

SUNY COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT

The Effects of a Kindergarten Home Reading Program

By

Patricia Siracusa

**A Thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human
Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Science in Education**

**Degree Awarded:
Summer Semester 2002**

SUBMITTED BY:

Patricia Syracuse *6/25/02*
Candidate Date

APPROVED BY:

Arthur E. Smith *6/24/02*
Thesis Advisor Date

Robin E. Umbra *7/1/02*
Second Faculty Reader Date

M. J. Beers *7/2/02*
Director of Graduate Studies Date

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a kindergarten home reading program with parents reading books to their children. The program required parents to read stories to their children and to discuss the stories afterwards. Subjects included 46 kindergarten students and their parents. The families came from an upstate New York suburban school district. The students participated in a half-day kindergarten program. Students participated in a home reading program that started in January and continued through March. Children (with parents' assistance) were asked to read a minimum of 26 books during the program, one for each letter of the alphabet. Children illustrated their favorite part of the story in a teacher-made alphabet book. The study found 93% of the students participated in the program, with 63% percent actually completing all 26 letters. Parents' responses to the post survey questions showed that the program was successful at getting parents to have a discussion of a story after reading it to their child. Many parents enjoyed hearing their child's version of the story.

CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a kindergarten home reading program with parents reading books to their children.

Introduction

Much is expected from five year-olds who enter kindergarten and leave kindergarten as six year-olds. Some children enter school with no experience with stories or looking at print. Other children enter kindergarten with literature rich environments at home. Both groups of children exit kindergarten with varying abilities and some struggle with the challenges that meet them in first grade.

In kindergarten, teachers expect that children be read to on a daily basis at home. To encourage at home storybook reading the researcher implemented a home reading program in the classroom that involved a treasure hunt theme. The program required parents to read books to their children and discuss the story afterwards.

Need for the Study

It is imperative that families become involved in their children's school achievement. The importance of involving families in children's learning and school experience is widely understood (Barbour, 1998). State standards are higher and the expectation for kindergartners is also on the rise. "Standardized curriculum and testing in primary schools are causing what educators call 'push down' academics" (Dickinson, p.61). The "push down" academics are landing on the youngest learners and now kindergartners are expected to read by the end of kindergarten and social skills are a second priority. To help meet the higher standards it should be expected that all children are read to and enriched with good quality literature at home. Parents should get into a daily routine of reading and discussing stories with their children. Good books should be an integral part of every child's life (Cohen, 1997). Parents should have started this process before children have reached school age.

Teachers need to encourage parents to read and discuss good quality literature to their children at home. Kindergarten is, for some children, their first experience in school. We have to make this first year positive by instilling a love of literature in the classroom and home. With technology and the media absorbing a lot of free time in American

households, it is important that literature remain the constant connection between school and home.

Research Questions

1. Will parents spend time reading to their children during a home reading program?
2. Will a home reading program have an effect on children in a kindergarten classroom?
3. Will the practice of reading continue after the completion of the program?

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a kindergarten home reading program with parents reading books to their children.

Introduction

Kindergartners come to school with fresh faces every year and are usually ready to learn. These children are very excited about their first experience in school. Story time and interacting with their peers is a new experience for some children. Teachers and parents want a child's first year of school to be a positive and enriching one. Educators often speak about the need to involve parents more fully in their children's education. When parents are integrated into the design of an educational system, student growth is maximized (Cohen, 1997). Much evidence suggests that parents have a great influence upon the behavior of their children, particularly their intellectual and academic achievement (Schaefer, 1972).

The Importance of Parental Involvement and Home Reading

Parents should introduce children at an early age to the world of books. If children do not see their teacher or parents read, then they will not read, nor will they want to read (Haverty, 1996). Frequent storybook

reading enables children to learn about the functions of written language and to gain information about reading skills and processes (Strickland & Morrow, 1990). Trelease (1985) states parents should read to their children when they are infants so the child is being conditioned to the parent's voice and to the sight of books. They should read to them often and they also should look closely at themselves as readers (Butler & Clay, 1990). Parents should be reading role models for their children. Parents who read regularly to their children promote positive attitudes toward reading and reading achievement (Becher, 1985). Children should see their parents reading all the time. Parents who read to their children do not only produce children who can read, but also results in additional benefits, as noted by Meinbach and Rothlein (1991).

The warmth of the oral reading period, as well as the generally effective climate created during the reading time, helps support the child's emotional well-being and thus helps build self-confidence. (p. 5)

Stories help children by giving them ways of dealing constructively by their inner experience, as noted by Barton and Booth (1990).

When children enter story, they are transported to other worlds, joining in the adventures and the excitement, freed of their own time and place- and somehow changed by the experience. They learn about the lives of others and in doing so develop a better understanding of their own lives. (p.14)

The more children are enriched with good quality literature, the more they will understand that reading is for enjoyment and has a purpose- to keep us entertained and to give us information. If a child does not learn that reading is pleasurable or if reading fluency is poor it will reflect across all content areas, and his/her chances for living a fulfilling literate life are practically nonexistent (McPike, 1995).

Importance of Storybook Reading

In an era when computers are taking over conversations in households and TVs are used as babysitters for children, it seems all the more important that we need to read to our children on a daily basis. According to Hartwig (1994), "the single biggest factor affecting young people's reading habits is the extent of parental involvement in children's reading" (p. 3). Little can be done to end the cycle of illiteracy without beginning with the communities in which our children live (Reissner, 1994). Parent involvement in children's reading is positively related to reading achievement in the early grades (Senechal & LeFevre, 1998). When parents read aloud to their children on a daily basis, it strengthens children's reading, writing, and speaking skills and thus the entire civilizing process (Trelease, 1985).

McNeil and Fowler (1996) researched strategies to teach parents conversation techniques while reading to their preschool children with

language delays. McNeil and Fowler found that they could teach parents ways to have conversations with their children while reading, thus enhancing positive language development. "Mothers who praise their children, expand their children's utterances by using at least one of their child's prior words in a more advanced statement...children engage in longer conversations as a result" (p.47).

De Temple and Tabors (1996) investigated whether children's early book reading experiences at home were related to later narrative skills. In this study they visited homes of 62 mothers with their children for 3 consistent years. The first visit was when the child was 3 ½ years old and once a year after that until the child was 5 ½ years old. During each home visit the mothers were asked to read The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle. The mothers were interviewed about their literacy practices at home. When the children were 5 ½ years old the researchers tested the children on language and emergent literacy using standardized and experimenter designed measures. The results of the study indicated that early book reading in pre-school and kindergarten greatly predicted first grade reading performance in a positive manner.

In a study conducted by Barbour (1998) it was noted that a home based reading program promoted family involvement in several ways:

The project not only allowed all families to become directly involved in their children's learning, but it also affected parental attitudes and behaviors...In addition, the project prompted some families to establish regular reading routines. If continued, such patterns of parental involvement can benefit children's learning in the future. (p. 75)

This study not only shows how important home reading is for children, but also how it can affect parents' attitudes toward school and their children's education. Parents are teachers too, and when there is an implementation of a home reading program, then parents will know they are contributing to their children's education.

School-Supported Home Reading Programs

Much of the research supports school based home reading programs. Barbour (1998) states that three teachers at Howard Early Childhood Center, in San Antonio, Texas, initiated a family literacy program. Literacy bags, which included books and activities in each, were sent home with children once a week. Teachers reported that children were eager to take home the literacy bags and were enthusiastic about their experiences with the books and activities. Teachers found that parents were very positive about the program and "that parents who had not read to their children before had begun making time to do so" (p.73).

Cohen (1997) introduced a kindergarten book backpack program that helped parents and children recognize the breadth of children's literature that was available for reading.

Good books should be an integral part of every young child's life. In my whole-language kindergarten the emphasis is on the meaningfulness and functionality of reading quality literature and picture books. My goal is to provide children with the disposition to love books and become life-long readers. (p.69)

The book backpack program lets teachers and parents "share the responsibility and the joy of nurturing the development of children's literacy learning" (p.71).

When teachers are implementing a home reading program, they have to take into account the home environment. An effort should be made to get to know the family and to support what the parents are already doing (Danielson, 1997). It should not be assumed that children are not being read to at home. "Particular linguistic styles, curricula, and authority patterns send messages to diverse cultures about appropriate learning environment and thus alienate various parents" (Bourdieu and Passerson, cited in Danielson, 1997, p. 274). Teachers should be supportive of what parents are already doing to enhance learning. Encouraging parental involvement with the implementation of a home reading program should enhance a love of reading. In turn, children will love reading at home and parents will love sharing books with their

children. A life long pattern will develop that will benefit children in the long run and encourage parents to participate in their child's education.

Parents are a vital part of any effort to boost early literacy skills (Nespeca, 1996). When children see their parents involved in their education they will realize how important it is to learn and they will see how much commitment everyone is making for their success. In a study conducted by Spewock (1988) parents were trained to help develop readiness skills in their preschoolers.

Mothers and fathers who had never before realized the value of reading to their children have now started libraries for them at home. They've also noticed that children have developed a love for books. A mother of a 4 year- old boy said "One of the first things Billy asked for on his birthday was books. I couldn't believe it! (p.652)

If we give children the opportunity to explore with books at an early age and read to them at an early age, they will expect it when they get older.

It is important to help parents to become involved in their child's classroom in inner city schools where parent involvement tends to be low. In a study conducted by Britt and Baker (1997) it was found that children are more likely to have a positive attitude toward learning and view school as a very important place when parents are participating in their education. Brit and Baker (1997) had a lending library in their classroom and children were encouraged to take books home to read to their

parents. The books were readily available for the children to take home. "Involving parents more closely in their children's education fostered a group cohesion." (p.5)

Parents want to feel a part of their children's education, but there have to be more programs for their involvement. Parents must realize they do have a voice in their children's education (Newman, 1995). Family involvement does not need to be limited to volunteering at school or attending school-sponsored events (Epstein, 1995). It can take other meaningful forms such as the lending library previously mentioned. In some situations it is hard for a parent to come to school to help out, but if there is a home reading program intact then they know they are still helping with their child's education without entering the school.

It is obvious that most of the research supports some sort of home reading program with parental involvement. However, not much research has been conducted on home reading and a discussion of the story afterwards with a picture or with words. Many children come to school having had few conversations during book readings (Teale & Martinez, 1988). Reading a story to children is important, but discussing a story while reading and afterwards is just as equally important. Additional research on this area would be beneficial for teachers, librarians, and parents.

CHAPTER III

Design of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a kindergarten home reading program with parents reading books to their children.

Research Questions

1. Will parents spend time reading to their children during a home reading program?
2. Will a home reading program have an effect on children in a kindergarten classroom?
3. Will the practice of reading continue after the completion of the program?

Methodology

Subjects

The subjects of this study were 46 kindergarten students and their parents. The families came from an upstate New York suburban school district. The students participated in a half-day kindergarten program with 23 students in the morning class and 23 students in the afternoon class.

Materials

The following materials were used in this study:

- ◆ A teacher-made alphabet book for children to take home and use to illustrate pictures after listening to a story (Appendix A)
- ◆ General letter sent home to parents in January to explain the program (Appendix B)
- ◆ Tear off sheets to be sent to school on January 25th, February 15th and March 15th to verify reading has been done (Appendix C)
- ◆ Follow up letter sent to parents requesting feedback on the program (Appendix D)

Procedures

Students participated in a home reading program that started in January and continued through March. Children (with parents' assistance) were asked to read a minimum of 26 books during the program, one for each letter of the alphabet. Families could select books from their homes, public libraries, school libraries, etc. The books selected needed to have a word in the title that began with the letter of the alphabet. For example, Curious George by Margaret Rey could be used for the letter "C" for Curious or the letter "G" for George. After the parents read the books to their children, children had to illustrate something they enjoyed about the story in the alphabet book.

Three check points were made during the program to monitor progress. As the children completed a page in the alphabet book, parents were to indicate this on the tear off sheet with their initials. The tear off sheets were returned on the following dates for check points, January 25th, February 16th, and finally March 16th. The home reading program continued through March. At that time, children were asked to bring their completed alphabet books to school to share with their classmates and to display in the library for the to public view. The children had a visit from the school principal, who called himself "Alphabet Man" for the children's enjoyment, to acknowledge their completion of the reading program. At the end of the program the researcher sent home a post-survey for parents to share their reactions to the reading program.

Analysis of Data

Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Students' participation in the program during each checkpoint was analyzed in a quantitative manner to look for student participation. Students' completion of the program in March was assessed quantitatively. Parent feedback on the survey along with teacher observational notes in the classroom were examined in a qualitative manner to see the success, if any, of the program.

CHAPTER IV

Results of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a kindergarten home reading program with parents reading books to their children.

Findings and Interpretations

Participation in the Reading Program

Forty-six students and their families were included in the reading program. There were three checkpoints during the program to monitor students' progress. The first checkpoint, in January, showed 93% of the students returned their tear off sheets. Students in the A.M. class showed 22 out of 23 and the P.M. class showed 19 out of 23. These results may have been high because the students were excited about starting the program. In February, the results declined for participation with 70% of the students returning their tear off sheets. The A.M. class showed 16 out of 23 students and the P.M. class showed 16 out of 23 students. The reason for the decline may have been because the day the slips were due was a day before a week off, so many students had already started their vacation and were absent on that day.

The total percentage of students who completed the program was 63%. These students completed the required 26 letters and finished their books. In the A.M. class 16 out of 23 students completed and in the P.M. class 13 out of 23 students completed the program. From the 17 students who did not complete the program, 76% of them did participate by completing 8 letters or more. The students who did not participate were 9% with 1 out of 23 in the A.M. class and 3 out of 23 in the P.M. class. Additional books were sent home to the children who were not participating, but nothing was returned.

Teacher Observation

During the program the researcher observed the students at three different times during the school day, after snack time, before story time, and after project time. At these times students were encouraged to take books off the shelves and read them by themselves or with a buddy.

After snack time, students would read through books before story time. During this time, the researcher noticed many children would return to favorite books every day. Students always returned to books that were read by the researcher during story time. These books were always readily available to the children. Often students looked at books together and discussed the characters and different pictures with each other.

Students enjoyed turning to their favorite parts of stories and sharing these parts with their friends.

Every day at the beginning of story time, the teacher would read a title of a book to be read. The students were asked which letter they could complete in their "A to Z" books if they read this book at home. Many students would say the first letter in the title and refer to the same letter in the "A to Z" book. This was good practice for students who were still learning the letters of the alphabet and it helped students understand how to complete the "A to Z" book.

Students were also encouraged to look at stories after project time. Frequently, they would return to books that were already read and then go through them again by locating words they recognized or by retelling the story to their friends. Many students complained over how long it took another child to look at a popular story. Students continued to discuss details in the pictures and repeated words they recognized in stories.

During the three different occasions where children were encouraged to browse and read books, the researcher noticed that the students did not like it when a transition took place and they had to move to a different activity. When it was free playtime and the students were allowed to choose any activity to play, many students would choose to read a book.

Parent Survey

A parent survey was sent home at the end of March, 2 weeks after the program ended, to ask parents their reactions to the home reading program. The survey was sent home to the 46 students and 43% were returned. The surveys that were returned were generally positive toward the program. The results are as follows:

Question 1: How often did you read to your child during the reading program?

Ten percent of the parents said 3-6 times a day, while 85% said 1-2 times a day. Five percent said 3-4 times a week.

Did it change after the program was completed?

Sixty percent said it did not change and 5% said it was reduced to 2-3 times a week because of the warmer weather. Thirty-five percent did not respond to this question.

Question 2: Did your child enjoy searching for books to go with the letter of the alphabet?

Seventy-five percent said yes, 5% said no, 5% said mostly, 5% said sometimes, 10 % said the parent made the choice. Many parents commented on their child becoming frustrated on not being able to find a book to go along with a letter. Visits were made to the public library on a

weekly basis and many families had their extended families involved in the effort too.

Question 3: Who initiated the reading?

Thirty-five percent said usually the child, 50% said usually the parent, 10% said the whole family (brothers, sisters, and grandparents, and 5% said the parent and child. One parent said their child was encouraged by the babysitter who had a child involved in the program too. One parent said the child initiated the reading, but had to be reminded about completing the book.

Question 4: Did your child enjoy discussing the story afterwards?

Ninety percent said yes and 10% said sometimes. Many parents commented on the child's interest in drawing the pictures after the story was completed. A lot of parents enjoyed hearing their children's versions of the stories and their interpretations.

Question 5: Did your child request the book to be read again?

Fifty percent said yes, 25 % said no, 20% said sometimes, and 5% said most of the time. Parents noted that some books were read again during the program. The stories the children knew were requested again and again. Some children just wanted to move on to the next letter in their "A to Z" book.

Additional Comments:

Overall, the parents made positive comments on the home reading program. The program helped children feel as if they accomplished something and were acknowledged for it. One parent mentioned that her son actually read fewer books during the program, but they read a wider variety of books to cover all the letters of the alphabet. Many parents mentioned that they visited the public library when the books were harder to find for letters Q and X.

One parent mentioned she thought it was a little overwhelming for a kindergartner to complete 26 activities, but still thought it was a good program. One child didn't take much initiative in the program, but enjoyed the drawings.

Most of the comments were positive and all the parents thought the program was a good idea.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of a kindergarten home reading program with parents reading books to their children.

Conclusion

This study found that 93% of the students participated in the reading program, but only 63% of the students actually completed the reading program by completing all the letters in their alphabet books. The number of children who completed the program may be lower than the participation group, because the program went on for 3 months and many parents may have forgotten to keep track of books that were being read.

Parents' responses to the post survey questions showed that the program seemed successful at getting parents to have a discussion of a story after the reading. Many parents enjoyed hearing their child's version of the story.

Children who did not participate were given more books to take home and still nothing was returned. These are the same children that rarely returned homework assignments, and letter recognition and interest

in stories was low. Parental involvement in school was also at a low for the children who did not participate.

As teachers, it is our challenge to try to get all the children motivated and involved in reading. When children are in kindergarten we need to get the parents involved and motivated about reading. By starting to get the parents motivated when the children are at such a young age, we are creating a positive pattern toward reading and learning for parents and most importantly their children.

Implications for the Classroom

The results of this study indicate that teachers can motivate children into reading and learning with parental involvement. Teachers need to be aware that some parents will need more guidance than others on how to get their children interested in reading.

Some families may not have many books at home. Modifications would need to be arranged in the classroom to accommodate such families. One way to do this is to introduce literacy bags. Literacy bags can be used to get children and parents involved in reading at home. There are many ways to get parents and children involved in reading; a home reading program is just one of them.

Richgels and Wold (1998) described the successes of a home reading program called "Three for the Road" that was implemented in their

classroom by sending backpacks filled with books home with the students.

Students took turns taking the backpacks home.

Three for the Road was developed to allow families to experience the inspirational qualities of children's literature while children choose books to read, negotiate the context for reading, and participate with teachers and parents in authentic scaffolding experiences. Three for the Road empowers students and families to build the foundations for lifelong enjoyment of reading and writing (p.16).

This home reading program was a successful program implemented in a first grade classroom. Teachers need to keep in mind the preparation such a program would take such as, making sure plenty of books are available. Yet, the benefits would be positive because many good quality books would be readily available for children to read at all times.

Implications for Further Research

Further research could be done on low parental involvement in kindergarten. A big factor in a child's success in kindergarten is how involved the parents are at home. This research showed that some parents did not get involved in the program, even with repeated opportunities. Research should be conducted to encourage parental involvement for children who are not achieving academically.

A home reading program could be implemented in middle school or secondary school. Further research could be conducted in this area

where students are reading a greater volume of books with many different genres.

Time spent on a home reading program is questionable. Further research could be done to investigate if time restraints need to be made, or can it be a yearlong activity.

If a home reading program did not bring success, then research could be done for a school based reading program where students are tracking books they are reading during school.

References

Barbour, A. C. (1998). Home literacy bags promote family involvement. Childhood Education, 75 (2) 71-75.

Baker, L. & Britt, G. (1997). Engaging parents and kindergartners in reading through a class lending library. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 405 553).

Barton, B. & Booth, D. (1990). Stories in the Classroom. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Becher, R. (1985). Parent involvement and reading achievement: A review of research and implications for practice. Childhood Education, 62 44-49.

Butler, D., & Clay, M. (1990). Reading Begins at Home. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cohen, L. E. (1997). How I developed my kindergarten book backpack program. Young Children, 52 (2) 69-71.

Danielson, K. E. (1997). Improving parental involvement in children's literacy. Reading Horizons, 37 (4) 274-280.

De Temple, J. M. & Tabors, P. O. (1996). Children's Story Retelling as a Predictor of Early Reading Achievement. Canada: (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED403543)

Dickson, A. (1999). Education: kinder grind forget blocks, dress-up and show and tell. Five-year-olds are now being pushed to read. Are we asking too much too soon? Time 61-62.

Epstein, J.L. (1995). School/ family/ community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. Phi Delta Kappan, 76 (9) 701-712.

Haverty, L. (1996). Improving elementary schools students' attitudes toward voluntary reading. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 398 544).

Hartwig, F. (1994). Ways to create lifelong readers. Ebony, 49, 2.

McNeil, J. H. & Fowler, S. A. (1996). Using story reading to encourage children's conversations. Teaching Exceptional Children, 28 (4) 43-47.

McPike, E. (1995). Learning to read: Schoolings first mission. American Educator, 19, 3-6.

Meinbach, A.M. & Rothlein, L. (1991). The Literature Connection
Glenview, IL: Good Year Books.

Newman, R. (1995). The home school connection. Childhood Education,
71(5) 296-297.

Nespeca, S.M. (1996). Literacy begins at home. School Library
Journal,42 (5) 26-30.

Reissner, L. A. (1994). A read aloud program that encourages parent
participation in schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 369
596).

Richgels, D. J. & Wold. L. S. (1998). Literacy on the road: Backpacking
partnerships between school and home. Reading Teacher, 52 (1) 18-30.

Schaefer, E. S. (1972). Parents as educators: Evidence from cross-
sectional, longitudinal and intervention research. Young Children, 27, 227-239.

Senechal, M. , LeFevre, J. & et al. (1998). Differential effects of home
literacy experiences on the development of oral and written language. Reading
Research Quarterly, 33 (1) 96-117.

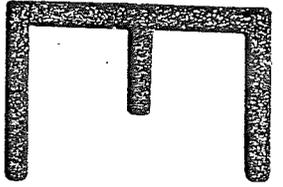
Spewock, T.S. (1988). Training parents to teach their preschoolers through literature. The Reading Teacher, March, 648-652.

Strickland, D. S. & Morrow, L. M. (1990). Family literacy: Sharing good books. The Reading Teacher, 43 (7) 518-519.

Teale, W. & Martinez, M. (1988). Getting on the right road to reading: Bringing books and young children together in the classroom. Young Children, 40 10-15.

Trelease, J. (1985). The Read Aloud Handbook. New York, NY: Viking Penguin Inc. .

Appendix A



Title: _____

Author: _____

Appendix B

Welcome to our 2001 Home Reading Program!

This program is being offered to all of the students at Helendale Road School.

What is the Home Reading Program?

It is a program designed to encourage our students to read for fun and to read a variety of books. This year each child is being provided with this alphabet book. This book is to be used to keep track of the good books that are read during the next several months. Our design is a bit like a scavenger hunt this year. We are asking that your child read a minimum of 26 books during the coming weeks, one for each letter of the alphabet. The books that you and your child select should have a word in the title that begins with the letter or is something that begins with that letter. For example Curious George by Margaret Rey could be used for the letter "C" for Curious, or "G" for George. Please only one letter per book and try to fill out all of the letters.

What to do?

- ◆ Select the book and have your child read the book, read the book to your child, or read the book together.
- ◆ Find the page in the alphabet book with the correct letter. Write the title and author of the book that was read on that page. You can do this in any order you want.
- ◆ Your child should now use the rest of the page to respond to what they have read. You should discuss the story with your child. The response can be done in several ways and can be done differently for different books. Some possible responses could be: 1) an illustration 2) a sentence or several sentences about the story 3) an adult can write what the child says and the child can do the illustration.

Tear- offs

At the end of this alphabet book you will find tear off sheets with dates on them. As your child completes a page in the alphabet book, indicate this on the tear-off sheet with your initials. The tear-offs should be returned to your child's teacher on the dates indicated. Classes will be recognized every few weeks for the work that they have done up to that point.

At the end of the program:

At the end of the program, March 15th, all students are asked to bring their completed alphabet books to school. We will be having special recognition for our classes for participation and completion of their reading and alphabet books. Look for a visit from "Alphabet Man!"

Remember not to get hung up on a particular letter. If you have trouble we at school can help out. Our intent is to have some fun and encourage all of our students to read.

Thanks for participating!

Appendix C

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

Student Name:

Teacher:

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

Student Name:

Teacher:

Appendix D

Dear Parents,

Thank you for participating in the home reading program that was completed in March. To help me finish my graduate thesis, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions.

Thanks!
Trish Siracusa

1. How often did you read to your child during the reading program? Did it change after the program completed?
2. Did your child enjoy searching for different books for every letter of the alphabet?
3. Who initiated the reading?
4. Did your child enjoy discussing the stories after the reading?
5. Did your child request the book to be read again?

Comments: