

1997


The home-school partnership

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Recommended Citation

McDonald, Sue W., "The home-school partnership" (1997). *Graduate Research Papers*. 1148.
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The home-school partnership

Abstract

This school-home literacy project reaffirms the notion that the school and home working together greatly benefits children. The parents in the project believed the partnership encouraged them to make time each day to be involved in their child's literacy experiences. From this consistent scheduling of experiences, the parents were able to observe the benefits of the partnership as their children grew in reading and writing abilities. Parents also commented on the difficulty of locating books that were appropriate for their children's reading level. A bibliography of predictable stories should be provided to the parents.

The Home-School Partnership

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Sue W. McDonald

March 1997

This Research Project by: Sue W. McDonald

Entitled: The Home-School Partnership

has been approved as meeting the research project requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

6/23/97

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Parents can play a significant role in their children's emerging literacy by promoting positive attitudes towards language as they serve as models of readers for their children (Ahuna-Ka'Ai'Ai et al., 1993; Huck, Hepler, & Hickman, 1993). When children are exposed to loving and caring human beings who enjoy reading and writing, their interest in literacy grows (Taylor & Strickland, 1986; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991; Morrow & Paratore, 1993). Although parents can make a strong impact on their children's literacy development, many parents feel inhibited about becoming involved. This inhibition may be due to uncertainty about the development of literacy and the role they can play in their children's emerging reading and writing (Meek, 1982). In view of this parental uncertainty, schools need to form a partnership with parents to assist them in understanding children's emerging literacy and ways for them to foster this ability (France & Hager, 1993).

As a first grade teacher, I initiated a course of action to develop a home-school literacy partnership. The information that I shared with the parents is summarized in the following section.

Summary of Information About Emergent Literacy

Nature of Emergent Literacy

Children grow into reading and writing in much the same manner as they develop oral language. When they are immersed in an environment that demonstrates the usefulness of print,

children will engage in print-related activities (Walton, 1989; Strickland, 1990). Literacy begins when children recognize that print is meaning bearing (Walton, 1989). Therefore, children need opportunities to actively create meaning in their daily lives through the reading and writing processes (Strickland, 1990; Goodman, 1986).

Characteristics of Emergent Readers and Writers

Most young children are discovering the relationship between oral language and print. In a literacy-rich home environment, it is reasonable to expect preschool children to display reading-like behavior, such as holding a book correctly, turning through the pages from left to right, and pretending to read. They often rely on the picture cues to tell the story (Walton, 1989).

Young readers tend to enjoy and benefit from reading predictable books that have familiar content and structure, such as those with repetition and cyclical sequencing. In reading and rereading predictable materials, children can predict, or comprehend the story, and experience the joy of being an independent reader. These texts allow children ease in constructing meaning from their reading experiences (Goodman, 1986; McMackin, 1993).

Young writers produce few words with conventional spelling, instead they engage in the spontaneous exploration of print. They

begin with scribble writing and gradually move to letters and groups of letters. Once children have more experience with print and more control over their hand movements, they begin to construct letters and words. Parents need to be encouraged to focus on the meaning of their young children's writing rather than on forms, such as spelling, handwriting, capitalization, and punctuation. An emphasis on meaning can encourage children to be risktakers in both their writing and reading (Clay, 1987).

Parents' Role in Providing Literacy Activities

The home environment provided by parents influences children's emergent literacy. Studies have shown that children who come from homes enriched with language activities have an educational advantage over those who do not. These children are more likely to read before they enter school. Even those who are not early readers are more likely to learn to read with more ease when formal instruction begins in school (Taylor & Strickland, 1986).

Ways for Parents to Provide a Literacy Environment

Parents can initiate many literacy activities with their children. These activities are not dependent on the parents' educational background or socio-economic level.

Engage in the reading and writing processes. Parents serve as models of readers and writers for their children. Children are more likely to value literacy if they witness their parents'

enjoyment of reading and writing. Parents who exhibit an appreciation for literacy will influence their children's pursuit of reading and writing as a leisure activity for a lifetime (Goodman, 1986). Children need to observe adults reading many types of materials for different purposes and using writing in diverse ways. Through these demonstrations, children will understand the purpose of written language (Walton, 1989; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991).

Read to children. Family reading time provides an important support for children's language development (Strickland, 1990; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991). When parents read stories aloud to their children, they are creating a safe, warm place for language learning. Through hearing literature read aloud, children acquire a storehouse of information related to reading and writing. Such experiences provide children with an understanding about the way in which people communicate ideas through print and the structure of stories (Taylor & Strickland, 1986; Thoreson-Crain & Dale, 1992). They also extend their concepts and the words that represent these ideas (Taylor & Strickland, 1986).

Because of the tremendous impact of storybook reading on children's literacy, parents need to make time to read with them (Griffith & Hamilton, 1987). The reading time does not have to be extensive but scheduled regularly. Parents can make a difference if they could spend fifteen or more minutes a day reading to

their children. This routine can help children establish a habit that can nurture lifetime reading (Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991; Segel & Friedberg, 1991).

To attain optimal benefits from family reading experiences, children should not be passive recipients. They should be allowed to be involved in choosing books to be shared (Taylor & Strickland, 1986). Once the book is selected, reading should take place in a comfortable room free of distraction. It is always best to have an abundance of appropriate reading materials for future selection (Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991).

Discuss what is being read. Because reading is an active and interactive process, parents need to discuss with their children what is being read. These discussions can help children clarify and extend meanings and relate ideas in stories to their lives. As parents talk about stories, children can learn about different kinds of stories and their elements. This interaction can prepare children to become critical readers and thinkers. Through this process, parents can help children learn what readers and writers do (Taylor & Strickland, 1986; Walton, 1989; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991).

Create an environment to encourage reading and writing. Parents' positive approach to language can support literacy. Children's learning usually occurs where trust and support abound. Children will hesitate to try out tasks if they are

afraid of failing or are constantly corrected (Walton, 1989). To encourage reading and writing, parents must allow children the freedom to take risks in their exploration of language. The parents' role is to give support to children's reading and writing, supply information when asked for or needed, and in the case of writing, read the written message if requested (Clay, 1987).

In fostering literacy, the home environment needs to offer space, time, and available materials. A whole array of books and writing materials needs to be available to the children. When children are surrounded by fine literature and writing tools such as paper, markers, crayons, pencils and pen, they are encouraged to explore reading and writing (Clay, 1987; Walton, 1989; Rasinski & Fredericks, 1991).

Home-School Partnership Project

At the beginning of the school year, I sent a letter to the families of each of the students in my first grade class inviting them to participate in a home-school literacy partnership (see Appendix A). The goals of the partnership were to assist parents in becoming more aware of the important role they play in their children's emerging literacy and in learning ways to encourage their children to become readers and writers. A thirty-minute conference was scheduled with each family to discuss different aspects of emergent literacy. A summary sheet of ways to nurture

children's emerging literacy was given to the parents during the initial conference (see Appendix B).

After discussing children's emergent literacy in the conference, the parents had an opportunity to examine samples of predictable texts. They commented that browsing through these books gave them better ideas for selecting appropriate books for their children. To conclude the meeting, the parents were given a questionnaire to assess the literacy environment of their child (see Appendix C).

To encourage communication between the home and school, notebooks with forms for parents to record their children's reading and writing activities were distributed. The teacher asked the parents to keep the notebooks for the duration of the partnership. The partnership lasted six months, beginning in September and ending in March. The notebooks were shared with the teacher at the end of each month and during conference time in November and March. However, if the parents had an urgent question related to their child's emergent literacy, they were encouraged to bring the notebook to school or call the teacher at any time. The teacher would promptly give a response to the questions.

Eight families responded to the invitation to become part of the home-school partnership. The three children who were beginning to read and write were focused on for this project. The

other five children were well into reading and writing. The responses of the three selected children and their families will be reported. (The names of the children have been changed.)

Stacy's Home-School Partnership Experience

Home literacy environment. In response to the questionnaire, the parents revealed that Stacy comes from a home that values and encourages reading. The parents and the child expressed a strong interest in reading and time was set aside each day for the family to read together. A regularly scheduled fifteen-minute period is spent in reading together. Every member of the family is included in this read aloud experience. Stacy and her younger brother enjoy spending time listening to and discussing stories read aloud by their parents.

The parents also commented that Stacy had an interest in writing. Although the parents expressed the importance of participating in writing activities, the family does not engage in this activity as frequently and consistently as reading. Time is not set aside to write together. The parents could not recall the number of minutes that they spent writing on their own or together as a family. They revealed that most of Stacy's writing experience consists of typing words on the computer during a computer word game. In contrast to reading experiences that are interactive, Stacy's writing experiences are solitary.

Responses as a reader and writer at the beginning of the school year. Since Stacy had more home experience with reading than writing, her confidence level and ability to read was higher than to write. In September, she could read predictable books with one sentence per page without assistance. She relied mainly on picture cues and memorization of story. When she read these stories, she read with confidence and expression. However, more difficult text required the assistance of an adult. Adults served as guides in helping her find strategies to figure out an unknown word.

Stacy frequently used inventive spelling in her writing. She could independently figure out the beginning sound of most words. However, she became easily frustrated when asked to sound out the endings of words. She spent most of her time making elaborate drawings to express her thoughts on paper.

Reading and writing activities at home. The partnership encouraged her to spend time on reading and writing activities as the year progressed. Stacy's average minutes of reading and writing increased during the six-month period from 20 to 65 minutes (see Figure 1). In December, she took advantage of the holiday period to engage in reading and writing.

Month	Avg. Min./Wk Reading	Avg. Min./Wk Writing
Sept.	100	20
Oct.	139	35
Nov.	160	35
Dec.	243	60
Jan.	183	45
Feb.	190	45
Mar.	188	65

Figure 1

Average Minutes of Reading and Writing Per Week

Stacy's growth in literacy is reflected in the increase of time she spent reading independently and the decrease in time she was read to or was given assistance by her parents (see Figure 2). The chart shows the number of books read for each month. It also shows the percentage of books read by the parent, read with assistance, and read independently.

Month	Total Books	% Read Aloud	% With Help	% Independ.
Sept.	40	73	22	5
Oct.	52	63	17	19
Nov.	64	39	39	22
Dec.	97	30	45	25
Jan.	73	27	37	36
Feb.	76	18	39	42
Mar.	75	16	24	60

Figure 2

Percentage of Books Read Aloud, Together, and Independently

During the partnership, Stacy kept a record of the reading and writing activities that she participated in at home. The reading activities which she engaged in varied from listening to lengthy chapter books, such as The Trumpeter Swan, to reading predictable books independently. The reading activity which Stacy enjoyed the most was reading stories that were familiar to her. For example, More Spaghetti, I Say! by Rita Golden Gilman (Scholastic: New York, 1992) is a predictable text which Stacy could read independently. Being proud of her accomplishments as a reader, she chose to read this story at least once a month. It is not surprising that she chose to record this experience as her favorite reading activity for the week of October.

More Spagetti
 I said
 I Love that
 Book.
 I like the Book

Figure 3

Record of Stacy's Favorite Reading Experience in October

Partnership's effect on child's emerging literacy. During the time which Stacy participated in the partnership, she emerged as a reader and writer. In the beginning of the partnership, she relied mainly on others to read to her. As her reading time at school and at home increased, her ability to read independently did, too. Stacy who once enjoyed reading predictable text with one sentence per page could read longer books with less predictable text at the end of the period.

Stacy showed progress in writing. Prior to the partnership, Stacy was reluctant to write and required assistance with spelling. A sample of her writing in September is shown in Figure 4.

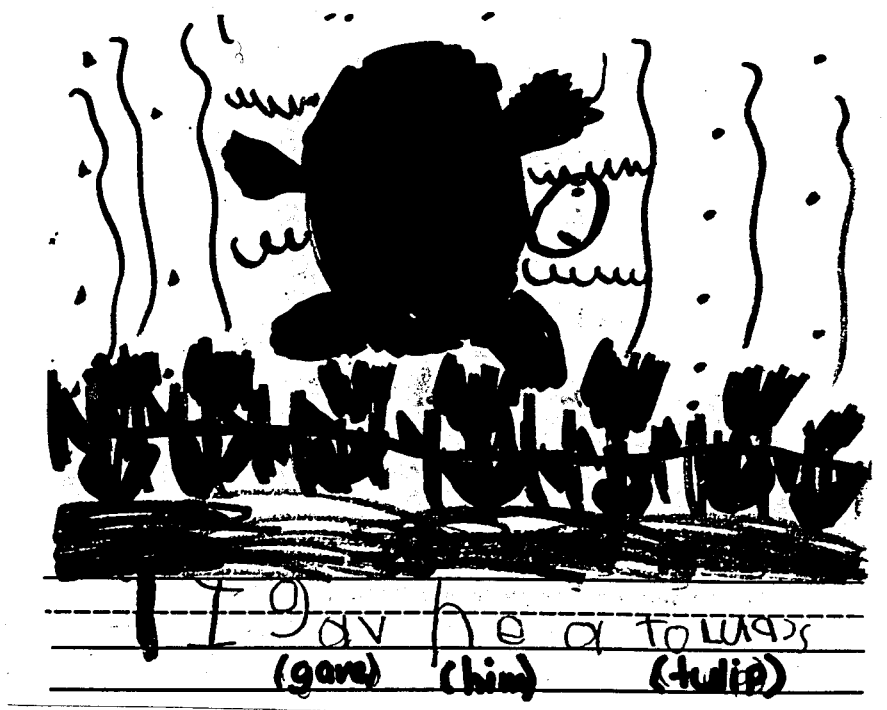


Figure 4

Stacy's Writing in September

Since her participation in the partnership, the range of Stacy's writing activities has expanded beyond typing on the computer when playing word games. She spends time with her family making books; writing stories, poems, and letters; and writing in

her notebook. Her favorite writing activity was keeping a classroom journal.

As her experiences with writing increased, she became more confident in writing her thoughts. By the end of the school year, she was capable of using inventive and conventional spelling to write one-page stories. An example is the piece she wrote to her assigned teacher for grade two shown in Figure 5.

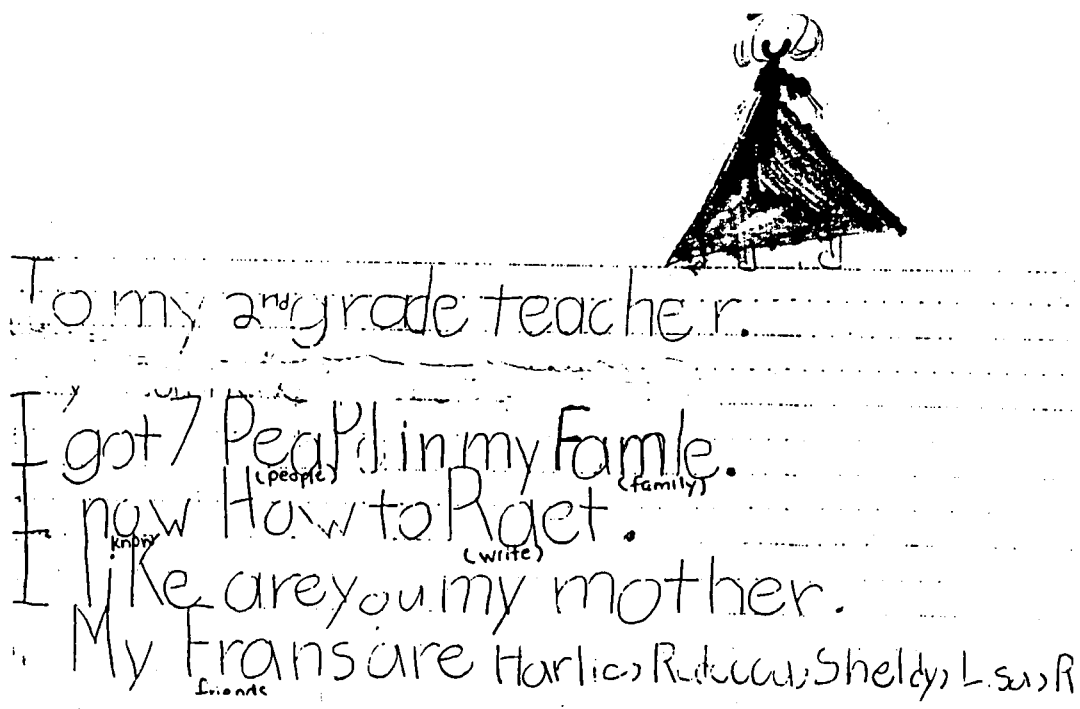


Figure 5

Letter to Second Grade Teacher

Parents' response to home literacy activities. Stacy's parents enjoyed the time that they set aside for reading and writing with her. They especially appreciated seeing the progress

that she has made. They commented, "I can tell that she will sit and look at books for a longer period of time by herself. She is also not as monotone with her reading. It is especially nice to see her joy in reading. She looks forward to reading to the class and wants to share books that we have read together at home."

The problem which Stacy's parents encountered with reading time at home was finding enough books at her reading level. I assisted them in dealing with adequate materials by lending books from the classroom library and by recommending a public library which codes the books according to the reading level of the children. Visiting this library provided the family with more reading resources that Stacy could read independently.

Along with seeing her enthusiasm for reading, Stacy's parents also saw her need for assistance with writing. They commented, "She is writing more than she used to. Stacy can write one to two sentences. However, she doesn't like to sound words out and would rather have us write them for her." The parents wanted ideas for spelling games and activities which they could use with her at home. I provided them with materials for four different games and activities. After several months, they began to see Stacy's enthusiasm and independence in writing develop. Stacy's parents found the home-school partnership valuable. They attributed their daughter's joy in reading and writing to this collaboration. The partnership also helped the family in finding

more productive ways to spend their time as a family. Since their participation in the partnership, the parents found that the family spends less time watching television.

Lisa's Home-School Partnership Experience

Home literacy environment. The parents' response to the questionnaire indicated that Lisa's parents value and encourage reading and writing at home. Both parents enjoy reading and writing. They read each day for approximately 1 hour and write for 20 minutes so Lisa frequently sees her parents read and write. The parents also set aside time to read and write together with Lisa. Her family reads consistently with her every day for 30-45 minutes. Many family members--parents and grandparents--are available to read with Lisa. The reading time is a pleasant family experience in which Lisa is encouraged to select books to read. Discussions of the stories occur frequently. The family spends about ten minutes daily writing together. Lisa usually initiates the writing. She enjoys practicing the spelling of new words that she has learned and writing simple sentences. The parents spend time helping Lisa spell if she asks for their assistance.

Responses as a reader and writer at the beginning of the school year. Lisa was an enthusiastic student who was eager to learn to read and write. Although she was just beginning to read in September, Lisa had knowledge of many basic tasks related to

reading. She opened a book correctly, pointed to one word at a time, and understood that print moved from left to right. She also had a strong sense of story plot and told stories with much accuracy. Also, she was developing an awareness of letter-sound relationships and would attempt to decode unknown words. She needed more experience with books to build her knowledge of sight words.

Lisa also enjoyed writing. She used letter-sound relationships and sounded out words as she wrote.

Reading and writing activities at home. The home-school relationship nurtured Lisa's involvement in reading and writing at home. Lisa's average minutes of reading and writing per week increased as the year progressed. In September, she read an average of 113 minutes a week; in March, she increased her average to 208. Her time spent weekly in writing increased from September for 20 minutes to March for 82 minutes.

Month	Avg. Mins/Wk Reading	Avg. Mins/Wk Writing
Sept.	113	20
Oct.	157	36
Nov.	146	35
Dec.	168	42
Jan.	172	54
Feb.	194	63
Mar.	208	82

Figure 6

Average Minutes Per Week of Reading and Writing

Also, as the year progressed, Lisa read more books independently. The parents indicated that she needed less assistance while reading and that she desired less read aloud sessions as the months passed.

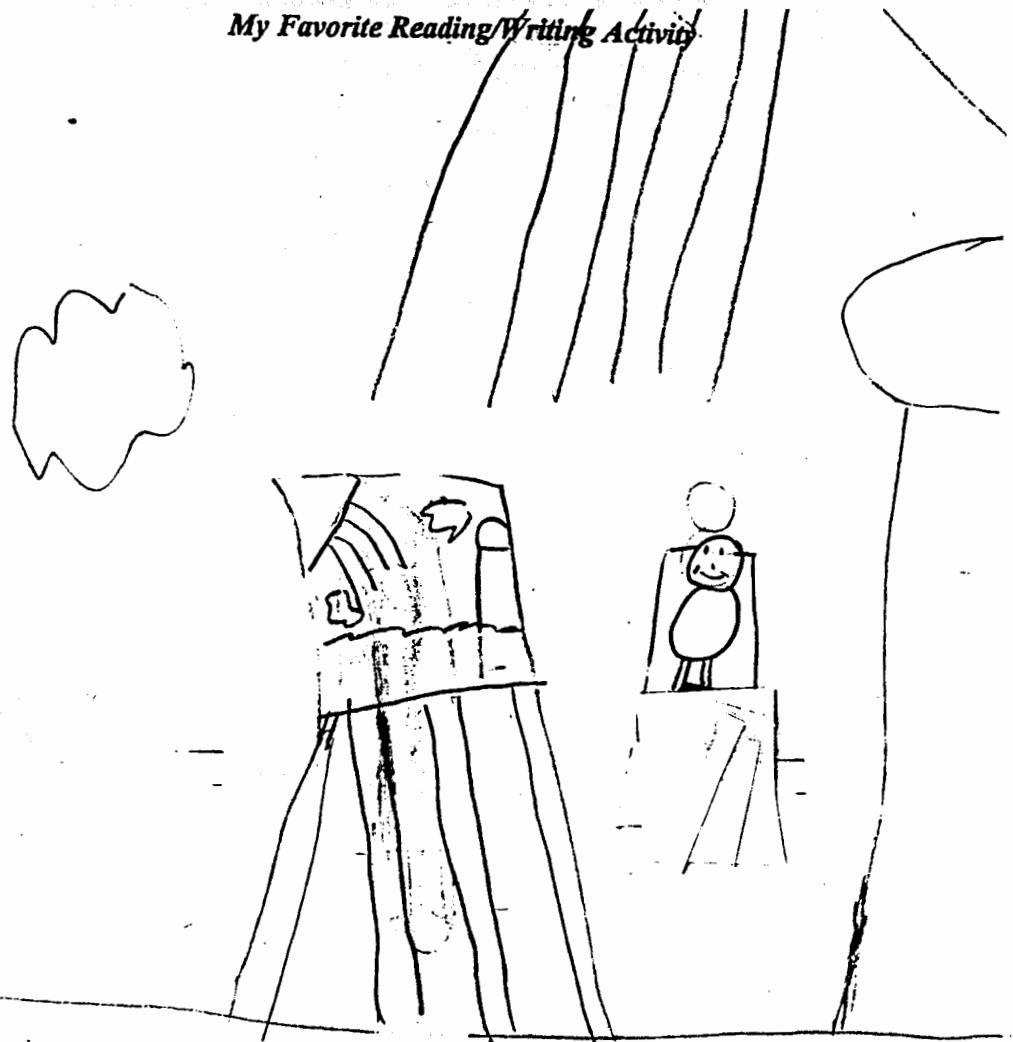
Month	Total Books	% Read Aloud	% With Help	% Independ.
Sept.	45	68	26	6
Oct.	61	62	21	17
Nov.	58	56	15	29
Dec.	66	40	28	32
Jan.	69	32	30	38
Feb.	77	22	32	46
Mar.	83	14	24	62

Figure 7

Percentage of Books Read Aloud, With Help, and Independently

During the partnership, Lisa was exposed to many types of books. The books that she preferred to read with her parents were colorful picture books that were related to her interests. One of her favorite was When I Grow Up by Mercer Mayer (Western Publishing: Racine, Wisconsin, 1991). Her response in her notebook to this work indicated that she enjoyed the story because it made her aware of her career choice of becoming an artist (see Figure 8).

My Favorite Reading/Writing Activity



The book called, When I Grow Up, made me think about when I grow up, I want to be an artist.

Figure 8

Response to a Favorite Book

Lisa also engaged in many different kinds of writing activities at home. She enjoyed making books, creating flashcards, writing stories, and making greeting cards which was her favorite writing activity. In her November notebook entry, Lisa explains her pleasure in creating cards (see Figure 9).

I did the card because I
like to write.

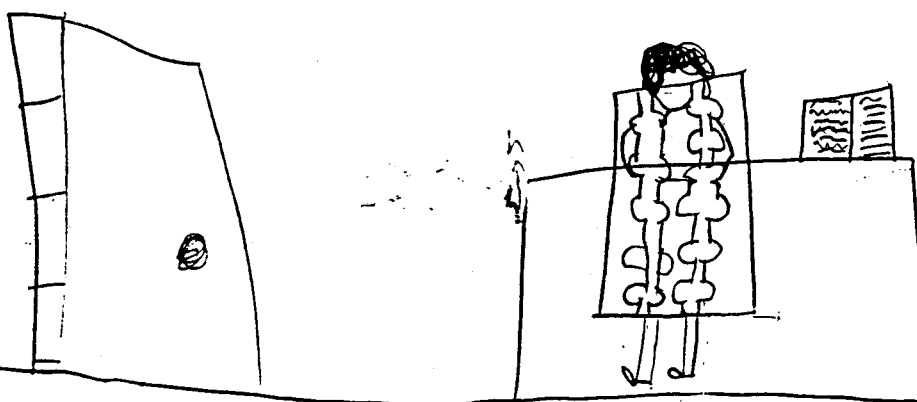
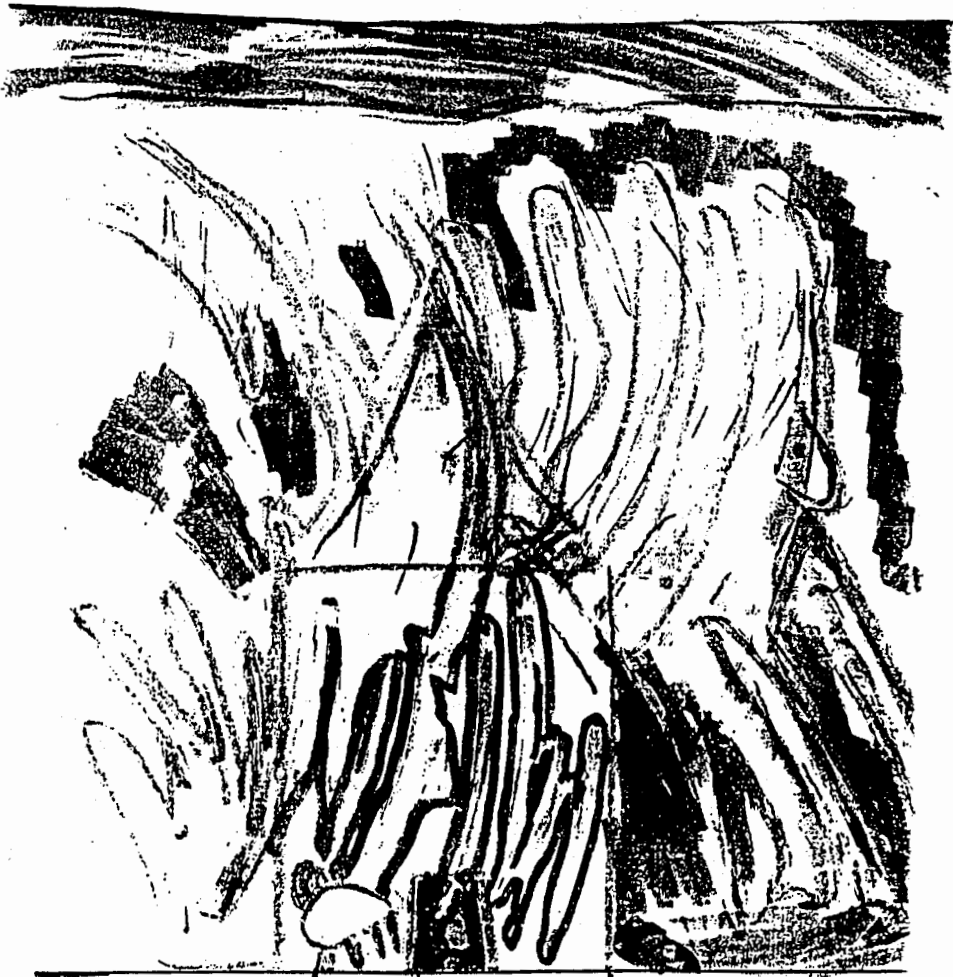


Figure 9

Notebook Entry

Partnership's effect on child's literacy. Lisa developed into a reader and writer during the six months of participation in the partnership. It appeared that the increased time spent reading and writing with family members supported her emerging reading and writing abilities. These home language activities also seemed to bolster her confidence in reading and writing. Within the six months, she progressed from being able to only retell stories to reading beginning chapter books independently.

Lisa also made significant progress in writing. In September she wrote one sentence stories with some words spelled conventionally and others containing enough of the letters to allow the audience to understand the intended meaning (see Figure 10).



I Pua the dog
 (put)
 Ni the hous
 (in)

Figure 10

Story Written in September

By March, she wrote longer stories and used more conventional spelling. She was also becoming more aware of written form, such as capitalization and punctuation (see Figure 11).

we skate together. We play together. We dance together.
 We play house together. We swim together. We swing together.
~~We play~~ We ski together. We climb together.



Figure 11

Story Written in March

Parents' response to home literacy activities. Lisa's parents commented that even though they had spent time together reading and writing prior to the home-school project, they have extended their awareness of the importance of literacy activity at home. They increased the amount of reading and writing time and learned about more reading and writing activities. By engaging in home literacy activities, the family had opportunities to observe Lisa progress toward more independent reading and writing.

Ryan's Home-School Partnership Experience

Home literacy environment. The parents' response to the questionnaire revealed that Ryan comes from a home in which Arabic is the primary language and English is the second language. The father speaks English at his workplace, but the mother knows little English. The children are exposed to English for the first time when they enter school. Ryan's father feels strongly about maintaining the culture so learning Arabic is important. He also sees the need for his children to communicate effectively in the school setting. This desire peaked his interest in participating in the partnership.

The questionnaire indicated that Ryan's parents want him to learn to read and write, but they have difficulties at home finding time to nurture his literacy abilities. The family has four other children, ranging in age from a newborn to sixteen

years of age. Also, the father's response to the survey showed that Ryan rarely sees his parents reading and writing. The only two people that Ryan observes engaging in these activities are his older brother and sister. Most of Ryan's reading activities in the home involves his older siblings. The father has them read one book a day to him before bedtime. The story is usually not discussed. Ryan did not write at home.

Responses as a reader and writer at the beginning of the school year. Lack of experience with reading and writing probably accounted for Ryan's limited experience with the various aspects of English. For example, he did not hold a book correctly, look at print from left to right, or retell with accuracy a story by using picture cues. He retold stories by looking at one character in the illustrations and then making up a story about the character.

His concept of writing also showed his lack of exposure to the process. Writing for Ryan consisted of drawing pictures which were not elaborate in nature. In fact, he drew mostly stick figures. Ryan neither attempted to write words to go along with his pictures nor to copy sentences written by others. He relied on adults to write the sentences for him.

Reading and writing activities at home. To help Ryan develop into a reader and writer, the teacher emphasized to the parents the importance of finding time to spend reading and

writing with him. Prior to the partnership, he spent an average of 35 minutes per week listening to stories and 0 minutes writing. During the last month of the partnership, he was averaging 47 minutes of reading and 20 minutes of writing per week. The following chart exhibits the average minutes of reading and writing per week that occurred in Ryan's home.

Month	Avg. Min./Wk Reading	Avg. Min./Wk Writing
Sept.	40	15
Oct.	40	15
Nov.	43	16
Dec.	35	12
Jan.	45	22
Feb.	44	20
Mar	47	20

Figure 12

Average Minutes of Reading and Writing Per Week

At home for the first three months, Ryan did not read books independently. However in October, he began to participate in shared reading. As his experience with books increased, he started to read independently (see Figure 13).

Month	Total Books	% Read Aloud	% With Help	% Independ.
Sept.	33	100	0	0
Oct.	35	98	2	0
Nov.	42	96	4	0
Dec.	29	95	3	2
Jan.	43	87	8	5
Feb.	41	84	10	6
Mar.	46	73	16	11

Figure 13

Percentage of Books Read Aloud, With Assistance, or Independently

Ryan began to spend more time visiting the public library to check out books which became one of his favorite reading activities. In his notebook, he recorded his pleasure in these visits in November. Ryan enjoyed sitting in the comfortable baseball glove shaped bean bag chair at the library. He also liked the many different kinds of books that he could choose. Ryan frequently checked out soccer and Berenstein Bear books. As recorded in January, he also enjoyed reading Berenstein Bear books with his older sister.

Ryan also spent time writing with his brother and sister. He practiced his school spelling lessons as his older brother and sister were doing their homework. Ryan enjoyed the time that the family spent doing school work. Ryan referred to their special

time as playing "school." His term for that routine time indicates that he saw writing as an enjoyable experience. He wrote in the notebook in December that practicing spelling was his favorite writing activity.

As time passed, Ryan's confidence grew in writing. He began to engage in extensive activities. Instead of viewing writing as just practicing writing words, he began to think of writing as a creative process. In February, he started to write stories. An example of one written as a February entry in his notebook is shown in Figure 14.

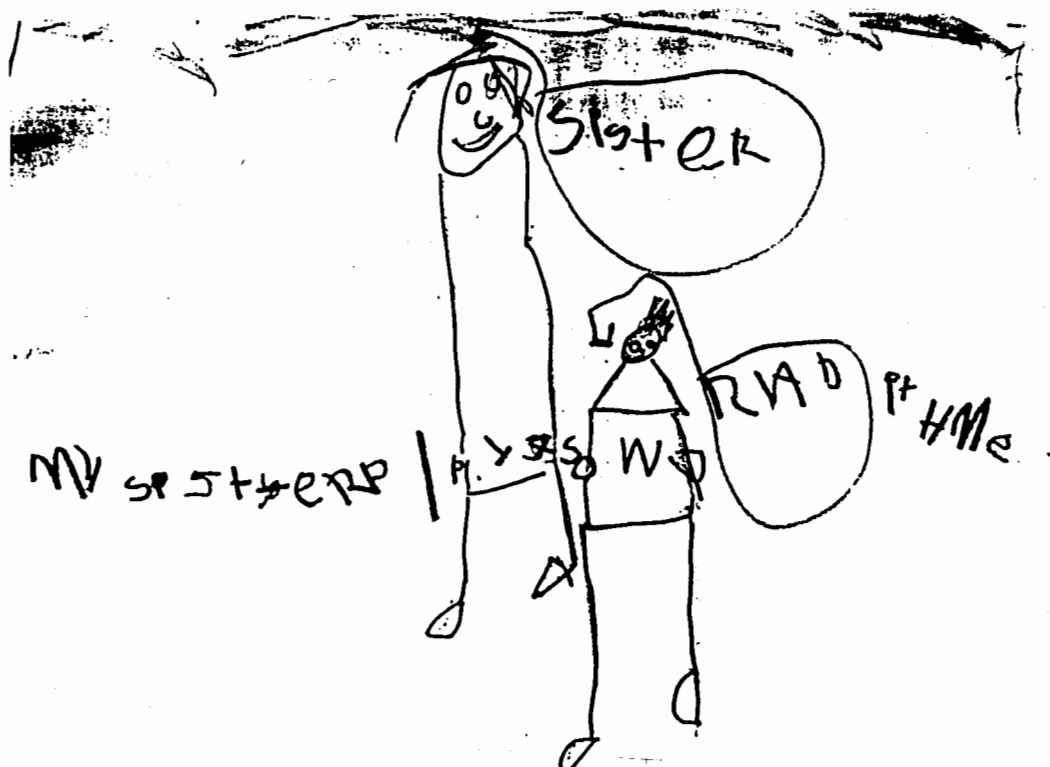


Figure 14

Ryan's Writing in February

Partnership's effect on child's emerging literacy. Ryan did not develop into an independent reader and writer by the end of the partnership. However, he did make great strides towards becoming one. In September, he understood little about the components of the English language. By March, he had learned to hold a book properly and follow the print from left to right. He could read predictable books with one sentence per page. He could retell a story using the illustrations as props for recall.

His writing abilities also improved. Ryan no longer drew simple pictures to express his thoughts. By March, he was drawing more detailed pictures and could copy sentences. An example is his story about aspiring to be an artist (see Figure 15).

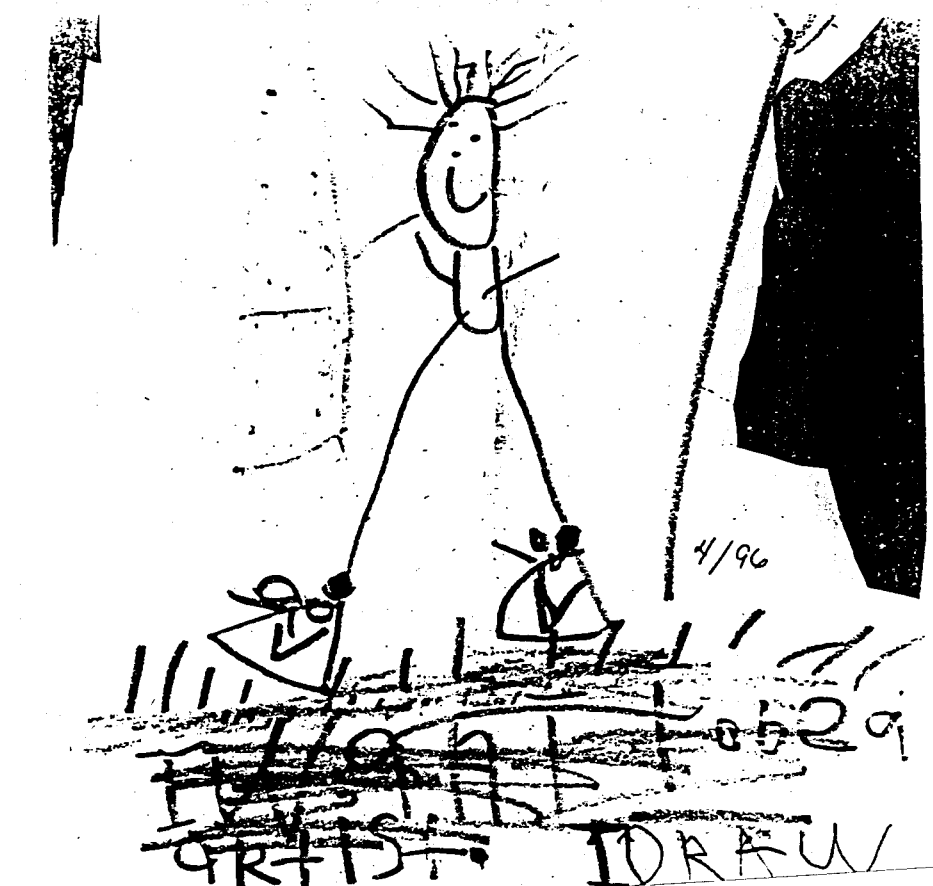


Figure 15

Ryan's Story

Parents' response to home literacy activities. Ryan's father stated that the home-school partnership made him more aware of Ryan's need for support in reading and writing. Although he does not have as much time as he would like, he makes the effort to set aside fifteen minutes each night to work with Ryan.

He also asked the older siblings to devote more time in helping Ryan with reading and writing. He stated that he made himself more available to help his two older children with their school work.

From participation in the home-school partnership, his father believes that the siblings have grown closer together. The older brother and sister used to go off on their own to do their homework and play. Now they include Ryan while they do their school work. The father sees progress in Ryan's reading and writing. He was proud to report Ryan's reading of his first book independently. The father had Ryan read it aloud to all of the relatives during a family reunion. He also stated that Ryan takes more initiative to do writing activity. He spends more time drawing and writing in more detail.

The parents were very grateful to have participated in the partnership. They believed that the time spent in helping Ryan has brought the family closer together.

Summary

This school-home literacy project reaffirms the notion that the school and home working together greatly benefits children. The parents in the project believed the partnership encouraged them to make time each day to be involved in their child's literacy experiences. From this consistent scheduling of

experiences, the parents were able to observe the benefits of the partnership as their children grew in reading and writing abilities. As the teacher, I also observed similar benefits in the classroom. For this reason, I plan to continue this program in the coming school year. However, I would implement more assistance in book selection. Parents commented on the difficulty of locating books that were appropriate for their children's reading level. A bibliography of predictable books could be provided to the parents.

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Appendix A

September 1, 1996

Dear Parents,

I would like to invite you to participate in a project. My project is to develop a home-school literacy partnership. The goal of my project is to help you become more aware of the important role you play in your child's literacy development. Through the project, I hope to provide you with a better understanding of how your child becomes a reader and writer. In addition, you will be given ideas to encourage your child's literacy development at home.

Participation in the project will require one brief meeting to discuss the specifics of the program. I will give you a call to schedule the meeting within the next two weeks. The meeting will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you.

Please return the bottom section by September 10. If you have questions about the project which I have not addressed, please do not hesitate to call me. Thank you for your cooperation and I look forward to forming a home-school literacy partnership with you.

Mrs. McDonald

Please return this bottom section by Sept. 10.

_____ Yes, I would like to participate in the home-school literacy partnership.

_____ No, I would not like to participate in the home-school literacy partnership.

Appendix B

Ways to Support Your Child's Literacy Development

1. Let your child see you reading and writing

Why: By seeing you read, your child will begin to understand the value and purpose of reading and writing.

2. Read aloud to your child as often as possible

Why: Through hearing others read aloud, your child will begin to understand how people communicate ideas through print. They will learn concepts and story structure.

How: Make reading a part of the family's routine. Read in a place that is free from distraction. Make reading fun by allowing your child to make choices about books to be read. Your child might also enjoy predictable books which have familiar structure and content. The repetition of predictable books help children with story structure and vocabulary.

3. Talk to your child about what is being read

Why: By talking with you, your child will become more aware of the elements needed to create a story and become more critical readers and thinkers.

How: Discuss with your child how books are held and pages are turned, how words are written in a straight line from left to right, and how words represent ideas.

4. Create an environment that will encourage reading and writing

Why: When your child has many positive experiences with reading and writing, he/she will believe that he/she can become readers and writers.

How: Organize space, time and available materials for reading and writing. Give attention to their work, supply information when asked for and read written messages if requested.

Appendix C

Questionnaire for Project Participants

Child's Name _____ Parent's Name _____

General Instructions: Please respond to all questions by circling or filling in the most appropriate response. Please return the questionnaire by _____

1. How would you describe your child's interest level in reading?
 - a. Very interested
 - b. Somewhat interested
 - c. Not interested at all
2. What type of reading activities do you and your child like to do together?

-
3. How would you describe your reading schedule with your child?
 - a. Consistently; every day
 - b. Frequently; but not daily
 - c. Whenever there is time
 - d. Never

4. How would you describe the interaction between you and your child during reading time?
 - a. I read; my child listens quietly.
 - b. I read; my child responds to the story.
 - c. I read; my child and I talk about the story.
 - d. We read the story together.
 - e. We read the story together and discuss it.
 - f. My child reads independently and I follow along.

5. How much time do you spend each day reading with your child?

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6. How much time do you yourself spend each day reading? _____

7. Other than yourself, who else reads consistently with your child?

8. How would you describe your child's interest level in writing?
a. Very interested
b. Somewhat interested
c. Not interested at all

9. What type of writing activities do you and your child like to do together?

10. How would you describe your writing schedule with your child?
a. Consistently; every day
b. Frequently; but not daily
c. Whenever there is time
d. Never

11. How much time do you spend each day writing with your child?

12. How much time do you yourself spend each day writing? _____

13. How often does your child see you reading and writing?
a. All the time
b. Some of the time
c. Not very often
d. Never

14. I believe that I could help my child become a better reader and writer by

Thank you for your cooperation.