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## Educating Parents on the Reading Recovery Program

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## Educating Parents on the Reading Recovery Program

### Abstract

Just as the African proverb states that it takes a village to raise a child, it also takes a village to help some children read. The significance of the home environment on literacy development has long been recognized (Danielson, 1997; Cairney & Munsie, 1995). Even parents are aware that their interest in their child's literacy learning is important (Hayden, 1995/1996). Learning to read is an educational objective that is valued highly by both parents and teachers (Berger, 1998) and the sharing of knowledge and information about learning to read empowers teacher, parents, and most importantly, children (Holland, 1991). Successful early intervention programs support and foster the home-school connection. Reading Recovery is a short-term, early intervention program designed for first-grade students who are struggling with reading (National Diffusion Network, 1999). Students work one-on-one with a teacher who is specially trained in Reading Recovery. The goal of the program is to help children develop effective strategies for reading and writing, while reaching average levels of classroom performance (Ohio State University, 1998).

Educating Parents on the Reading Recovery Program

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Division of Reading Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Amy Colette Williams Sorenson

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

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## Introduction

Just as the African proverb states that it takes a village to raise a child, it also takes a village to help some children read. The significance of the home environment on literacy development has long been recognized (Danielson, 1997; Cairney & Munsie, 1995). Even parents are aware that their interest in their child's literacy learning is important (Hayden, 1995/1996). Learning to read is an educational objective that is valued highly by both parents and teachers (Berger, 1998) and the sharing of knowledge and information about learning to read empowers teacher, parents, and most importantly, children (Holland, 1991). Successful early intervention programs support and foster the home-school connection.

Reading Recovery is a short-term, early intervention program designed for first-grade students who are struggling with reading (National Diffusion Network, 1999). Students work one-on-one with a teacher who is specially trained in Reading Recovery. The goal of the program is to help children develop effective strategies for reading and writing, while reaching average levels of classroom performance (Ohio State University, 1998).

## Reading Recovery in New Hampton, Iowa

I became involved in Reading Recovery when the New Hampton Community School District adopted the program for the 1998-1999 academic year. This monumental decision was made for several reasons. First, the district had recently hired a principal who had experience with the Reading Recovery program. The successes and research he shared were convincing. Second, our Area Education Agency had invested in training a Teacher-Leader who could then train local teachers in the techniques of Reading Recovery. Third, the number of students being referred to special education and Title 1 for reading was growing steadily while the number of teachers available to work with these students was decreasing. Furthermore, once placed in a special program, students usually remained for several years, while Reading Recovery lasts between fifteen and twenty weeks. A decision to meet the needs of all of students before reading problems became habituated and ingrained was imperative.

My school district invested in the Reading Recovery program to help prevent problems before long-term interventions were necessary. After reviewing successful reading programs, Pikulski (1994) noted "Enormous amounts are spent annually in efforts to remediate reading problems, or so-called 'learning disabilities,' while a fraction of that funding is expended on preventing those problems" (p.30). Furthermore, reading failure can be prevented in

most children (Clay, 1985; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). On the other hand, evidence to support programs that fix reading problems after second grade has been scarce (Pikulski, 1994). Often, students are allowed to sit in classrooms frustrated with learning how to read while self-esteem levels plummet before an intervention is started. "Early intervention does not guarantee continuing achievement; but *not* providing early intervention guarantees failure for many students throughout schooling" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 193).

At the end of the 1998-1999 school year, the results of Reading Recovery at the New Hampton Elementary School confirmed the district's decision to invest in this early intervention program. In the Reading Recovery Annual Report I wrote for the district, six out of eight children were discontinued from Reading Recovery. A discontinued child graduates from the program reading at or above the class average and has the strategies to continue to grow as an independent reader (Clay, 1993b). All students made progress in the program, regardless of their status at the end of their program.

Students were given the six assessments from the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 1993a) at the beginning and end of their programs to monitor progress. On the text reading level, the smallest gain was ten levels while the largest gain was sixteen reading levels. Furthermore, seven out of eight students improved on every

assessment from pre- to post testing. The one child who showed growth on only four of the *Survey* tasks already knew all 54 symbols on the letter identification test as well as seventeen out of twenty words on the word test during both testing times. While the first year was successful for the students, one component that needed improvement was parental involvement.

#### Parental Involvement during the 1998-1999 School Year

Involvement of parents at the elementary level in my district has remained consistently high for many years. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences hovers around 100 percent. School-sponsored events, such as open house, music performances, and the school carnival are also well attended by parents.

Since Reading Recovery was new to the district and parents seem to attend many school events, I knew educating them about this program and involving them from the beginning would be important. In the fall, I invited parents of Reading Recovery students to a short, informal meeting. Attendance by parents was 100 percent. My focus was on emphasizing the importance of children returning materials and attending school each day. Neither one of these issues ever developed into a problem. Parents followed through on the matters I had stressed at the meeting.

On average, I made approximately ten additional contacts with parents while serving their children. Seven out of the eight students



served through Reading Recovery had parents who observed at least one of their daily lessons. Furthermore, all parents of Reading Recovery students attended their child's scheduled parent-teacher conference. Other types of communication involved telephone calls, form letters, procedural forms, and informal memos. The content of communications included praise for the child's hard work and the parents' daily commitment to helping their child, feedback on progress from both parents and teacher, and information on starting and ending dates. The vast majority of contacts were initiated by me; however, all were well received by parents.

Near the end of each child's program, a letter was sent to parents. The importance of working diligently until the end of the program along with areas of strength and need for each individual student was stressed in the letter. Thus, parents were informed on what their child was doing well and what would be heavily emphasized the last two weeks of service. An up-date on student progress was the main theme of the communication again.

The parents of my Reading Recovery students were involved in other ways throughout the year. For example, two parents brought their child to behind-the-glass sessions where lessons were observed behind a two-way mirror (Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993). These parents had the opportunity to again observe their child's reading and writing while other Reading Recovery teachers examined

and discussed my instructional decisions (Pinnell, Fried, & Estice, 1990). Two other parents granted me permission to take their child to these special lessons.

Questionnaires evaluating the program were returned by seven out of eight parents. On a scale of one to five, all parents indicated that they viewed Reading Recovery as a very good program by circling the number five. In their comments to the questions on the survey, parents had high regard for the program and attributed the success of their child to the instruction received in Reading Recovery. One parent who shared her views on Reading Recovery wrote on the questionnaire that the program helped her daughter in every way while building up her child's level of confidence. Another parent commented that Reading Recovery enabled her son to enjoy reading again.

Despite the positive results of Reading Recovery in the district the first year and the relatively high level of parent involvement, I became aware of a primary area of need. Throughout my graduate studies, my knowledge of the significance the role of parents played in educating children was enhanced. However, my practices were not echoing my preaching. Much of my time was consumed learning the new program while implementing it. The crucial element of parental involvement was being kept to a minimum.

## The Need for More Parental Involvement

The actions on the part of most of the parents of Reading Recovery students indicated to me that they were interested in their child's education. However, parents do not always know productive practices to help their children with literacy (Cairney & Munsie, 1995), and they rely on their own experiences in school to teach their children to read and write (Holland, 1991). Throughout the year, comments from parents echoed their lack of understanding of how to help their children. From multiple parents on different occasions, I heard talk about instructing their child to "sound it out" and "fix every mistake." The strategy of 'sounding it out' is often used by parents because it's a familiar phrase they heard when learning to read (Routman, 1996). However, readers who are efficient and competent do not sound out every word letter by letter (Goodman, 1993). The technique of sounding out is only one means of decoding a word. Unknowingly, parents can also make the mistakes of "focusing so much on mechanics that their child's motivation is diminished," or "taking a punitive attitude when the child makes errors" (Finn, 1998, p. 22). The parents of my Reading Recovery students were working from a limited knowledge on how to help children with literacy. As an educator, I had not taken the time to explicitly instruct them on how to work with their children.

Most parents want to know how to effectively help their children and be involved in their learning (Epstein, 1986; Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Burow, 1995; Mavrogenes, 1990; Routman, 1996; Tracey, 1995). In a survey by Epstein (1986), parents indicated they “could help more if the teacher showed them what to do” (p. 291). The vast majority of parents took the time to view one of their child’s Reading Recovery lessons at school and attend parent-teacher conferences. Since parents wanted to learn more, my comments and suggestions were valued.

In addition, the parents of my Reading Recovery students appeared to appreciate assistance from me. In a study on homework and parental involvement, Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1995) found that parents thought very highly of teachers who gave specific suggestions for helping children at home. The role of a partnership between parents and teachers should be acknowledged and supported (Cairney & Munsie, 1995; Danielson, 1997), and the connections between school learning and home literacy experiences with parents needs to be developed.

Involving parents is a factor that should be considered when contemplating ways to improve current practices and increase student achievement (Silvern, 1985). One common practice employed by teachers of at-risk readers is having students read at home (Hayden, 1995/1996). He cautions, “As professionals, when we ask

parents to have their children read at home, it may be wise to show them how they may participate in the reading event and how to offer assistance within a framework that reaffirms reading as a meaning-making activity” (p. 336). With time, attention, and some demonstrations by educators, parents can become informed without expensive programs or materials (Danielson, 1997; Mavrogenes, 1990). The impact of early intervention programs can be enhanced when the component of parental involvement and education is developed.

The effects of working to directly influence parental practices can be long lasting compared to a list of suggestions sent home. In reviewing programs that attempt to educate parents on how to help children with reading, Tracey (1995) concludes that parents did learn and use strategies which often resulted in an improvement of children’s reading. Research indicates that parents do want assistance helping their children with literacy acquisition and will apply what they learn.

Holland (1991), who investigated home and school literacy in connection with Reading Recovery, suggests that parents need to know how to support their children’s literacy development at home. In addition, the quality of help could improve if teachers offered guidance and assistance to parents (Mavrogenes, 1990). While parent involvement was evident at New Hampton, the type of assistance

provided by parents tended to be inconsistent with Reading Recovery practices.

Reading Recovery is a program that naturally lends itself to promoting parental involvement. After each lesson, the child selects several familiar books to take home for rereading (Clay, 1993b). In a study on home and school literacy, Holland (1991) found that Reading Recovery teachers who took the time to explicitly explain to parents how to support their child's literacy development were regarded highly. More importantly, these informed parents "diligently followed their instructions" (p. 160). Again, the role of parental involvement is strengthened and improved.

As a result of reflecting on experiences with parents of Reading Recovery students during the implementation year, I created a slide show presentation to specifically educate them. With the knowledge of the importance of parent education and how to accomplish it, my goal for next year is to enhance the quality of the parental involvement in the Reading Recovery program in order to make students more successful with literacy learning at home.

Plans for Future Parent Involvement in the Reading Recovery  
Program at New Hampton Elementary School

Parental involvement will begin as their child's involvement in Reading Recovery begins. At New Hampton Elementary, all children

are selected for placement in Reading Recovery based on classroom performance and the results the *Observation Survey* (Clay, 1993a). From the target population of first graders, the lowest students receive priority (Pinnell et al., 1990). The first two weeks are spent “roaming around the known” (Clay, 1993b, p. 12). This time gives teachers the opportunity to further observe the child while developing a rapport (Clay, 1993b). The teacher does not introduce anything new to the child and the formal lessons have not yet started.

Parents will be invited to their child’s Reading Recovery classroom for the slide show presentation during this “roaming around the known” period. This time frame is favorable since students have already been selected for the program, yet the daily structured lessons have not begun. During this one hour session, parents will learn what Reading Recovery is and how they can help their child with literacy. Parents will view fifteen slides, observe a teacher-modeled example of how to read with a child, and be able to ask questions.

Listed below are the texts of each slide and what will be shared and discussed with parents on that particular slide. A copy of the actual slide is included in the appendix.

**Slide 1 Text:**

Reading Recovery  
An Informational Slide Show for Parents  
by Amy Sorenson

Introductions will be made, and parents will be thanked for attending. The purpose of educating parents on how to help their children specifically in the Reading Recovery program will also be explained. Parents will learn that this evening was created for them.

**Slide 2 Text:**

What is Reading Recovery?

•early intervention	•first grade students
•one-on-one tutoring	•strengths
•short term	•supplemental

This slide will be used to inform parents about Reading Recovery. This program was created to help children who are showing signs that they need additional assistance in learning to read and write. In the New Hampton program, selected first graders receive daily, individual thirty-minute lessons from a teacher who is specially trained in Reading Recovery. The program lasts between 15 and 20 weeks. Reading Recovery is in addition to the literacy instruction they are receiving from their classroom teacher.

The program is designed to catch students up to their peers by building on what they already know. For example, if the word *mom*



can be written by a child, then that same word can also be read in text. In the past, some remedial programs focused on filling in the gaps in a child's knowledge about reading. If the child did not know the word *at*, then the words might be taught by memorizing flash cards in isolation of texts. However, a teacher following Reading Recovery procedures would demonstrate for the child that the word *at* is connected to the known word *cat*.

**Slide 3 Text:**

History

Auckland, New Zealand

Parents will learn that Reading Recovery comes from Auckland, New Zealand. The program was developed by educator and psychologist Dr. Marie Clay. She conducted observational research in the 1960s to find out what good and poor readers did (Clay, 1993a). In 1984, some professors from The Ohio State University asked Marie Clay to show them her alternative remedial reading program. As the impressive results were shared with other educators, the program spread. In the New Hampton Community School District, six out of eight students were discontinued from the Reading Recovery program during the 1998-1999 academic year. A discontinued child graduates from the program reading at or above the class average and has the strategies to continue to learn as an independent reader (Clay, 1993b).

#### Slide 4 Text:

##### Goals of Reading Recovery

- uses strategies when reading and writing
- independence
- reads at or above the class average

This slide will explain to parents the three main goals of Reading Recovery. The focus of each lesson is the teaching of strategies that enable the child to read at grade level and to become an independent reader and writer who will succeed in the classroom. In other words, the child is able to problem solve with print. This child has a box full of tools (rereading, looking at pictures, self-correcting, etc.) to help fix reading problems. These tools can help in almost any situation and apply to all types of reading. In more traditional remedial reading programs, the child may be taught the tricky word by the teacher supplying the word and then teaching the word in the absence of the book. However, this knowledge was not taught to be transferred to other reading situations. Moreover, being told the word did not provide the child with a tool to figure out other tricky words. Since the child works individually with the teacher in Reading Recovery, each lesson is tailored to meet specific needs.

**Slide 5 Text:**

The Reading Recovery Lesson

10 minutes of reading

10 minutes of writing

10 minutes of reading

Parents will be informed that children in Reading Recovery learn to read and write by engaging in real reading and writing activities. The thirty minute lesson is divided into ten minute blocks of reading, writing, and more reading. In reading block number one, two book activities are completed. In the second block, the student learns about how words work and writes in a personal writing book. In the last reading block, a new book is introduced. The specific details of each lesson are designed to meet the strengths and needs of each child. However, the general framework of lessons is the same for all students. Parents will be invited to view at least one of their child's Reading Recovery lessons. This presentation information reflects what parents can expect to see during their visit to their child's Reading Recovery lesson.

**Slide 6 Text:**

1. Reading familiar books

In the first reading block, the child chooses from books that have been read more than once. This "easy" material allows the child to practice using strategies, focus on the meaning of the story, and

build fluency. During this warm-up the child works independently while building self-confidence.

**Slide 7 Text:**

2. Running records		
The clown got on	√ √ √ √	
and the lady got on	√ √ lake √ √	MSV
and the boy got on	√ √ box √ √	MSV
and the girl got on	√ √ √ √ √	
and the bear got on	√ √ √ √ √	
and the bicycle	√ √ bil √	MSV
got...	√	
squashed.	square	MSV

Also during the first reading block, a running record is taken on yesterday's new book that has only been read once. The teacher uses a shorthand technique, called a running record, to record everything the child does while reading. The box on the left is an example of text that a child might be reading. The box on the right is an example of a running record. What the child said during the reading event is recorded above what the text actually said. The checks represent the words the child read exactly as written in the text.

This sample is then used to analyze the student's oral reading behavior and to identify the child's strengths. Looking at the errors

made by the child, the teacher determines what kind of information is being used during reading. The teacher examines errors to decide whether or not the error makes sense, fits in an English sentence, and looks like the word printed in the book (Clay, 1993a). Good readers use all three kinds of information during the reading event. The slide of the running record reveals that all of the child's errors fit in English sentences and were visually similar. However, the errors did not make sense.

The teacher also uses the running record to investigate what strategies, or tools from the tool box, are being used. On the slide, the child rereads two different lines. This behavior indicates that the child knew the reading was not making sense. However, the tool of self-correction was not used.

The running record is very important. This daily document guides instruction by helping the teacher decide what reading behaviors to reinforce and what behaviors need to be learned. The teacher analyzing the running record used in this example will probably emphasize to the child that all reading must make sense and self-corrections are necessary when meaning is lost. The child will likely be praised for rereading when the book did not make sense.

**Slide 8 Text:**

3. Words

h			at
b	cat	the	is
s			en

The second ten minute block begins with working with words, which is only a few minutes of the lesson. The teacher helps the child create a link between what is known to something new (Clay, 1993b). Using magnetic letters, the child manipulates the first and last parts of known words to construct new words. For example, if the word *cat* is know, the first part can be changed to make *hat*, *bat*, and *sat*. The connection between taking words apart in reading and writing is also reinforced in this segment of the lesson. Children learn during this portion of the lesson that knowing how to read and write one word enables them to read and write many other words. They are learning how words work during this portion of the lesson. The parents will be given the magnetic letters to practice making words, like their child does in lessons.

**Slide 9 Text:**

4a. Writing

me	took	mom
me	look	

My mom took me to the store.

Students write everyday in their journals for the remainder of the second block. The top half of the book is the work page. On this portion, the child may practice writing high frequency words very quickly (i.e., *me*). The child may also apply the knowledge gained from making and breaking words to use analogies of a known word to write an unknown word (i.e., *look* to *took*). Sound and letter boxes are another method used to help the child problem solve to figure out words (i.e., *mom*). The teacher constructs the number of needed boxes, and the child fills in the letters.

The bottom half of the book is where the actual message is recorded. First, the message is composed orally. Then, the pen is shared between the teacher and the student, with the child writing as independently as possible in his/her own language. The child is learning how to hear and record the sounds in words.

With the assistance of another Reading Recovery teacher, the writing portion of the lesson will be demonstrated. An example of a writing book will be attached to the chalkboard for better viewing. After a brief conversation, the message, "My mom took me to the store," will be composed orally and then written. The "child" will practice writing a high frequency word, use an analogy, and fill in sound boxes. The teacher will share the pen to finish writing the word *store* after the "child" has written the letter *s*.

**Slide 10 Text:**

4b. Cut-up sentence

My mom took me to the store.

The child's sentence is written on a sentence strip and cut into word chunks and words. The child reassembles the message and reads it again. The same cut-up sentence is sent home for extra practice. The puzzle-like sentence reinforces one-to-one matching and directionality, in addition to checking and monitoring behaviors.

Parents will be given an envelop containing the same cut-up sentence used in the slide show. Even though this task will normally be completed by the child, parents will have the opportunity to construct the sentence. The behavior of monitoring will be explained by discussing how the novice reader must pay close attention to distinguish between the three words that all start with the letter *m* and the three different words that begin with the letter *t*. Parents will check their work by rereading the arranged sentence.

**Slide 11 Text:**

5. Reading a new book

In the second ten-minute reading block, the entire time is devoted to a new book. The child and the teacher talk about the pictures in the book, and then it is read by the child. The book should offer a bit more challenge than the books read in the lesson, but it should be within the child's reach (Clay, 1993b). The focus on the



reading event is always to understand the author's message. This book will be used for the next day's running record.

**Slide 12 Text:**

What Parents Need to Know about Reading

1. Understanding is the goal.
2. Not all mistakes need to be fixed.
3. To be a better reader a child must read.

Reading is a complex, mental activity that seems automatic to literate adults, and contemplating how it happens seems abstract. Helping parents define reading is important. This slide offers support for the specific techniques they should employ while listening to their child read.

The analogy of learning to drive a car compared to learning how to read will help parents understand the complex nature of this experience. In driving, many behaviors must be done at once to be successful with the task. Controlling the steering wheel alone does not make someone a driver nor does being able to brake, accelerate, or shift. The goal of driving is to coordinate all of these actions in order to get from point A to point B safely. In reading, pronouncing all the words correctly does not make someone a reader nor does being able to read fluently, using visual information, or sounding out tricky words. The goal of reading is to use a variety of strategies in an orchestrated manner while integrating the cue sources of

meaning, structure, and visual display in order to comprehend from the beginning to the end of the book.

Reading and driving are also alike in that all errors do not have to be fixed. When traveling fifty miles per hour in an area restricted to forty-five miles an hour, most drivers do not stop, back up, and follow the speed limit exactly. Instead, when the area is traveled again, more caution might be taken to pay more attention to the posted speed limit sign. When reading, all readers, efficient and poor, make mistakes or miscues, just like drivers. The reader who is focused on making sense knows which miscues need to be fixed. It's unrealistic to expect readers to "follow all road signs" at all times and neither should they. The goal is to get the meaning, not necessarily to get each and every word all the time.

Experience makes all of us better drivers and readers. With lots of time and repeated practicing with driving and reading growth will occur.

### Slide 13 Text:

#### General Ways to Foster Literacy at Home

1. Have a special place where your child can read, preferably a flat surface.
2. Make time to listen to your child read.
3. Continue reading to your child.
4. Have additional books and writing materials available for your child to use.
5. Show your child that you are a reader and a writer.

A general list of ways to foster literacy in the home provides parents with some additional possibilities for helping their child. This list applies to all literacy learning and not just to the Reading Recovery program.

1. Reading at a table allows a child to point at individual words as needed without having to coordinate handling a book. Also, sitting next to your child shows your support.

2. Reading Recovery books come home nightly. Setting a regular reading time will establish a routine for the child. Approximately ten to fifteen minutes is needed to complete all activities.

3. The books brought home from Reading Recovery need to be read by the child. The books have been read before, and they are at the appropriate level. However, other books can be read by parents to their child. Children are still growing in their understanding of how

books work as well as increasing their vocabularies when listening. Therefore, make reading to your child another goal at home. A possible read-aloud list (Radencich, Beers, & Schumm, 1993) will be distributed to all parents. *The New Read-Aloud Handbook* (1989) by Jim Trelease that provides many additional suggestions will also be shared as a possible resource for parents. Many of the recommended books, including the *Handbook*, can be checked out for no fee at the New Hampton Public Library.

4. Literacy development can be fostered when a child has additional supplies to practice newly acquired knowledge. Buy books as possible gifts. Also, encourage your child to write lists, stories, letters, or anything else.

5. Parents are powerful models. Therefore, demonstrate to your child how reading and writing are a part of your daily life. Read items, such as newspapers, recipes, maps, and telephone books when your child is present. At times when you are engaged in writing notes to school, grocery lists, or checks, make sure your child is again in your presence. Additionally, let the child write with you. For example, a parent could say to a child, "I'll tell you what we're getting at the grocery store, and you write it down."

## Discussion of Slides 14 and 15 after the Modeling of the Child/Parent Reading Event

The next two slides will be accompanied by a demonstration. With the assistance from another Reading Recovery teacher, the reading experience between an adult and a child will be modeled. A text from the Reading Recovery library will be used to show several items. First, the parents will watch a Reading Recovery teacher play the part of a child and observe the “child’s” reading behaviors. Second, parents will observe the techniques used by the adult. Parents will be encouraged to pay particular attention to what both the adult and “child” are doing at the point of difficulty and be prepared to discuss their observations after the book is read.

Using the text, *Ben’s Treasure Hunt* (Randell, 1996), the adult and “child” will sit side by side at a table. First, the title and treasure maps will be discussed. The book will then be read by the “child” who will use the strategies of stopping, rereading, self-correcting, looking at pictures, and using initial visual clues with rereading throughout the sixteen pages of text. The adult will model some helping techniques by being positive, providing wait time, accepting mistakes, and asking questions. The parents will follow the event with their own copies of the text.

## Slide 14 Text:

### Evidence of Strategy Use

- stopping or hesitating
- rereading
- running finger under tricky word
- self-correcting
- looking at the pictures
- saying the first part of the tricky word and rereading

Since the reference to strategy use was made several times throughout the slide show presentation, parents need more concrete information on this important reading topic. Therefore, after the demonstration is completed, parents will share the behaviors they observed the “child” doing during the reading event. The slide will help parents discuss what they saw.

Strategies are “in the head processes” (Clay, 1993b, p. 43) used by readers to problem-solve during the reading event. Since they cannot be directly observed, parents need to know the behaviors that indicate the use of strategies. Encourage your child to try these strategies, and praise your child when these strategies are used independently:

•Stopping and hesitating indicate that a child is noticing that something is not right. On page two of *Ben’s Treasure Hunt*, the “child” stopped at the word *clue* for a moment and again at the word

*pocket* on page twelve. A child may be rereading silently to figure out the problem or to recall a word. Parents need to observe patiently without intervening.

- Rereading is often used by a child to confirm or gain understanding. During the demonstration, the “child” reread the phrase, “A clue!” on page four with more emphasis while running her finger under the word *clue*. Fluency and expression may also be added with rereading. When a tricky word appears, a child may run his/her finger under the word. This action helps the child scan for known chunks and focus on matching the individual letter with its possible sound.

- Self-correcting is the action of fixing mistakes. The word *up* was substituted for the word *to* and then corrected by the child on page six of the text. The same actions occurred again on page fourteen when the “child” self-corrected the phrase “A clue!” with “A plane!”. If a child is focused on reading for meaning, this behavior will become more automatic. Given time, a child will often correct what doesn’t make sense.

- Pictures can provide additional understanding of the text. The pictures on page eight and nine of the text were used to help the “child” figure out the word *table*. Scanning the pictures can provide clues as well as help a child confirm what is being read.

•Using initial visual clues and rereading is another strategy that may help a child figure out tricky words. For example, during the demonstration, the “child” enunciated the *sh* sound in the text word *shouted* on page ten, went back to the beginning of the sentence, and was successful. The child is using the letters as one clue and reading again for an additional clue to make an educated guess about what word might make sense in the story.

**Slide 15 Text:**

Helping When your Child Reads

- Be a cheerleader.
- Give lots of wait time.
- Expect and accept some mistakes.
- Ask questions about making sense instead of always giving the word.
- Be there!

Next, the parents will discuss the techniques used by the adult during the modeled reading session. A limited, but specific, list of suggestions will provide parents a means for discussing their observations as well as methods of offering assistance they can utilize while they listening to their child read.

•When looking at a glass with some water in it, one can say it is half empty or half full. There are at least two different ways to look at every situation. When you listen to your child read, make sure



you are offering more positive than negative feedback. Looking for the errors is easy. Therefore, try focusing your attention on what your child does well. For example, the adult praised the “child” on page six for going back when she realized it didn’t make sense.

- Learn to take a lot of deep breaths instead of offering immediate support or feedback. During the reading of *Ben’s Treasure Hunt*, the adult allowed the “child” to use a strategy to figure out the word *shouted* and to make sense of the sentence on page fourteen. If the parent intervenes too soon a child can develop the habit of waiting for the parent to do the work (Clay, 1993b). When your child stops, makes a mistake, or appeals for help, silently and slowly count to ten. Then, suggest the child try using a strategy.

- All readers, accomplished and struggling, make mistakes. If you expect perfection with every word, then that will become your child’s focus. However, the true goal of reading is understanding. If your child reads, “The bear went into the forest,” instead of “The bear went into the woods,” ask yourself if your child understood the author’s message before intervening. The adult in the demonstration made no comments during or after the reading about the “child’s” reference to T.V. instead of the text word *television* on page six.

- After giving plenty of wait time to problem solve, encourage a child to make sense of the story. Use the prompts of “What word might make sense there?” or supply the word and ask “Would that

make sense?”. Getting the child to think will foster independence. During the reading, the “child” was able to be successful on her own when the adult told her to think about what word might make sense instead of supplying the word *pocket* on page twelve.

- Show your child that you value literacy by making a commitment to be available to listen. Reading Recovery books are about enjoying a story and not calling out a string of words written on a page. Therefore, be present as much as possible when your child is reading, just as the adult in the demonstration.

A handout containing a list of read-alouds, hours of the public library, suggestions for fostering literacy at home, reading strategies, and techniques for helping will be distributed to the parents. The session will end with time devoted to questions and answers.

### Conclusions

Since parents will continue to have a significant role in their child’s life as that of teacher, one way to improve the Reading Recovery program may be through parent involvement. If parents are educated on ways to improve the quality of help they provide their child, then this knowledge may extend beyond the Reading Recovery program. Furthermore, if the effects are to be long-lasting, then

continuing literacy learning at home once the Reading Recovery sessions have stopped is an area that deserves much consideration (Holland, 1991).

This slide show presentation was designed for the specific audience of Reading Recovery parents. However, parents helping children who are learning to read is not limited to this particular group. Programs similar to this one could be expanded to all parents of emergent readers.

Parents will always be a child's first teacher. Their role in education needs to be acknowledged, celebrated, and fostered by schools. As teachers, we have a responsibility to provide our students' parents with as much education and direction as possible to help them help their child. Working together, we can raise a village of readers.

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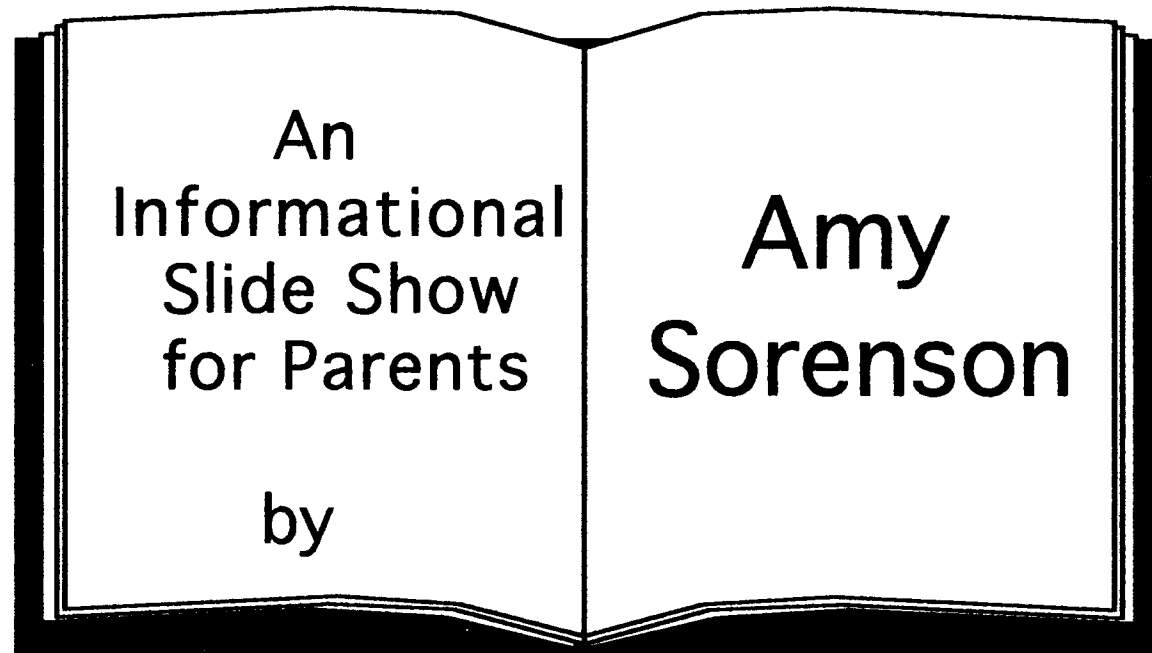
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## Appendix

# READING RECOVERY

Slide 1



# What is Reading Recovery?

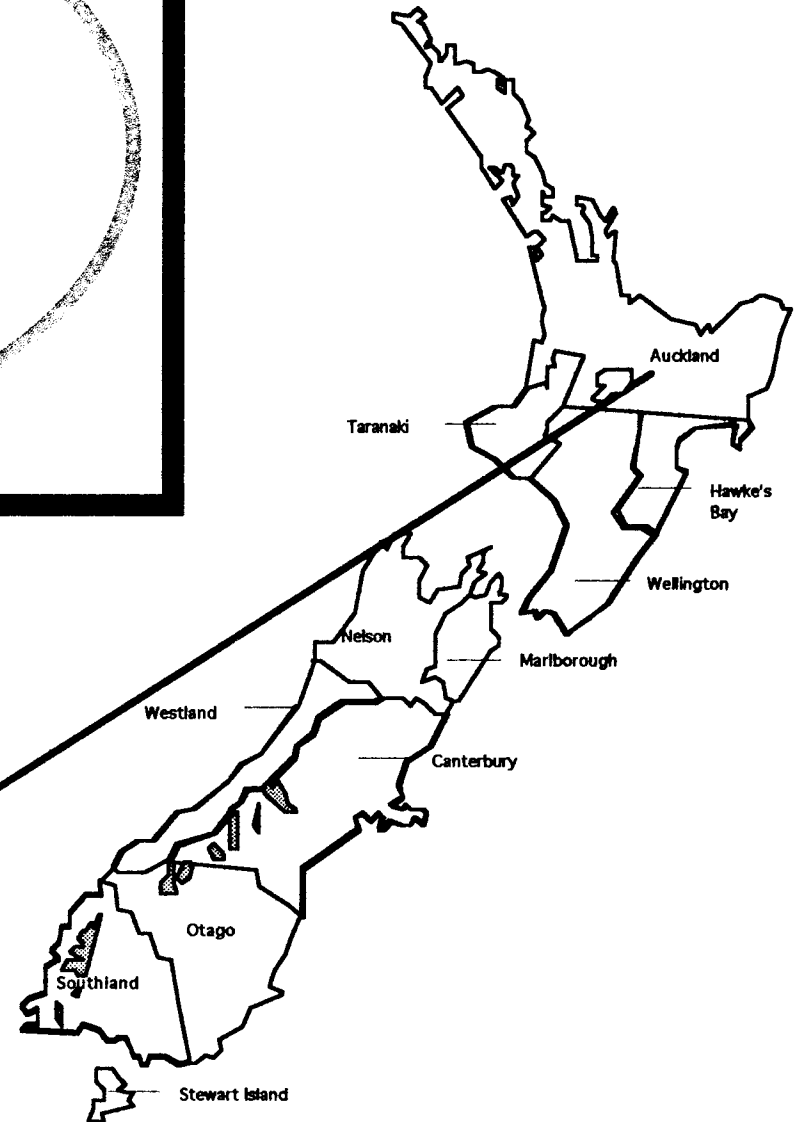
- **early intervention**
- **first grade students**
- **one-on-one tutoring**
- **strengths**
- **short term**
- **supplemental**



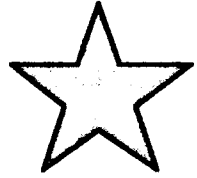


# History

## Auckland, New Zealand



# Goals of Reading Recovery



- uses strategies when reading and writing

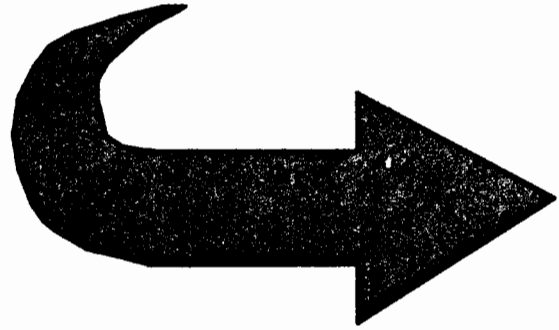


- independence

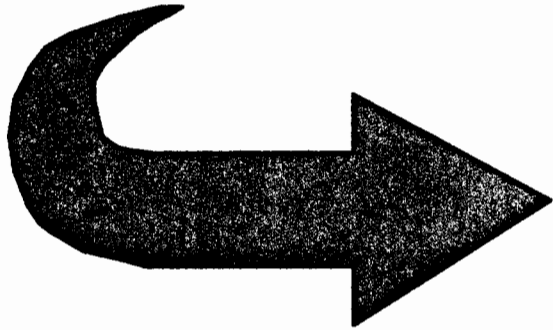


- reads at or above the class average

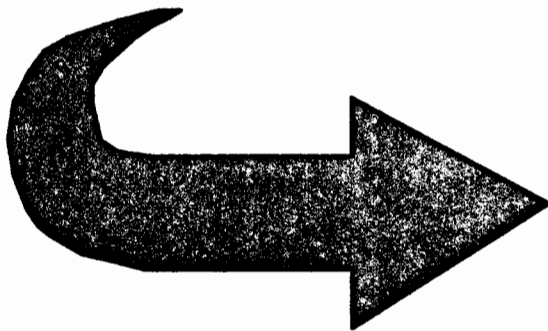
# The Reading Recovery Lesson



10 minutes of reading



10 minutes of writing



10 minutes of reading

# 1. Reading familiar books



# 2. Running records

The clown got on  
and the lady got on  
and the boy got on  
and the girl got on  
and the bear got on  
and the bicycle  
got...  
squashed.

Slide 7

<i>The Bicycle</i>		Accuracy 85.5%		
	E	SC	E MSV	SC MSV
✓✓✓ ✓ ← ✓✓ <u>lake</u> ✓✓ lady	1		M (S) (V)	
← ✓✓ <u>box</u> ✓✓ boy	1		M (S) (V)	
✓✓✓✓✓				
✓✓✓✓✓				
✓✓ <u>bil</u> ✓ bicycle	1		M (S) (V)	
✓				
<u>square</u> squashed	1		M (S) (V)	

# 3. Words

h

at

b

cat

the

is

s

en

Slide 8



# 4a. Writing

me look

m	o	m
---	---	---

me took

My mom took me  
to the store.

# 4b. Cut-up sentence

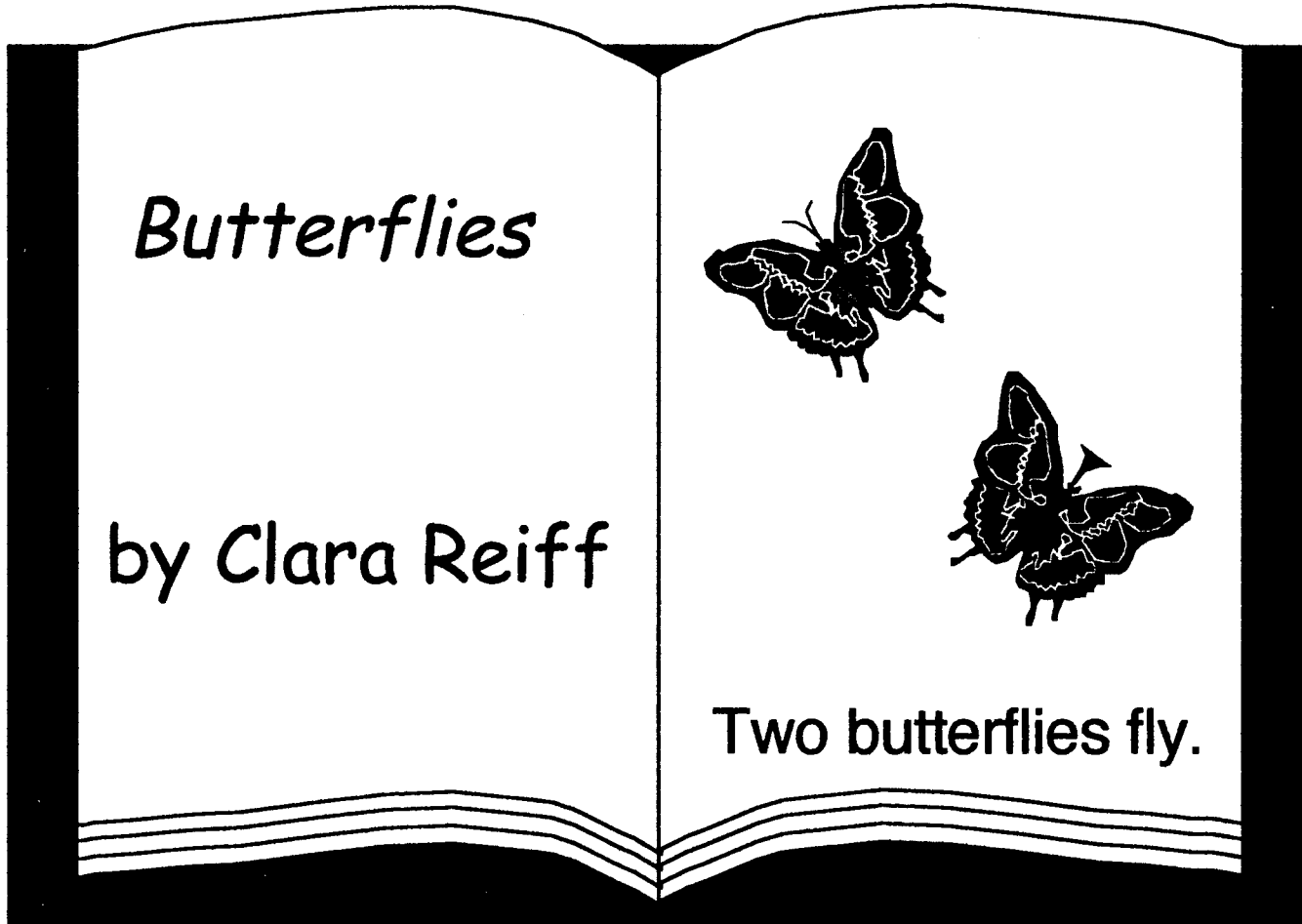


Slide 10

My mom took  
me to the store .

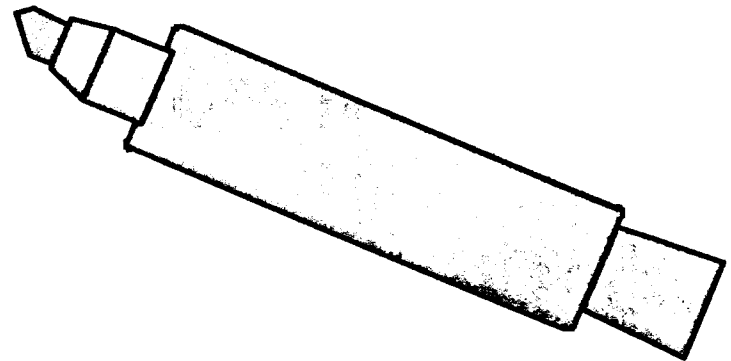


# 5. Reading a new book



# What Parents Need to Know about Reading

1. Understanding is the goal.
2. Not all mistakes need to be fixed.
3. To be a better reader a child must read.



# General Ways to Foster Literacy at Home

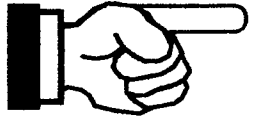
1. Have a special place where your child can read, preferably a flat surface.
2. Make time to listen to your child read.
3. Continue reading to your child.
4. Have additional books and writing materials available for your child to use.
5. Show your child that you are a reader and a writer.

# Evidence of Strategy Use

- stopping or hesitating
- rereading
- running finger under tricky word
- self-correcting
- looking at the pictures
- saying the first part of the tricky word and rereading the sentence



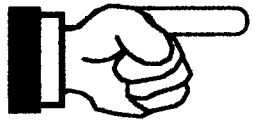
# Helping When Your Child Reads



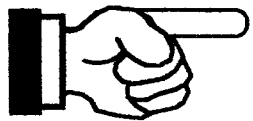
Be a cheerleader.



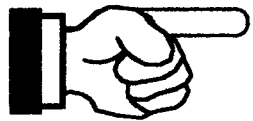
Give lots of wait time.



Expect and accept some mistakes.



Ask questions about making sense instead of always giving the word.



Be there!