Indispensable Allies:
Understanding family members’ unique contributions to children’s early literacy and what we can do to support them

Families play critical and unique roles in the early language and literacy development of young children. This interactive session will explore practices through which family members can have the greatest impact on early literacy learning, and will engage participants in examining the extent to which their centers, home visiting programs, and schools help support these practices, particularly in culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse communities. Join us to explore resources for promoting family engagement in early literacy activities, and collaborate with colleagues to identify actions you can take to increase support for family literacy in your setting.

Professional Development for All
Buffett Early Childhood Institute
University of Nebraska
March 13, 2016

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AGENDA

I. Points to Ponder – Exploring what we believe about families’ roles in early language and literacy learning

II. Strategies that impact family engagement in early literacy activities: What the research says

III. The power of the mirror: Representing our families in our collections and curricula

IV. Restrictions in access to texts: Why it matters and what we can do about it

V. Collaborative Action Planning & Review of Resources

Book lists, descriptions, and teaching guides for recommended text selections can be found at www.kidslikeus.org

Follow us @KLUBooks
Indispensable Allies: Points to Ponder

What do you think?

Take a couple of minutes to consider each of these statements. Think about the extent to which you agree or disagree with each, and why.

Choose one or two to discuss with colleagues at your table.

1. We should help parents understand that they are their children’s first and most important teachers.

2. All language is good language when it comes to building a foundation for early literacy learning.

3. Reading to their children is the single most important thing parents and caregivers can do to support emergent and early literacy.

4. Any book is better than no book for supporting emergent and beginning literacy at home.
## 4 Easy Ways to Grow Brainpower!

### Tips for Parents and Caregivers of Infants and Toddlers


Available at [http://iloveyoulikesunshine.com/](http://iloveyoulikesunshine.com/)

### TALK!

Notice what seems interesting to your baby and talk about it.

- Name and describe the things you see (Are they big/small? Soft/hard? Near/far?)
- Tell family stories. What were things like when you were little?
- Name the expressions you notice on your baby’s face
  - If she frowns, ask her if she’s upset.
  - If she smiles, ask her what’s so funny!

### SING!

Babies love music. Listening to songs and rhymes helps babies learn sounds that make up words.

- Sing lullabies or songs you remember from your childhood
- Listen to music and sing or hum along
- What are some of your favorite songs now? Sing them over and over as much as you like!

### READ!

Babies like to look at pictures (especially baby faces), and they love to hear your voice.

- Read with your baby and tell him about the pictures in the books
- Read books you remember from when you were little
- Look for poetry books or rhyming stories to share with your baby
- Read what makes you happy!

### PLAY!

Babies learn by interacting with people.

- Having fun with your baby is a great way to develop connections and brainpower
- Be silly, make jokes, dance around, play peek-a-boo, and cuddle
- Play pointing or counting games during feeding, baths, and diaper changes (show objects, count fingers and toes, etc.)
- When your baby makes noises, act as if he told you something and talk back to have a “conversation”
LITERACY AT HOME

Family members can help young children build strong language, reading, and writing skills.

Here are some ways to bring literacy home.

1. Talk to your child about his or her day. Have everyone in the family talk about their day. Describe what you did, how you did it, and what happened. Use words like, “First, I got on the bus, then I got off at my stop, and then I went to work.” This helps children understand the order of events in a story.

2. Point out in the environment familiar words and letters that your child sees every day. For example, the letters on the bus, a sign, the subway, or in the grocery store. Ask your child if he or she sees other letters that match the letters in their name or letters they know.

3. Take photographs at events that include family members. View the photos together after the event. Identify each family member and describe what they are doing. Use these photos to help your child tell a story or recall the events and activities. Recall helps children develop literacy skills.

4. Read aloud to your child as often as you can. Listen while your child “reads” or retells a familiar story. Ask the child to predict what will happen next or ask the child to tell you the story after you read it. This helps your child learn to sequence the story.

5. Look for times in the day when you and your child can share literacy activities that help you around the house. When it is time to prepare a meal or sit down to eat you can point out the letters and words on the boxes and cans you use to prepare the meal. You can talk to your child about where everyone will sit, what they like to eat, and how much they will enjoy the meal. Discuss with your child the ingredients in what you are making. Make a game from the labels and boxes.

6. The stories you heard from your family when you were a child will make great stories to read with your child. Tell your child a story and help draw pictures to illustrate the story. Write some of the words about the story under the pictures. Put the pages together for a unique book that you and your child can read together.

7. When you plan to shop for the family ask your child to help you make a list. Describe each item you are writing down, show your child the list, and point out familiar letters. While shopping, ask your child to mark off each item you select. Point out familiar letters on each label or package.
Some Tips for Reading with Young Children

- **Read together every day.**
  Read to your child every day. Make this a fun, relaxing time you can share together.

- **Be interactive.**
  Engage your child in actively listening to a story. Discuss what you see on the cover, point to pictures and words on the page, and answer your child's questions. Ask questions of your own, like “What do you think will happen next?” or “What was your favorite part of the story?”

- **Take your time.**
  Try not to read too fast. Read slowly enough for children to build mental images of the story in their minds.

- **Read with fun in your voice!**
  Read to your child with humor and expression. Use different voices for different characters.

- **Use pictures to “tell” stories**
  It's ok to skip parts of a book or summarize a long story until your child’s attention span can handle it. Feel free to add brief explanations or details to pages you think might be hard to understand.

- **Read books that interest and engage your child.**
  Look for books with characters about the same age as your child. Choose easy-to-read rhyming books, books with colorful illustrations that help tell the story, pattern books with repeating text that let your child join in, and books related to your family's interests and experiences.

- **Read it again and again and again.**
  Your child will probably want to hear a favorite story over and over. Go ahead and read the same book for the 100th time! Repeated readings help children develop language and literacy skills. Encourage your children to tell parts of the story they remember.

- **Talk about writing, too.**
  Draw your child's attention to the way writing works. When looking at a book together, point out how we read from left to right and how words are separated by spaces.

- **Say how much you enjoy reading together.**
  Tell your child how much you enjoy reading with him or her. Look forward to this time you spend together. Talk about “story time” as the favorite part of your day.

- **Know when to stop.**
  If your child loses interest or has trouble paying attention, just put the book away for a while. Don't continue reading if your child is not enjoying it.

- **Keep books around the house.**
  Check out books from your local library or your child’s school. Look for inexpensive books at thrift stores, flea markets, library book sales, or used book stores. Ask friends or relatives who have older children for books their children may have outgrown.

Kahoot it! Survey on Access to Text

1. Our center, school, or program has a well-stocked, contemporary, and inviting library.

2. Our library has many books that are “mirrors” for the families and community we serve.

3. We have a good range of selections in all of our families’ home languages.

4. Our library is managed by a staff member and is open and accessible regularly.

5. Children and family members can check out multiple books at any time.

6. Purchasing a $6-$18 picture book is a reasonable expense for all of our families.

7. The closest Omaha Public Library is less than 5 blocks from my center or school.

8. I would allow my 10-year-old to walk those 1-5 blocks without my supervision.

9. All of our parents have the proper ID and address documentation needed to get a public library card.

10. We ensure that books to go home from our collection on a daily basis.

□ YES □ NO

□ YES □ NO

□ YES □ NO

□ YES □ NO

□ YES □ NO

□ YES □ NO

□ YES □ NO
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Representation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Babies</td>
<td>Global Fund for Children</td>
<td>Many representations of family diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birthday Swap. The</td>
<td>Lopez, Loretta</td>
<td>Close-knit extended family; bicultural experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black is Brown is Tan</td>
<td>Adoff, Arnold</td>
<td>Multiracial family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bringing Asha Home</td>
<td>Krishnaswami, Uma</td>
<td>Adoptive family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candy Shop, The</td>
<td>Wahl, Jan</td>
<td>Aunt as primary caregiver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castle on Viola Street, A</td>
<td>DiSalvo, DyAnne</td>
<td>Family experiencing economic hardship/housing insecurity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair for My Mother</td>
<td>Williams, Vera B.</td>
<td>Intergenerational family/Mom, daughter, grandmother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin</td>
<td>Tonatiuh, Duncan</td>
<td>Extended family separated by distance; bicultural experience</td>
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<td>Didi and Daddy on the Promenade</td>
<td>Singer, Marilyn</td>
<td>Divorced or separated parents</td>
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<td>Everywhere Babies</td>
<td>Myers, Susan</td>
<td>Many representations of family diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Book, The</td>
<td>Parr, Todd</td>
<td>Many representations of family diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>From North to South/De Norte al Sur</td>
<td>Laínez, René</td>
<td>Father as primary caregiver; Mom separated by distance/deportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hello, Goodbye Window, The</td>
<td>Juster, Norton</td>
<td>Multiracial family</td>
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<tr>
<td>How My Family Lives in America</td>
<td>Kulkin, Susan</td>
<td>First generation Americans; bicultural experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Love Saturdays y Domingos</td>
<td>Ada, Alma Flor</td>
<td>Multiethnic family</td>
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<td>In Our Mothers' House</td>
<td>Polacco, Patricia</td>
<td>Adoptive family, same-gender parents</td>
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<td>Kiss Means I Love You, A</td>
<td>Allen, Kathryn Madeline</td>
<td>Many representations of family diversity</td>
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<td>Kitchen Dance</td>
<td>Manning, Maurie</td>
<td>Multiethnic family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knock, Knock: My Dad’s Dream for Me</td>
<td>Beaty, Daniel</td>
<td>Separation from a parent, not named, but can infer incarceration</td>
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<td>Last Stop on Market Street</td>
<td>de la Pena, Matt</td>
<td>Grandmother as primary caregiver</td>
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<td>Mama Zooms</td>
<td>Cowen-Fletcher, Jane</td>
<td>Parent with physical disability/ Mom uses wheelchair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation</td>
<td>Danticat, Edwidge</td>
<td>Father as primary caregiver; Mom separated by distance/deportation</td>
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<td>Mango, Abuela, and Me</td>
<td>Medina, Meg</td>
<td>Grandparent and grandchild separated by distance; getting to know each other</td>
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<td>Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/ Marisol McDonald no combina</td>
<td>Brown, Monica</td>
<td>Multiracial family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini Mia and Her Darling Uncle</td>
<td>Lindenbaum, Pija</td>
<td>Uncle as frequent caregiver; same-gender partner</td>
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<td>Monicka's Papa is Tall</td>
<td>Jopling, Heather</td>
<td>Same-gender parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Abuelita</td>
<td>Johnston, Tony</td>
<td>Grandmother as primary caregiver</td>
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<td>My Diary from Here to There/ Mi diario de aquí hasta allá</td>
<td>Pérez, Amada Irma</td>
<td>Family members separated by distance/bicultural experience</td>
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<td>My Feet Are Laughing</td>
<td>Norman, Lissette</td>
<td>Parents divorced but “still good friends”</td>
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<td>My Name is Yoon</td>
<td>Recorvits, Helen</td>
<td>Recently immigrated family/bicultural experience</td>
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<td>My Very Own Room</td>
<td>Pérez, Amada Irma</td>
<td>Challenges and rewards of living with a large, extended family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Night Shift Daddy</td>
<td>Spinelli, Eileen</td>
<td>Dad is night shift-worker; family adapts routines to time differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Family</td>
<td>Shannon, George</td>
<td>Many representations of family diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinito’s Neighborhood/ El vecindario de Quinito</td>
<td>Cumpiano, Ina</td>
<td>Close extended family includes aunts, uncles, cousins; Non-traditional gender roles in family (Mami is a carpenter, Papi is a nurse)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelter in Our Car, A</td>
<td>Gunning, Monica</td>
<td>Economic hardship/housing insecurity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday Shopping</td>
<td>Derby, Sally</td>
<td>Grandmother as primary caregiver; parent and child separated by deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tía Isa Wants a Car</td>
<td>Medina, Meg</td>
<td>Aunt and uncle as primary caregivers; family separated by distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Mrs. Gibsons, The</td>
<td>Igus, Toyomi</td>
<td>Biracial family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Day</td>
<td>Woodson, Jacqueline</td>
<td>Grandmother as primary caregiver, parent and child separated by incarceration</td>
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<tr>
<td>We Had a Picnic This Sunday Past</td>
<td>Woodson, Jacqueline</td>
<td>Grandmother as primary caregiver; extended, multigenerational family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where's Chimpy?</td>
<td>Rabe, Berneice</td>
<td>Family member with disability; daughter with Down syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Swan Express, The</td>
<td>Okimoto, Jean Davies &amp; Oaki, Elaine M.</td>
<td>Adoptive families</td>
</tr>
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In Search of Free Books?

How to build your collection without breaking your bank

National Organizations that Distribute Books

FIRST BOOK and FIRST BOOK MARKETPLACE - www.fbmarketplace.org
Books for Kids Foundation – www.booksforkids.org
Kids Need to Read - community.kidsneedtoread.org
The Literacy Empowerment Foundation - www.lefbooks.org
International Book Project - www.intlbookproject.org/
Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) – www.rif.org

Grant opportunities

There are a number of small foundations dedicated to providing grants for the purchase of children's books for schools, libraries, and personal ownership:

- The Barbara Bush Foundation
- Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation
- The Lois Lenski Covey Foundation
- National Home Library Foundation
- Snapdragon Book Foundation
- Target Foundation

Online options and eBooks

Links to these and other resources can be found at http://www.readingrockets.org/article/search-free-books

International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) - http://en.childrenslibrary.org/
The non-profit ICDL Foundation's library is a large digital collection of children's books in more than 50 languages. The compete ICDL collection is available as a free iPad app.

Open Library - openlibrary.org
Open Library provides access to children's books on archive.org with links to other online book collections.

Open eBooks - openebooks.net
Open eBooks is an app containing thousands of popular and award-winning titles that are free for children from in-need households)

More Ideas!

Goodwill
Dollar Stores
Garage Sales
Library Book Sales
Scholastic Bonus Points
Wish list on Scholastic book orders
Donorschoose.org
Adoptaclassroom.org
½ Price Books (give aways)
Get books from retiring teachers
Give a book/get a book swap drive at school
Parent/family donations (of new books or gently used books that children have outgrown)
SUPPORTING FAMILY MEMBERS AS PARTNERS IN EARLY LITERACY

How are we doing in…

• working with family members as indispensable allies?
• understanding the resources and values in our community?
• building on families’ interests and routines to engage children in talking, singing, reading, and playing?
• understanding how our families use literacy every day?
• encouraging activities that can support language and literacy learning during everyday routines?
• ensuring that all of our children and families find themselves represented in our curriculum?
• helping ensure families have access to high-quality, culturally and linguistically relevant texts?

Action planning - Steps I can take in my own setting right away

1. ___________________________________________________________________________

2. ___________________________________________________________________________

3. ___________________________________________________________________________