to anticipate and is more predictable will support their efforts.

#### Strategies for Engaging Children in Predictable Books

List ideas from group. Here are some possibilities:

- Choosing the right topic.
- Finding the rhythm of the book.
- Pointing to key words, especially those with a different font or colour; using an expectant tone.
- Pausing for the child to fill in the rhyming word.
- Drawing attention to pictorial cues; asking questions to anticipate the text.
- Asking, "What is happening here? What do you think will happen next?"
- Being ready to read the book over and over if it is a hit.

## Accessing Books

### Conversation Point THREE

#### Book Talk: Looking Closely at Predictable Books

Form groups of three. Give each group four predictable books, including one wordless book, to examine. Consider:

- Which of these books do you like best and why?
- Which of these books is most predictable and why?
- What strategies would you use to engage your child with these books?

### Conversation Point FOUR

#### Display of Predictable Books

Discuss the range of predictable books on display and share the list of recommended predictable books for children.

#### Making Your Own Predictable Book

Have materials on hand so that participants can make a predictable book to share with their child.

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## Suggestions for Practitioners

### Book Talk

Honour everyone's point of view. The idea is not to come to agreement, but to look closely at the different attributes of predictable books and generate discussion.

- Invite each group to share their thinking with the whole group.
- Encourage the group to make comparisons between books, identifying the different techniques used to make them easier to read.

### Possibilities for Making Your Own Predictable Books

Have parents consider the characteristics and interests of their child and the different types of predictable books. Before you begin consider:

- Familiar sequences such as numbers, days or months.
- Familiar stories and songs.
- A selection of family photos or pictures cut from magazines.
- Samples of print from the environment.

Remember that children enjoy looking at pictures of themselves, their family and events or activities in which they have been involved. Homemade books can be kept right on the shelf with other books.

*Jeremiah, 4 years, and Ethan, 2 years, make books with their moms, Jessica and Shelley.*



## Progressions in Children's Reading and Writing

Children must learn to use a large repertoire of skills, knowledge, and dispositions in order to make sense of text. Reading is a complex process: it is important to remember that the course of reading and writing development is not always linear and does not occur in fixed sequences.

**Logographic reading** – Initially, children rely solely on context and visual cues. They recognize the MacDonald's "golden arches" and can read the logo because it has meaning in their lives. They become increasingly aware of print in the environment and can identify signs and labels in and out of context. Eventually they begin paying more attention to the print. They may associate the visual features of the written word with the meaning of the word. For example, the word caterpillar may be remembered by making an association with the shape or length of the word and characteristics of an actual caterpillar. (The caterpillar has a long low body.) This is the basis for progressing to the next level of reading.

**Alphabetic reading** – As children gain experience with print, they begin to attend to the sounds of the letters, combining this with a variety of other strategies. Children use what they know about context and visual cues, and combine it with their growing understanding of grammar, meaning, sound and symbol to actively engage in the printed word. Through this active engagement they continue to perfect their growing concepts about the functions, form, conventions and meaning of written language.

"Letter/sound relationships are much more complex than is com-

monly acknowledged. A is not only 'for apple' but also for ale and Asian and for army and aardvark. And just look at Pat-a-cake! So it is for all letters that the letters that precede or follow them determine the sound they make."

It would be a nightmare and a mistake to teach young children to consciously attempt distinguishing all of these different letter/sound relationships as a prerequisite to learning to read. They will learn to make many of these distinctions intuitively in the process of reading and writing, and use them without being able to actually name them, just as adults do."

*From Where Does Fonix Phit? Connecting sound, sense and symbol, Pamela Nuttall Nason and Anne Hunt (1999).*

**Orthographic reading** – Children at this level are fluent readers. They know the conventional spelling of many words. They have a highly sophisticated and complex understanding of the written language.



*Jeremiah, 4 years, prints his name.*

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**FROM:****Honouring Domestic Literacies (1999)****By Pamela Nuttall Nason and Anne Hunt**

Updated March, 2004  
The Early Childhood Centre  
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# Older Preschoolers: Just Before School

*A Series of Possibilities*

Folk and Fairy Tales *Pamela Nuttall Nason... 63*

Starting School *Pam Whitty & Sherry Rose... 69*



## Exploring Our Own Stories

**Materials:** At least 2 different picture book versions and the original text of *Cinderella*, Beni Montresor's *Little Red Riding Hood*, multiple picture book versions (enough for one between two people) of one fairy tale such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, the *Three Little Pigs*, *Sleeping Beauty*, etc. Document projector.

### Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge

#### Conversation Point ONE Parents Recollect Their Own Experiences

- Can you remember hearing folk and fairy tales when you were a child?
- Which ones do you remember hearing?
- Which ones did you really like/dislike?
  - Do you remember why you liked or disliked particular stories?
  - Did anyone else like or dislike the ones you remember?
  - Have you told any of those stories to your own child(ren)?
  - Does anyone tell them these stories?



### Background Information

Stories that happened long ago and far away offer us the opportunity to explore our own life stories. Many of them have endured for centuries, precisely because they are about matters that are deeply important to us. They are about the clash of good and evil; about the ways in which human beings use their wits and muster what support they can to overcome the odds, or even survive.

With their predictable story lines and repetitive refrains, folk and fairy tales work wonderfully as predictable, oral texts. Whether the story is told from memory or written in a book, it's easy to invite a child to 'chime in' ... "with a huff and a puff ..."

There's been a lot of discussion about whether we should reveal the "gory details" of the old fairy tales to the children of today. Some psychologists argue that it's important for children to see that the wolf meets his end — so he is no longer a threat to any little pig, or child. Others argue that children should not be exposed to such disquieting images. In his acceptance speech for the Caldicott award for his (then much criticized) book *Where the Wild Things Are*, renowned children's author Maurice Sendak noted, "...children do know there are frightening things in the world. If we don't acknowledge them they don't go away; children don't stop suffering. They just suffer alone."

### Suggestions for Practitioners

#### Cinderella

There are hundreds of versions of *Cinderella* in many different languages. Women's need/desire to 'marry up' in the social scale crosses many cultures apparently! And it's not coincidental that the glass slipper was so small — the first version of *Cinderella* is thought to have originated in China, where small feet were so highly valued as a sign of beauty (and a guarantee of subservience?) that for centuries women suffered the agonies of binding to keep their feet unnaturally small.

## Conversing with Parents

### Conversation Point TWO

#### Changing Sensibilities: Gender and Social Class.

The Cinderella story is sometimes called 'The rags to riches' tale.

- What sort of message do you think this story conveys to a girl?
- How about to a boy?
- Should we just 'go along' with it, or try to disrupt that message?



### Conversation Point THREE

#### Book Walk: A New Look at a Familiar Tales

Read Beni Montresor's version of Little Red Riding Hood with a view to discussing how the illustrations of a picture book illuminate and change our interpretation of the text.

This particular text has the capacity to prompt deep discussion and reflection about parenting and protection as well as choosing books for children.

You may wish to add the voice of contemporary literary theory that suggests we all 'read into' texts depending on our experience (making world-to-text connections), so a child's reading of this very text will be quite different from an adult's, and that will be different from an adult well versed in looking carefully at picture books.

## Suggestions for Practitioners

You may want to show different versions of *Cinderella* that show how we adapt fairy stories to contemporary sensibilities. For example, the grim Grimm's tale—where the ugly sisters actually cut off their toes to make the glass slipper fit, is usually greeted with horror. But it can be an opener for a great conversation about the ways in which women continue to mutilate/reshape their bodies in order to present a more pleasing appearance (see page 5 Nason and Hunt, *Folk and Fairy Tales*). There are also a number of modern day fairy stories that show how the issues endure into modern times—Fiona French's *Snow White in New York*, for example. There are also books designed to disrupt these familiar texts, such as Robert Munch's *The Paper Bag Princess*, in which the roles are reversed and the princess rescues the prince.

**A bit of TV trivia:** Oprah tells her autobiography as a rags-to-riches story, but her sister has contested it, claiming that they were comfortably off as children. However, Oprah now is so fabulously rich, perhaps her former life looks like poverty to her! It's important to note that such stories give hope to ordinary folks, and are basic to the American ideology that anybody can make it if they try (just so long as they aren't ugly women with big feet).

### Little Red Riding Hood

You might note that:

- The whole community is watching *Little Red Riding Hood* getting ready to go out—or rather 'come out'. This is a "coming of age" story. It was originally written as a cautionary tale for pubescent young women. The red cloak is thought to symbolize menstrual blood indicating that she is no longer a child.
- The wolf is a dandy in pursuit. Down on one knee, he appears to be courting the grandmother.
- The wolf devours the grandmother. The phrase is exactly the same as is used for *Little Red Riding Hood*: a synonym for intercourse? Rape? Look at the pictures carefully. Do the young woman and elderly woman appear compliant? Afraid? Something else?
- Inside the wolf (double-page spread)—Little Red Riding Hood is whole, the wolf looks pregnant. Is her position alluding to the crucifixion? Is this story about rebirth?
- What's that man doing outside the door? Is he mentioned in the original text? Is he, the woodcutter, coming to the rescue? "He looks", said one of our participants, "like the Gestapo, not coming to the rescue, but patrolling to secure the inside." Is there no escape until this scenario is played through to its conclusion? Until the girl is 'reborn' as a woman? Until the wolf has had his way?

## Accessing Books



### Conversation Point FOUR

#### Book Talk: Parents and Practitioners Look Carefully at Books and Select Their Favourites

- Choose a number of different versions of the same fairy tale.
- Invite parents to examine them carefully in small groups.
- What struck them the most?
- What do they like and dislike about each one?
- Can they make any connections between these texts and others they have read, or things that have happened to them?
- Collectively, which did they like best and least?
- Invite each small group to share with the larger group what they noticed and which version they would choose for their children.

## Suggestions for Practitioners

Adults often express shock or horror at this sort of reading. They may offer alternative interpretations. Accept all interpretations. This book, like all picture books of oft-repeated tales, is an interpretation. So too are the things you are noticing about it as you do the book walk.

Parents may raise questions about the appropriateness of this version for young children. If they do, solicit many different viewpoints from the assembled parents/guardians. When we did this book walk with parents in the UNB Parenting for a Literate Community Project, they were very much divided on this. One already had read this book to her child who'd enjoyed it in much the same way as any other version. Some parents said they would never choose it, nor would they want their children's teachers to choose it. One noted that censorship of books such as this was quite hypocritical, given the images their children were constantly exposed to on TV—cartoons, music videos and the news.

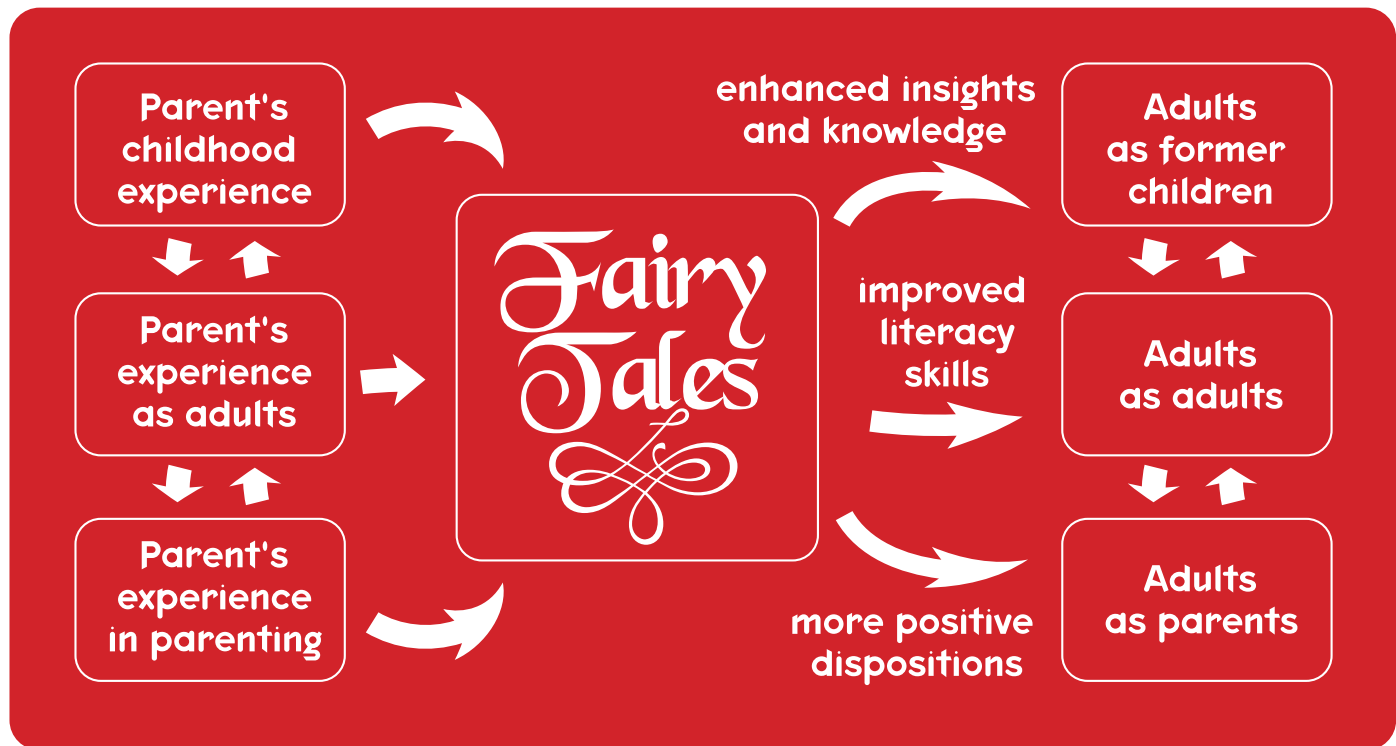
### Book Talk: Parents and Practitioners Look Carefully at Books and Select Their Favourites

In picture books it is often the illustrations that change the meaning from one version to the next, so make sure everyone is positioned to see them clearly.

There may be strong feelings and it's important that the facilitator can validate everyone's perspective and not seek resolution or agreement. Cultivate respect for a wide range of viewpoints. There are no right answers! Agree to disagree on what people prefer and why. Knowing that the experts differ sometimes helps.

#### Points to stress:

- Looking carefully at picture books enables parents/guardians to be critics themselves—rather than depending on 'experts' to tell them what is a 'good book.'
- Experts do not agree on their interpretations or evaluations of books.
- Parents/guardians choose differently depending on what is in keeping with their sensibilities about gender, social class, race, etc.
- Reading is an interpretive act—we can all read the same picture book and come up with a different interpretation.
- Eliciting the child's interpretation of the pictures and words develops a key comprehension skill—that of making world-to-text connections.



## Suggestions for Practitioners

### Professional Readings

Nason, Pamela Nuttall and Anne Hunt (1999). *Folk and Fairy Tales*. Early Childhood Centre, University of New Brunswick. <http://www.unbf/education/ecc/plc> (PDF file).

The range of picture books that retell fairy and folk tales is stunningly varied. Different illustrators illuminate the texts in different ways, often quite beautiful; sometimes disturbing. Thus adults and children are invited to take a fresh look at old familiar tales.

You may wish to reflect on the conversations you have had with the parents in relation to the diagram above.

- How did these conversations enable them to take a fresh look at their former lives as children?
- How did these conversations illuminate the issues they face today as adults and as parents?

## Exploring Our Own Stories

## CINDERELLA

**Andersen, Hans Christian.** Illustrated by Alain Vaes (1983). *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*. Little, Brown and Company, Toronto.

**Brown, Marcia** (1954). *Cinderella*. Charles Scribner, New York.

**Climo, Shirley.** Illustrated by Ruth Heller (1989). *The Egyptian Cinderella*. Thomas Y. Crowell, New York.

**Edens, Cooper** (1991). *Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White*. Bantam Books, New York.

**Hague, Michael** (1989). *Cinderella and Other Tales from Perrault*. Henry, Holt and Company, New York.

**Jackson, Ellen B.** (1994). *Cinder Edna*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, New York.

**Karlin, Barbara,** illustrated by James Marshall (1989). *Cinderella*. Little, Brown and Company Ltd., Boston.

**Mehta, Lila.** Illustrated by Neela Chhaniara (1985). *The Enchanted Anklet*. Lilmur Publishing, Toronto.

**Perlman, Janet** (1992). *Cendrillion Pingouin ou la Petite Palme de Verre*. Scholastic Canada Ltd., Toronto.

**Suddon, Alan** (1969). *Cinderella*. D. Dobson Books Limited, London.

## THE FROG PRINCE

**Berenzy, Alix** (1989). *A Frog Prince*. Henry, Holt and Company, New York.

**Scieszka, Jon.** Illustrated by Steve Johnson (1991). *The Frog Prince Continued*. Viking Press, New York.

## THREE LITTLE PIGS

**Bucknall, Caroline** (1987). *The Three Little Pigs*. Dial Books for Young Readers, New York.

**Galdone, Paul** (1970). *The Three Little Pigs*. Clarion Books, New York.

**McNaughton, Colin** (1994). *Suddenly*. Anderson Press, London.

**Scieszka, Jon.** Illustrated by Lane Smith (1989). *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. Viking Kestrel, New York.

## THE GINGERBREAD BOY

**Galdone, Paul** (1975). *The Gingerbread Boy*. Clarion Books, New York.

## LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

**Brothers Grimm** (1964). *Little Red-Cap*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York.

**Lacome, Julie** (1994). *I'm a Jolly Farmer*. Candlewick Press, Cambridge, Mass.

**Marshall, James** (1996). *Red Riding Hood*. Dial Books For Young Readers, New York.

**McNaughton, Colin** (1996). *Oops!* Harcourt, Brace and Company, London.

**Montresor, Beni** (Original by Charles Perrault) (1991). *Little Red Riding Hood*. Doubleday, New York.

**Schart-Hyman, Trina** (1983). *Red-Riding Hood*. Holiday House, New York.

**Young, Ed** (1989). *Lon Po Po. A Red Riding Hood Story From China*. Philomel Books, New York.

## SNOW WHITE

**Brothers Grimm** (1983). *Snow-White and Rose-Red*. Julia MacRae Books, London.

**French, Fiona** (1986). *Snow White In New York*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

## FROM:

## Folk and Fairy Tales (1999)

## By Pamela Nuttall Nason and Anne Hunt

Updated March, 2004  
The Early Childhood Centre  
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## Here We Come, Ready or Not!

**Materials:** Chalkboard, white board or overhead projector and chalk or markers. Copies of *I am Starting School Today*, (Whitty and Klausen, 2000). One copy for the workshop leader and additional copies for participants. Display of books reflecting themes of starting school, friendship, inclusion and diversity. (See book list that follows.)

### **Eliciting and Valuing Parent Knowledge**

#### **Conversation Point ONE**

- *Can you remember your first days/year at school?*
- *What particular joys, anxieties can you recall?*
- *How do you feel about your child starting school?*

### **Conversing with Parents**

#### **Conversation Point TWO**

##### **Book Walk: Reading Aloud**

*Read Aloud I am Starting School Today and walk through the book with parents with an eye to starting school.*

- *How is this girl prepared for school in the context of home?*
- *How did the school staff prepare for her?*
- *What are other issues, concerns, adventures and challenges to starting school?*



### **Suggestions for Practitioners**

#### **List what the parents say.**

Before closing the conversation, return to the list and add on any other possibilities.

Suggestion: This list can be used to develop a local handout for parents to take home.

#### **Reading Aloud**

List what the parents say to questions in left hand column. Other possibilities to add as you walk through the book:

- Focus is on the child.
- Sight words let us know we are entering school culture.
- She is prepared for school with new clothes, lunch box, knapsack, indicating that this adventure is an important event that may be financially stressful.
- Emotions for letting go may be different for each person.
- Some kids have friendships established before school.
- Mom teaches child a lesson in kindness; some children do not have friends yet.
- Picture illustrates friendships, isolation or possible aloneness.
- Mom's memory of starting school and her desire to make things better brings out inclusions and kindness.
- Prior to the school year, school staff has set up an orientation visit.
- Familiarity with classroom, playground, and the bus.
- School bus as an adventure with prior experience.
- At home as the day arrives, the girl recognizes mom's feelings and carries Mom's message with her to school.



## Conversing with Parents

### Conversation Point THREE

#### School Readiness

- What is school readiness?
- What kinds of experiences do you think help a child be ready for school?
- How do you think schools are ready (or not) for your child?
- How might you feel about starting school if you are a child? A parent? A sibling? A teacher?

### Conversation Point FOUR

#### Linking Our Discussions to What the Research Literature Says About Prior-to-School Experience.

- When children interact with other children what are they learning?
- How do parents support children?



### Conversation Point FIVE A

#### What Differences Do You Think Your Child Will Experience?

Read *The Pumpkin Blanket* by Deborah, Turney, Zagwgn. This is a beautiful story about anxiety over starting school as addressed by a parent. Share your own stories of when your children started school. Talk about problems encountered and solved.

## Background Information

### School Readiness: One Definition

“The quality and rate of learning in the first few years of life are nothing short of spectacular. The fact that by three or four years of age, most children can understand and use the language of those around them is just one example of learning that takes place long before children begin school.” Lilian Katz, “Readiness: Children and Schools.” <http://readyweb.crc.uiuc.edu/library/1991/katz91.html>

### Children benefit from:

- Opportunities to play cooperatively.
- Time to make and sustain friendships.
- Working together on mutual tasks and projects.
- Learning to understand the perspectives of another.
- Using language in a variety of settings with different people.

### Parents Support Children By:

- Helping children build, paint, draw, talk, play, dance, sing, invent, and role-play.
- Inviting the child to tell them what s/he is thinking, i.e., “Tell me about your invention?; What makes you think that?; What will you do next? How did you solve that problem?”
- Sharing books and other reading materials with the child.
- Regulating the amount of TV viewing.
- Responding with warmth and responsiveness to the child, i.e., being playful when entering her/his world and ideas.

### As Well

- A mother’s accurate understanding of her child’s abilities.
- Maternal education is a more important influence than maternal participation in the work force.

### Difference

When your child enters school, he or she enters a community. Inside a community, people are different: physically, emotionally, and/or economically, with a range of experience with other adults.

## Accessing Books

### Conversation Point FIVE B

#### Book Talk: Linking Books with Events in a Child's Daily Life

Review the accompanying book list with a librarian and select 25-35 books on themes of starting school, friendship and difference for a book talk with parents.

Group parents in three and ask:

- What do you like?
- What do you not like?
- What connections can you make with your own life?

Discuss parents' likes, dislikes and connections with the larger group.

### Conversation Point SIX A

#### Connecting with the School From Home

Practical considerations:

- Which school will your child attend? How do we know? Who do we call?
- When is the school's orientation procedure? In the spring? In the fall?
- Which bus? Which bus stop? Which walking route?
- What does the school send home for the parent?
- What would you like the school to send home?

## Suggestions for Practitioners

### Some Suggestions for Accessing Books:

Display books for starting school, friendship, inclusion, diversity. Help parents to ensure that their children have library cards and access to the library.

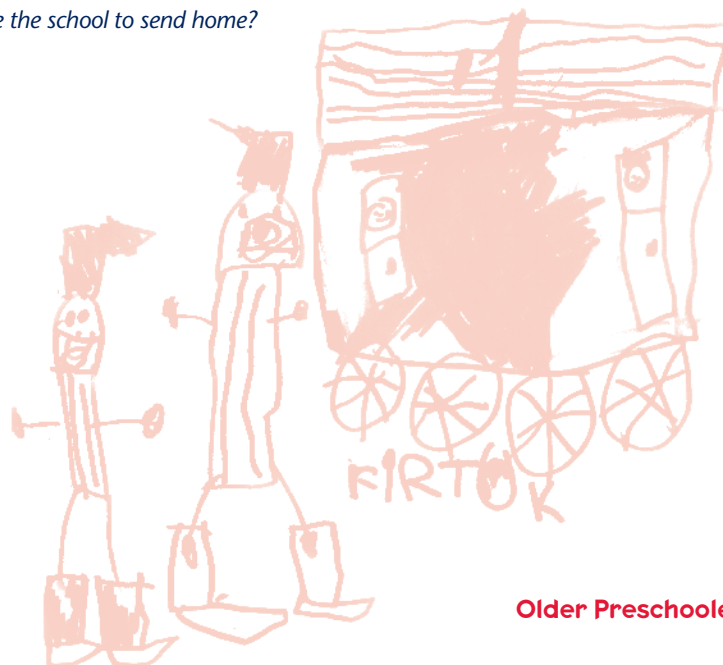


### For Discussions With Parents:

Collect sample documents about beginning school by contacting the local school principal, the district and/or the Department of Education.

#### Documents

Review N.B. Department of Education materials sent home. *Enrichment*, *When Conflict Arises*, *Once You Are On the Bus*, and possibly others.



### Accessing Books

#### **Conversation Point SIX B** **Role Playing Activity to Explore Communication with Teachers.**

Many parents express anxiety about approaching teachers. Role modelling possible conversations can help lessen this anxiety and provide concrete suggestions for getting results for your child.

#### **Conversation Point SEVEN** **Homework: School Work Sent Home.**

- What do you see as the place of homework? As a child? A parent? A teacher?
- Play games with parents and model conversations with children.
- Organize a session where you create games to take home for families to play with children.

### Professional Readings

Pam Whitty (2000). "Are You Ready for Us? Here We Are - Ready or Not." *Connections Journal* 3:3 February 2000, pp.1-4. <http://www.unbf.ca/education/ecc/publications/index.html>

Douglas Powell (1995). *Enabling Young Children to Succeed in School*. American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C.

### Suggestions for Practitioners

#### **What to Communicate to the Child's Teacher and How:**

See a model *For Role Playing*. This is a real life activity Pamela Nuttall Nason conducted with a group of parents in the Parenting for a Literate Community project.

**Go to:** <http://www.unbf/education/ecc/plc>

*Pam Whitty with Mollie Fry (1999). Pam Whitty, (pp 16-17). Early Childhood Centre, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB. Connecting Home, School and Community Based Programs.*

#### **Activities to connect with school learning:**

Some examples need to be shown, others could be created. You can collect samples of these from your elementary teachers, home or family resource centres, etc.

Materials needed:

- Word games
- Board games (*Snakes and Ladders*, for example )
- Labelling
- Reading with your child
- Counting games



## Using Environmental Print at Home To Support Literacy learning in School

- .....
- Newspaper letters, words and sounds**    ◦    Newspapers and magazines are a source for many different styles of print. Children are asked to look through them collecting a sound (e.g., th) or a letter (e.g., h) or a word (e.g., the) which the child cuts out and glues onto a piece of paper, or highlights using a highlighter pen. This helps to develop phonemic and word recognition.
  - Print games**    ◦    “I See” is a game similar to “I Spy” where the focus is signs or letters in the environment. It can be played at home or by parents on a car trip.
  - License plates**    ◦    Matching and Snap game — logos from cereal packets, etc. can be cut out and glued onto cards and used as a recognition game.

    - Track game — a board game where a child stops on a space and picks up a card which could have a candy wrapper stuck onto it or a photograph of some environmental print, e.g., a road or name sign. The child needs to read the print in order to continue the game.
    - in the early stages it is difficult for children to distinguish between numbers and letters as they can both look like a black pattern to a child. By looking at parked car license plates, an adult can talk about the concept of what a number is and what a letter is, and the difference in a pattern. The child can then copy the numbers and letters onto a clipboard if they wish.
  - Community Photographs**    ◦    Photographs showing print and the community languages of the local area can be taken, e.g., road names, store fronts, door numbers, doctor’s offices, take-outs, school signs. These can all be used with children to stimulate discussion and to help them recognize that print is important and tells them about their community.
  - Jigsaw puzzles**    ◦    Photographs, postcards, carrier bags, leaflets, etc., can be collected, cut up and made into jigsaw puzzles for the children to complete. They will enjoy trying to recognize the logos.

*From Desirable Literacies, Approaches to language and literacy in the early years, pp 61-64. Ed. Jackie Marsh and Elaine Hallet, 1999.*

## Here We Come, Ready or Not!

## STARTING SCHOOL

**Anholt, Laurence.** Illustrated by Cathering Anholt (1991). *Going to Nursery School*. Scholastic Canada Ltd., Richmond Hill.

**Ahlberg, Janet and Allan** (1988). *Starting School*. Puffin Books, New York.

**Berenstain, Stan and Jan** (1993). *The Berenstain Bears and the Bully*. Random House, New York.

**Berenstain, Stan and Jan** (1986). *The Berenstain Bears' Trouble at School*. Random House, New York.

**Berenstain, Stan and Jan** (2002). *The Berenstain Bears's Report Card Trouble*. Random House, New York.

**Bourgeois, Paulette and Clark, Brenda** (1996). *Franklin's School Play*. Kids Can Press Ltd., Toronto.

**Carlson, Nancy** (1999). *Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!* Viking, New York.

**Curtis, Jamie Lee.** Illustrated by Laura Cornell (1993). *When I Was Little: A Four Year Old's Memoir of Her Youth*. Scholastic Canada Ltd., Richmond Hill.

**Deborah, Turney, Zagwgn** (1995). *The Pumpkin Blanket*. Tricycle Press Ltd., California.

**Golloway, Priscilla.** Illustrated by Heather Collins (1984). *When You Were Little and I Was Big*. Annick Press Ltd., Toronto.

**Lindgren, Astrid** (1950). *Pippi Goes to School*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Rathmann, Peggy** (1991). *Ruby the Copy Cat*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Rogers, Jacqueline** (1999). *Tiptoe into Kindergarten*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

## BOOKS WITH BOYS IN MIND

**Bunting, Jane.** Illustrated by David Hopkins (1995). *The Children's Visual Dictionary*. Scholastic Canada Ltd., Richmond Hill, Ontario.

**Burningham, John** (1991). *Aldo*. Random House Children's Books, London.

**Carrier, Roch.** Illustrated by Sheldon Cohen (1991). *The Boxing Champion*. Tundra Books, Montreal.

**Coiley, John** (1992). *Train*. Dorling Kindersley, London.

**Fleischman, Sid.** Illustrated by Peter Sis (1986). *The Whipping Boy*. Troll Communications, New York.

**Jeunesse, Gallimard.** Illustrated by Christian Broutin (1992). *Boats*. Moonlight Publishing Ltd., London.

**Jonas, Ann** (1983). *Round Trip*. Greenwillow Books, New York.

**Parson, Alexandra.** Illustrated by Richard Manning and Ed Stuart (1992). *What's Inside Trucks?* Gorlier Ltd., Toronto.

**Patchett, Fiona** Illustrated by Colin King, Mark Ruffle and Ian Mcnee (1997). *Planes*. Usborne Beginners, London.

**Sendak, Maurice** (1970). *In the Night Kitchen*. Harper & Row Publishers, USA.

**Seymour, Peter.** Illustrated by Chuck Murphy (1989). *The Pop-up Books of Big Trucks*. Little, Brown and Company, Toronto.

**Shortt, Tim** (1996). *The Babe Ruth Ballet School*. Firefly Books, Buffalo.

**Taylor, Barbara** (1954). *Animal Homes*. Dorling Kindersley, Willowdale, Ontario.

**Young, Caroline.** Illustrated by Chris Lyon and Teri Gower (1991). *Diggers and Cranes*. Usbourne Publishing Ltd., London.

## DISCUSSING DIFFERENCES

**Binch, Caroline** (2001). *Silver Shoes*. DK Publishing Inc., New York.

**Bogart, Jo-Ellen et al** (1997). *Jeremiah Learns to Read*. North Winds Press, Richmond Hill, Ontario.

**Bottner, Barbara.** Illustrated by Peggy Rathmann (1992). *Bootsie Barker Bites*. PaperStart Book, New York.

**Cannon, Janell** (1957). *Crickwing*. Harcourt Inc., Orlando.

**Chocolate, Debbi.** Illustrated by Melodye Rosales (1995). *On the Day I was Born*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Hale, Sarah Josepha.** Photo illustrated by Bruce McMillan (1990). *Mary Had a Little Lamb*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Hoffman, Mary and Binch, Caroline** (1991). *Amazing Grace*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Lead, Munro.** Illustrated by Lawson, Robert (1936). *The Story of Ferdinand*. Puffin Books, New York.

**Lionni, Leo** (1963). *Swimmy*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

### Here We Come, Ready or Not!

**Lucado, Max, et al.** Illustrated by Liz Bonham (1994). *The Crippled Lamb*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Ringgold, Faith** (1991). *Tar Beach*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Say, Allen** (1996). *Emma's Rug*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York.

**Say, Allen** (1993). *Grandfather's Journey*. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York.

**Sper, Emily** (2001). *Hanukkah A Counting Book in English, Hebrew and Yiddish*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Waboose, Jan Bourdeau.** Illustrated by Brian Deines (2000). *SkySisters*. Kids Can Press, Toronto.

**Yoshi, Andrew Clements** (1988). *Big Al*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Young, Ed** (1992). *Seven Blind Mice*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

#### FRIENDSHIP

**Crimi, Carolyn.** Illustrated by Lynn Munsinger (1999). *Don't Need Friends*. Random House Inc., New York.

**Komaiko, Lead.** Illustrated by Laura Cornell (1989). *Annie Bananie*. Harper Trophy.

**Mayer, Mercer** (1989). *Little Critters This is My Friend*. Western Publishing Company Inc., New York.

**Pilkey, Dav** (1991). *A Friend for Dragon*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Tafari, Nancy** (2000). *Will You be My Friend?* Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Wagner, Karen.** Illustrated by Janet Pedersen (1998). *A Friend Like Ed*. Scholastic Inc., New York.

**Wells, Rosemary** (1973). *Benjamin & Tulip*. Dial Books for Young Readers, New York.

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March, 2004

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A B C D E F G H I J K L M  
O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Alphabetic principle</b>	The understanding that written letters systematically represent sounds.
<b>Big Books</b>	Oversized books that allow for the sharing of print and illustrations with children.
<b>Book Talk</b>	A strategy for discussing and critiquing a wide range of books. It originated from the Parenting for a Literate Community program of the Early Childhood Centre, UNB. Sitting in small groups, workshop participants examine multiple texts—3 or 4 each, and respond to questions such as, “which of the books do you like best and why?” The idea is not for each group to come to a consensus but to generate discussion about the attributes of the different books.
<b>Book Walk</b>	A term that originated from the Parenting For a Literate Community Program, it refers to the process of reading a book with a group in order to elicit and discuss the interpretations and the reflections that follow. A <i>Book Walk</i> can focus only on the illustrations, only on the text, or on both. The emphasis is on making connections with the life of the reader.
<b>Cadence</b>	Rhythmic flow of language.
<b>Chiming in</b>	Reading along by the child.
<b>Developmental spelling</b>	The use of letter-sound relationship information to attempt to write words.
<b>Emergent literacy</b>	The view that literacy learning begins at birth and is encouraged through participation with adults in meaningful reading and writing activities.
<b>Environmental print</b>	Print that is a part of everyday life, such as signs, billboards, labels, and business logos.
<b>invented spelling</b>	Phonemic based spelling where children create their own unconventional spelling.
<b>Literacy</b>	Defined in its broadest sense, it includes reading, writing, dance, pictures, film, play, mathematical symbols, icons and music which are all understood and used in an integrated way.

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Phonemic awareness</b>	The ability to notice and work with the individual sounds in spoken language.
<b>Phonological awareness</b>	The understanding that spoken language is made up of individual and separate sounds. In addition to phonemes, phonological awareness activities can involve work with rhymes, words, sentences, and syllables.
<b>Predictable Books</b>	Refers to books with characteristics such as repeated patterns, strong rhythm or picture cues or particular fonts that invite the reader into the text and make it easy for him or her to act as a reader.
<b>Print awareness</b>	Knowing about print and books and how they are used.
<b>Reading the world and the word</b>	Being properly literate means that you are able to write not just 'the word' but, as Paolo Friere says, 'the world'. This means that you begin to understand how words (talk, pictures, icons and print) are used to shape, persuade, direct, divide and control us, as well as understand how we can take control and put words, pictures and print to our own uses. <i>(Taken from the Training Manual for the Parenting for a Literate Community program, Nason &amp; Homer, 1999.)</i>
<b>Scaffolding</b>	Providing support and guidance that enables the learner to operate at a higher level of skill than they could otherwise. What the learner can and cannot do determines the amount and type of support given.
<b>Spoken language</b>	The language used in talking and listening; in contrast to written language, which is the language used in writing and reading.
<b>Syllable</b>	A word part that contains a vowel or, in spoken language, a vowel sound (e-vent, news-pa-per, pret-ty)
<b>Syntax</b>	Refers to the rules of a language that govern word order.
<b>Vocabulary</b>	The words we must know in order to communicate effectively. Oral vocabulary refers to words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print.
<b>Voice-to-print match</b>	Matching the word spoken to the word printed with finger so a child can begin to recognize key words.
<b>Word recognition</b>	Using any one of a number of strategies, such as recognition by sight or decoding, in order to figure out the meaning of a word.





## Notes on the Authors

**Lynda Homer** has worked with young children and families as an elementary school and preschool teacher, early interventionist and Family Literacy Practitioner. She has taught courses and conducted numerous workshops for parents, teachers and early childhood educators. Lynda is the former Provincial Consultant for Early Intervention Services for the Province of New Brunswick. She currently works as an associate with the UNB Early Childhood Centre and the NB Community College. She is a co-developer of the ECC UNB *Parenting for a Literate Community* Program and author of *Books for Babies*, *Connecting Warmth Well Being and Books*. She is also author of *Baby and Mommy Go Walking*, a book for children and parents which was inspired by her own grown up babies, Bruce and Trevor.

**Anne Hunt** has been singing and dancing since she could walk and talk. She still spends most of her spare time at choir rehearsals with the Bel Canto Singers, a chamber choir, and with the choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton. Not that there is much time to spare — as she spends her days teaching kindergarten at Park Street School in Fredericton (of course, she and her kindergarten children do enjoy singing and dancing each and every day), working with the UNB Early Childhood Centre, and occasionally teaching about early childhood education at St. Thomas University. She is the mother of four singing and dancing children — Jennifer, Christopher, Kathryn and Amelia — and two singing and dancing grandchildren, Rachael and Rhiannon. They are engaged, variously, in Celtic harp, reggae, belly dancing, Highland dancing and choral singing.

**Jan Greer Langley** is the Executive Director of the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick Ltd., which gives her the opportunity to promote literacy and carry out numerous literacy projects in the province. Jan wrote the curriculum guide for the Canadian Storysacks Project, directed the national project and delivered the train-the-trainer workshops. She is a published author and leads Storysack and Writing Out Loud workshops. Jan has a degree in Journalism from St. Thomas University and is working toward an Honours degree in English. She works closely with literacy coalitions across the country including national literacy agencies.

## Notes on the Authors

**Pamela Nuttall Nason** teaches Early Childhood Education and Curriculum Theory at the University of New Brunswick. Her focus on parents as children's first literacy teachers was piqued by the birth of her own daughter—nineteen years ago. Since then, much of her research and community work has involved collaborating with parents, parent educators, and school teachers to enhance connections between them and to provide for continuity in literacy learning among home, community and school. She is particularly interested in helping educators identify and honour diverse literacies.

**Sherry Rose** is an early childhood graduate of University of New Brunswick where she obtained her Masters degree in education. She is an elementary teacher whose teaching experience spans from kindergarten to grade nine. Currently, she teaches on a multi-age team working with kindergarten, grade one and grade two students. Sherry has worked closely with parents on both the school advisory level and in the Home and School associations for the past seven years. Recently her teaching work has expanded into administration. Sherry believes all children come to school literate, as readers of the world and mark makers. Her interests lie strongly in helping children develop their literacies so that they may leave their individual mark on their world and those who share their world. Sherry believes the child has much to teach us about understanding the complexity and uniqueness of literacy development.

**Pam Whitty** is a professor of early literacies in the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB. Prior to 1991, she taught kindergarten, first grade and special education. Her most recent literacy projects involve the publication of children's books by New Brunswick authors and illustrators. These projects have been made possible by partnerships with the National Literacy Secretariat, Born to Read New Brunswick and Gooselane Publications.



## Illustration & Photo Credits

### Children's illustrations

<b>Front Cover</b>	Turner, age 5 years.	<b>Page 29, 35, 47</b>	Turner, age 5 years.
<b>Page i</b>	Turner, age 5 years.	<b>Page 31</b>	Tanner, age 5 years.
<b>Page iii</b>	Turner, age 5 years.	<b>Page 32, 33</b>	Sophia, age 5 years.
<b>Page 2</b>	Turner, age 5 years.	<b>Page 39</b>	Phoebe, age 4 years.
<b>Page 3, 12</b>	Turner, age 5 years.	<b>Page 61, 63</b>	Bruce, age 5 years.
<b>Page 5, 9, 16</b>	Beth, age 5 years.	<b>Page 64, 65</b>	Joseph, age 4 years.
<b>Page 10</b>	Amber, age 5 years.	<b>Page 70, 71</b>	Beatrice, age 4 years.
<b>Page 17, 19, 22</b>	Jeswanth, age 4 years.	<b>Page 71, 72</b>	Amber, age 5 years.
<b>Page 25, 26</b>	Phoebe, age 4 years.	<b>Page 77, 78</b>	Turner, age 5 years.
<b>Page 28</b>	Jeswanth, age 4 years	<b>Page 79, 80</b>	Turner, age 5 years.

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