



**Buffett
Early Childhood
Institute**

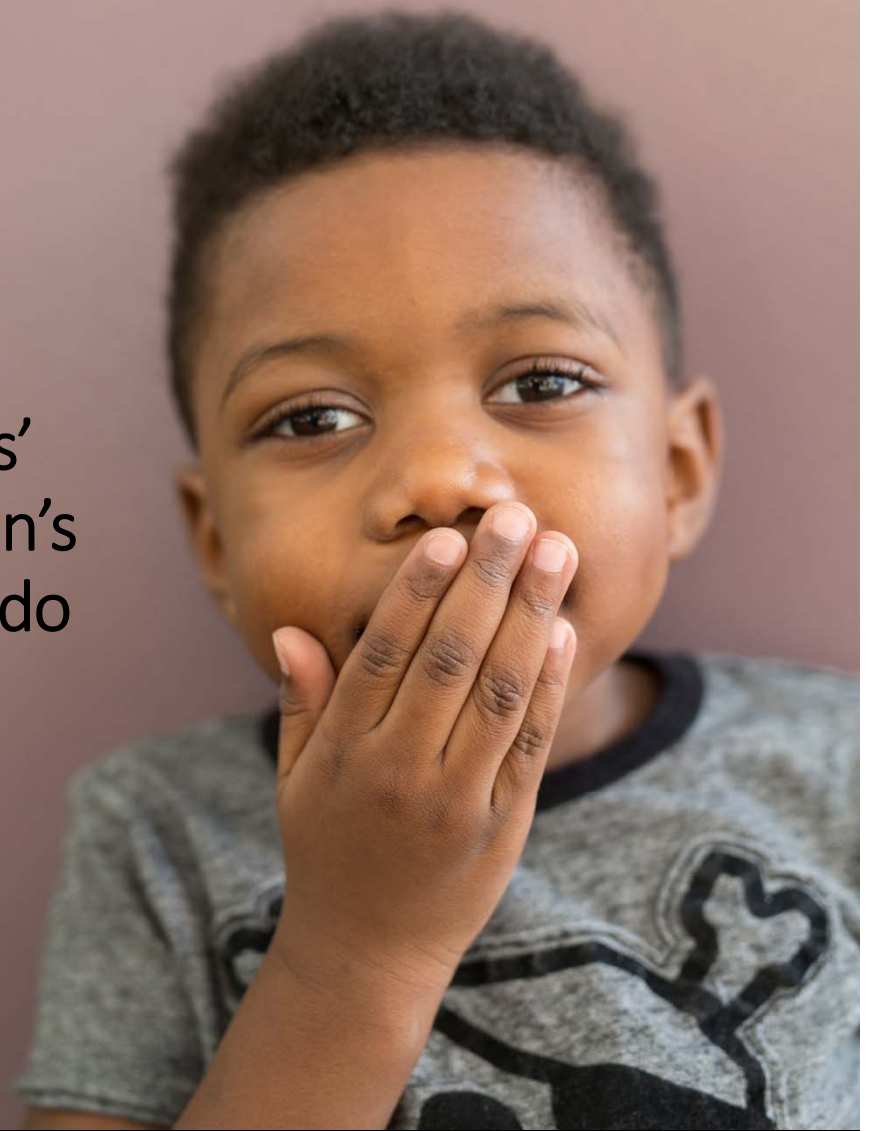
at the University of Nebraska

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

Jane Fleming, PhD

PD For All

May 13, 2016



Start early. Start well.

Plan for the Session

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

BREAKOUTS

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

Wi-Fi

Select Scott Conference Center
Pass: bestofomaha



Introduce your yourselves to one or two
colleagues nearby...

Points to Ponder (p. 2)

- Take a couple of minutes to read the 4 statements on p. 2.
- Think about the extent to which you agree or disagree, and why.
(there are no “right” answers – all are debatable)
- Choose one or two to discuss with colleagues.





What are you wondering?

What questions do you have?

How families can support early literacy learning— what the research says

- Increase conversation
- Engage in interactive book reading
- Provide access to texts/ build home library
- Integrate language and literacy into regular routines

Strategies for Increasing Family Engagement in Language and Literacy Activities

Rule #1: Keep it simple! (p. 3)

Talk!	Sing!
Read!	Play!

Parent as first “teacher”



- Young parent
- Parent who feels undereducated
- Parent whose first language is not English
- Parent with low literacy
- Parent working two or three jobs
- Primary caregiver to a large extended family
- Parent whose home culture holds teachers in very high regard

Parent as first “teacher”



Talk!

Sing!

Read!

Play!

TALK!

What does talk have to do with early literacy?



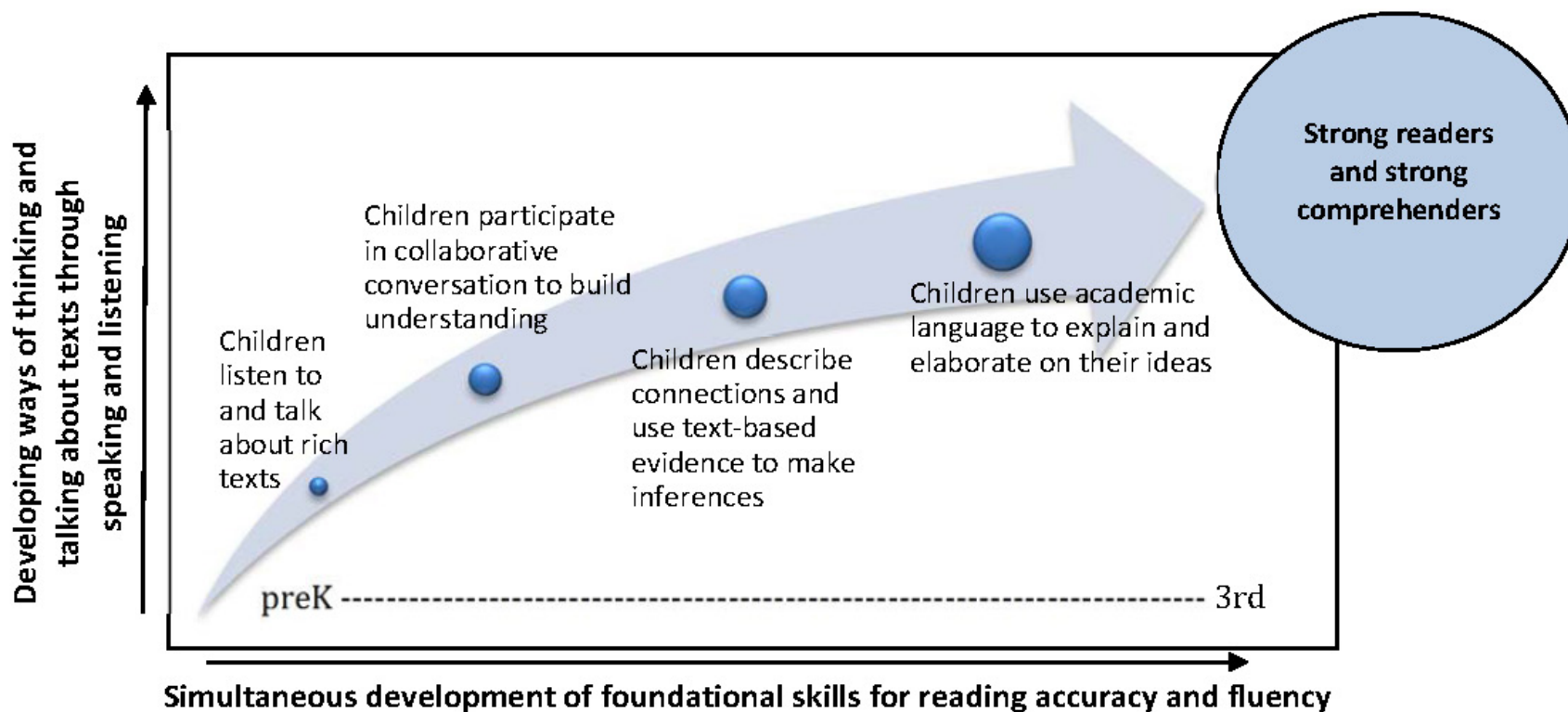
Language Makes Readers

Oral language ↔ Literacy



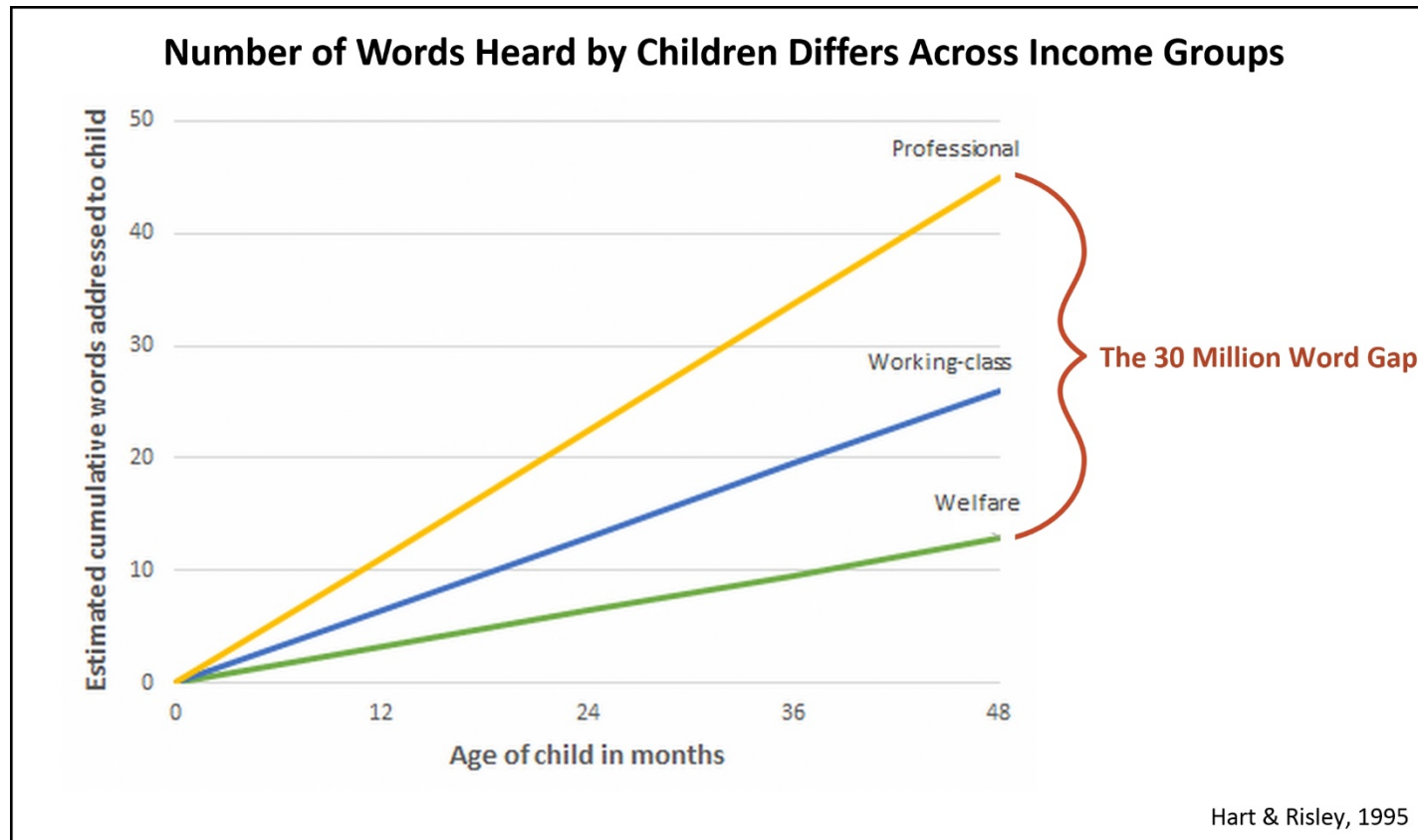
Listening & Speaking → oral retellings → relating speech to print

Build comprehension through conversation



Erikson Institute New Schools Project (2015). P-3 Connections for Early Literacy. *Policy Brief #1 : Getting to Rigor in Reading Comprehension: The Critical Role of Oral Language Development.*

Talk, talk, talk: Increasing conversation



Introducing new words

Continual exposure to lots of different words in lots of different contexts.



What do you notice?



What kind of words might Mom use to describe what she is noticing?

Strategies for Increasing Family Engagement in Language and Literacy Activities

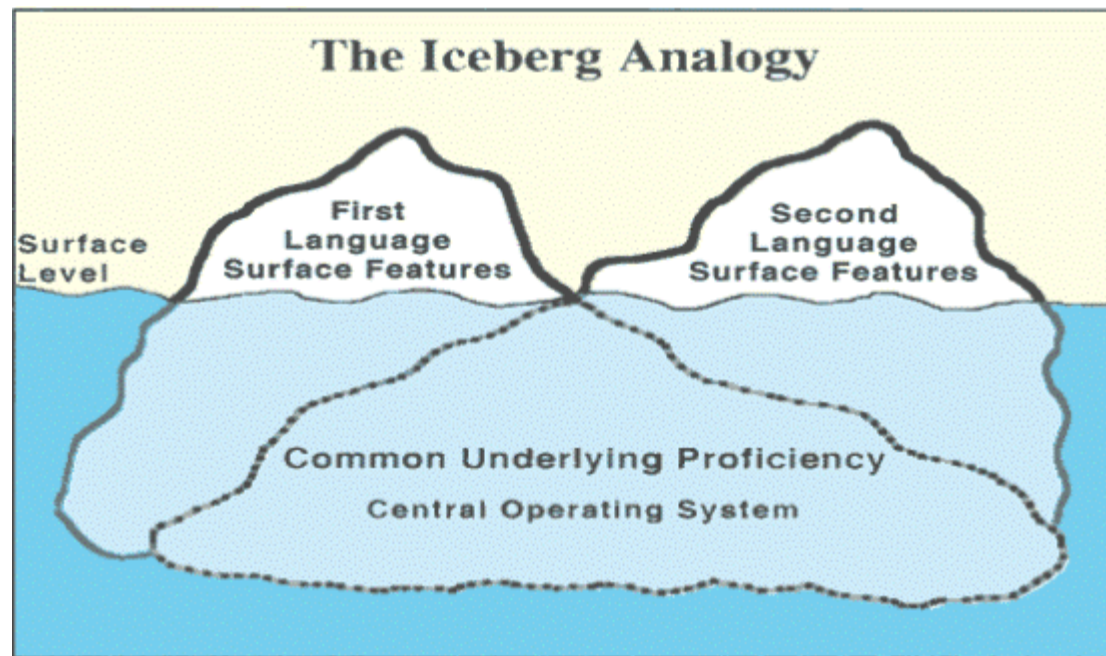
Rule #1: Keep it simple! (p. 3)

Talk!	Sing!
Read!	Play!

Getting past common misconceptions about second language learning

1. Learning two languages in early childhood will delay acquisition of English.
2. Code-switching is a sign of confusion
3. Immersing young children in English-only programs in school is the best and fastest way to develop proficiency in English

Bilingualism and Common Underlying Language Proficiency



Cummins, J. (2000)

Dual language learning and code-switching ability have numerous distinct advantages

- Increases flexibility of thinking
- Improves ability to hold onto and work with information
- Develops strong working memory
- Inhibits distractions
- Supports self-regulation
- Builds unique pathways in the brain
- Increases metacognitive skills



Adding a second language between 3-8 years old is ideal.

SING!

What does singing have to do with early literacy?



SING!

- Builds vocabulary and background knowledge
- Patterns, rhythms, and rhymes support development of phonemic awareness
- Language “play” associated with songs develops metacognition and flexibility of thinking



“Sing what makes you happy!”
~ M. Glusman in *I Love You Like Sunshine*

READ!

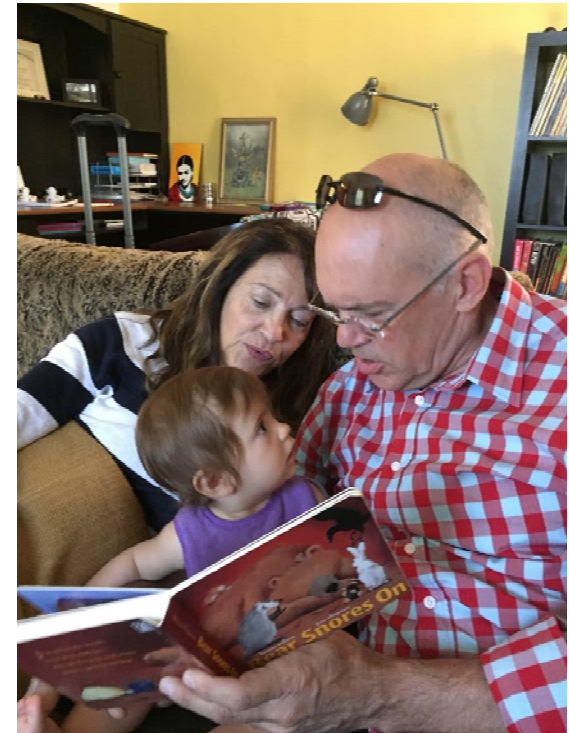


What do you notice? What does it tell you?

Interactive book reading

- physically sharing a book in close proximity,
- engaging in active questioning and responding
- explaining and elaborating on children's responses
- relating information to children's life experiences
- has most positive effects with multiple re-readings

Family-friendly tips on p. 5



E-books vs. “real” books?

PLAY!

(and talk)

Dramatic/pretend play (restaurant server, mechanic, doctor)
has strong connections to language development and literacy learning

- Experiment with new words and phrases
- Practice” narratives
- Take perspective of others
- Make inferences
- Problem-solve
- Nurture imagination



Engaging parents as indispensable allies in early literacy



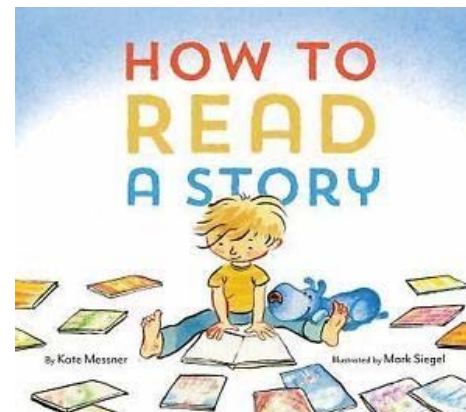
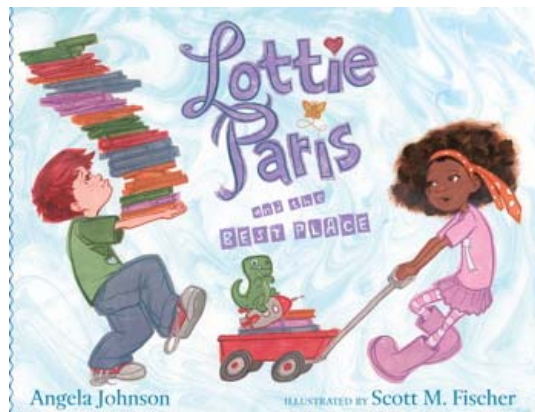
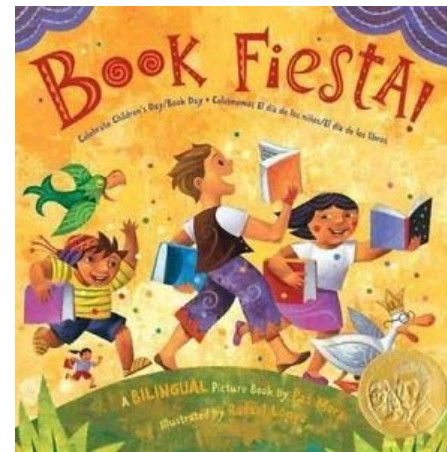
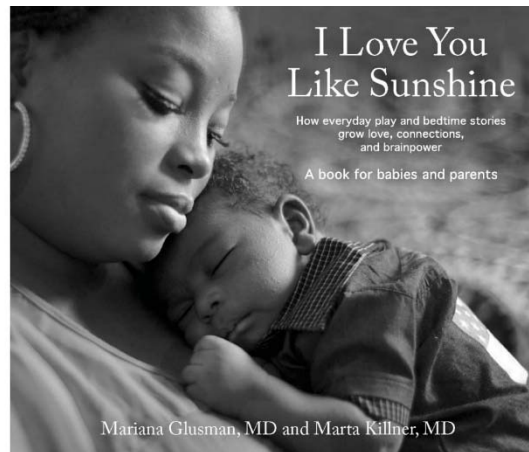
Talk!

Sing!

Read!

Play!

Raffle Giveaways



PD FOR ALL: INDISPENSABLE ALLIES

Using cultural knowledge and community experiences as resources for literacy leaning



How many of us live in the same neighborhood where you work?



What are some ways that you have gotten to know the community your school, center, or program serves?

Turn and Talk

What are some ways that you have gotten to know your center/school community?



- Talk regularly with children and family members
- Attend all-school events (sports, literacy nights, book swap)
- Take public transportation and walk the neighborhood
- Patronize local businesses
- Get familiar with the landscape, local establishments
- Know where people shop, worship, gather
- Read neighborhood/community newspapers
- Listen to local talk radio

Representing families in our collections or curriculum

Books as “mirrors” and “windows”

(Rudine Sims Bishop, 1990)





**Dedicated to the literacy learning of
children in city schools**

Research • Professional Development • Advocacy

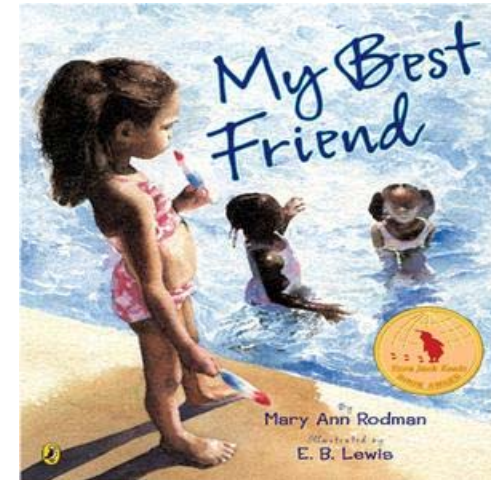
kidslikeus.org

Culturally relevant texts: Think broadly.

INCLUDES - Race, ethnicity, SES, language, gender, religion

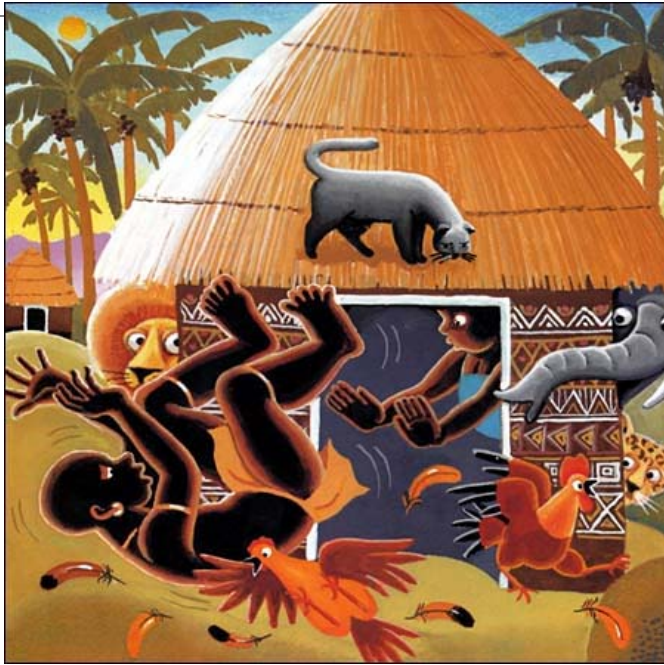
BUT ALSO ...

- Where children live
- What their neighborhoods are like
- Who they spend time with
- What their families are like
- Where they go to school
- What contemporary kids are up to



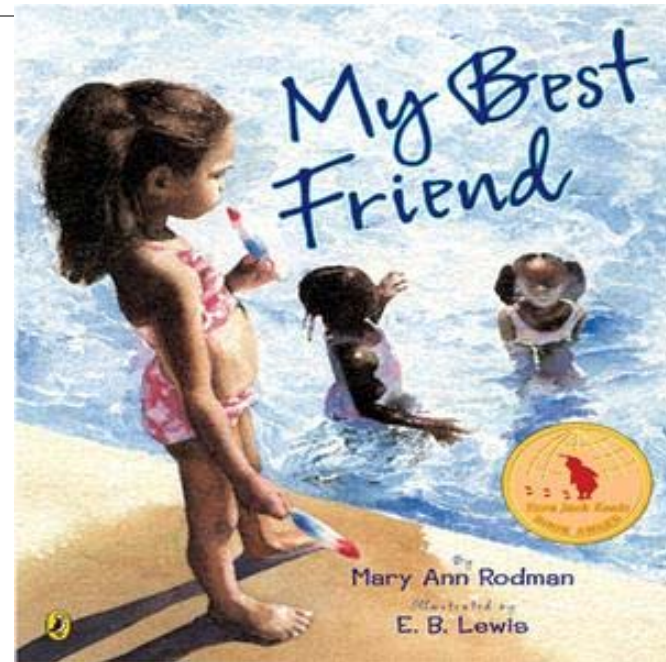
My Best Friend (2007).
Artwork by E.B. Lewis.

Multicultural ≠ Culturally Relevant



The Cat Who Came Indoors in
Nelson Mandela's Favorite Folk Tales (2007)

vs.



My Best Friend (2007).
Artwork by E.B. Lewis.

“Culturally relevant” means more “mirrors”

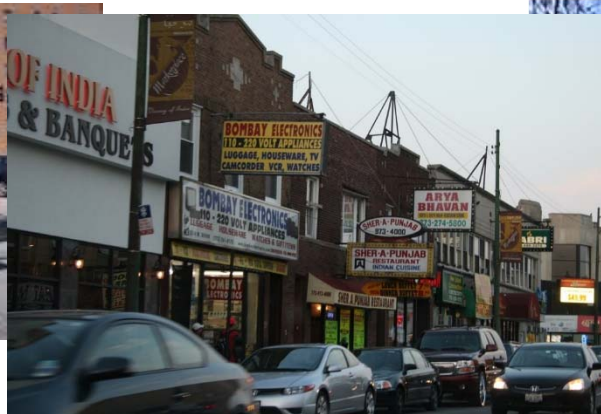




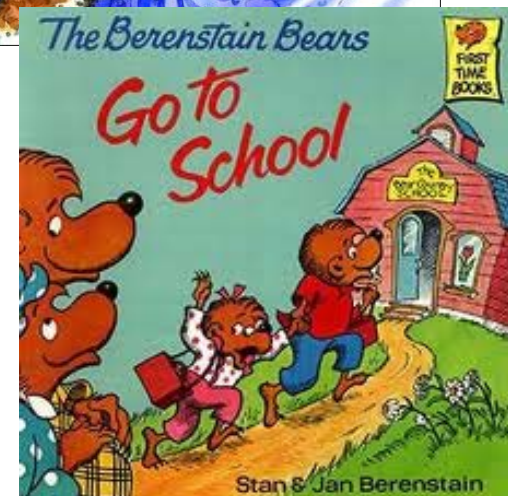
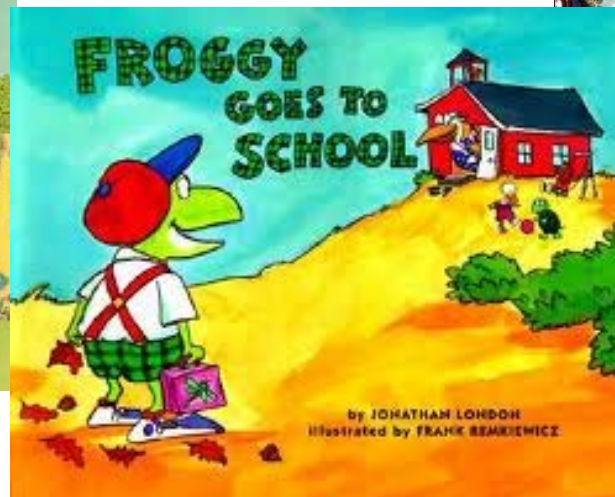
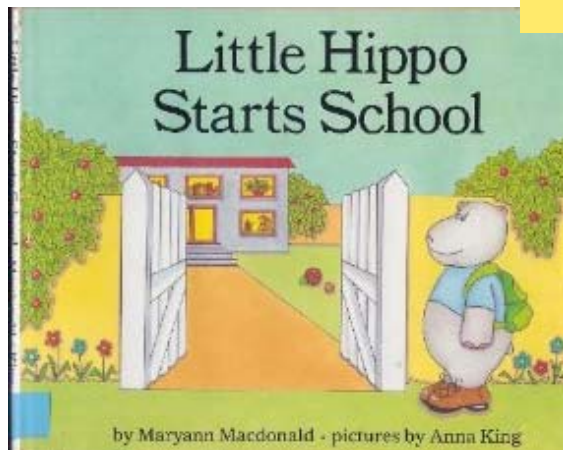
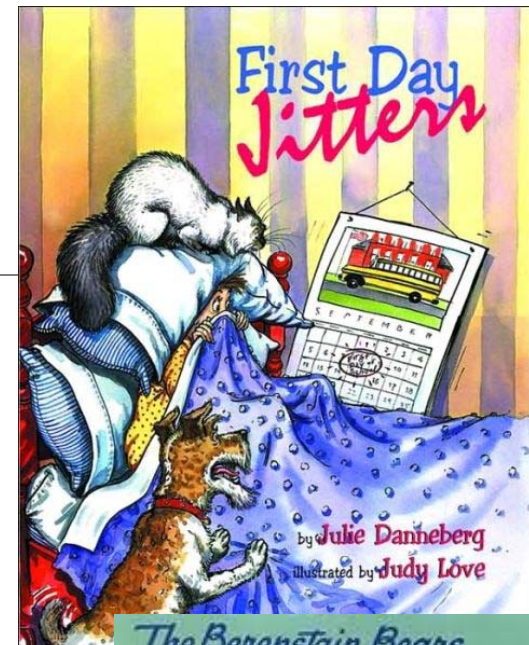
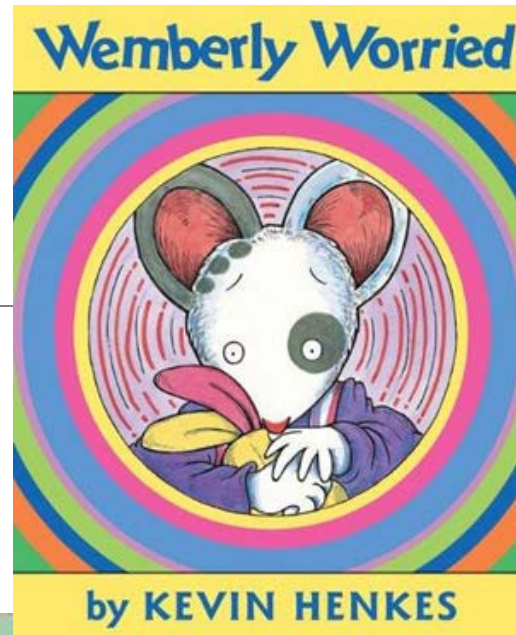
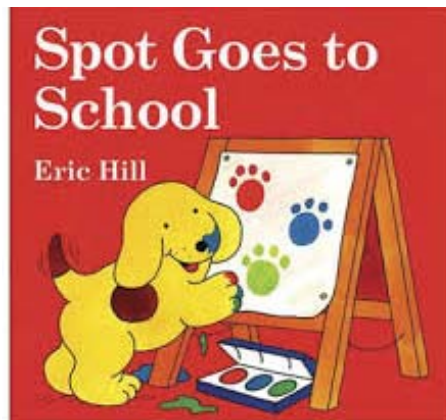
What's the big deal?

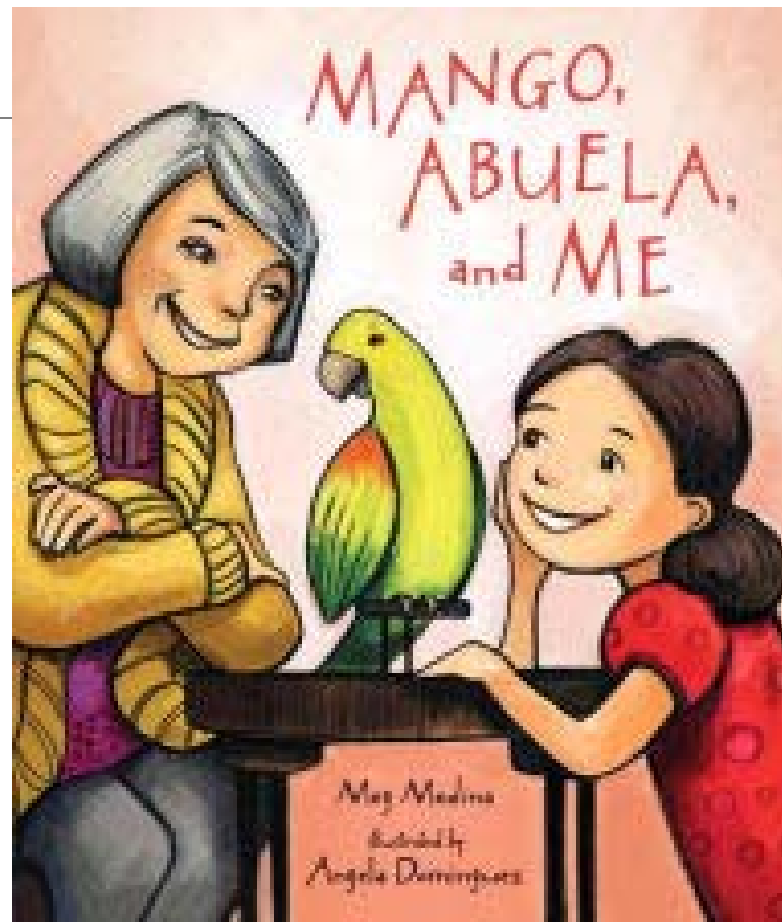


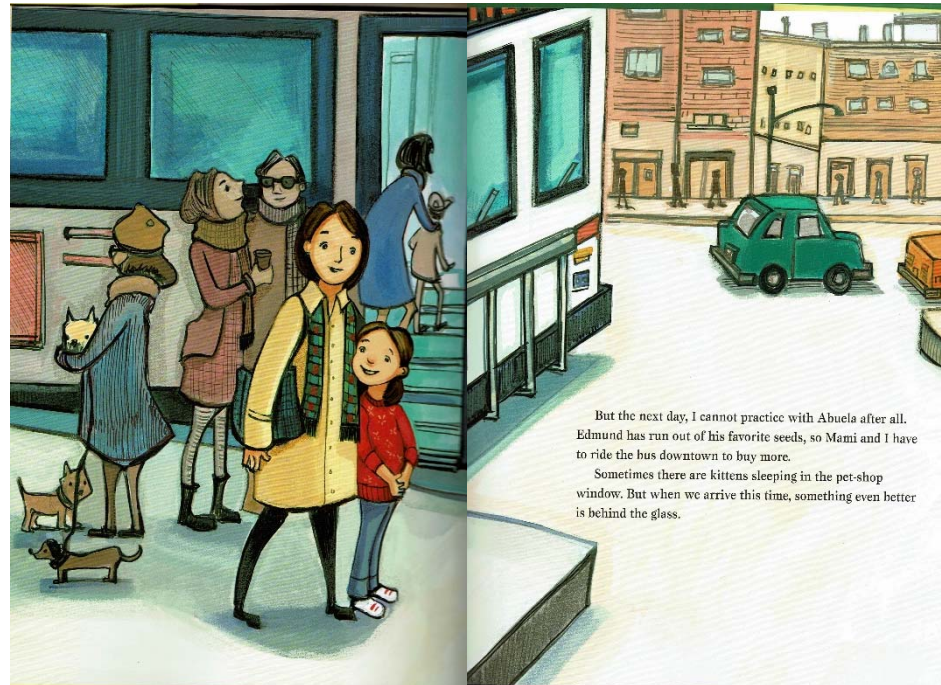
Rogers Park



Imagine that you are 4 years old...









Why might “mirrors” matter for language and literacy development?



Culturally relevant literature matters in

Emergent literacy

Oral language ↔ Literacy



Listening → oral retellings → relating speech to print

Culturally relevant literature matters for

Interest and Engagement

(Wigfield, Guthrie, Eccles; Rueda 2011)

interest → motivation → frequency

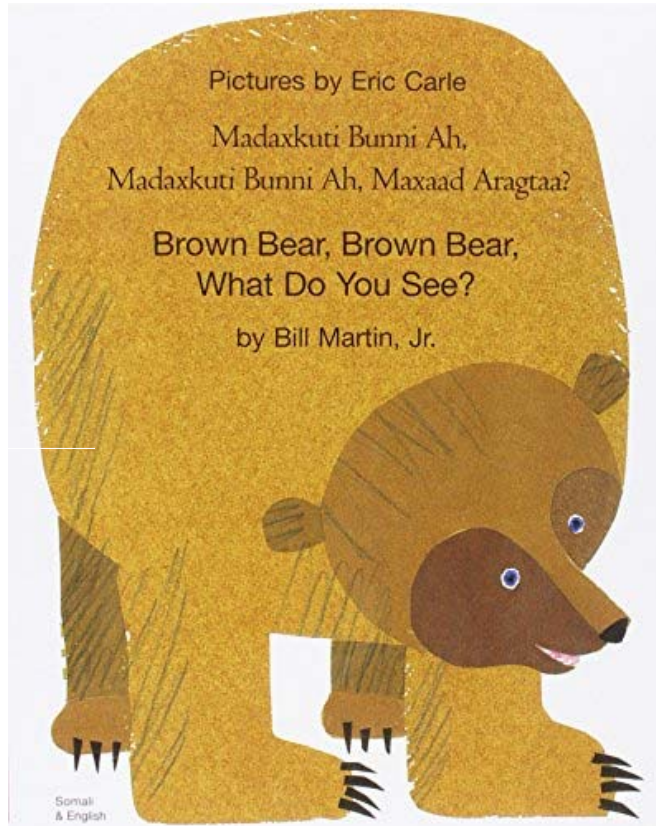


Culturally relevant literature matters for Family engagement

(Larrotta & Gainer, 2008; Ortiz & Ordonex-Jasis, 2005)

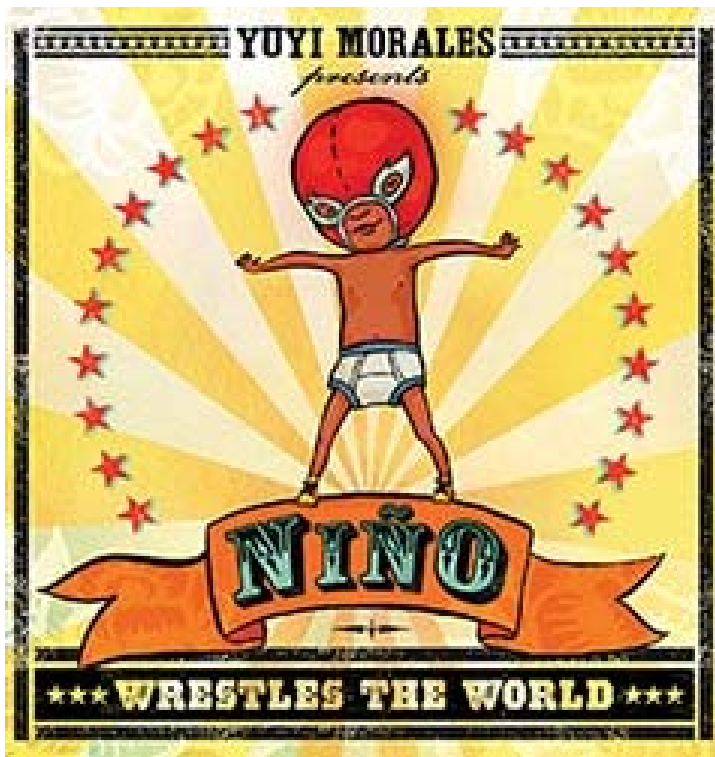


Brown Bear – Dual Language Kindergarten

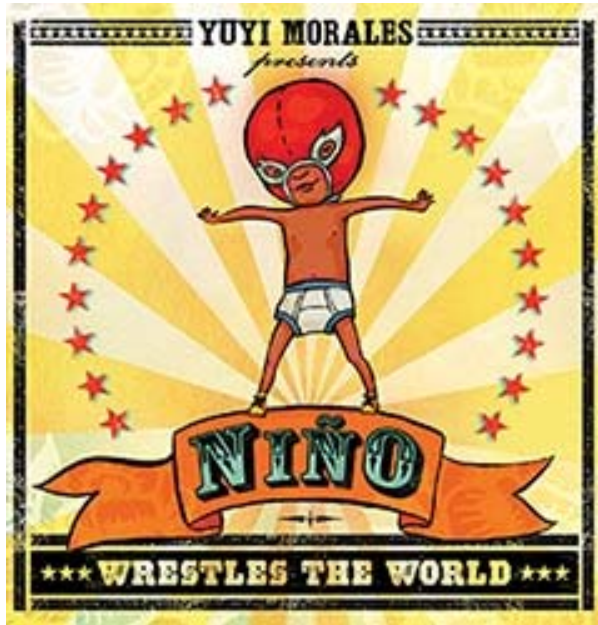


Niño Wrestles the World

1st grade

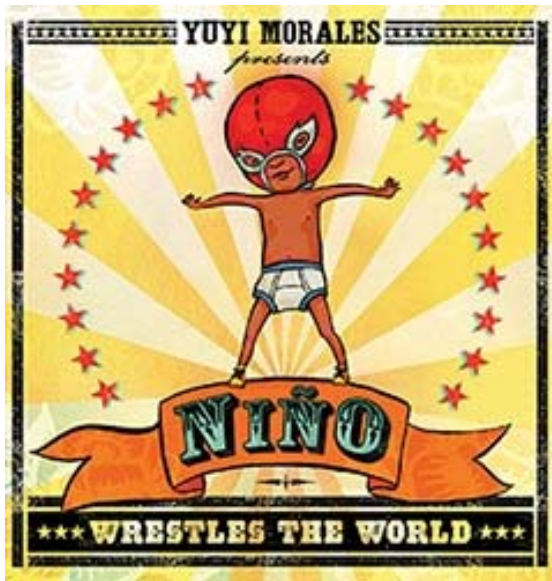


“No one went home to research mice when I read Chrysanthemum.”



“With Niño [Wrestles the World], they really were fascinated by some of the characters. One little girl went home and asked mom and dad about El Cucuy and brought me an article about it, and wanted to talk [with the class] about it. It really did light a fire, like oh I've heard about this person before...I'm gonna go ask grandma about it. So then we had stories [coming from home], and they really wanted to know more, even beyond the book. No one went home to research mice when I read Chrysanthemum, but they did go home and research some of the characters that were in the Niño book, once we read that.

“It’s not the same kind of connection”



“They connect to it because they see themselves in the book. It's different than if they see a book like Knuffle Bunny, which they love as well, but they're not really in that book *culturally*. They can maybe connect to losing a stuffed animal, but it's not the same kind of connection that they have when their grandma talks about the book.”

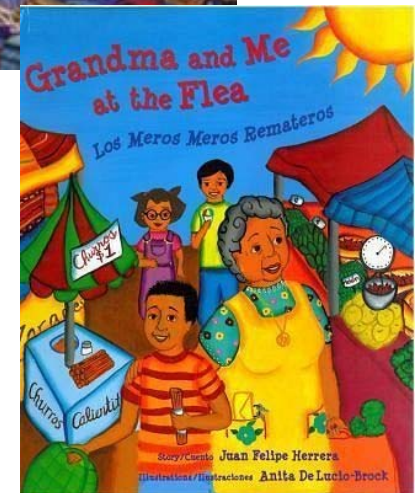
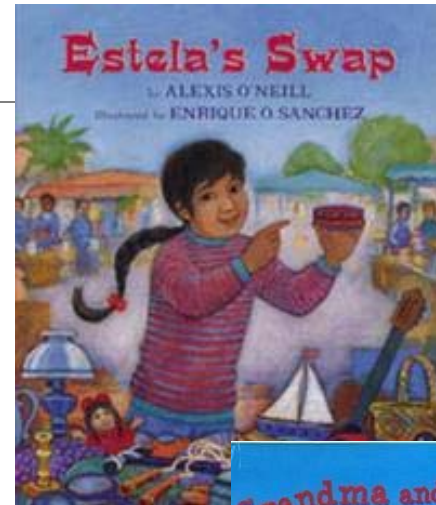
South Omaha



Night at the Fair



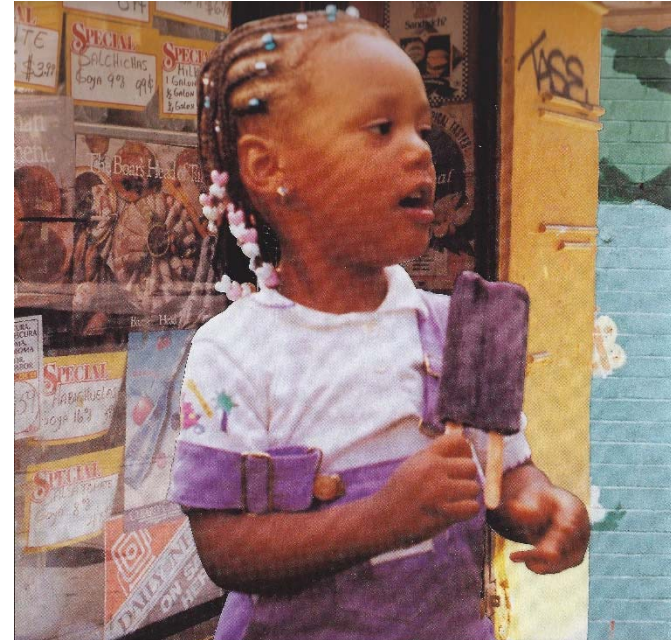
Brownville Flea Market



North Omaha



One Hot Summer Day





Think about the families you work with...

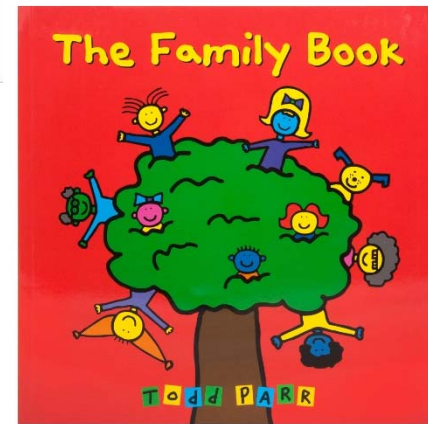
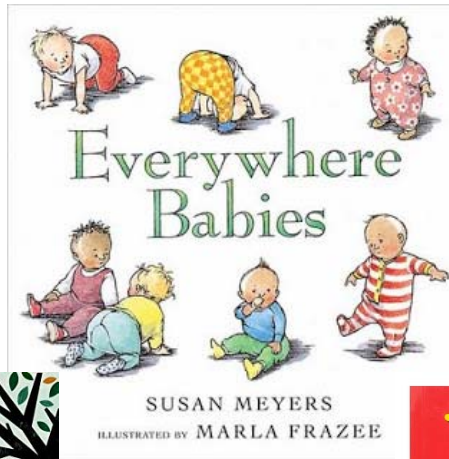
Can they find themselves well represented
in your collection or curriculum?

Think about the diversity of family structures represented in your school community

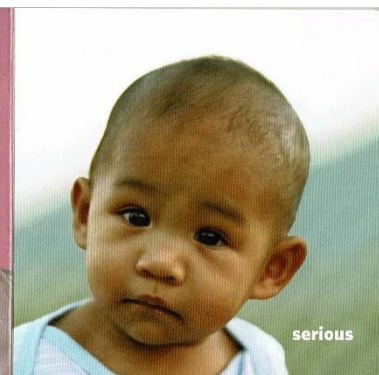
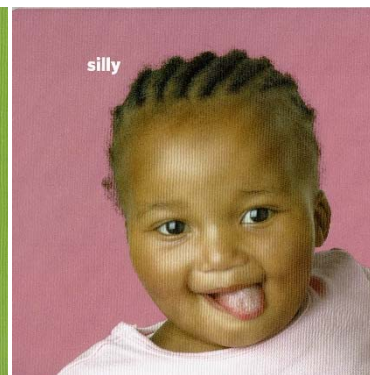
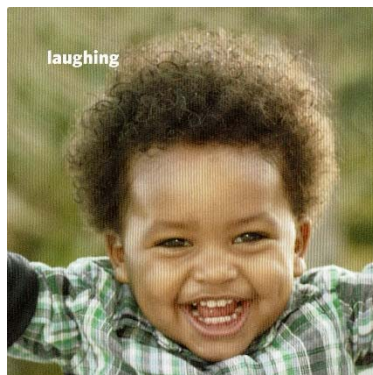
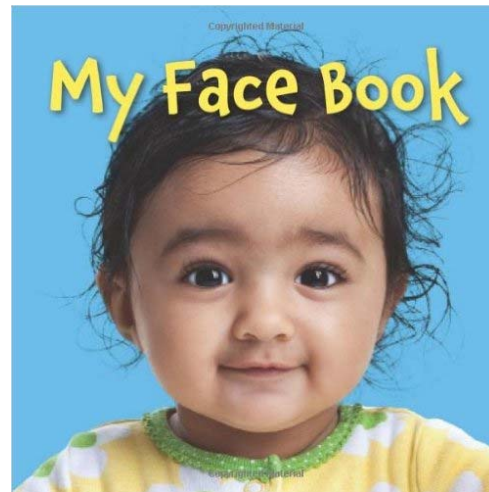


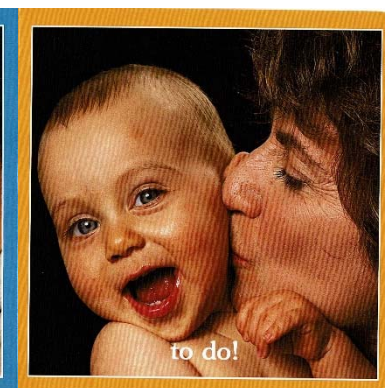
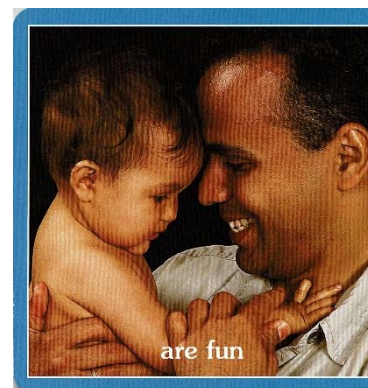
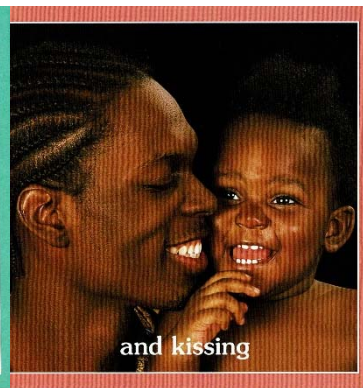
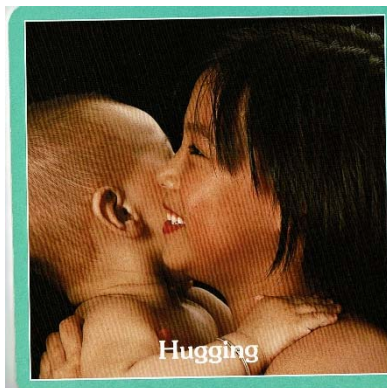
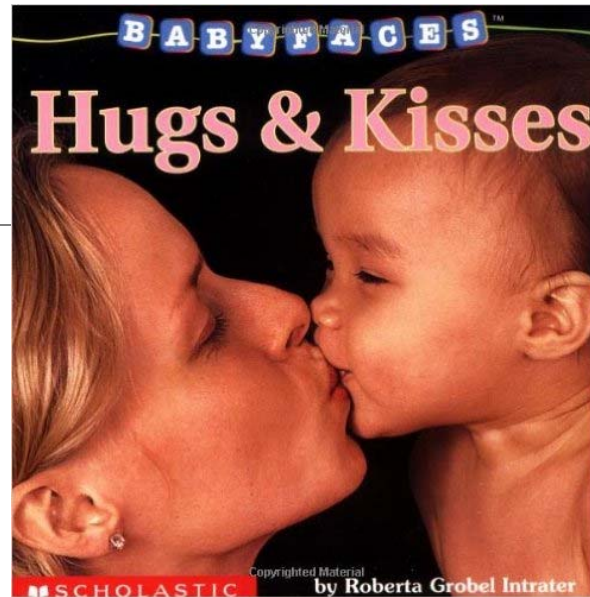
- Single parent families?
- Two parent families?
- Extended families?
- Multigenerational?
- Biracial/multiracial?
- Adoptive families?
- Blended families?
- Same gender parents?
- Young parents?
- Families experiencing separation?

Diversity of Family Structures

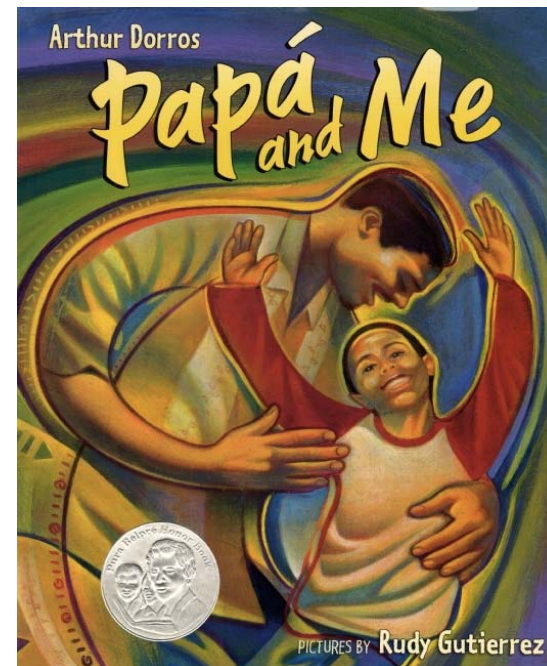
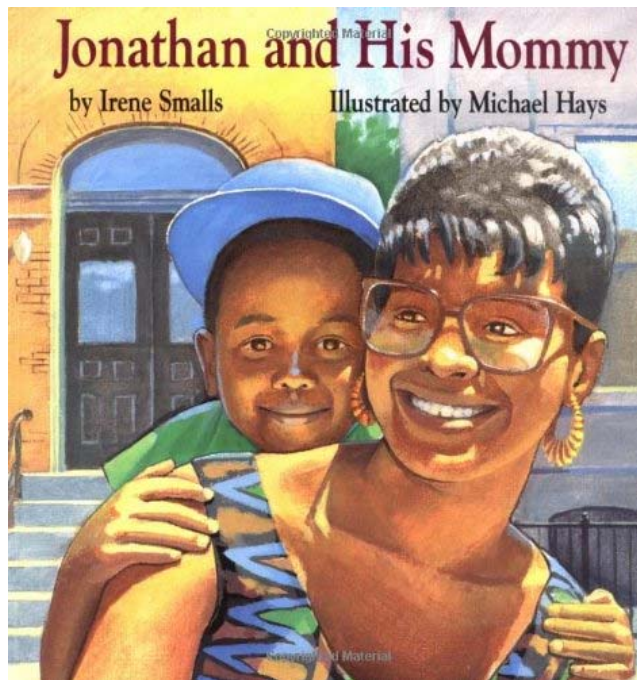


Great board books for babies

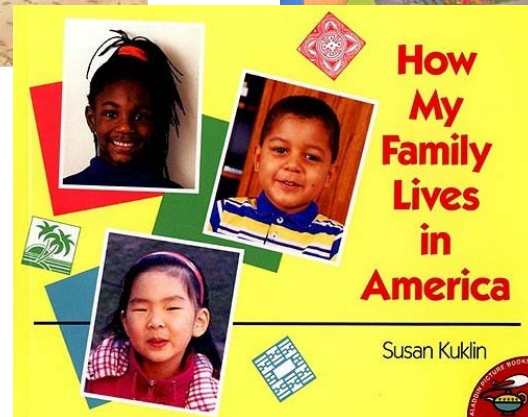
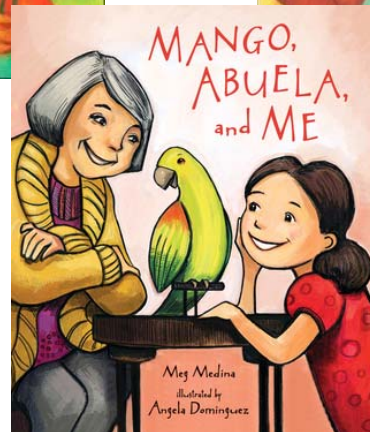
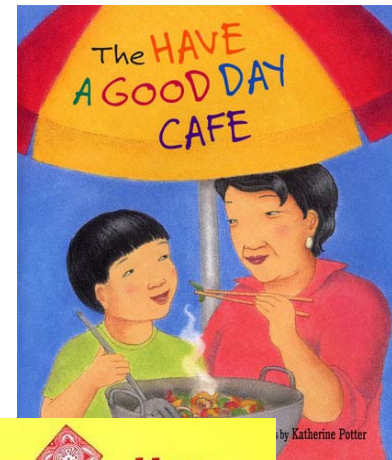
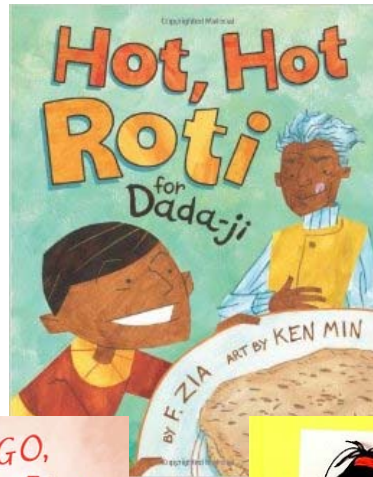
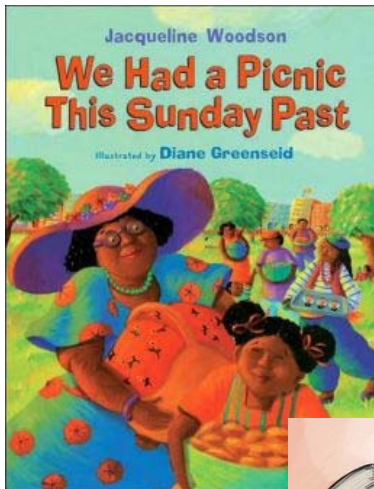




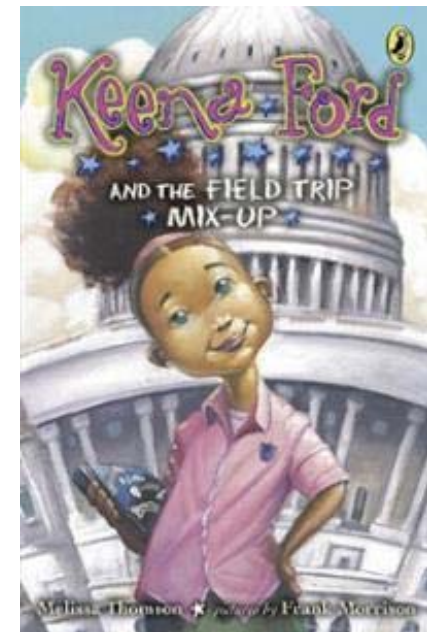
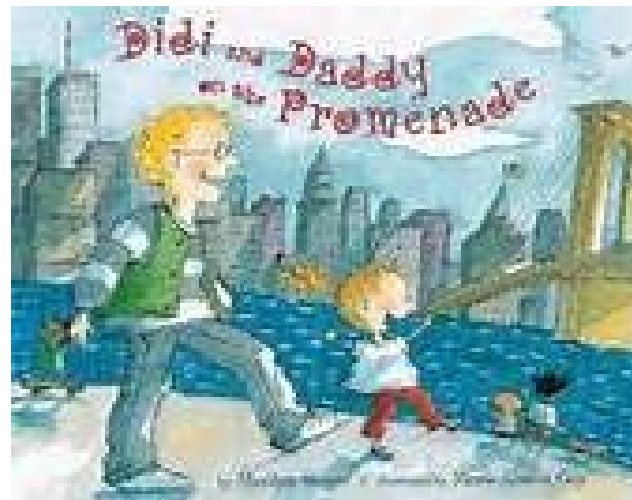
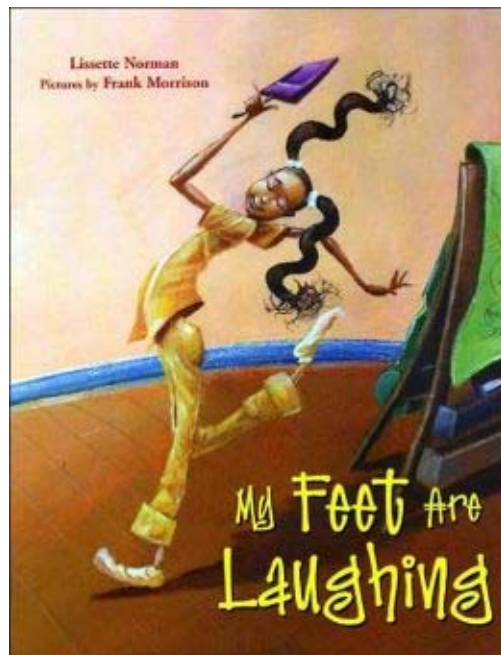
Families with a single parent



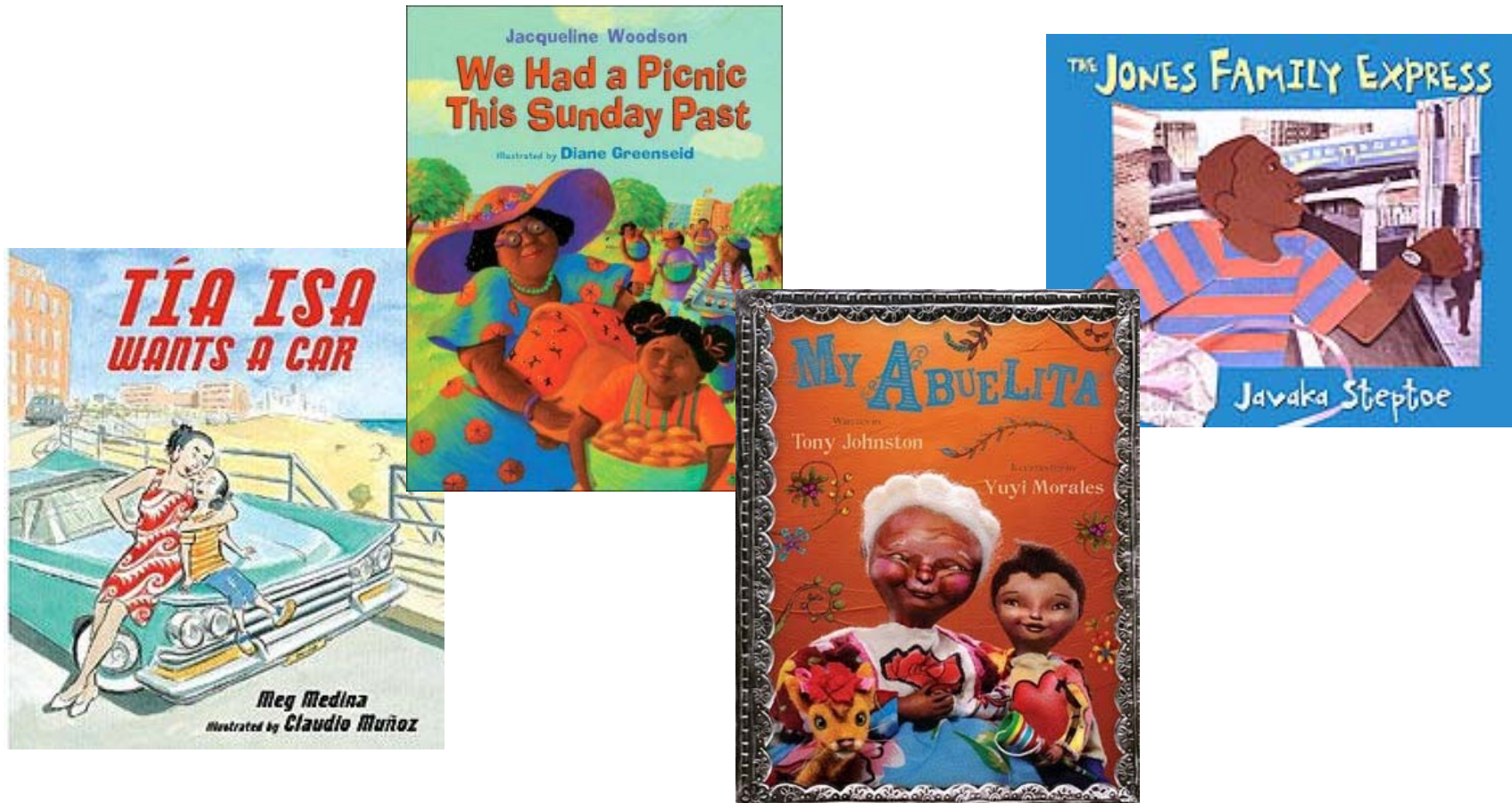
Extended, multigenerational families



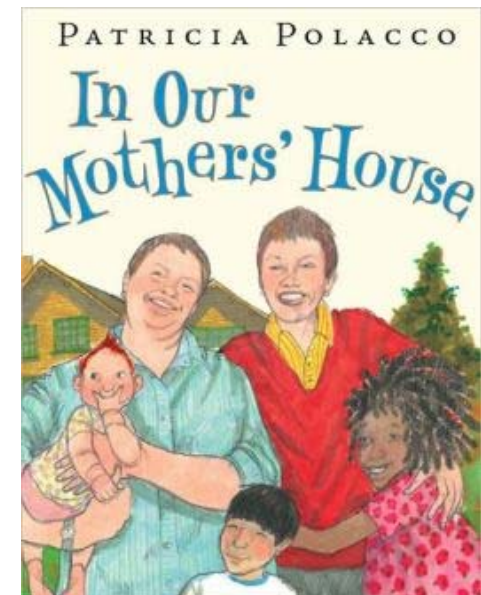
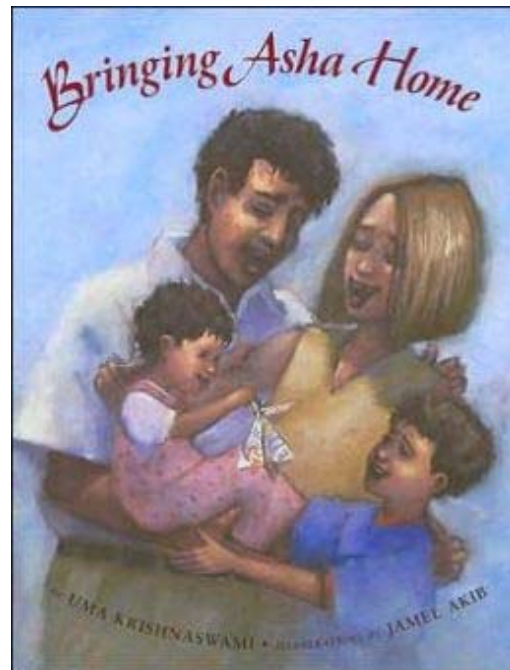
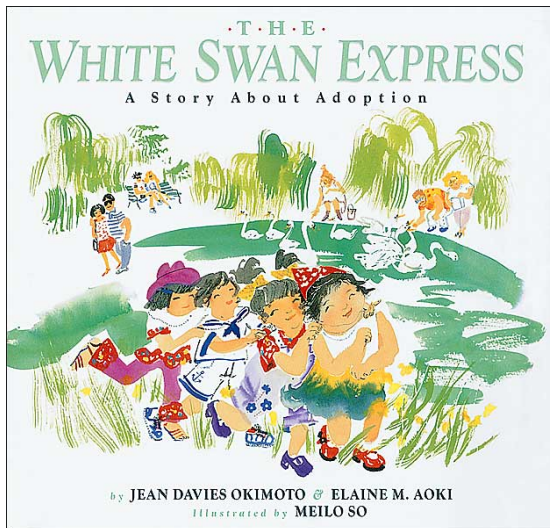
Single, separated, or divorced parents



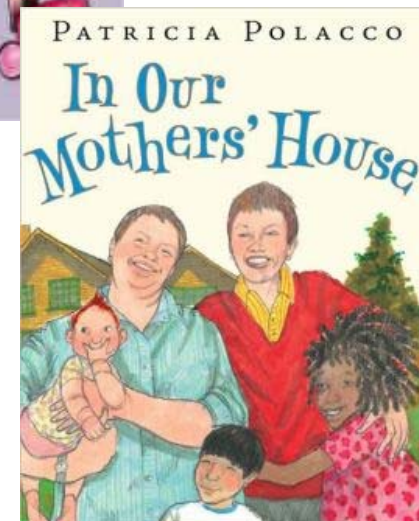
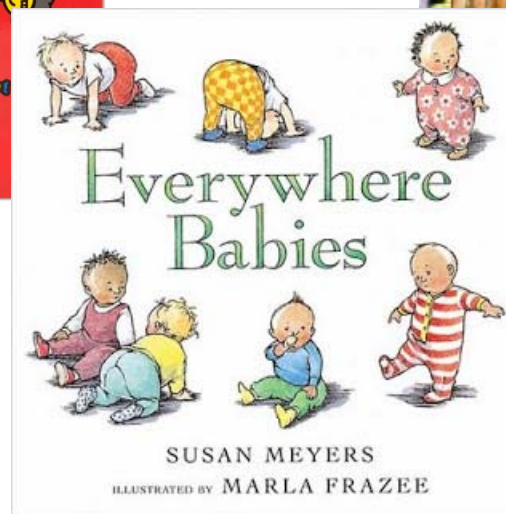
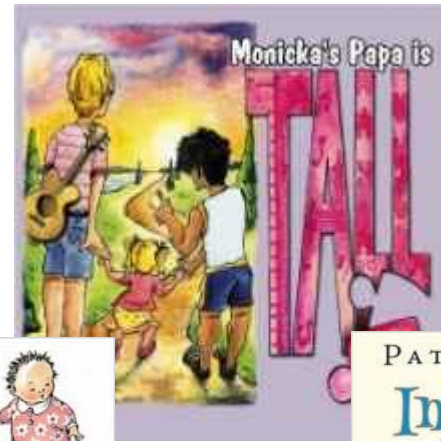
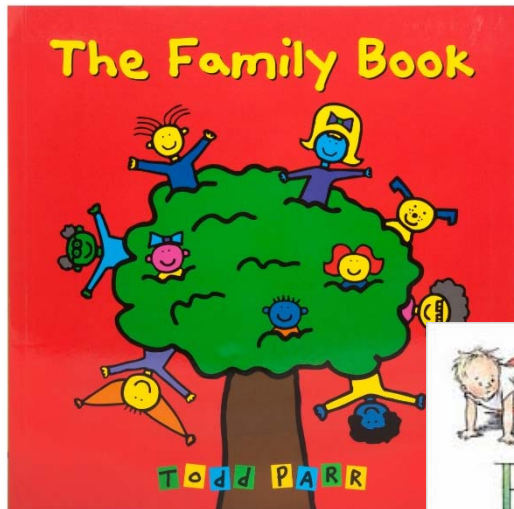
Relatives as primary caregivers



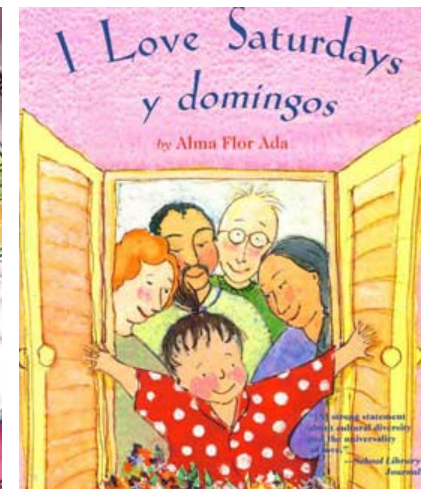
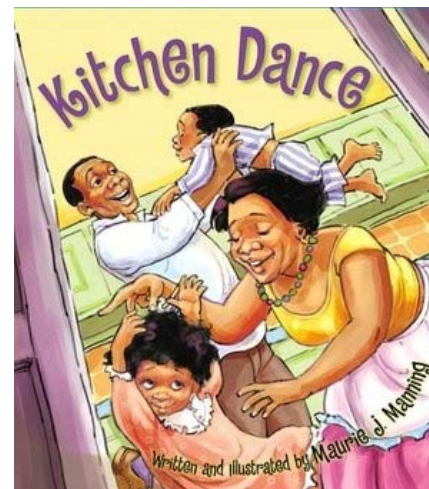
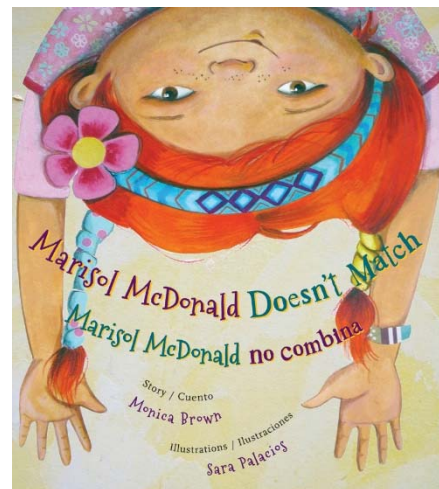
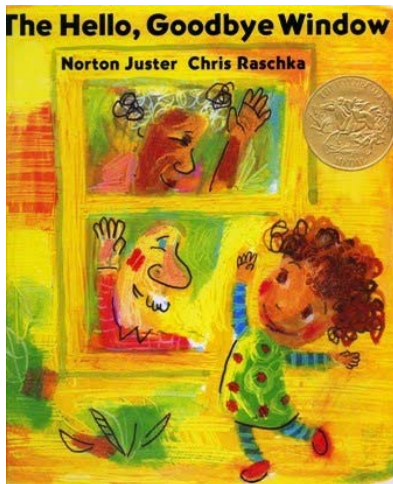
Adoptive or foster families



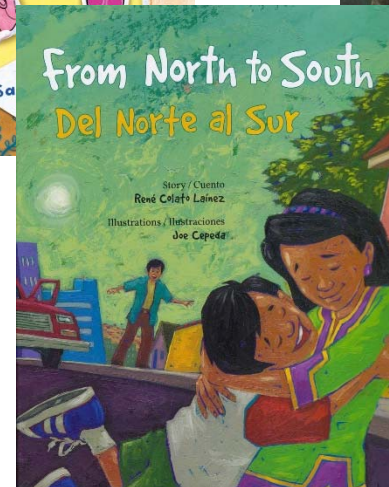
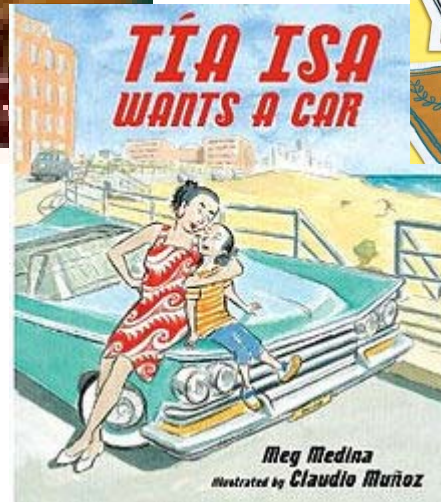
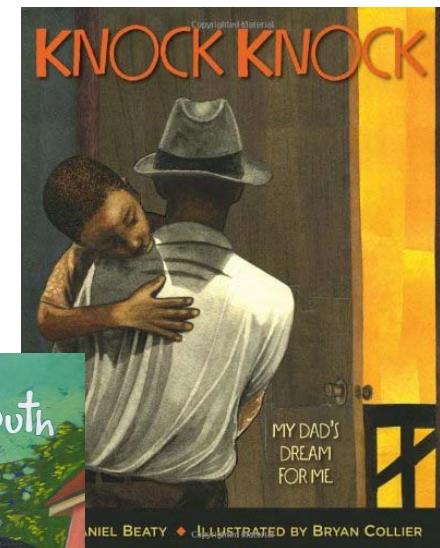
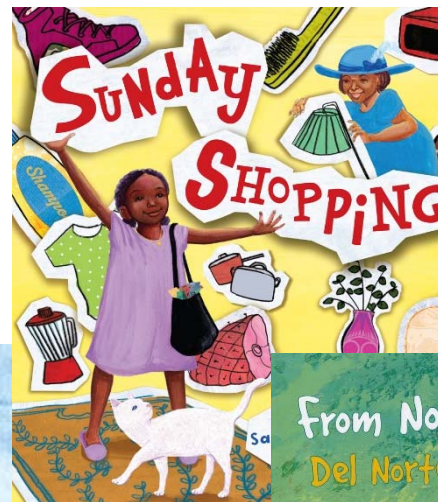
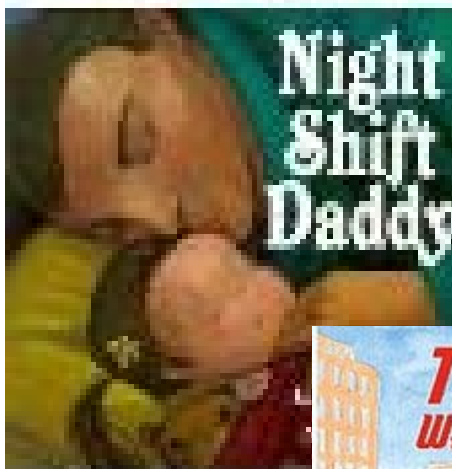
Same gender parents



Multiracial, bicultural, or blended families



Family members separated by time, distance, or circumstance





Give a child a book, she'll be happy.
Give a child a library, she'll be literate.

Access to texts in the home and community

- The availability of a variety of interesting books is highly predictive of reading achievement
- There are striking differences in access to text for children from different communities.
- Children from middle-income homes have on average 13 books per child. There is only one book for every 300 children in low-income neighborhoods.
- A home library with as few as 10 books can make a dramatic difference in the reading trajectory of a young child

Beyond home

What do you notice?



How much access do our families have?

- Think about the “library” or collection of books available to you and your families through your program, center, or school.
- Complete the Access to Text survey on p. 6, answering as honestly as you can
- If a question doesn’t apply to your setting, check no.



1. Get out your cell phone, laptop, tablet, or other device
2. Internet login: ScottConferenceCenter
Password: *bestofomaha*
3. Go to kahoot.it

Post-Survey Discussion

What does this mean for our sites?

What steps might we take to increase families' access to high-quality, culturally relevant texts?

Action Planning (p. 10)

How are we doing in supporting family members as partners in early literacy?

Think back over the content of the day.

Use the guiding questions on p. 10.

Discuss with colleagues.

Explore resources (p. 5-9).

Identify some next steps.



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at the University of Nebraska

Start early. Start well.

