FOSTERING EMERGENT LITERACY IN PRESCHOOL:

PARENT–CHILD INTERACTION

By

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Abstract

Vocabulary development is of the utmost importance for pre-school aged children as vocabulary has long-term effects (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Research however has displayed that children often do not enter Kindergarten with a sufficient vocabulary and therefore encounter the Matthew Effect, which is the idea that “the rich get richer, while the poor become poorer,” in the effect that good readers continue to read well, while poor readers continue to deteriorate in their skills (Stanovich, 1986).

Current research suggests that properly designed curriculums and family literacy programs can have a positive effect on children’s vocabulary development (Christ & Wang, 2010; McKeown & Beck, 2011). Read-alouds coupled with explicit instruction, specifically targeted vocabulary words, conversation with children, and authoritative instruction tend to promote emergent literacy (Neuman, Newman, & Dwyer, 2011; Nitecki & Chung, 2013; Shedd & Duke, 2008). With family literacy having such an impact on children’s emergent literacy and vocabulary, it is important to put into place programs and resources for parents and children to reap these benefits. A pre-school setting is an ideal place where children can come and benefit from family literacy programs through interactions with early childhood educators. Therefore, providing a guide for educating adults, coupled with lessons on how they can work with their children, is what is provided in this project. The lessons included with the workshop are modelled after McKeown and Beck’s (2011) tier approach and weekly plans, as well as adapted from Giorgis and Glazer’s (2013) teaching tools and book lists.
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Chapter 1—Background Information

Rationale

Ever since I was a young child I have loved to read. I have fond memories of my mom taking my sisters and me to the public library, where we would stock up on books for the week. My love for reading and English continued, as in my undergrad my major was in English Literature; so reading has always come naturally to me. Due to my own recent experiences working at a daycare in both a kindergarten and school age program, and having a partner with two children; one of whom is 5 years old and learning to read, I have a new interest in reading development. I have seen at first-hand, children in Grade 3 who are unable to read, and who are unable to access any materials at school because reading is the way to understand everything they are learning. I have watched as a 5 1/2 year old senior kindergartener could sing the alphabet, but not apply any of those letters to her written counterparts, or phonemically sound out any letters or words. As an avid reader, and someone who does not recall struggling with reading, I cannot imagine what it must be like to not understand the print on a page, or a sign while walking down the street. I began to wonder how such differences can really occur.

When I was a child my chosen pastime was to pick up a book and become lost within its pages and a world of text. Children today pick up video games and remotes and become lost within a world of technology. Families of this generation generally have two working parents, or single parents, who do not have the time or resources to pick up a book and sit with their child. When I began to see how my own busy life began to mean less time to read or carry on a conversation with the 5 year old learner in my own life, I began to wonder what negative effects this could have. If I— as a certified teacher, and a daycare worker who loves reading and
understands the need for children and parents to interact—am not able to read a book to a child, how can other households be expected to?

These questions and concerns led me to further wonder about the reading journey that begins at home. The idea of the first books given to a baby when they are born, or the first favourites that the toddler pulls off the shelf for a bedtime story; is a vivid image in my mind. However, how often does this happen in reality? And how many children now begin kindergarten less prepared than their peers?
Purpose

What further compelled my project design was the concept of child care centers, as Murray, Fees, Crowe, Murphy, and Henriksen (2006) through examination of research determined that 56% of toddlers now experience “at least one non-parental child care arrangement with approximately half of young children in center-based care” (p. 234). With such large numbers of children now in center-based care, it is important to take these opportunities to foster literacy growth in these children.

The purpose behind my research was to establish a lesson plan for pre-schoolers, to be used in conjunction with an adult learning aspect, through the creation of a resource manual. This manual is a guide to presenting a workshop for parents, which would show parents the importance of literacy activities, as well as give solid instructions and lesson plans on how to carry out activities with their children. With a lesson plan for pre-schoolers as well as a workshop for adults, children and parents can begin to learn together, and emergent literacy can be fostered at home.
Chapter 2– Understanding Vocabulary Development: A Literature Review

Outline. In the literature review you will find a review of the literature on how vocabulary is acquired, with a sub-section on the long-term effects of vocabulary. Understanding vocabulary acquisition is important to the project as it was integral for the motivation behind creating a program for a pre-school group of children that would foster emergent literacy skills. Following in the vocabulary section is a sub-section on emergent literacy in order to describe what emergent literacy skills are. Next is a sub-section on family literacy: to show how family life is essential in the development of emergent literacy skills. Last in the vocabulary section, is a sub-section reviewing the research on how to support emergent literacy in pre-school children.

Next in the review is a section on Early Childhood Educators and Day Nurseries in order to understand how pre-school children are taught and interacted with at child care centres.

A literature review on curriculum design and lesson planning gives information to the reader on designing curriculum and the best curriculum arrangement for pre-school learning. This section therefore portrays the reasoning behind the chosen layout and design of the lesson plan and workshop that follows in the appendix.

Lastly, in the literature review is a section on adult education. This review on adult education was an important area for the project, as it gave an overview of how adults learn best. How adults learn mattered greatly when the project outcome was to create a workshop that meets adults needs and engages them.
Understanding Vocabulary Acquisition

To understand vocabulary acquisition and development is important in order to make connections between emergent literacy skills and how best to support emergent literacy in pre-school aged children. Vocabulary acquisition, as Pence and Justice (2008) determined, involves semantic development, which requires three major tasks for a language learner; first is acquiring a mental lexicon, which is the volume of words he or she understands and is about 60,000 words between infancy and adulthood. Second is learning new words rapidly, and third is organizing the mental lexicon in an efficient semantic network (Pence & Justice, 2008, pp. 74–75).

In order to fully begin to understand vocabulary’s connection to reading development and acquisition, one must also be familiar with comprehension. Reading development and comprehension in children is a far spanning and at times difficult topic. There are some differences in how children develop due to naturally occurring differences like genes, disabilities, or cognitive abilities (Evans & Shaw, 2008; Nathan & Stanovich, 1991).

Dooley and Matthews (2009) proposed a definition of reading comprehension as “emergent comprehension.” They determined emergent comprehension to be “the period when young children, prior to conventional reading, engage in meaningful experiences that stimulate the development and use of meaning-making strategies with potential to affect later reading comprehension” (Dooley & Matthews, 2009, p. 269).

Sonnenschein, Stapleton, and Benson (2010) considered reading as gaining meaning from print, decoding, as well as comprehension skills and other cognitive, motivational, and sociocultural factors. Johnston, Barnes, and Desrochers (2008) discussed cognitive models of
comprehension and cognitive processes of comprehension, which are involved in comprehension related skills and put these skills into three categories. According to the authors, fluent readers:

(a) access word-level and sentence meaning from the surface structure of text (b) build text based representations through processes critical for semantic coherence such as pronominal reference and inferences that connect parts of text, and (c) construct mental models that capture and integrate the information provided by the text with the reader’s goals and world knowledge. (Johnston et al., 2008, p. 125)

The complex process of development and comprehension encompasses a large area of understanding and working memory. Cognitive overload can occur and comprehension will not be reached if a child’s working memory is limited. When children are fluent in their reading it is less likely that a cognitive overload will occur. Nathan and Stanovich (1991) contributed that, when word recognition processes are inefficient, the demand on the child’s cognitive capacity is excessive, and there is less room for comprehension.

Researchers are now realizing how important vocabulary is. McKeown and Beck (2011) stated that “The dawning of vocabulary’s role might be traced to Hart and Risley’s study (1995) showing that the vocabulary children know at age 3 strongly predicts their reading comprehension status in third or fourth grade” (p. 139). Facing the realization that what children know at age three predicts later reading comprehension determines how important early learning is. McKeown and Beck (2011) also determined from the research that schooling has little effects on the vocabulary development of students, “so however ill or well-equipped children are in vocabulary when they start school, is how they will be when they finish their schooling” (p. 139).

The research demonstrated that, what children know when they begin school is what will stay with them, so the early years of learning are of extreme importance.
Other issues arise for children such as the Matthew Effect. This is a term started by Walberg and Merton, and cited by Stanovich (1986), which follows the principle that the rich get richer, while the poor get poorer. The Matthew Effect determined that:

Children who are reading well and who have good vocabularies will read more, learn more word meaning, and hence read even better. Children with inadequate vocabularies—who read slowly and without enjoyment—read less, and as a result have slower development of vocabulary knowledge, which inhibits further growth in reading ability. (Stanovich, 1986, p. 37)

Children who enter kindergarten with limited family literacy experiences are already behind some of their peers, and most likely will remain behind. Children who experience fewer instances of family literacy and vocabulary will therefore comprehend less when they are exposed to new words. This cycle will continue as the child will read less, experience less vocabulary, and therefore continue to fall behind (Biemiller, 2012; Stanovich, 1986). Knowing the long-term effects of vocabulary acquisition are one of the ways to prepare and discover how these trends may be able to change, which is what was examined next.

**Long-term effects of vocabulary acquisition.** A number of researchers have reviewed the effect that vocabulary skills have on children at different developmental stages. Critical research was done by Cunningham and Stanovich (1997), who completed a battery of tests on a group of first graders, and followed up with those children when they were in Grade 11. Their method involved 56 students from two different classrooms, in a mostly middle class school. The children’s mean age at the start was 7 years old, and they completed a reading, spelling and writing program. Ten years later 27 of these children remained in the area and were at a mean age of 16 years old. They then completed a series of tests in relation to comprehension,
vocabulary, and general knowledge (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) discovered that not only does first grade performance on tests predict Grade 3 performances, but that it even predicted Grade 11 outcomes (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). This study demonstrated the effects of early reading on later life, as even after a 10-year time span, early reading abilities predicted the cognitive outcomes.

Sonnenschein et al. (2010) within their study used a latent growth model to examine the long-term effects on children’s language skills, using the data set of The Early Childhood Longitudinal study. This data set is from kindergarten to fifth grade. Sonnenschein et al. (2010) limited the data to public schools and to children who were in school for the first time; which resulted in 6,381 subjects. Through a number of analyses of the data, such as: an integrated language arts scale, phonics scale, teachers’ background, instructional approaches, amount of time spent in language instruction, and children’s reading skill; the authors were able to find significant results. Sonnenschein et al. (2010) determined that the variance that occurred in children’s reading skills from Kindergarten to Grade 5 had to do with influential factors outside of the school (p. 382). They also determined that “children’s reading related skills at the start of kindergarten were strongly related to their reading scores at the end of kindergarten and beyond” (Sonnenschein et al., 2010, p. 382). Their study demonstrated the impact of previous knowledge and previous skills on both Kindergarten and future grades. The research has demonstrated the major impact of early learning on children, and how this early learning affects them throughout their lives (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Sonnenschein, Stapleton, & Benson, 2010; Stanovich, 1986).

Due to the major impact of the long-term effects of vocabulary development and literacy on children, it is positive to know that there may be ways to change and influence children’s
development. To further examine and understand reading development in pre-school years without the naturally occurring differences, emergent literacy and family literacy must be understood.

In this literature review family literacy follows emergent literacy, as emergent literacy is often fostered within the family environment. Once the reader understands both emergent literacy and family literacy, they can then begin to understand how to support these.

**Emergent literacy.** Emergent literacy encompasses the skills and areas of development including vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary skills that begin to progress from the very beginning of a child’s life. Emergent literacy is the development of components of literacy that begins early in life and takes shape as a child grows (Evans & Shaw, 2008). This term was first used by Teale and Sulzby in 1986, then by Clay in 1993, and now has been defined by Evans and Shaw (2008) as “the skills and reading-like behaviours that are developmental precursors to their conventional and more advanced counterparts” (p. 89). Emergent literacy is divided into two domains, that of “inside out” and “outside in” (Evans & Shaw, 2008). Inside out relies on information to translate print to words and sounds to print; it includes such concepts as phonological awareness and the alphabetic principle; which is that units of sound map onto print (Stanovich, 1986, p. 25). Outside in relies on information from the outside to help decipher the print and helps the reader find meaning in it; this includes the concepts of semantic and syntactic knowledge, knowledge of narrative structure, and a broader conceptual understanding (Evans & Shaw, 2008). Emergent literacy skills include pre-literacy abilities, such as identifying and printing letters, knowledge of some letter-to-sound relations, understanding the mechanics of book reading (Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994), as well as speaking and listening skills (Nitecki & Chung, 2013).
Emergent literacy is influenced by family literacy and early literacy interactions that occur for preschool children within child care settings. In the home and around family is where children’s first literacy interactions begin and skills begin to develop, which is further examined below in the family literacy section.

**Family literacy.** Family literacy is the literature and knowledge that comes from the family environment (Evans & Shaw, 2008). It follows the idea that the family environment shapes what children learn, and that key activities within the home shape children’s literacy (Evans & Shaw, 2008; Levy, Gong, Hessels, Evans & Jared, 2006; Sonnenschein, Stapleton & Benson, 2010). Phonological awareness, alphabetic knowledge, and print concepts can all come from activities within the home. Nursery rhymes, poetry, and singing with children as well as alphabet blocks, shared reading, and shared writing between children and their parents or guardians, are all building blocks for literacy (Evans & Shaw, 2008; Nathan & Stanovich, 1991; Sukhram & Hsu, 2012). Family literacy is how families interact with one another; using literacy while doing everyday tasks and maintaining relationships (Nesbitt-Munroe, 2006). Children begin to develop early literacy skills by engaging and seeing others engage with print, talking with others, listening to and telling stories, and other activities (Sonnenschein, Stapleton & Benson, 2010, p. 360).

Johnston et al. (2008) discussed that the activities that shape literacy are not just conversational discourse. It is through specific activities such as story-book reading that children become aware of distinct structures, such as plot and sequence, and are then able to create a schema for how the story is to unfold. Reading stories, especially those such as:
Narratives, the most common genre for pre-readers, are particularly suited to provide a bridge between oral language and text comprehension. Lack of exposure to stories in early childhood may impair the building of this bridge. (Johnston et al., 2008, p. 129)

Not all children receive the same amount of literary support in their early years, as Nathan and Stanovich (1991) asserted that the amount of time “varies tremendously, from zero hours to 1,700 or more” (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991, p. 179). Evans and Shaw (2008) similarly reflected that 72% of parents in Ontario reported reading to their child five or more days a week, while low-income families in the US reported that about half of the children under age 4 were read to daily.

Socio-economic status and ethnic background both play a large role in the differences within family literacy. Sonnenschein et al. (2010) reviewed the literature regarding ethnic-and income-related differences to determine that these low-income children are less likely to have experiences at home, and are likely to arrive at school without the necessary competencies or preparation for reading. These children are likely to have less exposure to print, as well as less frequent verbal interaction with adults, and less observation of positive literary models (Sonnenschein et al., 2010).

In order to change how families interact with their children, it is important to further understand how to support emergent literacy, and ways in which families and educators can foster literacy skills with their children.

**Supporting emergent literacy.** Family literacy and family interactions are where children first begin to absorb literacy and gain literacy skills. Researchers have realized how early in life emergent literacy skills begin to occur and have completed research to discover how to support and foster these early developmental skills within family life as well as child care
centers. There is now an abundance of literature regarding interventions, programs, activities, and other ways to support emergent literacy in pre-school aged children. Christ and Wang (2010) conducted a review of the research and determined some of the best practices for effective teaching of young children. Vocabulary development begins with exposure to new words multiple times, self-motivated learners, and using word learning strategies (Christ & Wang, 2010). Their research found that there were four main teaching principles to effectively teach vocabulary: 1) purposeful exposure, 2) intentional teaching of word meanings, 3) teaching word learning strategies, and 4) offering opportunities to use the newly learned words (Christ & Wang, 2010, p. 86). Christ and Wang (2010) expressed that read-alouds provided exposure to new words along with illustrations to provide contextual meaning and reference, while children are engaged and cognitively challenged through interactive discussion around the text. Christ and Wang (2010) discussed that, if teachers intentionally use new words when conversing with children, they can effectively provide new word learning. Intentionally teaching word meanings through asking eliciting questions, giving embedded definitions, and extending the instruction are the ways the researchers discovered were the most effective (Christ & Wang, 2010). The steps for extending instruction were discussed by a number of researchers. These steps were to contextualize the word in the story, explain the word’s meaning, ask the children to repeat the word, offer examples, have children demonstrate their understanding of the word, and have the child restate the word to reinforce its sounds (Christ & Wang, 2010, p. 88).

Christ and Wang (2010) wrote extensively on read-alouds and the practices of teaching word strategies through this activity. Christ and Wang’s (2010) research found that modelling through “think-alouds” and showing the steps through this activity helped children in their own thinking and connecting background knowledge to the current text.
Christ and Wang (2010) determined that effective teaching comes through teaching thematically and providing multiple exposures through conversation, interactive read-alouds, centers, and projects. Effective teaching also occurred through book selections that illustrated the text clearly to provide meaning, having children re-tell and buddy read, as well as act out stories that they have been read in the classroom (Christ & Wang, 2010, p. 86). Christ and Wang’s (2010) research drew upon the foundational research of Beck and McKeown (2001). Beck and McKeown’s (2001) research described the benefits of “text-talk” and read-alouds. Their project followed the goal of enhancing children’s abilities to construct meaning from decontextualized text (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 13). Beck and McKeown's (2001) research and observations determined that following a number of components in “text-talk” was how to best support learning. The components Beck and McKeown (2001) found were as follows: selection of text, initial questions, follow-up questions, pictures, background knowledge, and vocabulary (p. 14). Beck and McKeown (2001) established that more meaning was created for children when using texts that were both intellectually challenging but had primary linguistic content, so that it did not rely too heavily on pictures: as well as by choosing stories that contain an event structure (p. 14). Open questions are an important feature of “text talk” as children are able to answer through description and explanation, not just recall (Beck & McKeown, 2001).

McKeown and Beck (2011) discovered that tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3 words were the best ways to segment vocabulary. This segmentation designates tier 1 words as the words that are normally found in typical oral language, especially conversations with young children, examples of these are “bed, boy, busy and run” (p. 148). The researchers determined that tier 2 words are not as common in conversation but are high utility words, and as such they have a significant impact on vocabulary (McKeown & Beck, 2011). Tier 3 words are those that would normally
apply to a specific subject, and are therefore less frequent; these words can be learned with new concepts and are meant to build student knowledge, instead of expanding vocabulary (McKeown & Beck, 2011). McKeown and Beck (2011) provided instruction features that required pulling words from certain text and targeting the vocabulary for further instruction, setting up the week based around a theme, and providing the context through a read-aloud. The weekly format used by McKeown and Beck (2011) is displayed in the following way: Day One– Introduce a theme, the text, and the new words in the context of the story; Day Two– Review and practice the new vocabulary; Day Three and Four– Practice with the words; and Day Five– Review (pp. 151–163). Each weekly plan is similar to the last in order to establish repetition and mastery for the children. For the purposes of this project, this format by McKeown and Beck (2011) will be followed to establish a routine for parents and children to follow.

Neuman, Newman, and Dwyer (2011) completed a study that examined vocabulary development in pre-schoolers through teaching words in categorization. They determined that word knowledge and conceptual development were affected through taxonomic categorization and embedded multimedia (Neuman et al., 2011, p. 249). By categorizing words, children were more likely to make meaning and connections when themes were present (Neuman et al., 2001, p. 253). Using highly interactive lessons through video, photographs, and audio, created the necessary activities to achieve word learning and conceptual development (Neuman et al., 2001, p. 253). Themes across books also demonstrated to children that texts and literature were not just stand alone, but that they had connections through repeated structural patterns (Giorgis & Glazer, 2013).

Carefully selecting books for read-alouds as discussed by the researchers can be done through texts that they have suggested, and following the guidelines of theme, high quality,
structural patterns, the curriculum, and general interest to the children. These aspects were taken into account, as well as the day nurseries act: which gives the provincial requirements, the “Early learning for Every Child Today” document, and book lists as suggested by a local library to create a suitable book list for read-alouds. For this project, the book selection was adapted from Giorgis and Glazer’s (2013) book lists and follows curriculum and skills as described in the “Early Learning for Every Child Today” document.

Table 1.

**Text Selection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>Subject/Text Form</th>
<th>Rationale/Themes</th>
<th>Curriculum/Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can You Cuddle Like a Koala? By John Butler</td>
<td>Animals - Fiction</td>
<td>Repetition Word Use</td>
<td>Expanding vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bear Snores On By Karma Wilson</td>
<td>Animals- Fiction</td>
<td>Repetition Word Use Modelling</td>
<td>Expanding vocabulary, Discovery of syntax, structure, language, volume, speed and phrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clever Jack Takes the Cake By Candice Fleming</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Prediction Word Use</td>
<td>Expanding vocabulary, Discovery of syntax, structure, language,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robert (2012) determined that it was not just reading to your children, but the interactions surrounding reading that really mattered. Re-telling in your own words at intervals in the story, focusing on the story structure and the characters, activating prior knowledge, and
talking about the text are all ways to keep the child involved while activating his or her schema (Roberts, 2012).

The research has determined that read-alouds are a very effective way to achieve emergent literacy skills in pre-school aged children, as long as the reader also engages in interactive talk surrounding the text he or she is reading (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Bus, van IJzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Evans & Shaw, 2008; Roberts, 2012; Sinatra, Zygouris-Coe, & Dasinger, 2012; Shedd & Duke, 2008; Sukhram & Hsu, 2012). Nitecki and Chung (2013) examined the research and determined that play-based methods must also combine with learning standards and research to create developmentally supported emergent literacy activities in pre-school classrooms (p. 46). Through careful organization, allowing for time for play with literacy-rich materials, and scaffolding on children’s knowledge, teachers can capitalize on the Vygostkian perspective and nurture the development of self-regulation and thoughtful deliberate actions (Nitecki & Chung, 2013). This process, in turn, creates learners with positive self-esteem and assists in developing skills that are integral to cognitive development (Nitecki & Chung, 2013).

Nitecki and Chung (2013) examined the research and determined that a “culture of conversation” is crucial in developing the emergent skills of speaking and listening (p. 49). Environments rich in conversation through dramatic play, expression, encouraging child talk, interactive read-alouds, and story-telling create confident learners and emergent literacy skills (Nitecki & Chung, 2013). Nitecki and Chung (2013) determined quality books to be those with multicultural and realistic characters, attractive illustrations that are linked to the story, rhyming words, as well as comedic actions and words so that children can construct meaning and build foundations (pp. 50–51). In addition, researchers have found emergent literacy skills were
enhanced through word play, such as rhyming, singing songs, and music (Evans & Shaw, 2008; Nitecki & Chung, 2013) as well as by having children “read” their drawings and tell the story of what they have created (Nitecki & Chung, 2013).

Nitecki and Chung (2013) determined that fine-motor skills assist with writing and are the first skill necessary in order for children to actually write words. Holding writing utensils requires developing hand-eye coordination, which can be achieved through a number of activities. Nitecki and Chung (2013) suggested activities such as: three dimensional art, stringing beads, cutting and scissor skills, playing with mud and molding clay, wood working, hammering, and building blocks (p. 51). Beginning skills such as fine motor skills and recognizing letters in a child’s own name, are the first steps of discovery in the pre-school setting and development of the emergent literacy skills that assist in later literacy growth (Foorman, Anthony, Seals, & Mouzaki, 2002; Nitecki & Chung, 2013).

An important aspect of Nitecki and Chung's (2013) research is that nurturing, play-based, discovery learning should be at the center of curriculum, as drills and direct instruction may hinder creativity as well as exploration and problem solving skills; however, both modes of instruction have a place (p. 53). Focussing on organization in literacy-rich, play-based environments and what is developmentally appropriate for children is the best way to foster emergent literacy skills in a pre-school classroom (Nitecki & Chung, 2013).

Due to the findings from the research about how emergent literacy skills can be supported at the pre-school age, as well as how integral early literacy skills are to later learning, examining Early Childhood Educators’ knowledge and pre-school interactions is the next step to determine how to create the best program for children. Using the idea that the environments of families and child care programs are places where children encounter early literacy, research on both families
and child care programs have been examined to provide information on how best to foster emergent literacy. The desire behind this project was that these two domains can be brought together so that children will enter kindergarten prepared and excited about literacy.
Early Childhood Education—Day Nurseries and Child Care

With many parents in the work-force, children are often left at day nurseries and other child care settings. This is an optimal opportunity for children to begin both formal and informal learning and for emergent literacy skills to develop. Bielmiller (2009) found that “what parents and caregivers ‘do’ matters as much or more than the genetic potential” (p. 4). More verbal explanations and less negative commands were found to be beneficial in child care settings where one adult was responsible for small groups of 8-10 children (Biemiller, 2009). Research suggests that calm, caring communities of literate adults are factors that have a large impact on emergent literacy skills for children within child care settings (Biemiller, 2009; Bouchard et al., 2010; Murray, Fees, Crowe, Murphy, & Henriksen, 2006).

Within the area of day nurseries and early childhood, understanding children’s development is how to plan optimal learning environments. As a result, the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services created a document titled “Early Learning for Every Child Today,” which follows the development of children through a series of categories, domains, and skills: a) social; b) emotional; c) communication, language, and literacy; d) cognitive; and e) physical (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2007). This curriculum is a tool for early childhood educators to base their curriculum, programs, and activities on, so that they are developmentally appropriate for the child’s age and skills, and children are able to access learning.

Since parents and caregivers generally work together towards children’s education, using child-care as a stepping stone to further educate both the children and the parents is an optimal opportunity. Using day nurseries as a place of education for both the child and adult is the idea
behind this project, through creating a workshop for adults and children so that adults are able to foster emergent literacy skills in their own children and assist them in further vocabulary development.

Using both child care curriculum, and knowledge of curriculum development and design, is the next step in creating a workshop to benefit both adults and their child.

**Curriculum design.** Curriculum is the design of content for a course to create effective teaching and learning (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004; Richards, 2013). Planning for effective curriculum is crucial to establishing desired learning outcomes. McTighe and Wiggins (2004) and Richards (2013) both discussed the “input” as the skills and key facts, and the “output” as the learning outcome. Richards (2013) researched three approaches to designing curriculum: forward design, central design, and backward design. Forward design moves from input and content, to process, to outcomes, while central design begins with the process and developing input and output from this, and backward design begins with the outcome and then uses this to plan the process and input (Richards, 2013, p. 8).

With vocabulary at the core of the design, and increased vocabulary as the goal, backward design is the key to creating a curriculum that reaches these goals. Planning what to teach and read and the activities for interactions with students have to begin with what you want those children to learn and gain from these activities (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006; Childre, Sands, & Pope, 2009). Researchers determined that, when using backward design, there are a number of steps. Identify learners and their needs, identify curricular priorities and objectives, select and organize the content, develop an assessment to determine if children have met the standards, and
lastly create the learning activities that accomplish the previous steps (Childre, Sands, & Pope, 2009; Richards, 2013).

A number of researchers have already established working curricula for optimal development and learning for children. Foorman, Anthony, Seals, and Mouzaki (2002) argued that children must have a significant vocabulary size and oral language as a foundation in order to comprehend other words (p. 173). Their research examined emergent literacy, oral literacy, and the best activities for curricula that prepare pre-schoolers for later schooling. Foorman et al.’s (2002) idea for optimal curriculum was using backward design, with emergent literacy skills as the goal, and so therefore beginning with vocabulary development. Foorman et al. (2002) found that, at 20 months of age, children born to talkative mothers had 131 more words in their vocabularies than children whose mothers were quieter, and by age 2, this gap had widened to a difference of 295 words (p. 171). This research relates back to family literacy, and the importance of conversation between children and their parents or caregivers.

Foorman et al.’s (2002) research fueled their design and planning of curriculum with the emergent literacy components of oral language, phonological sensitivity, letter knowledge, concepts of print, emergent reading, emergent writing, and print motivation as the six child characteristics that are emphasized (pp. 175–178). Oral language is integral to emergent literacy skills since, in order to understand books and text that are being read, a child must have a sense of vocabulary (Foorman et al., 2002). Research has displayed that oral language is connected to later reading comprehension, decoding skills, and phonological sensitivity (Foorman et al., 2002, p. 175).
Foorman et al. (2002) discussed that phonological sensitivity aids reading by enabling sound-letter correspondence as well as reading by likeness. Phonological activities like rhyming and blending syllables assist children in further reading development (Foorman et al., 2002). Foorman et al. (2002) researched that letter knowledge does not have a direct impact on learning to read, but does play a part in that knowing the names of letters in the alphabet may link to phonological sensitivity as letter sounds are often embedded in letter names (p. 176).

Foorman et al. (2002) included emergent reading and emergent writing as curriculum components as these emergent literacy skills consist of children’s pretend play at reading and their recognition of print. Emergent reading and writing also consist of a wide range of writing, from scribbling, to illustrations intended to convey word meanings (Foorman et al., 2002). Both emergent reading and emergent writing skills become more independent and representative of the language system and a more developed skill as children grow (Foorman et al., 2002). Foorman et al. (2002) found through their research that children who experienced shared reading activities at home were more likely to be print motivated and interested in literacy activities.

Foorman et al. (2002) observed that these six characteristics: print motivation, emergent reading, emergent writing, letter knowledge, oral language, and phonological sensitivity, are developed through a curriculum rich in oral language and vocabulary activities, phonological and alphabetic activities, as well as through communities of caring and literate adults. Foorman et al. (2002) discussed that it is not just the curriculum, but how the curriculum is delivered that affects children. Authoritative instead of authoritarian adult-child relationships, and quality relationships also affect children’s desire to read; as children are more motivated to communicate, and teachers are more likely to listen and expand on discussion (Foorman et al., 2002).
Foorman et al. (2002) provided explicit ideas for shared reading activities, such as, multiple readings of a story book, vocabulary learning from listening to stories, and dialogic reading. All of these activities are discussed in previous research in the emergent literacy sections of the literature review. Foorman et al. (2002) provided suggestions of a vocabulary sequence to use to determine what words, and how many words should be used in pre-school curriculum, as it is integral to challenge children, as the goal is to increase the size of their vocabulary (p. 177). Foorman et al. (2002) concurred with the previous research that rhymes, songs, and other listening games contribute to phonological and alphabetic awareness and are therefore integral to a pre-school curriculum. Foorman et al. (2002) were clear that “it is important to consider curricular goals within a developmental framework rather than present four year olds with watered down primary grade activities” (p. 181). With extension of targeted vocabulary into meal times, play times, and center times, teachers provide additional exposures that are necessary to learn roots of words and their derivations (Foorman et al., 2002). Specifically targeting vocabulary as the goal is the beginning to create the steps needed to complete a curriculum that meets developmental expectations and Ministry standards, and improves children’s lifelong learning.

Giorgis and Glazer (2013) researched enhancing the literature curriculum through strategies and activities that help children explore the structure of literature (pp. 80–81). Giorgis and Glazer (2013) determined that it is the preschool or primary grade teacher’s role to guide the realizations that fiction is an imaginative world and something different to explore. Strategies such as drawing responses to a story, creating a bookmark on a certain character, or comparing books, extends children’s learning about the stories they have read and creates a curriculum that encourages further interaction with literature (Giorgis & Glazer, 2013, p. 80). Giorgis and
Glazer (2013) set up a plan for developing a curriculum keeping in mind the strategies and activities, needs and interests of the children, and the goals of early literacy. The researchers also found a number of books that support each strategy that they discussed, and grouped these books together to support the curriculum (Giorgis & Glazer, 2013). The researchers also gave activities for the reader, teacher, and parent to extend their own learning, which is critical for evaluating the curriculum and program design (Giorgis & Glazer, 2013).

Researchers have developed a framework for early childhood settings that gives developmental stages and the activities that can foster these developments. This guide incorporates strategies and a continuum of development so that early childhood educators can document and plan curriculum accordingly (Best Start Panel on Early Learning, 2007). Following this document demonstrates to educators ways that they can interact with children in order to improve certain skills. An example from this document is provided in Table 2. The interactions suggested surrounding toddler sentence formation are similar to expanding on read-alouds and best ways to communicate with children. The curriculum planning for this project is adapted from these interactions so that communication among adults, children, and pre-school educators is meaningful and constructive.
Table 2.

Curriculum Document: *Communication, language and literacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain and Skills</th>
<th>Indicators of the skill</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Expressive Language</td>
<td>- combining words</td>
<td>Invite a toddler to add to your description of a photo. “Look at Ned’s big hat.” Pause. “What else is he wearing?” This sequence invites the toddler to notice photo details and respond in expressive language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>- using common verbs and adjectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>- using simple sentences</td>
<td>Reflect back language and expand when a child misspeaks. For example: “Daddy wented away.” Adult response: “Your daddy went away.” (Reflecting back.) “Where did he go?” (Invitation to expand.) This sequence provides a correct language model and encourages the toddler to continue to talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- using compound sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- engaging in pretend play that includes language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There is an abundance of research on curriculum design, as well as professional development workshops and workbooks to assist educators and program planners in developing the most effective program. One such example is that by McTighe and Wiggins (2004), which provides organizers and templates, standards, exercises as well as design tools and examples to assist in planning. Their templates are provided with guiding questions to help the curriculum planner to organize a lesson plan that best suits the children’s needs. The following format is used to establish a lesson and plan for optimal learning experiences.
Table 3.

**Lesson Plan Format**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Subject/Course:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stage 1 - Desired Results**

Established Goals:
What are the relevant goals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understandings:</th>
<th>Essential Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the big ideas?</td>
<td>What questions will foster inquiry and understanding?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will know and be able to:

- What key knowledge and skills will students gain and acquire?
- What should they eventually be able to do as a result?

**Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence**

Performance Tasks:
Through what tasks will students demonstrate understanding?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Evidence:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What other ways will students demonstrate achievement? (using the vocabulary, communication skills, emergent literacy skills)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stage 3 - Learning Plan**

Learning Activities: What experiences and instruction will enable students to achieve the desired results?


Workshops are an effective design for educating when time is short. Cooper (2011) discussed planning, using questionnaires, and being attentive to the learners among other things to implement an effective workshop. Cooper (2011) also researched negative body language coming from the learners, and that the facilitator must examine his or her own practice to
determine if it is something that he or she can change, or change the environment. Tone, body language, and the words used are three areas that Cooper (2011) examined and called, “the music,” “the dance,” and “the words” (p. 103). Using these areas is the key to creating a workshop to evaluate all perceptions that the adult learners experience. Weber and Stanley (2012) completed research regarding gifted children and educating their parents through workshops. Weber and Stanley (2012) suggested collaborating with other institutions to lessen costs, include professionals who may be able to give specific information, publicize the event, choose central locations to provide access for all, as well as being aware of what other events may be scheduled.

With the resources available, designing a program for parents and pre-schoolers can be done effectively to benefit both groups. Both groups in this situation are that of pre-school children as well as their families and guardians. To prepare to design a workshop to benefit and engage parents we will further examine adult education to understand how adults’ access information and learning, and therefore we will be able to provide the best learning experience.
Adult Education and Engaging Parents

As discovered through the literature relating to family literacy, parents, guardians, and those who spend the most time with pre-school children have a major impact on their literacy. This adult-child interaction, in turn, is related to adult education and the adults’ backgrounds, as well as how he or she approaches education and literacy. Much research has been conducted on how to best engage and educate adults, with Malcolm Knowles at the forefront starting in the 1970s.

Knowles (1977) discussed andragogy as a process of self-directed learning and pedagogy as being dependent on the educator for content. Knowles (1989) was a leading theorist in adult education and found that some of the best practices for educating adults were by overcoming resistance, modeling, getting students involved in their own learning, and helping them become self-directed learners. Lieb (1991) expanded on the characteristics of adult learning as pioneered by Knowles, and discussed that educators need to understand that adult education is different, as adults learn differently (p. 1).

Lieb (1991) described that adults are responsible for themselves and are self-directed learners, so educators must actively involve adults in the learning and guide learners instead of directly teaching. Adults have life experiences and background knowledge, which educators need to take into consideration and assist the learner in connecting experiences and knowledge to the current content (Lieb, 1991). Adults are also goal oriented, relevancy-oriented, as well as practical, as they seek education to meet an end or for a reason; because of these characteristics, they focus on what is most useful to them in their own lives or work (Lieb, 1991). Lieb (1991) also determined that educators must always show respect, as adult learners need to be treated as
equals. Lieb (1991) found that there were other factors relating to adult learners, such as different types of motivation, as well as barriers to education due to the wealth of responsibilities that adults usually have. Lieb (1991) provided learning tips for effective instruction of adult education, as reaching each adult learner comes at a different pace and process. The four crucial elements of learning that Lieb (1991) discussed that must be addressed are: motivation, reinforcement, retention, and transference (p. 3). Through following the theories and elements of learning, and showing adult learners that they will benefit from the material in the course, Lieb (1991) argued that adults will accomplish more and see the benefits in the long run.

Ross-Gordon (2003) discussed andragogy, the framework of adult learning that Knowles researched. Andragogy is “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Ross-Gordon, 2003, p. 43), and, within this framework, are the five suppositions of adult learning, which Lieb (1991) also researched. These five areas are: that adult learners have responsibilities and prefer self-direction in defining goals and outcomes of their learning, they have experiences that the educator should capitalize on and use for the learners, adults are ready to learn, adults enter learning situations with a need or task orientation to the learning, as well as being motivated to learn due to both work related motivators, as well as internal ones (Ross-Gordon, 2003, pp. 43–44).

Ross-Gordon (2003) discussed the concepts of self-directed learning, and transformative learning. Self-directed learning follows a number of stages as learners are not automatically self-directed (Knowles, 1989; Ross-Gordon, 2003). Educators must follow a number of possible roles to assist learners in becoming self-directed. Ross-Gordon (2003) describes these possible roles as: coach, guide, facilitator, and consultant (p. 45). The alternative to self-directed learning that Ross-Gordon (2003) researches is that of transformative learning, which is when
the learners realize that the teacher is not all knowing, but that the learners themselves can also construct knowledge.

The research determined that engaging adult learners, and having the educator take the role of facilitator, was the best way to promote learning (Goddu, 2012; Lieb, 1991; Ross-Gordon, 2003; Russell, 2006).

Following these strategies in lesson planning and curriculum design for the format of a workshop for parents of pre-school children will provide the best outcome for fostering a family literacy environment at home, as adults will be able to engage and learn to the best of their abilities when their learning is at the forefront.
Chapter 3

Conclusion

In the pre-school years children experience language differently, and therefore at the time they enter kindergarten children are differently prepared in the skills that they have acquired (Biemiller, 2012; McKeown & Beck, 2011; Stanovich, 1986). Differences in parenting and family literacy have a lasting effect on children’s vocabulary development (Stanovich, 1986). Research has demonstrated, however, that through interventions and targeted activities these differences can change and children can acquire the skills needed to enter kindergarten prepared (McKeown & Beck, 2011).

Therefore, it is important for parents and educators to work together to create within children the emergent literacy skills such as oral communication, emergent reading, and writing. Through participation in activities such as read-alouds, and an environment rich in literacy, to children’s vocabulary development will be impacted positively so that they are ready for early learning. Knowing how adults learn and function in an education environment and the practices to best keep adults engaged is an important aspect in creating a workshop that benefits them and their children.

Within the appendices there are 3 weekly lesson plans for pre-school children, that each span 5 days. These lessons are to be used in collaboration with the workshop guide for presenting to an adult audience. The lesson plans are adapted from McKeown and Beck (2011). All lesson plans have the same format in order to establish repetition and mastery of the concepts. The workshop guide assists early childhood educators with ways to reach parents, and the
lessons give solid curriculum for both educators and parents to use with the child as an interactive read-aloud guide.
References


http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/early_learning_for_every_child_today.aspx


Sonnenschein, S., Stapleton, L. M., & Benson, A. (2010). The relation between the type and


Appendix A

Weekly Lesson- Bear Snores On

Title: Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson
Topic: Language development
Time: Five Days

Stage 1- Desired Results
Established Goals:
- To encourage language development and conversation
- To encourage new word use

Understandings:
Students will understand that:
- A lair is a place where a wild animal sleeps, or where someone hides or goes to be alone; it is a place where someone can feel safe and comfortable
- Damp is when the air or an object feels slightly wet, when there is a little bit of moisture
- Slumber means to sleep

Students will know and be able to:
- understand and use three new words
- begin to understand story structure, syntax, volume, speed, and phrasing

Stage 2- Assessment Evidence
Performance Tasks:  
- Answering questions
- Following teacher’s example
- Reading their illustrations

Other Evidence:
- Using the vocabulary, communication skills, emergent literacy skills in book use, drawings, and writing

Stage 3- Learning Plan

Day One: Introduce story and new words
Read: Bear Snores On, by Karma Wilson

Introduce the new words one at a time, holding the word card as you talk; and reflect back on the story

1) “Does anyone remember hearing the word ‘lair’? Can you tell me what this might be?”
Give a friendly explanation about the definition of lair and how it was used in the story:
In the story, the author says that the bear is sleeping in his deep dark lair. A lair is where a wild animal sleeps, or where someone might go to be alone and feel safe and comfortable.
Let’s say the word together: “lair”

Now let’s think about the word lair. I will say some things and if you think it is a lair, or the same as a lair say “lair.” If not, say “No” (for each example, call on a child to give his or her explanation of why or why not)
- Where the mouse lives under the deck (lair)
- The kitchen in your house (No)
- Your bedroom (lair)

2) “Does anyone remember hearing the word ‘damp’? Can you tell me what this might be?”
Give a friendly explanation about the definition of damp and how it was used in the story:
In the story, the author tells us that the mouse calls the bear’s lair damp and dark, so he starts a fire. The word damp means when something is a little bit wet or feels wet.

Let’s say the word together; “damp”
Now let’s think about the word “damp.” I will say some things and if you think it is the same as damp, say “damp.” If not, say “No” (for each example, call on a child to give his or her explanation of why or why not)
- The washcloth you use to wash your face (damp)
- The carpet on the floor (No)
- The ground after it rains (damp)

3) “Does anyone remember hearing the word ‘slumbering’? Can you tell me what this might be?”
Give a friendly explanation about the definition of slumber and how it was used in the story:
In the story, the author tells us that the “slumbering bear” sleeps through the party. To slumber is another word for sleep.

Let’s say the word together; “slumber”
Now let’s think about the word “slumber.” I will say some things and if you think it is the same, say “slumber.” If not, say “No” (for each example, call on a child to give his or her explanation of why or why not)
- You are going to have a nap (slumber)
- You are watching TV (No)
- Your pet is sleeping outside under a tree (slumber)

Day 2: Review with Questions
For this activity, children will use the illustrations from the book, and the word cards to make connections, as well as the questions. Each word will be given two contexts and the
children must choose between them, and give a reason. (When children are uncertain, call on another student to give a reason, and remind them all of the definition)

Yesterday we learned some new words, these words were “lair,” “damp,” and “slumber”

1) Does lair mean somewhere that you do not want to go, or somewhere that is comfortable?
   Which lair would you like to be in: the bear’s lair, or your dad or mom’s lair?

2) Does damp mean that you are soaking wet after going swimming or dry after playing in the sun?
   If your mom asked you to dampen a cloth to wash the table, would you put a little, or a lot of water on it?

3) Who is slumbering, your pet playing in the yard, or your dad taking a nap on the couch?
   Where is your favourite place to slumber; on the couch or on the floor?

Day 3: Review and practice with actions

   For this activity incorporate questions with physical activity: display the word cards for each word, as well as a picture example from the story.

   1) First let’s think of the word lair, what would you use to build a lair in your living room, or here at daycare? What would an animal use to build a lair?

   2) Now I want you to think about the word damp, if you had a damp blanket wrapped around you, would you be very comfortable? Show me how you would feel (Shivering, etcetera).

   3) Think about the word slumber, can you show me your best slumbering position?

Day 5: Review

   On day 5, have the book available with illustrations, and the word cards.
   Review the words, and then complete the drawing and writing activity.

   1) Does lair mean a cave or place for an animal or person to feel safe, or an open area?

   2) Does damp mean a little bit wet, or dry?

   3) Does slumber mean to be wide awake, or to be sleeping?

   Have a drawing activity ready so that children can colour and draw his or her interpretations of the words “lair,” “damp,” and “slumber,” and then let them read his or her illustrations to you so that you can write it down on his or her paper.

   Great job! We have learned three new words to add to our word lists!
Appendix B

Weekly Lesson—Can You Cuddle Like a Koala?

Title: Can You Cuddle Like a Koala? by John Butler

Topic: Language development

Time: Five days

Stage 1- Desired Results

Established Goals:
- To encourage language development and conversation
- To encourage new word use
- To encourage literacy

Understandings:
Students will understand that:
- A creature is a person or animal
- To creep means to move slowly along the ground or wall so as to hide and not be seen
- To leap is another word for jumping very high

Students will know and be able to:
- understand and use three new words
- begin to understand story structure, repetition

Stage 2- Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks:
- Answering questions
- Following teacher’s example
- Reading his or her illustrations

Other Evidence:
Using the vocabulary, communication skills, emergent literacy skills in book use and writing

Stage 3- Learning Plan

Parents and educators can work with a child or group of children following this learning plan.

Day One: Introduce story and new words
Read: Can You Cuddle Like a Koala? By John Butler

Introduce the new words one at a time, holding the word card as you talk; and reflect back on the story

1) “Does anyone remember hearing the word ‘creature’? Can you tell me what this might
be?"
Give a friendly explanation about the definition of creature and how it was used in the story:
In the story, the author asks if we can copy the creatures, the author is talking about all of the animals in the story. A creature can be an animal of any type, or a person.
Let’s say the word together; “Creature”

Now let’s think about creatures. I will say some things and if you think they are creatures, say “Creature.” If not, say “No” (for each example, call on a child to give his or her explanation of why or why not)

- A baby bird (creature)
- The clothes in your closet (No)
- Your pets (creature)

2) “Does anyone remember hearing the word ‘creep’? Can you tell me what this might be?”
Give a friendly explanation about the definition of creep and how it was used in the story:
In the story, the author asks if we can creep like a mouse. This means that the mouse in the story is moving slowly and quietly close to the ground, and doesn’t want to be noticed.
Let’s say the word together; “Creep”
Now let’s think about the word “creep”. I will say some things and if you think it is the same as the word creep, or creeping, say “Creep.” If not, say “No” (for each example, call on a child to give his or her explanation of why or why not)

- You are walking slowly down the hallway to hide from your brother or sister (creep)
- You are running to get to the soccer ball (No)
- You are crawling on the ground playing a game with your friends (creep)

3) “Does anyone remember hearing the word ‘leap’? Can you tell me what this might be?”
Give a friendly explanation about the definition of leap and how it was used in the story:
In the story, the author asks if we can leap like a frog. This means that the frog is jumping very high and very quickly.

Let’s say the word together; “Leap”
Now let’s think about the word “leap.” I will say some things and if you think it is the same as the word leap, or leaping, say “leap.” If not, say “No” (for each example, call on a child to give his or her explanation of why or why not)

- Jumping from rock to rock in the playground (leap)
- Sitting with your friends in the sandbox (No)
- Your mom surprises you and you jump up in the air (leap)

Day 2: Review with Questions
For this activity, children will use the illustrations from the book, and the word cards to
make connections, as well as the questions. Each word will be given two contexts and the children must choose between them, and give a reason. (When children are uncertain, call on another student to give a reason, and remind them all of the definition)

Yesterday we learned some new words; these words were “creature,” “creep,” and “leap”

1) Does creature mean something like plant, or a pet? What kind of creature would you like as a pet?

2) Does creep mean that you are running around or slowly and quietly moving along? Who is creeping; your neighbour’s dog chasing a ball or the cat hiding from the dog?

3) Would you be leaping if you are jumping around, or watching TV with your family? Would your mom ask you to leap on the furniture, or leap outside in the yard?

Day 3: Review and practice with actions

For this activity, incorporate questions with physical activity: display the word cards for each word, as well as a picture example from the story.

1) First let’s think of the word creature; can you show me some actions that a creature might make? Ex; hopping frogs, flying birds, people running, sleeping cats, etc.

2) Now I want you to think about the word “creep.” Can you show me how you would creep away from someone who was looking for you?

3) Think about the word leap; show me how you would leap if something scared you or surprised you.

Day 5: Review

On day 5, have the book available with illustrations, and the word cards. Review the words, and then complete the drawing and writing activity.

1) Does creature mean an animal or person, or the tree in your backyard?

2) Does creep mean to run, or to go very slowly and quietly so no one sees you?

3) Does leap mean sitting quietly, or jumping very high?

Have a drawing activity ready so that children can colour and draw his or her interpretations of the words “creature,” “creep,” and “leap,” and then let them read his or her illustrations to you so that you can write it down on his or her paper.

Good job! Now we have learned three new words to add to our word list!
Title: *Clever Jack Takes the Cake* by Candice Fleming

Subject/Course: Language development

Time: Five Days

**Stage 1- Desired Results**

Established Goals:
- To encourage language development and conversation
- To encourage new word use

Understandings:
Students will understand that:
- Exchange is another word that can be used when you trade something for a different item
- Declare is a way to say said, or say something confidently
- Succulent is a word that describes when something is rich, tasty, or juicy

Students will know and be able to:
- understand and use three new words
- begin to understand story structure, prediction, and be exposed to new vocabulary

**Stage 2- Assessment Evidence**

Performance Tasks: Other Evidence:
-Answering questions Using the vocabulary, communication skills,
-Following teacher’s example emergent literacy skills in book use, drawings,
-Reading his or her illustrations and writing

**Stage 3- Learning Plan**

Day One: Introduce story and new words
Read: *Clever Jack Takes the Cake*, By Candice Fleming

Introduce the new words one at a time, holding the word card as you talk; and reflect back on the story

1) “Does anyone remember hearing the word “exchange”? Can you tell me what this might be?”
Give a friendly explanation about the definition of exchange and how it was used in the story:
In the story, the author tells us that Jack exchanges his axe for sugar, some seeds for eggs,
and a kiss for a pail of milk. Exchange means to trade something for another item.

Let’s say the word together; “exchange”

Now let’s think about the word exchange. I will say some things and if you think it is exchange say “exchange.” If not, say “No” (for each example, call on a child to give his or her explanation of why or why not)

- You trade your favourite toy for your friend’s new one (exchange)
- You borrow your sisters game (No)
- Your mom gives the lady at the farmer’s market some coins for a pie (exchange)

2) “Does anyone remember hearing the word ‘declared’? Can you tell me what this might be?”

Give a friendly explanation about the definition of declare and how it was used in the story:

In the story, Jack declares that he will make a cake for the princess. To declare is another way to say said, or when you say something and are very sure and confident in what you say.

Let’s say the word together; “declare”

Now let’s think about the word “declare.” I will say some things and if you think it is the same say, “declared.” If not, say “No” (for each example, call on a child to give his or her explanation of why or why not)

- You answered very loudly and confidently to the teacher (declared)
- You raised your hand and quietly asked to use the washroom (No)
- Your mom said it was time to clean your room (declared)

3) “Does anyone remember hearing the word “succulent”? Can you tell me what this might be?”

Give a friendly explanation about the definition of succulent and how it was used in the story:

In the story, the author tells us that Jack picks the reddest, juiciest, and most succulent strawberry. Succulent means that something is juicy and tastes good.

Let’s say the word together; “succulent”

Now let’s think about the word “succulent.” I will say some things and if you think it is the same, say “succulent.” If not, say “No” (for each example, call on a child to give his or her explanation of why or why not)

- Fresh fruit from the store (succulent)
- Burnt toast (No)
- A big piece of cake (succulent)
Day 2: Review with Questions
For this activity, children will use the illustrations from the book, and the word cards to make connections, as well as the questions. Each word will be given two contexts and the children must choose between them, and give a reason. (When children are uncertain, call on another student to give a reason, and remind them all of the definition)

Yesterday we learned some new words, these words were “exchange,” “declared,” and “succulent”

1) Does exchange mean that you use something and give it back, or that you trade it?
   If you had to exchange one of your toys for your favourite food, would you?

2) Does declared mean something that you told someone in private, or is it something for everyone to hear?

3) If something is succulent, does it taste good or bad?
   Which is more succulent, your favourite fresh fruit or a loaf of bread?

Day 3: Review and practice with actions

For this activity incorporate questions with physical activity: display the word cards for each word, as well as a picture example from the story.

1) First let’s think of the word exchange. Pretend that you are going to the market to get some fresh eggs, what would it look like if you were exchanging for them?

2) Now I want you to think about the word declared. What would it sound like if you were declaring your favourite movie to your friends?

3) Think about the word succulent. What would you think is the most succulent food?

Day 5: Review
On day 5, have the book available with illustrations, and the word cards. Review the words, and then complete the drawing and writing activity.

1) Does exchange mean to give something away, or to trade something for another item?

2) Does declared mean to quietly talk, or proudly say something?

3) Does succulent mean dry, or tasty and juicy?

Have a drawing activity ready so that children can colour and draw his or her interpretations of the words “exchange,” “declared,” and “succulent,” and then let them read his or her illustrations to you so that you can write it down on his or her paper.

Great job! We have learned three new words to add to our word lists!
Appendix D:

Workshop Guide for Educating Adults

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY LITERACY
A Workshop for Parents
EARLY LITERACY • EMERGENT LITERACY • FAMILY LITERACY

A Guide to Teaching Adults

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2014
Chapter One

Where to Begin?
Preparation for facilitating the workshop

Before we can begin to explore and address the concepts of teaching the importance of early literacy to our parent learners, we must first address the preparation of the event.


Pre-Planning
Get the information out there! Create a poster, web ad, or radio ad to try to reach as many parents as possible. Having parents from the community and not just the daycare is also a great step to community building.

Getting the Necessary Information
Knowing how many people will be attending the workshop is an integral starting point in preparation. A great way to prepare is to first reach out to parents. When parents call or email to confirm his or her attendance, have them complete a quick, anonymous questionnaire about themselves and their child.

Anonymity provides a safe place for honesty and sharing, as some individuals may feel too vulnerable to disclose the information. If they wish, they may provide their name if they feel you need to understand their situation.
Designing the questionnaire may differentiate depending on the audience that you may have. Open and closed questions are important as closed questions give you facts, and open questions create reflection, opinions, and feelings (Cooper, 2011).

- Knowing some information before-hand helps the facilitator tailor the workshop to the specific group of learners.

An Example Questionnaire

Getting To Know Your Learners

1) What do you know about early literacy?
2) What do you want to know about literacy?
3) Do you frequent the library with your child?
   a) Very Often
   b) Often
   c) Sometimes
   d) Rarely
4) Does your child have access to books and enjoy reading?
5) What do you hope to gain from this experience?
6) What does a successful workshop look like to you?

Considerations for creating your own Workshop as Suggested by Weber and Stanley (2012)

Weber and Stanley (2012) completed research in relation to gifted children and educating their parents through workshops, and their study has applications for all workshops.
As Weber and Stanley (2012) suggest, there are a number of things to be aware of when setting up your workshop, ranging from advertising the workshop, to who attends, all the way to what day the workshop is scheduled on.

Some hints while setting up the workshop:
- Collaborate to help with costs, gain sponsors, personnel assistance, and distribution of information
- Include professionals who can give specific information and assistance
- Publicize the event
- Choose central locations
- Try to provide transportation or bussing
- Translate the workshop for speakers of other languages
- Be aware of conflicting events for parents, especially sporting or school events

Weber and Stanley, 2012, p. 133

Some Additional Thoughts for Setting up Your Space and Workshop

- Have name-tags prepared, and have them colour coded so if group selection is necessary there is an easy way to have it already set up and makes getting to know each other easier
- Make sure the area and the chairs are comfortable
- Easy access for all; if some individuals have mobility issues, ensure that the area is equipped with wheelchair access and there is sufficient room at a table for these individuals
- Set up the environment with the planned activities in mind; this way you won’t be re-arranging during the workshop
- Create an environment where everyone feels included; set up the tables so that all participants can see, and remember to walk the room so that all feel involved
Chapter Two

The Learners

Facilitating your Learners

You had your learners complete a questionnaire before the workshop, so you know a little bit of information about them. Now it’s time for them to get to know each other.

This image suggests an ideal self-directed learning atmosphere, where individuals are sharing ideas and reflecting to further their understanding.
Malcolm Knowles (1989), a founder of adult learning theories, suggests using “relationship–building climate setting exercise[s]” (p. 47) in order to help adult learners become self-directed learners and more comfortable in their surroundings.

You may already be familiar with many relationship building exercises, but have probably heard of them as “ice breakers.” Due to the fact that many people feel negatively toward ice breakers, we will further on call them relationship builders.

“Learning is enhanced by a climate in which participants see themselves as mutual helpers rather than as competitors”  *Malcolm Knowles (1989)*

### Building Relationships

Have learners pair into groups of 2, 3, or 4, or whatever seems easiest to the particular group (Sometimes this number depends on how many chairs are at each table or how many participants are in the room).

Getting people talking to each other is the first step in building relationships and a comfortable environment. The instructor/facilitator should join in as well so people see you as a peer. When building these relationships, it is a great time to discuss ground rules or a code of conduct that the group will follow to assist in creating the best atmosphere and managing behaviours right from the start.
Energizers

Sometimes your learners begin to seem distracted and unfocused. Be attentive to negative body language, like yawning or lack of responses (Cooper, 2011). These responses are signals that something needs to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is it You?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These signals are a great time to take a break, or change up your facilitating time by adding in an activity and getting the group more engaged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your job as a facilitator is to determine why negative body language is occurring, and to do so quickly! Cooper (2011) suggests some of the following:

- Is it your facilitating style? Are you engaging the audience or lecturing at them?
- Are there other disruptive behaviours? (Technology; cell phone use, other un-engaged adults, or difficult behaviours?)
- Is there an issue with the physical environment? (Too hot, too cold, or uncomfortable seats?)

Helpful Hints on Building Relationships; How to Begin

- Think of one “ground rule” each to share with the group; write it on a slip of paper and gather together (Cooper, 2011)
- Have each participant share some things about themselves;
  - a) What they do: e.g., work roles
  - b) Who they are: one thing about themselves that shows them as different
  - c) Any special knowledge, skills, resources, or experiences they have to bring
  - d) Any questions they have
  - e) Something about their child  
    (Knowles, 1989)
- Games; 3 facts game – Participants tell two truths and one lie, and others must guess (Cooper, 2011)
Disruptive Behaviours

There are a number of disruptive behaviours that can occur during a presentation. There are the whisperers, sleepers, and those who are generally unengaged.

If the speaker is not engaging the audience, no learning is occurring.

When Presenting

Be aware of your tone of voice, your appearance, body language, and the vocabulary you use. Cooper (2011) determines that there are the three key areas of presenting, and calls them “The Music,” “The Dance,” and “The Words” (p.103).

Cooper (2011) cites Mehrabian (1971) who researched nonverbal communication and discovered that the impact that tone of voice, words, and body language one person has on another is as follows;

- 38 percent happens through tone (the music)
- 55 percent happens through body language (the dance)
- 7 percent happens through spoken word (the words)

These statistics underscore the huge area of perception related to body language. Be aware of your facial expression, posture, and gestures at all times (Cooper, 2011).
Chapter Three

Key Concepts of Adult Learning

Things to know before you begin

Why does age matter?

Adults and children learn very differently. Knowles (1977) discussed the differences between pedagogy and andragogy.

- Pedagogy is the way children are taught, as they are dependent on the educator for content—this is teacher-directed learning (Knowles, 1977)

- Andragogy is the process of self-directed learning, and adult cognition over the content of the teaching (Goddu, 2012; Knowles, 1977)

“Compared to children and teens, adults have special needs and requirements as learners” Lieb, 1991, p. 1

Knowles Adult Learning Principles as stated by Lieb (1991)

- Adults are autonomous and self-directed: learners must be involved in the learning process in order to get full benefits.

- Adults bring an array of life experiences and knowledge: be it work-related, family responsibility, or previous education. Groups of adults, especially in workshops have far ranging backgrounds; these differences must be taken into consideration.
• Adults are goal-oriented: they know the goals they want to attain in life. As facilitator, you must show them how this workshop can help them attain their goals.

• Adults are relevancy oriented: if they do not see relevancy in what they are doing, then they will not do it. As facilitator, you must give them a reason to stay and learn what you hope for them to learn, and to show them how it is applicable to their life experiences.

• Adults are practical: they focus on what is important and most useful to them; as facilitator, you must tell participants explicitly how the workshop will be useful to them.

• Adults need respect: like all learners, adults need to be shown respect and should be treated as equals.

**Adults each bring their own differentiating experiences and skills to the table, and contribute in different ways.**

![Work and Life Balance Image]

**Motivation**

Adults have many different motivators depending on their life circumstances.

One of your jobs as facilitator is to determine what this motivation is and tailor the workshop to feed this motivation.
Barriers

Adults face an array of barriers to their learning due to their life circumstances and backgrounds. As facilitator, it is important to be aware of what your learners are facing and how some of these barriers may impede learning.

Lieb (1991) lists some barriers as:

- Lack of time
- Lack of money
- Lack of confidence
- Level of interest
- Lack of information about opportunities to learn
- Scheduling problems
- Child care
- Transportation

When designing your workshop, be aware of what some families and individuals may be going through. Some may even share these things on their questionnaires.
Chapter Four

Introducing the Content

Learning Outcomes and Objectives

**Objective**: Learners will understand the importance of family literacy and early literacy learning.

**Outcome**: Learners will be able to engage with their children and apply new techniques and skills relating to early literacy

Emergent Literacy

Emergent literacy is the process of reading that begins early in life and takes shape as a child progresses (Evans & Shaw, 2008). First termed by Teale and Sulzby in 1986, then by Clay in 1993, and now defined by Evans and Shaw (2008) as: “the skills and reading-like behaviours that are developmental precursors to their conventional and more advanced counterparts” (p. 89).

Emergent literacy is distinguished into two domains, that of “inside out” and “outside in” (Evans & Shaw, 2008). Inside out relies on information to translate print to words and sounds to print, which includes such concepts as phonological awareness and the alphabetic principle. Outside in relies on information from outside to help decipher the print and helps the reader find meaning in it; this
includes the concepts of semantic and syntactic knowledge, knowledge of narrative structure, and a broader conceptual understanding (Evans et al., 2008).

**Family Literacy**

Family literacy is the literature and knowledge that comes from the family environment (Evans & Shaw, 2008). It follows the idea that the family environment shapes what children learn, and that key activities within the home shape children’s literacy (Evans & Shaw, 2008; Levy, Gong, Hessels, Evans, & Jared, 2006; Sonnenschein, Stapleton, & Benson, 2010). Activities within the home can foster the following for children:

- Phonological awareness
- Alphabetic knowledge
- Print concepts

Nursery rhymes, poetry, and singing with children as well as alphabet blocks, shared reading, and shared writing between children and their parents or guardians are all building blocks for literacy (Evans & Shaw, 2008; Nathan & Stanovich, 1991; Sukhram & Hsu, 2012).
Help adult learners understand the value of early literacy to them and their children.

Matthews Effects in reading is a term that was started by Walberg and Merton, and cited by Stanovich (1986), which follows the principle that the rich get richer, while the poor get poorer. The Matthews Effect determines that:

Children who are reading well and who have good vocabularies will read more, learn more word meaning, and hence read even better. Children with inadequate vocabularies—who read slowly and without enjoyment—read less, and as a result have slower development of vocabulary knowledge, which inhibits further growth in reading ability. (Stanovich, 1986, p. 37)

Children who enter kindergarten with limited family literacy are already behind some of their peers, and most likely will remain behind.

Most parents value reading and what it can do for their children. When they understand how important these practices can be for their future and their children’s future, they will be further motivated to learn.
Chapter Five

Reading Activities to do with Your Children

Read with your children, not to them

Reading with your children, instead of to them engages children in a dialogue about the book they are reading and helps them make connections with real life—this process assists in helping new concepts they learn stay in their minds (Roberts, 2012).

Roberts (2012) completed a study that found that parent-child interaction during reading did have an impact. Some of the strategies Roberts (2012) used are as follows:

1. Re-telling: at intervals during the story, ask your child to re-tell the main ideas and important details from the book.

2. Story Structure: the parent reader actively focuses attention on the characters, settings, events, problems, and resolutions.

3. Activation and use of prior knowledge: the parent reader actively searches for background knowledge that can be related to the child’s life—For example; “This is like that time when . . .” and have the child also try to make the connections. Use this knowledge to further understand the text or characters.

**Other Practices:**
As mentioned above, many family activities work towards emergent literacy in children. Some of these are as follows:

- **Nursery Rhymes:** Parents who sing songs, recite nursery rhymes, and read rhyming poetry to their children while encouraging them to fill in rhyming words, facilitate the beginning of phonological awareness, a critical part of early reading (Evans & Shaw, 2008).

- **Playing games with your children and the conversation around them.**

- **Reading and writing activities:** writing grocery lists, reading back children’s illustrations, and many other family occurrences all relate to literacy.

In order to determine if the objectives and outcomes are met, a secondary workshop with both parents and children participating is a great way to determine if the parents understand the reading strategies and skills for read-alouds with their children.

**Want More?**
If parents are looking for more information, as many self-directed learners do, there are many other areas to find information, tips, and activities on what to do to get families involved.

- **ABC Life Literacy Canada** – offers lots of information for families to get involved around learning and literacy. Go to their web-page for some fun activities to do as a family.

- **Ontario Early Years Center**

- **Literacy Encyclopedia**
  [http://literacyencyclopedia.ca/](http://literacyencyclopedia.ca/)

**Image References**
All clipart images used with permission from Microsoft.