

Interactive Literacy Activities Toolkit

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For Family Literacy Programs

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Background

Family literacy programs emerged in the 1980s and 1990s with the federally funded Even Start Family Literacy program championed by Congressman William F. Goodling. Congressman Goodling believed that

literacy begins at home. Parents as well as children should have the opportunity to develop their language and literacy skills. (Goodling Institute website)

The intent of family literacy programs is to provide integrated programming to serve the entire family, meaning that services focus on early childhood education, adult literacy (adult basic education and instruction for English language learners), parent education, and interactive parent and child literacy activities (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, para. 1). Generally, family literacy programs provide a range of services and activities, including parents helping their children succeed academically, particularly in language and literacy skills; increasing adults' language and literacy skills; and improving the family's economic well-being (Clymer, Toso, Grinder, & Sauder, 2017).

Unfortunately, the Even Start Family Literacy program was defunded in FY 2011-2012 after a number of federal research projects reported mixed results. Although the federal Even Start program no longer exists, family literacy programs weave together funding through other federal programs (e.g., Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, Title II; Every Student Succeeds Act), state initiatives, community support, and foundations (Clymer et. al., 2017).

Family Literacy Program Components

Family literacy programs are typically comprised of three to four integrated components: adult education, early childhood education, parent and child interactive literacy activities (ILAs), and parent¹ education. Parent education is often integrated into the adult education and/or ILA curricula because content can be easily embedded in both components. For example, the topic of fostering healthy eating habits might include math that relates to a developing weekly food budget and creating healthy and affordable menus. The ILA activity could be about cooking healthy food with your child.

¹ We recognize that not all parents or adults that participate in family literacy programs are parents, but we will use the word *parent* throughout the document.

Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA)

Parent and child interactive literacy activities aim to support parents and children in learning together. One purpose of an ILA is to “increase and facilitate meaningful parent-child interactions focused primarily on language and literacy development [a] in high-quality learning environment where they can learn and play together” (Jacobs, 2004, p. 197). As such, ILAs help parents understand how children learn, increase both their own and their child’s language and literacy skills, and enhance parents’ understanding of how and why they need to connect and partner with their child’s teachers. ILAs can occur anywhere and at any time and are critical to help parents understand how children learn and grow and how they can contribute to their child’s developmental and academic growth, particularly their language and literacy development.

Engaging in interactive literacy activities is important in the home, program, and when doing everyday activities at the grocery store or on a walk, for example. For example, ILAs

- support parents and children learning together.
- help parents support children’s growth and learning, particularly with language and literacy skills.
- support parents’ involvement in their children’s educational development and achievement.
- provide parents ideas and strategies to help children learn at home.
- provide parents with opportunities and experiences to practice working with their child in a safe environment.
- assist parents to understand and embrace the idea that they are the child’s first teacher.

Research About Interactive Literacy Activities and Parent Engagement

Learning to read is a developmental process; children are not born with the ability to read. Children must follow a sequence of behaviors as they learn to read, from understanding the nuances of letter sounds and the relationship of the sounds to written letters, to fluency and comprehension of text. Children must acquire the building blocks of reading to be successful readers and learners when entering school (Brown, 2014). Literacy is also viewed as a social practice where reading is embedded into our everyday social interactions. When literacy is integrated into relationships children learn that it is used for real-life, social purposes.

Consistently, research has demonstrated the positive effects of parent involvement on children’s reading acquisition and academic success (Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995; Senechal &

Young, 2008). Overall, parent involvement leads to improved student behavior, better attendance, and better achievement in school (Fan & Chen, 2001). Parent involvement in children’s language and literacy development begins at a child’s birth by engaging infants in conversation and language play and continues as children grow older, including assisting children with homework in elementary school (Grinder & Toso, 2012). As stated in Grinder and Toso (2012), “Current research indicates that merely educating parents about what to do and giving general suggestions may not be enough; parents may need explicit instruction to help them learn and practice how to work with their children to achieve greater academic success” (p. 1). Interventions that teach parents how to engage in literacy activities with their children produced stronger results than those activities where parents do not receive such guidance (Senechal & Young, 2008).

One of the best means of encouraging all aspects of language and literacy development is to engage in dialogic reading, which is an interactive reading experience where the parent asks open-ended questions about the book or experiences related to the book, elaborating on the child’s answers, and providing encouragement and praise (Whitehurst et al., 1988). Jessica Folsom (2017), at the Iowa Reading Research Center, provides a thorough explanation of how dialogic reading is an interactive reading experience for the parent and child allowing for conversation that encourages new vocabulary, comprehension, and verbal fluency. However, when designing ILA activities that incorporate dialogic reading, it is important to keep in mind the age of children served. Mol, Bus, de Long, and Smeets (2008) found that dialogic reading does not have as great an impact on older children (4 to 5-year-olds) who may need more focus on “specific type questions, evaluating and expanding on the child’s responses, and having the child repeat the expanded phrases” (p. 21), in comparison to younger children (2 to 3-years-of-age) who may need questions and discussion about story content. Appendix A provides more information about how to engage in a dialogic reading experience. Further, Folsom’s website provides an explanation about dialogic reading in English, but the website also provides similar explanations about dialogic reading in various languages for parents.

Understanding Children’s Language and Literacy Development

It is important to keep in mind these fundamental principles about early literacy development:

1. Learning to read and write begins before formal schooling.
2. Literacy has a function.
3. A strong oral language foundation is critical.
4. Learning occurs best through active engagement and constructing knowledge.

To help understand the importance of ILAs, it is important to include information to parents about language and learning skill development related to these principles. This information will help parents understand what their children need to learn and understand to gain language and literacy skills.

1. Oral language

- a. *Defining oral language development.* Oral language is the way we use spoken words to convey knowledge, ideas, and feelings.
- b. *Emphasizing oral language development in ILAs.* Oral language lays the foundation for reading and writing to help children become successful readers and communicators.
 - i. Children's understanding of the small sounds of speech (for example, beginning and ending sounds of words) help them figure out words, which ultimately helps children develop vocabulary and make sense of what they read. This is called phonological awareness.
 - ii. Oral language helps improve children's decoding strategies, which refers to the ability to look at a word and sound it out or break it down to figure out the word's meaning. This ability influences fluency and comprehension.
- c. *Ways to encourage oral language development.* Conversations help children learn new words and hear the sounds of speech. Other examples include playing with silly words and word games, reading poems and nursery rhymes, emphasizing beginning and ending sounds of words, telling stories, and playing with rhymes.

2. Alphabetic Principle

- a. *Defining alphabetic principle.* Alphabetic principle is the concept that letters and letter patterns relate to the sounds of spoken language.
- b. *Emphasizing alphabetic principle in ILAs.* Children who understand that there is a predictable relationship between sounds and letters can more easily decipher both familiar and unfamiliar words, which then leads to fluency. Letters are the building

blocks of language and, ideally, children should know the letters of the alphabet and what they look like before school.

- c. *Ways to encourage alphabetic principle.* Parents and teachers have many opportunities to encourage alphabet principle throughout the day. For example, parents can point out letters in the environment, have a letter “of the day,” develop a book of letters, practice sounding out letters, and read alphabet books.

3. Vocabulary Knowledge

- a. *Defining vocabulary knowledge.* Vocabulary knowledge refers to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. There are four types of vocabulary – listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- b. *Emphasizing vocabulary knowledge in ILAs.* Vocabulary words are critical to learning to read. Children must use the words they hear orally to understand the words they see in print. A child’s vocabulary in the early grades is related to reading comprehension in the upper grades. Essentially, we cannot comprehend words we do not know or understand.
- c. *Ways to encourage vocabulary development.* Parents have so many opportunities to promote vocabulary development. For example, parents can engage in conversations with children, do shared reading and ask questions or engage in dialogic reading (see Appendix A for information for parents about this topic), read for meaning, ask questions about the reading, introduce new words, engage in imaginary play, retell stories using new vocabulary, and look at book illustrations to understand word meaning.

4. Fluency and Comprehension

- a. *Defining fluency and comprehension.* Fluency is the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with expression. Fluency is considered to be the bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Comprehension is the ability to read or listen and understand text or the spoken word.
- b. *Emphasizing fluency and comprehension in ILAs.* Learning to read essentially consists of developing fluency and comprehension together.
 - i. Developing these two skills involves an interconnected reading process; if the learner is spending time decoding and/or figuring out words and not reading or

listening with fluency then mental energy is spent figuring out words rather than understanding their meaning.

- ii. Reading fluency is one of the greatest influences on reading comprehension.
 - c. *Ways to encourage fluency and comprehension.* Parents can read aloud with their children, talk about past events, reread stories, talk about events in the story, and make drawings that represent the sequence of a story.
5. Print Awareness and Writing
- a. *Defined print awareness and writing.* Print awareness is the understanding that print occurs in a structured way, such as conventions in English including reading from left to right, top to bottom, and knowing that words and spaces occur between words.
 - b. *Emphasizing print awareness and writing in ILAs.* Print awareness is the understanding that print has different functions depending upon the context (e.g., menus, grocery list, a book, signs, and so on).
 - i. Print awareness provides the background for how reading and writing are learned. Children with poor print awareness tend to have poorer reading achievement.
 - ii. Writing begins with scribbling and is a part of children understanding that print has meaning.
 - c. *Ways to encourage print awareness and writing development.* Adults and children can write letters to each other, make grocery lists, find a family member pen pal, use writing in imaginary play, and write stories together.

Working with English Language Learner (ELL) Families

There are some English language learner families who may not have well-developed literacy skills in their native language. However, a parent can contribute to their children's language and literacy skill development, regardless of their own literacy needs. Family literacy programs need to approach each family based on their strengths, concerns, and hesitations regarding family literacy. For example, multilingual families can have fears that impede their desire to engage in family literacy programs. These fears can include:

- Fear that the child's English (or dominant language) will be stunted or delayed.
- Fear that the child will be confused by having and/or learning more than one language.
- Fear that introducing a second language will delay language development.

- Fear that lack of focus on English will lead to a lack of opportunity for jobs, higher education, and other opportunities in the future.

Parents who are pre-literate in their native language may need to engage in literacy activities that are less print dependent. For example, these parents can engage in many interactive literacy activities that include:

1. storytelling,
2. reading wordless picture books,
3. saying rhymes and sing songs,
4. going to the public library,
5. going to the park, community events, and other places that stimulate talk, and
6. engaging in meaningful conversations.

Some ELL parents may only be able to read in their native language. These parents can engage in all the above activities, but they can also read books in their native language or bilingual books to their children.

Parent Education

Parent education lessons can easily be integrated into ILA and adult education classes. Parent education is a time to discuss and reflect on the family, including child development, parent skills, health and nutrition, communication, etc. These are fantastic topics for an adult education class, which can then be easily developed into an ILA so that parents and children can learn more about these topics. For example, practitioners can develop an ILA that focuses on nutrition and making healthy food.

Developing an ILA

Systematic and ILAs that are written down will help staff develop clear goals and directions for activities for parents and children. It's a good idea to keep a binder to reference all activities and use in future classes. In addition, using a template (see Appendix B) can help maintain consistency when developing ILAs. The template is important to keep a record of what was done and to refine the ILA for future use. As mentioned, both in-person and take-home ILAs have three segments – before, during, and after the activity.

Questions to ask when developing the ILA on the template:

1. What is/are the specific objective(s) of the ILA?
 - The objective is what will be accomplished and explains what parents and children are going to learn during the activity. For example, by engaging in book reading children will learn vocabulary words and develop print knowledge.
2. How much time should be spent on each section (introduction of activity, activity, reflection/debrief)?
 - Ideally, a program should provide two or more hours of ILA per week to effect change and accomplish the goal of improving parent's and children's language and literacy skills development. This can be a combination of in-person and take-home ILA, but note that the in-person ILA provides opportunities to guide parents and to model activities.
 - The introduction of ILA may occur during adult and/or parent education classes. Parents can learn about the ILA objectives and how to do the activity with their children. Parents may even help prepare the ILA materials as they discuss the activity.
 - Efforts should be made to connect what is taught in adult and/or parent education to what is taught in ILA.
3. What resources and materials are needed for the activity?
 - Generally, each activity will need resources and materials that the teacher must prepare or gather. Take-home activities may require more preparation to develop the materials and produce a document that explains the activity.
 - Each child/parent should have their own materials do the activity.
4. What needs to be done to prepare for the activity?
 - This will depend upon the ILA activity. For example, multiple materials may need to be prepared for the activity and for everyone participating. Materials such as books or items may also need to be purchased or prepared for an activity (e.g., Popsicle sticks to write words on).
5. What can be done to help parents clearly understand the activity?
 - Each ILA activity should clearly outline the explanation to parents, including the purpose, the materials, and how to engage in the activity, whether face-to-face or

take-home. If parents are doing a take-home ILA, a worksheet that explains the activity is necessary.

6. How much modeling of the activity is important?
 - Time can be gauged based on how well the parents understand the activity. Parents may need several opportunities to practice the activity depending on its complexity.
7. How does the teacher scaffold and work with the families while they engage in the activity (for face-to-face ILA)? Scaffolding is when the practitioner or adult provides temporary instructional support to enhance learning that builds on the experiences and knowledge of the learner to help the learning of new skills. For example, the adult may ask a probing question such as “what would happen if we did not build the tower so tall”?
 - Observe families as they begin working and playing together. During the observation answer these questions:
 1. Do the parents and children understand what they need to do for the activity?
If parents seem hesitant, perhaps explain the activity again.
 2. How can the activity or engagement with the activity be extended by asking questions or providing suggestions?
8. What are some reflective questions (debrief) to ask parents after the activity?
 - Discuss the activity with the parents and pose questions such as:
 - a. Did you enjoy the activity? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you think your child liked the activity? Why or why not?
 - c. What did you learn?
 - d. What do you think your child learned?
 - e. How might you adapt this activity to do at home?
 - f. What would you change in the activity?

Modes of Interactive Literacy Activities

There are four types of interactive literacy activities. Regardless of the type of ILA implemented, practitioners should develop the content for the ILA on the template that includes gathering the materials and determining the timeframe for each section, preparing for the activity, and deciding what to do before, during, and after the ILA.

1. *In-person*

- a. All parts of the ILA occur in-person with the family and child together and this is considered a separate component in the family literacy program.
 - b. The ILA activity is discussed during AE or PE and then the parent and child meet immediately after or another time is scheduled if the parents and children are not in the same building.
 - c. The ILA can occur in any configuration, but the actual ILA occurs with a teacher present to help guide and scaffold the activity.
2. *Hybrid ILA* – The activity is introduced and explained during a lesson in an adult education or parent education class. The activity is modeled at this time and parents are presented with an activity to do at home with their child that connects with what was learned in AE.
 3. *Take-home ILA* – The activity is briefly introduced to parents, with instructions for how to do the activity. The entire activity is completed at home. The take-home kit is provided to parents and includes a description of the purpose and how to do the ILA as well as any required materials.
 4. *Remote ILA* – This ILA is entirely online. The activity is introduced to the parents during the adult education and/or parent education component online. The remote ILA may occur synchronously (live online) or asynchronously (recorded for later viewing).

In-Person

Conducting ILAs in an in-person format provides the ideal situation to work directly with families and to scaffold new and exciting experiences for future ILAs. An example of an in-person ILA (*Beginning Sound Sticks A to Z*) can be found in Appendix C.

1. *Before the activity* – Introduce the activity to the parents during the ILA component, before the children join the parents. The introduction may also occur during adult and/or parent education. If the children are present during the introduction, it may be easiest to provide an activity or snack for the children. During this time:
 - a. Explain to parents the purpose and objective(s) of the activity. For example, discuss what the child will learn and what the parent and child will “get” from engaging in the activity.
 - b. Explain each step of the activity – describe and show the parents the materials they will use during the activity.
 - c. Model the activity – invite a parent to demonstrate the activity.

- d. Answer any questions that parents may have about your expectations and/or how to do the activity.
2. *During the activity* – Act as a support for parents and children. This might include re-explaining, modeling, or scaffolding the activity.
3. *After the activity* – Provide time to reflect or review the learning experience and to ask parents their views and thoughts about the activity. Refer to the questions outlined in #8 on page 11.

Hybrid

A hybrid ILA involves having a lesson about the topic during the adult (or parent) education class, introducing the activity, and then having the families do the activity at home. During the next adult or parent education class, families discuss how they did the activity at home with their children. Appendix D provides an example of a hybrid AE and ILA activity.

1. *Before the activity* – During the AE or parenting component, introduce a topic by having parents read articles, engage in activities, and discuss the topic. Next, introduce the ILA to the parents and explain what they will be doing at home with their child. It is important to explain the objectives and what the child will learn, and to model the activity. Also, be sure to provide a parent the instructions that explain what the parents will need and what they are going to do at home.
2. *Take home activity* – Parents take the activity home and follow the instructions on the parent document. Provide a reflection sheet (see Appendix E) about the activity for parents to complete and to document the amount of time spent on the activity. Ask them to bring the reflection sheet back to the next AE or parenting session.
3. *After the activity* – At the next AE or parenting session, provide time to reflect and review the learning experience and to ask parents their views and thoughts about the activity. If needed, have parents refer to the reflection sheets they completed and give them feedback on their experiences. Collect the reflection sheets so that you are able to document time spent at home on ILA.

Take-Home

There are many types of take-home ILAs, and they can range from casual to structured. Casual take-home ILAs are done while the parent and child are going about their daily activities. For example, a parent might talk about fruits and vegetables in the grocery store or talk about what letters of the alphabet each fruit begins with. Or a parent may go on a walk with a child and

make up silly words and rhyming words as they walk (“I see trees” “Bees, rhymes with trees”). Practitioners can develop take-home kits that provide ideas for casual ILA as well as specific instructions for a more structured ILA. For example, Zeece and Wallace (2009) provide guidelines on how to develop quality take-home literacy kits, such as planning with a purpose, asking yourself questions (“why am I creating the bags?”), and selecting items with sensitivity (is this an activity parents and children will enjoy?). An example of a structured take-home activity can be found in Appendix F.

Zeece and Wallace (2009) also provide suggestions about what to include in the Take-Home bag such as books, developmentally appropriate activities, games, manipulatives, and a parent letter explaining the activity and how to care for the items in the bag. The article also provides a number of book suggestions and materials for developing take-home literacy bags (pp. 38-42).

1. *Before the activity* – Introduce the activity briefly to parents so there is an understanding of how to engage in the activity.
 - a. Explain the objectives, materials, and timeframe for the activity.
 - b. Explain what children are expected to learn and what to expect from their child developmentally.
 - c. Explain and model how to do the activity and answer any questions.
 - d. Discuss important behaviors that a parent might do during the activity with their child, including:
 - i. engaging in conversations,
 - ii. asking open-ended questions that require the child think beyond yes and no answers,
 - iii. introducing new vocabulary words, and
 - iv. talking about how the activity relates to their home life.
 - e. Provide a sheet to parents that outlines exactly how to do the activity with easy-to-follow instructions and pictures.
2. *After the activity at home (Use reflection sheet)* – Provide a reflection sheet (see Appendix E) about the activity for parents to complete and to document the amount of time spent on the activity. Provide time when you meet with the parents again to reflect and discuss the activity and their experiences with their child. If needed, have parents

refer to the reflection sheets they completed and give them feedback on their experiences. The reflection sheet can also be used to document other ILA activities that the parents engage in at home. Collect the reflection sheets so that you are able to document time spent at home on ILA.

Remote

There may be instances when families are unable to attend the program in-person and a version of ILA may need to occur online. Although online ILA is not ideal because parents enjoy the opportunity of social networking with other families, there are advantages including higher participation in ILA. (Beschoner & Hutchison, 2016). However, attendance may increase when the online ILA classes are asynchronous (recorded) rather than synchronous allowing parents to choose the time to attend the ILA class. An example of a remote ILA can be found in Appendix G.

1. *Before the activity* – Introduce the activity so parents understand what to do in the online activity. This can be done in either the AE or PE component of the program. The overview may have to occur over one or two sessions, depending upon time and other topics discussed in class.
 - a. Explain the activity, including resources, activities to engage in, and a corresponding book.
 - b. As mentioned above, explain what children will learn from the activity and what to expect from the child developmentally. Include in the conversation suggestions about how to tailor the activity to children of different ages since many families may have multiple children at home.
 - c. Provide a list to parents of the common household items they will need to engage in the activity.
 - d. Introduce parents to educational apps or child-friendly websites where parents can select an additional online activity that is interesting to them and to their child. Appendix H provides list of ILA educational apps and websites.
 - e. Email or use other electronic means for providing parents with instructions for the ILA activity as well as a list of educational apps they can explore with their child.
 - f. Send out a reminder to parents via email, text, or phone call to remind parents about the recorded ILA, as well as any links for completing the ILA assignment.

2. *During the Activity* – Parents engage in the ILA activity at home with their child by attending the ILA that is live on-line or by watching the recorded ILA.
 - a. The parent should watch with their child the taped video of the instructor.
 - b. The instructor, if possible, will greet each child and draw on previous interactions with the families, if possible. The families will not be able to respond to the greeting because the session has been recorded. For example, the instructor might say, “José, your mom says you are working on spelling! That is great”.
 - c. The instructor will read the book and make comments and ask questions. The instructor will pause to acknowledge a response, as if the child were present.
 - d. After the story is read, the instructor will refer to the ILA discussed during AE or parenting class and/or discuss other possible activities for parents and children to do at home.
3. *After the Activity* – At the next AE or parent education class reflect or review with parents the activity and experiences they had with their child. Refer to #8 on page 11.

Additional Resources

1. Caspe, M. & Lopez, E.M. (2017). *Seven research-based ways that families promote early literacy*. Global Family Research Project.
https://globalfrp.org/content/download/88/593/file/Early+Literacy+Brief_Final.pdf
2. Reading Rockets environmental print article:
<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/environmental-print>
3. Five Easy Ways to help your child develop literacy skills:
<https://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/pr/posters/lit/flyerA-fillable.pdf>
4. Raising A Reader – parent tips for reading with children (8 languages available):
<https://www.raisingreaders.org/promoting-a-love-of-reading/parents-families/>
 - Arabic
 - Chinese (Mandarin)
 - English,
 - French
 - Somali
 - Spanish
 - Vietnamese
5. Reading Rockets - Parent reading tips documents for children who are babies, toddlers, pre-k, K, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades: <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/reading-tips-parents-multiple-languages#languages>
 - English (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, kindergartners, 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders)
 - Spanish (Babies, toddler, pre-k, K, 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade)
 - French (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd grades)
 - Arabic (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders)
 - Traditional Chinese (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders)
 - Dine (Navajo)
 - Haitian Creole (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders)
 - Hmong (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders)
 - Korean (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders)
 - Russian (preschool to grade 3)
 - Tagalog (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders)
 - Vietnamese (babies, toddlers, preschoolers, K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders)

Also have reading tips for children with disabilities on the Reading Rocket website.

6. Dial a story – FREE by calling the library’s Dial-A-Story service at 416-395-5400 by the Toronto Public Library: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/services/dial-a-story.jsp>

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Zeece, P.D. & Wallace, B.M. (2009). Books and good stuff: A strategy for building school to home literacy connections. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37, pp. 35-42.

Appendix A - Dialogic Reading

Folsom, J.S. (January 3, 2017). Dialogic reading: Having a conversation about books, Iowa Reading Research Center [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://iowareadingresearch.org/blog/dialogic-reading-having-a-conversation-about-books>.

Dialogic reading is an interactive reading experience and/or conversation during shared reading between an adult and a child. Questions and conversations can range from the “wh” questions that ask about specific details in the story to open-ended questions that ask children to converse about the story to questions that relate back to the child’s life (Flynn, 2011).

The blog by Folsom is an excellent explanation for parents to help understand how to engage in dialogic reading with their child. You can download the information in the following languages to discuss in the adult education, parent, or interactive literacy components.

English Downloads:

- Blog post explaining dialogic reading (may need to cut and paste into a Word document)
- Set of three interactive reading guide book inserts
- Set four CROWD bookmarks
- Set of four PEER bookmarks

Other Languages for the article Dialogic Reading: Having a conversation about books, Interactive reading guidebook inserts, CROWD bookmarks, and PEER bookmarks.

Arabic
Bosnian
Burmese
French
German
Karen
Lao
Chinese (Mandarin)
Nepali
Serbo-Croatian
Somali
Spanish
Swahili
Vietnamese

Appendix B -Template for Interactive Literacy Activity Lesson


Interactive literacy activities are a unique aspect of family literacy programs because they aim to support parent and child learning together rather than individually.

Time	Content	Materials
	Topic:	
Total Time:	Objectives:	
	Mode (In-person, hybrid, take-home, or remote):	
	Teacher prep for activity	
	I. Introduce the activity (before)	
	II. Activity (steps)	
	III. Debrief (after)	
	IV. Home Activity	

Appendix C – Sample Face-to-Face ILA

Beginning Letter Sounds A to Z

Interactive literacy activities are a unique aspect of family literacy programs because they aim to support parent and child learning together rather than individually.

Time	Content	Materials
	Topic: Beginning Sound Sticks A-Z (from www.pre-kpages.com)	
Total Time: 1 hour	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase children’s understanding of the letter-sound correspondence • To provide children practice-identifying beginning sounds of words • To expand children’s vocabulary • To assist children to learn the alphabet • To increase rich conversations between adults and children 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beginning Sound Stick Letters document (https://www.pre-kpages.com/docs/prekpages-beginning-sound-pictures.pdf) 2. One paint stirring stick per child (free at hardware stores) 3. Cardstock 4. Laminating film (for durability) 5. Scissors 6. Adhesive backed Velcro (from craft store)
	Teacher Prep for the Activity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect paint sticks for each child. Paint sticks can be obtained at various hardware stores free. 2. Cut out small pieces of Velcro and attach the soft side of the Velcro on each paint stick from top to bottom – 1 at the top for the letter and 5 more down the stick for the corresponding picture. See picture. 3. Print the <i>Beginning Sound Stick Letters</i> pages on cardstock and laminate each page for durability. 4. Cut out each circle – there should be one letter and five pictures that correspond to the letter. 5. Attach one piece of hard adhesive Velcro to the back of each circle. 6. Children and parents will attach the objects to the stick with the corresponding beginning sound. 7. If there is a large group of parents and children, then develop two copies of the activity so the parents and children can be at two tables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List above <p style="text-align: center;">EXAMPLE:</p> 
15 minutes	I. Introduce the activity (before) The teacher introduces the activity by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explaining the purpose of the activity and discussing/repeating that there are so many benefits for playing and engaging with their children including improved academic success and their relationship with their child. 2. Discussing the skills children will learn in this activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) New words b) Letters of the alphabet c) The relationship between a letter of the alphabet and the sound of the letter d) The beginning word sounds that match the letter 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paint sticks prepared with Velcro 2. Letter and Pictures with Velcro

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Explaining the steps of the activity to the parent: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Each child will receive a paint stick with soft Velcro pieces. b) Parents will decide if the letter should be on top of each stick prior to the game or if the child and parent should choose a letter. c) The circle pictures will be placed on a table face-up and mixed up. d) Children will then search for the five pictures with the beginning sound of the letter and attach each picture to the stick. e) Once all pictures are found, the children/parents will switch letters/paint sticks. 4. Modeling the activity for parents. 	
30 minutes	<p>II. Activity (steps)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have the parents and children sit around a table. Use a second set of activities at another table, if necessary. 2. Provide each child with a paint stick with the soft Velcro pieces. 3. Ask a parent to take the set of pictures for all of the letters, to put the circles face-up on the table, and to mix them up. 4. Have children, with the guidance of parents, search for pictures that start with the beginning letter sound that is at the top of their paint stick. 5. Once a child finds a picture, attach the picture to the stick and repeat until all five pictures are found. 6. When all the children (and parents) have found the pictures that match the letter, ask them to switch paint sticks/letters and play again. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paint sticks prepared with Velcro 2. Letter and Pictures with Velcro
20 minutes	<p>III. Debrief (after)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather parents together in either one large group or smaller groups, depending on children's ages. 2. Ask parents questions about the activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) What did the parent observe about the activity? b) Do you think your child enjoyed the activity? Why? c) How do you think you might extend the learning that occurs? 3. Any other questions? 	
10 minutes	<p>IV. Home Activity</p> <p>Discuss other activities that could be done at home to learn the alphabet and letter sounds.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Label objects around the house and say them aloud. 2. Read alphabet books and talk about the letter sounds. 3. Point out words in the environment such as on signs, food boxes, and menus. 4. Other ideas? 	

Appendix D - Sample Hybrid ILA

Summer Slide

Interactive literacy activities are a unique aspect of family literacy programs because they aim to support parent and child learning together rather than individually.

Time	Content	Materials
Topic: Preventing the Summer Slide through Comics		
Total Lesson Time: 40 minutes + 15 minutes debrief (during next class)	Objectives: At the end of the lesson, the parent will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain Summer Slide. • detail three strategies to prevent a reading slide. • describe how comics help children learn. • create a comic with their child and reflect on the experience. 	N/A
Approx. 45 minutes	Teacher Prep for the Activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read all articles thoroughly and prepare any comments or examples to clearly demonstrate. Also consider vocabulary or phrases that might be unfamiliar to parents and how to best present. 2. Print <i>Three Ways to Prevent Summer Slide</i> article and <i>Create a Comic Strip</i> handout. 3. Watch <i>Kids Create Comics</i> (1-7) videos. 4. Create a comic sample. <p>Note... All referenced articles and videos are listed below in the Essential Resources section. It is imperative that you review everything before beginning the lesson.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scholastic articles – <i>Three Ways to Prevent Summer Slide</i>, <i>Why Use Comics with Kids? How Comics Strips Help Kids Read and Learn</i>, <i>Create a Comic Strip</i> 2. Variety of writing utensils: Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, colored pencils 3. Electronic device/computer with internet connections
5 minutes	V. Introduce the activity (before) <i>Today we are going to talk about what schools refer to as the Summer Slide. Have you heard this term before? What does it mean to you?</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define Summer Slide. You can also draw a playground slide to assist in the definition. <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><i>The phrase used to describe the slide backward many children make in reading and math skills over the summer months.</i></p> 2. Talk about importance of eliminating/reducing the Summer Slide. <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><i>We want our children to enter the new school year, academically as close to where they left off the previous school year. Otherwise, teachers spend a great deal of time at the beginning of the year playing catch up, and lose valuable time teaching new skills.</i></p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. White board 2. Dry erase markers
35 minutes	II. Activity (steps) Adult Education/Parent Education Directions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scholastic article – <i>Three Ways to Prevent Summer Slide</i> (1 per caregiver)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute the Scholastic article – <i>Three Ways to Prevent Summer Slide</i>. Have parents take turns reading, clarifying unfamiliar words/terms as they are encountered. 2. Review the information and strategies. Encourage parents to share any additional ideas. Emphasize the importance of tapping into what their child is most interested in. Review the importance of varied reading experiences – child reads alone, child reads aloud to adult, adult reads aloud to child, and the benefits of each. 3. Shift to the topic of comics as a strategy to combat “slide” as referenced under article point #2 – Morning. Ask parents if they read comics themselves or with their children. Discuss the following: What are the benefits of comics (reading and creating)? How do comics help children learn? Have they ever created comics? Draw from the Scholastic comic articles for details and information. <p>Take-home ILA Prep/Directions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Outline key points (obtained from <i>How Comics Strips Help Kids Read and Learn</i> page two) for creating comics. If possible, present the <i>Kids Make Comics</i> videos (which ones you feel are most beneficial for your audience) Share the comic you created and discuss. Distribute copies of <i>Create a Comic Strip</i> handouts. Have parents practice creating a comic of their own. 2. Review the take home ILA activity. Parents will work with their child to create a comic using the additional <i>Create a Comic Strip</i> handouts. Any writing utensil can be used to create. They are encouraged to pay attention to what their child learned from the experience, how the experience went and what they might do different the next time. Parents are asked to return to class with a comic they created with their class and prepared to share. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Scholastic articles – <i>Why Use Comics with Kids? How Comics Strips Help Kids Read and Learn</i> 3. Scholastic handout – <i>Create a Comic Strip</i> (5 copies for each parent) 4. Sample completed comic 5. Variety of writing utensils: Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, colored pencils 6. OPTIONAL – laptop, internet connections, projector
<p>15 minutes debrief (during next class)</p>	<p>III. Debrief (after)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review key points from the previous lesson. What is Summer Slide? What are some ways to combat the “slide”? What are the benefits of using and creating comics with children? 2. Have parents present the comic they created with their child. How did it go? What did their child gain from the experience? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family generated comics

Appendix E – Reflection Sheet

Take-Home Interactive Literacy Activity Reflection Sheet

Your Name: _____



ILA ACTIVITY #1		
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:
Describe the activity (this can be a planned activity sheet or an everyday activity you might do):		
After the Activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Did you enjoy the activity? Why or why not?2. Do you think your child liked the activity? Why or why not?3. What did you learn?4. What do you think your child learned?5. What might you do at home with your child that is similar?6. How would you change the activity?		

ILA ACTIVITY #2		
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:
Describe the activity (this can be a planned activity sheet or an everyday activity you might do):		
After the Activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Did you enjoy the activity? Why or why not?2. Do you think your child liked the activity? Why or why not?3. What did you learn?4. What do you think your child learned?5. What might you do at home with your child that is similar?6. How would you change the activity?		

Appendix F – Sample Take-Home ILA

Alphabet Letter Word Game

Interactive literacy activities are a unique aspect of family literacy programs because they aim to support parent and child learning together rather than individually.

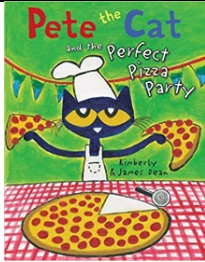
Time	Content	Materials
	<p>Topic: Alphabet Letter-Word Game Adapted from: https://thekindergartenconnection.com/never-ending-cvc-words-game/</p>	
Total Time:	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase children’s understanding of the letter-sound correspondence To assist children to understanding the segmenting and blending of sounds To provide children practice-identifying beginning sounds of words To expand children’s sight vocabulary To assist children to learn the alphabet To increase rich conversations between adults and children 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Upper and lower case letters (magnet or other type) Cookie Sheet (if you use magnetic letters – parents supply) Small wooden sticks Sheet of paper to record words Timer (advanced version) Bag (to put the activity in to take home) Parent Take-Home Sheet <i>Take-Home Activity Reflection</i> sheet
	<p>Teacher Prep for the Activity</p> <p>8. Take the small popsicle sticks and create word starts or word endings, such as “_ap”, “_in”, “_am”, “_at”, and so on. The chart below provides additional examples.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Three-letter (CVC) Words</p>  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">© 2017 Mervyn Brothers Publishing</p> <p>9. Develop a take-home sheet for the parent so that they have steps for how to do the activity plus how to do other suggested activities. (attached)</p> <p>10. Put the letters, small wooden sticks with word starters, and Take Home sheet in a bag.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List above <p style="text-align: center;">EXAMPLE:</p> 
	V. Introduce the activity (before)	

	<p>The teacher introduces the activity by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Explaining the purpose of the activity and discussing/repeating that there are so many benefits for playing and engaging with their children including improved academic success and their relationship with their child. 6. Discussing the skills children will learn in this activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> e) New words f) Letter sounds and how they form words. g) Letters of the alphabet h) The relationship between a letter of the alphabet and the sound of the letter and how the letter forms a word. i) Reading words as a whole. 7. Explaining the steps of the activity to the parent: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provide the take-home bag to the parents. b) Have parents choose a starter word such as “_in” and find the letters for that word from the pile of letters. c) If the letters are magnetic, use a cookie sheet for the game. d) Version #1: Make as many words as you can using the word starter. e) Version #2: Use the word starter stick and find as many words as you can by changing the first, middle, or last letter. f) Version #3: Play Version #1 or #2 and use a timer for a challenge. 8. Model Version #1 for the parents 	
	<p>VI. Activity (steps)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Parents and children engage in the activity at home. 8. Parents document the time doing the activity and their review of the activity using the <i>Take Home Activity Reflection</i> sheet. 	
	<p>VII. Debrief (after)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. When you meet again with parents, discuss the activity together. 5. Ask the questions that the parent answered on the <i>Take-Home Activity Reflection</i> sheet. 6. Collect the <i>Reflection</i> sheets for your records of Parent ILA time at home. 	
	<p>VIII. Other Activities</p> <p>Play other activities with the letters</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Sort letters by colors 6. Read alphabet books and match the letter to the book 7. Talk about words that rhyme with a word that starts with the letter. For example, “P” could be pink, ink, sink. 8. Other ideas? 	

Appendix G – Sample Remote ILA

Pete the Cat and the Perfect Pizza Party

Interactive literacy activities are a unique aspect of family literacy programs because they aim to support parent and child learning together rather than individually.

Time	Content	Materials
	<p>Topic: Learning letters and sounds with Pete the Cat https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6xdncgnDXA</p>	
Total Time:	<p>Objectives: At the end of today’s activity, families will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with the letter P, creating alliterative phrases • Identify words that begin with the letter P • Recall P letter toppings used in the story • Create a pizza of their own • Select and complete at least one activity from the Pinterest board 	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Pete the Cat: Perfect Pizza Party</i> by Kimberly and James Dean. Book or online read aloud https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6xdncgnDXA 2. Internet access (Pinterest): www.pinterest.com/bigbadwolfe/pete-the-cats-perfect-pizza-party/ 3. Materials to make a pizza
	<p>Teacher prep for activity Review plans and customize to best suit the needs and interests of your families. Gather materials to share.</p>	
	<p>VI. Introduce the activity (before) During PE time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the trailer video for the book. https://youtu.be/sLCBYpEvhXs. • Define alliteration. (Alliteration happens when you put together a series of words that have the same first sound. We often call them tongue twisters.) • Ask adults if they can think of any tongue twisters or examples of alliteration. (Seven sisters sang a silly song and Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.) • Address how alliteration is an important skill in literacy development and in particular, phonological awareness. • Read the book out loud or show the online read aloud. Point out strategies used to make the story engaging, questions that could be asked, comments that could be interjected. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce that this book also creates an opportunity to talk about other concepts like fractions, diversity in tastes, or anything else you see as being important. • Walk through the Pinterest board. Talk about what activities are most appropriate for what ages, what they child will learn through the activity and ways to adapt them. • Give an overview of the upcoming ILA so parents know what to expect and what materials to have available. • Online interactive read aloud • Family pizza making – Will they make a homemade crust? Will they purchase a crust? Will they use something already available such as pita bread or an English muffin? What toppings do their children like? Do they have or will they need to purchase ahead of time? What kinds of age appropriate fraction conversation can they have with their child? For example, younger child $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$, older child $\frac{1}{2} = \frac{2}{4} = \frac{4}{8}$ and so on. 	
	<p>VII. Activity (steps)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Pete the Cat: Perfect Pizza Party</i>. Encourage children to predict the next P item and the chime in on the refrain, “It’s a party, it’s a party, it’s a pepperoni, pretzel, pistachio, ... perfect pizza party.” For those that miss the live event, they can watch at home at their convenience using the YouTube link provided. • Make individual pizzas at home based on what they have available. Engage in fraction conversation. Encourage child to think of a P related topping they could add (whether it be fantasy or reality). • Complete at least one activity from the Pinterest board. 	<p>4. Internet access (Pinterest): www.pinterest.com/bigbadwolfe/pete-the-cats-perfect-pizza-party/</p>
	<p>VIII. Debrief (after) At the beginning of the following PE time, debrief on the ILA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did their child respond? • What parts did they like best? • What did they learn from the activity? • What could they do differently next time? 	
	<p>IX. Home Activity See above in “Activity (steps)” section.</p>	

Appendix H – Educational Apps

- **Audible** (<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>) – Stream stories for free while schools are closed due to Covid-19. Stories are in up to six different languages.
- **Dial a Story** (<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/services/dial-a-story.jsp>) – Listen to a story by phone anytime of the day. Available in 16 languages.
- **Epic!** (<https://www.getepic.com/>) – Access instantly free digital books for children 12 and under. Subscription required for parents, but a 30-day free trial period is available.
- **Family time Machine** (<http://www.familytimemachine.com/>) – Go to this website and parents and children can imagine and learn together.
- **Free Library of Philadelphia** (<https://www.freelibrary.org/>) – Access free digital books and, if needed, apply for online for a library card.
- **International Children’s Digital Library** (<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>) – Explore this collection of digital of books that represent historical and contemporary books from around the world.
- **Open Culture** (<http://www.openculture.com/2016/08/enter-an-archive-of-6000-historicalchildrens-books-all-digitized-and-free-to-read-online.html>) – Discover 6,000 historical children’s books, all digitized and free to read online.
- **Unite for Literacy** (<https://www.uniteforliteracy.com/>) – Look through the large collection of books that are either narrated or for the family to read together. The books can be narrated in over 40+ languages.
- **Wonderopolis** (<https://wonderopolis.org/>) – Explore the wonder of the day. Each day a new question is posted, and the answer is explored in a number of ways.
- **Wow in the World Podcasts** (<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510321/wow-in-the-world>) – Join two hosts as they guide curious kids and their grown-ups on a journey into the wonders of the world around them.

Additional ILA Resources of museums, zoos, and other fun sites

- **Animals & Zoos** – Access information about various zoos and learn about animals and view live animal cams. A few examples include:
 - **Atlantic Zoo Panda Cam** (<https://zooatlanta.org/panda-cam/>)
 - **Houston Zoo Live Animal Cams** (<https://www.houstonzoo.org/explore/webcams/>)
 - **San Diego Zoo** (<https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/videos>)
 - **Wolf Conservation Center** (<https://nywolf.org/meet-our-wolves/webcams/>)
 - **Cornell Lab Ornithology** (<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/>) – A virtual window into the natural world of birds. Includes live video cams and video highlights of barred owls, red-tailed hawks, and other birds.
- **British Museum** (<https://www.britishmuseum.org/learn/schools/ages-7-11>) – Engage and experience the unique collection through resources, sessions and gallery visits.
- **Exploratorium** (<https://www.exploratorium.edu/>) – Learn about science, art, and human perception by exploring the huge collection of online experiences and teaching resources.
- **How Stuff Works** (<https://www.howstuffworks.com/>) – Allow your curiosity to run wild on this website that answers questions about topics, such as cars, culture, entertainment, science, technology, money, and more.

- **NASA Kids Club** (<https://www.nasa.gov/kidsclub/index.html>) – Play games and learn about NASA. Features of this site may or may not work on a phone or tablet.
- **National Geographic Kids** (<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>) – Learn about fun and interesting topics, including animals, earth day, heroes, homework help, and fun quizzes.
- **National Geographic Resources for Families** (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/family/in-the-news/coronavirus.html>) – Find parenting articles, study tips, science experiments, videos, and more.
- **National Park Service Virtual Tours – a few examples:**
 - **Yellowstone National Park** (<https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtours.htm>)
 - **Gettysburg** (<https://www.nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/national-cemetery-virtualtour.htm>)
 - **Klondike Gold Rush** (<https://www.nps.gov/klgo/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtours.htm>)
 - **Statue of Liberty** (<https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm>)
- **P.E. with Joe daily workouts** (<https://youtu.be/K6r99N3kXME>) – Engage in fun, daily live and video-recorded workouts with a fitness trainer.
- **Smithsonian Kids** (<https://www.si.edu/kids>) – Find fun stuff for kids, including activities and games and animal cams of zoo animals.
- **Spy Museum** (<https://www.spymuseum.org/education-programs/spy-resources/>) – Learn about spy stuff (more for the instructor).