



In the Beginning: Building the Foundations for Literacy Learning

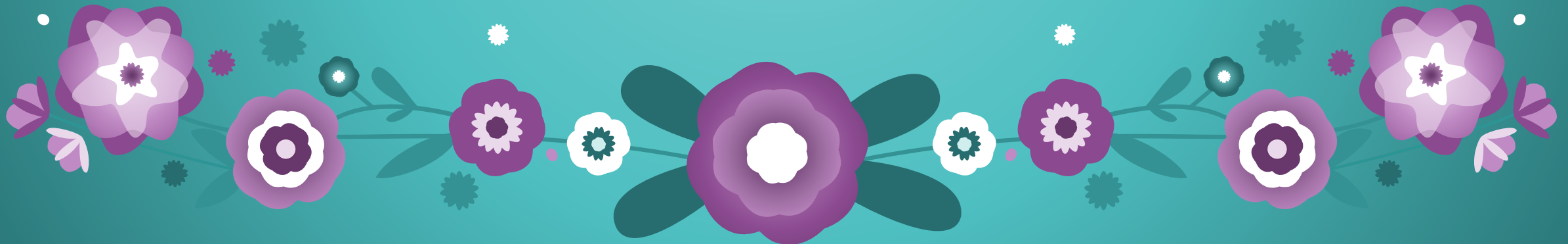
Patricia A. Edwards, Ph.D.

Michigan State University

2010-2011, President of the International Reading Association

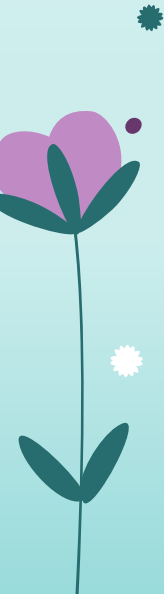
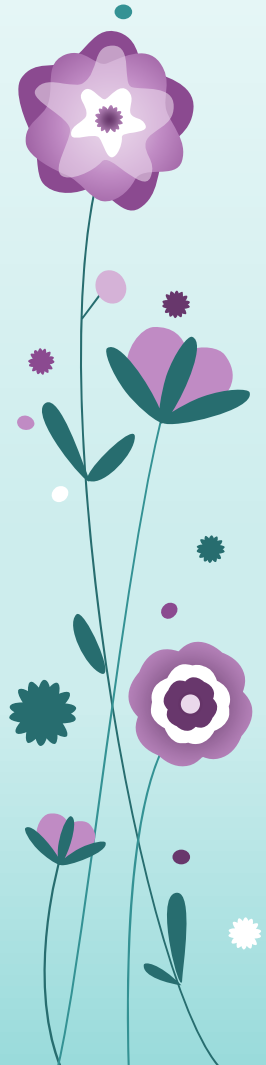
2018 Parent-Child Home Program Conference

May 7, 2018



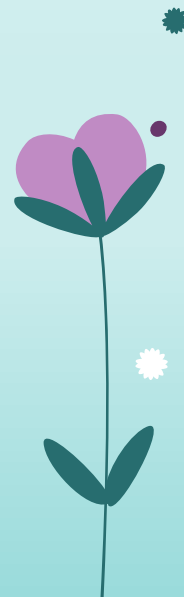
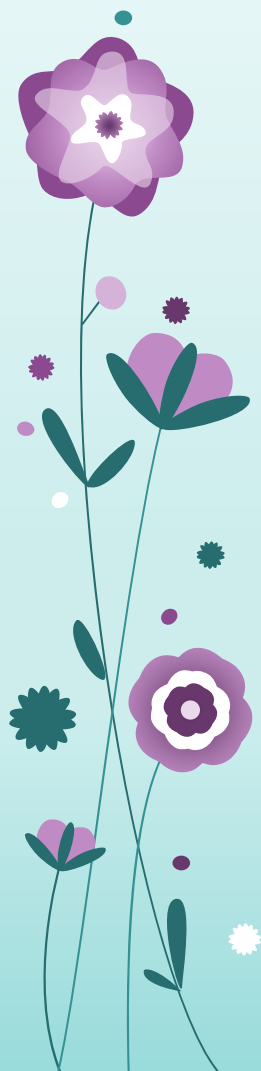
Richer Than Gold

- You may have tangible wealth untold;
- Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.
- Richer than I you can never be—
- I had a mother to read to me.
- --Strickland Gillilan (1869-1954)



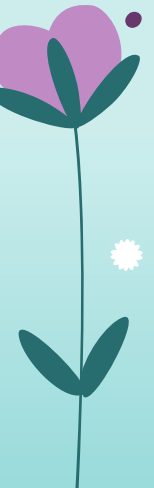
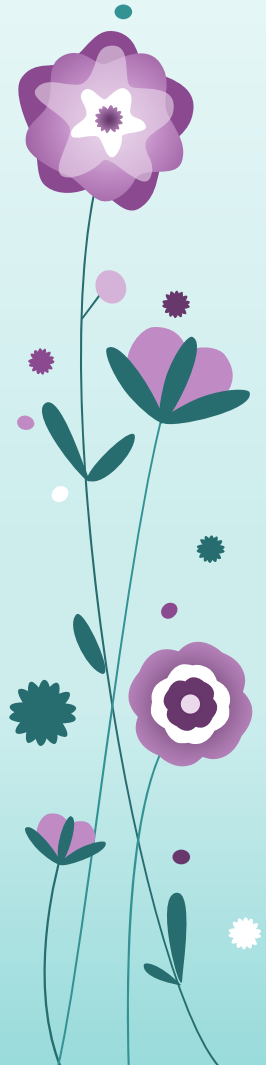
Quotes My Mother Shared with Me

- “Literature nourishes the mind and spirit, shapes character and prepares the child for a full life.”—
Author Unknown
- “That is a good book which is opened with expectation and closed with profit.” —A. Bronson Alcott



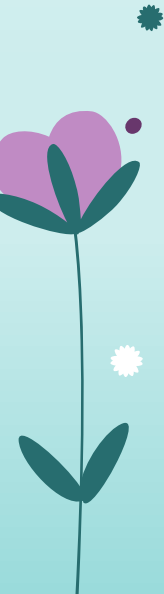
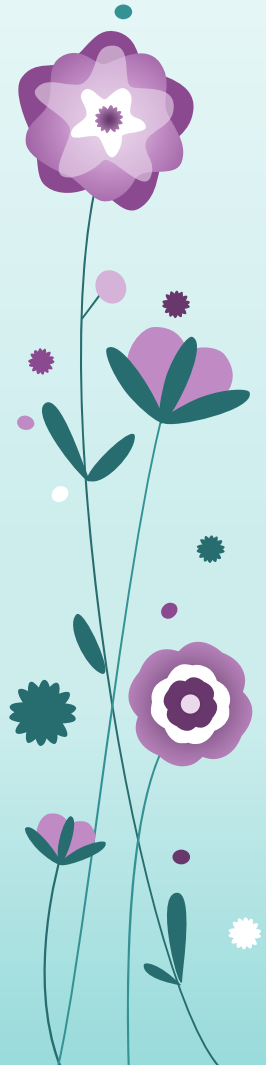
Quotes My Mother Shared with Me

- “The book to read is not the one which thinks for you, but the one which makes you think.” McCosh
- “The things you read will fashion you by slowly conditioning your mind.’—A. W. Tozer
- “A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.”—Chinese proverb



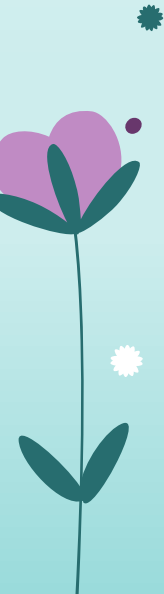
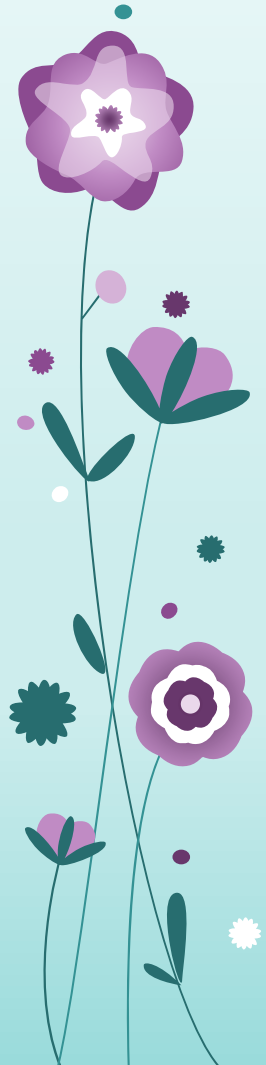
Quotes My Mother Shared with Me

- “Just the knowledge that a good book is waiting for one at the end of a long day makes that day happier.”—Author Unknown
- “Every book makes a difference.”—Author Unknown
- “There is more treasure in books than in all the pirates’ loot on Treasure Island—and best of all, you can enjoy these riches every day of your life.”—Walt Disney
- When I am reading a book, whether wise or silly, it seems to me to be alive and talking to me.”—Jonathan Swift

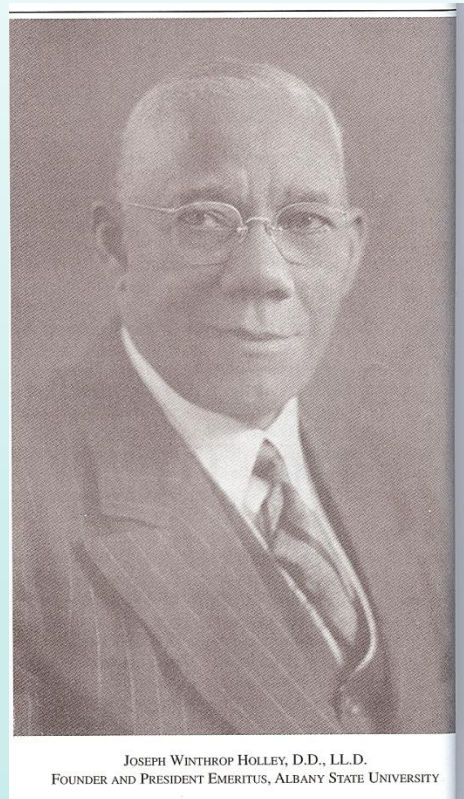
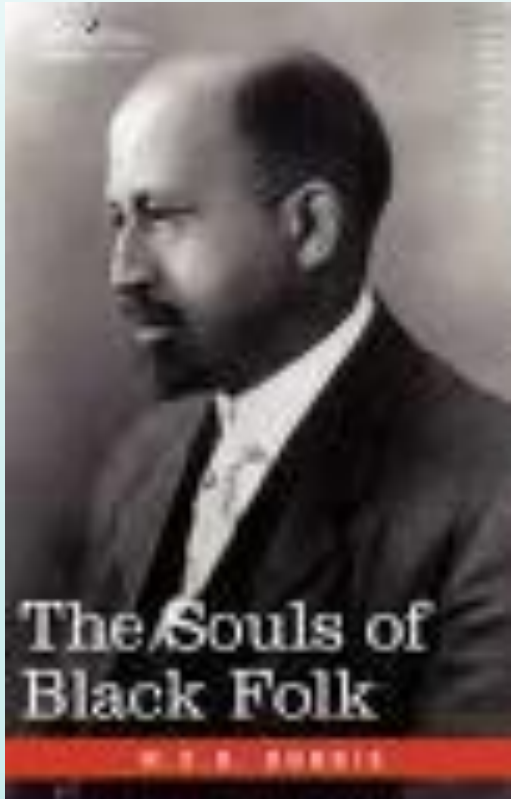


Quotes My Mother Shared with Me

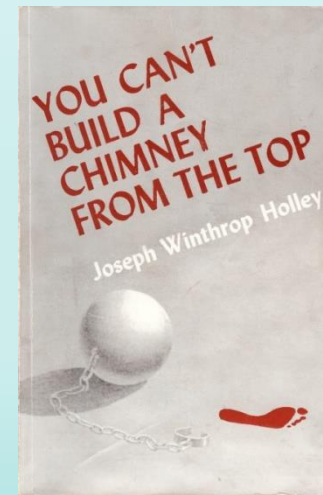
- “Reading—A gift that lasts a lifetime.”—Author Unknown



Dougherty County--Vast Ignorance Festered Untouched

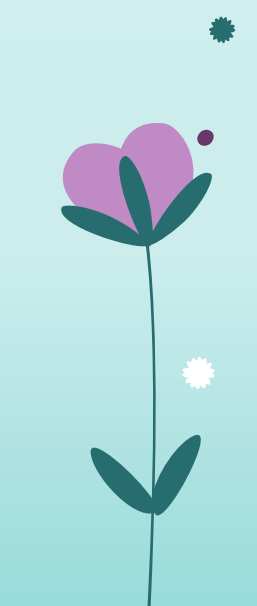


Albany State University





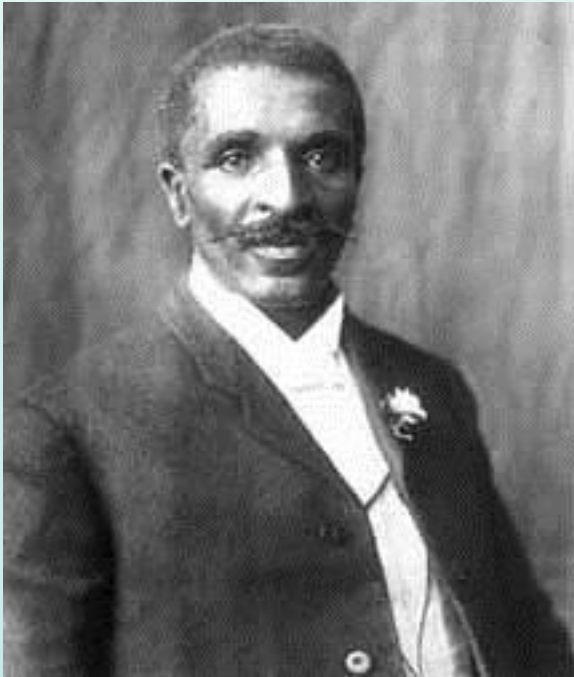
Education—Valued and Valuable in the African American Community

- Literacy and education are valued and valuable possessions that African-American families have respected, revered, and sought as a means to personal freedom and communal hope, from enslavement to the present (Gadsden, 1993, p. 29).
- 

What I Was Taught

- Advocate for the powerless
- Provide direction for the restless
- Speak for the voiceless
- Motivate the hopeless





George Washington Carver

“Where there is no vision, there is no hope.”



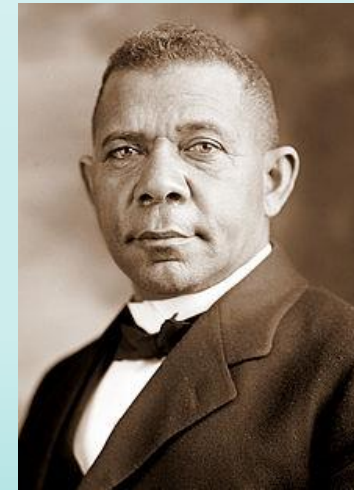
Booker T. Washington

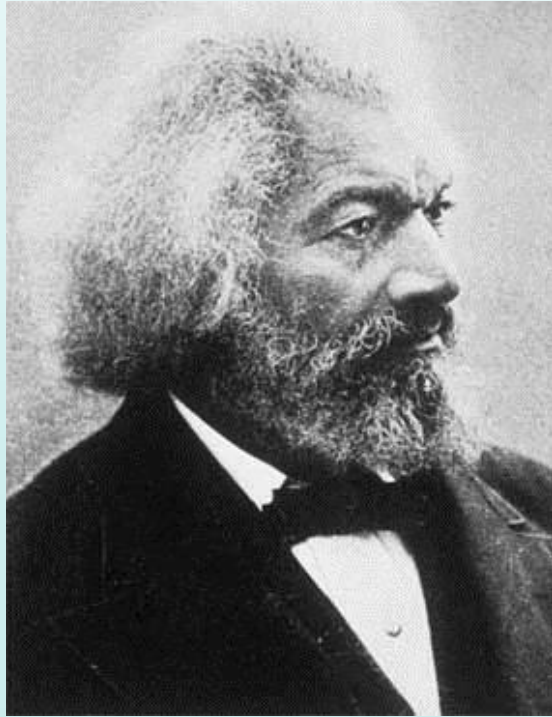
“If you can't read, it's going to be hard to realize dreams.”



I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has had to overcome while trying to succeed.

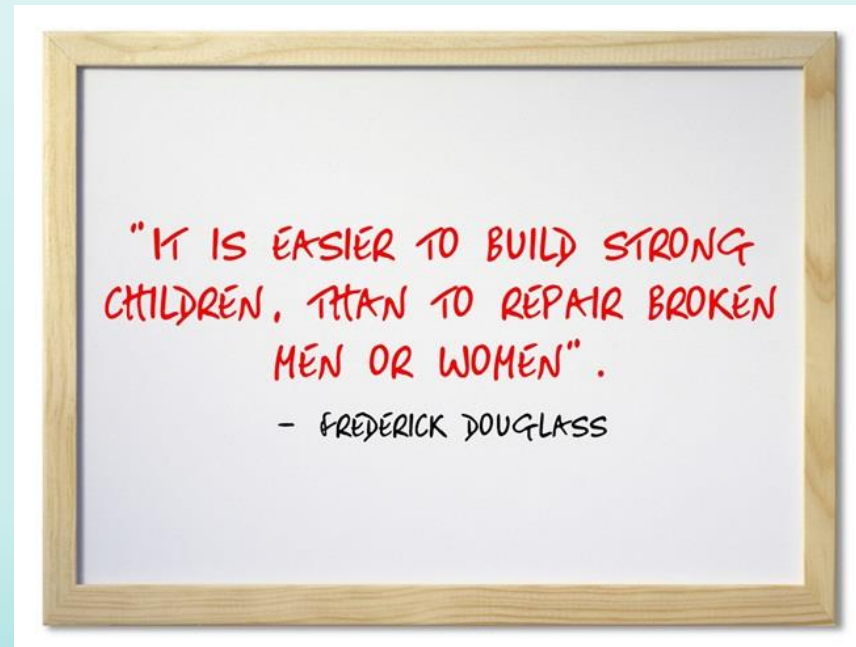
—Booker T. Washington





Frederick Douglass

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.”





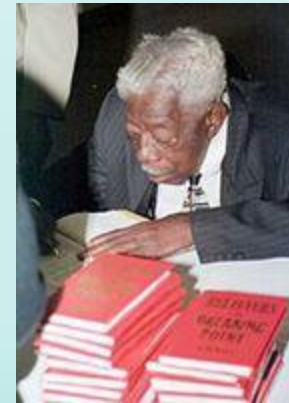
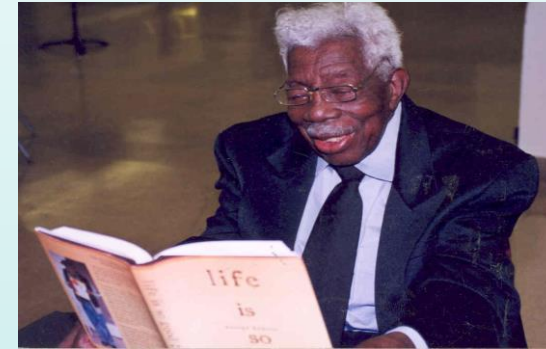
Carter G. Woodson

“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”

Mrs. Taylor 1957 Yellow Studebaker



Mr. George Dawson learns to read at 98 years-old



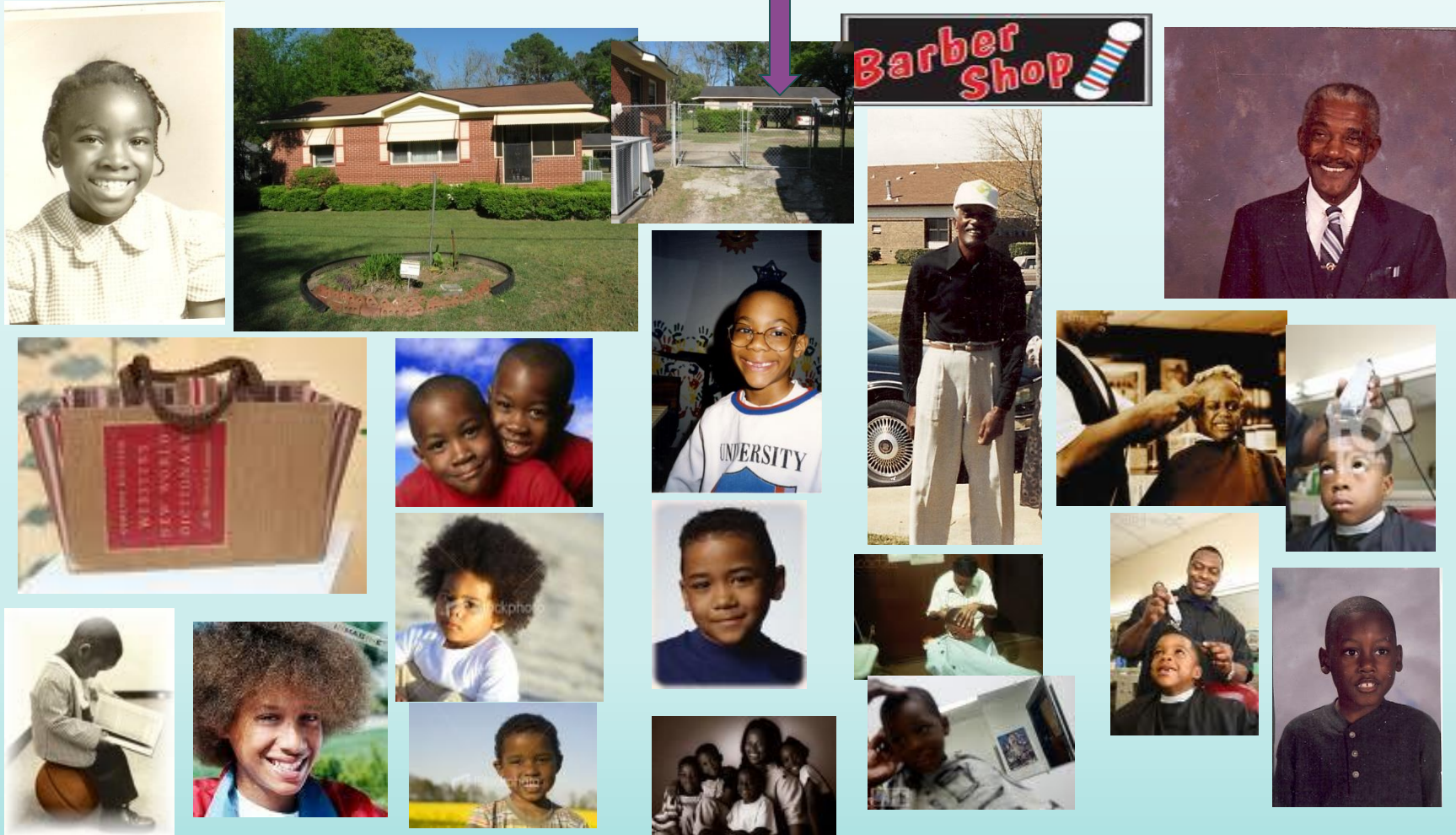
This is Me



Patricia A. Edwards

The Power of Teaching

Saturday Mornings at the Edwards House



Permission Slip

Mrs. Flossie Brown said that Wintthrop
has permission to come to Pats saturday school.

thank you

Progress Report

Progress report

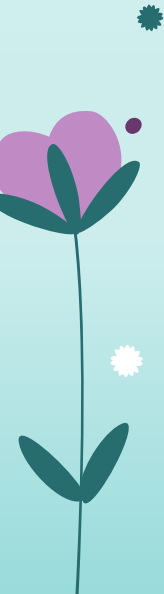
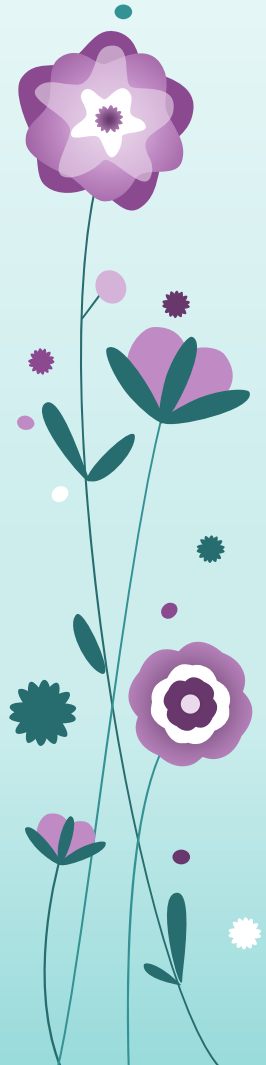
Dear Mrs. Brown,

Winthrop is making great progress
in my school.

Patricia Edwards
(Saturday School teacher)

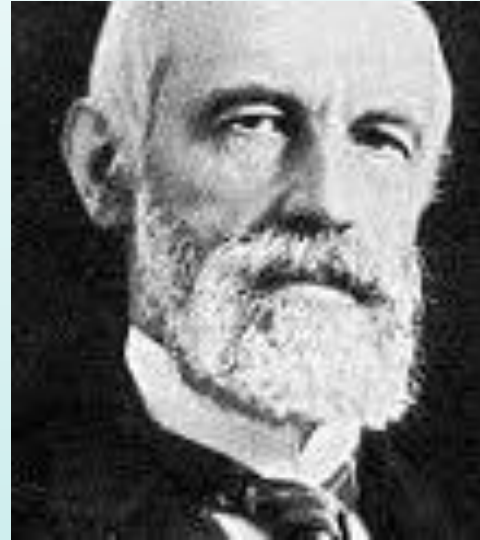
Controversial Suggestion

- Americans have been conflicted about the idea of early reading instruction for over 100 years
- It has long been claimed that early reading instruction doesn't work and that it is even harmful to children



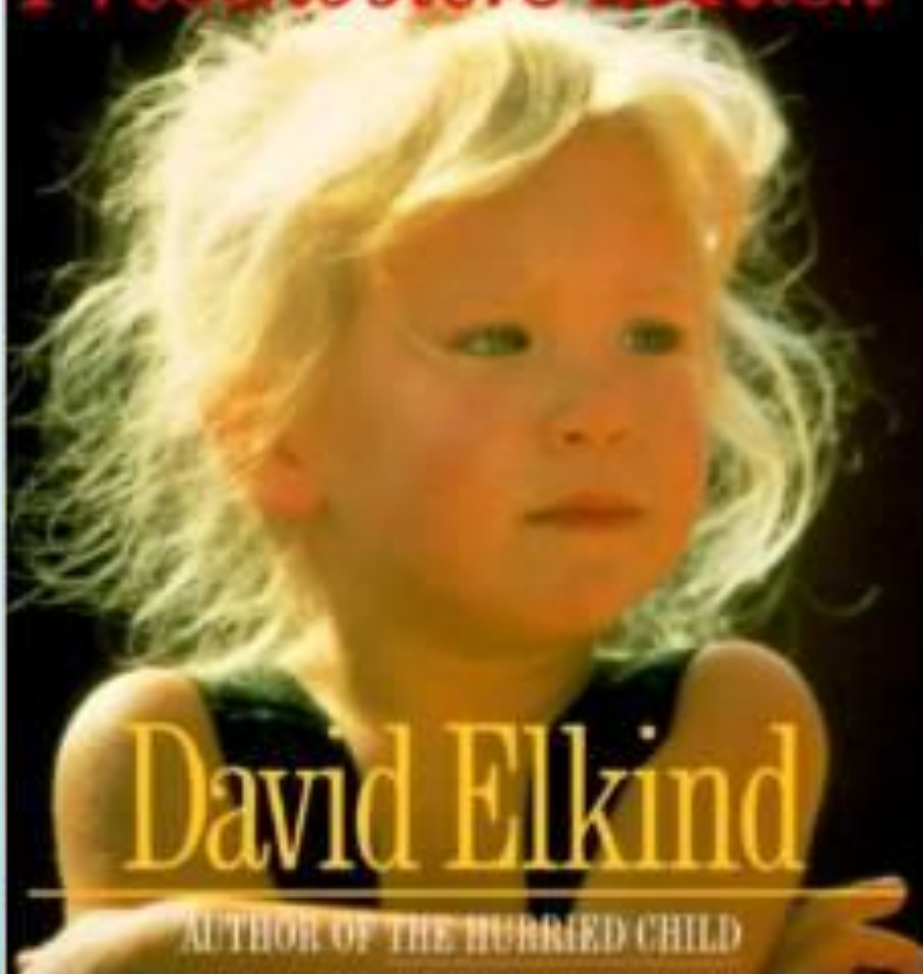
Early Opposition

- G. Stanley Hall, pioneer psychologist, proposes a stage model of development and a rigid concept of “readiness”
- Arnold Gessell argues that young students can’t learn to read and attempts to teach them will cause mental problems



MISEDUCATION

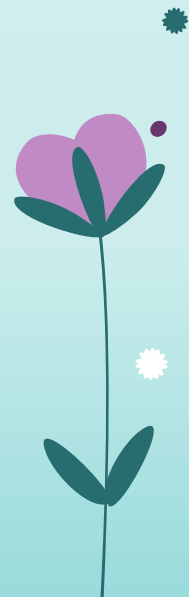
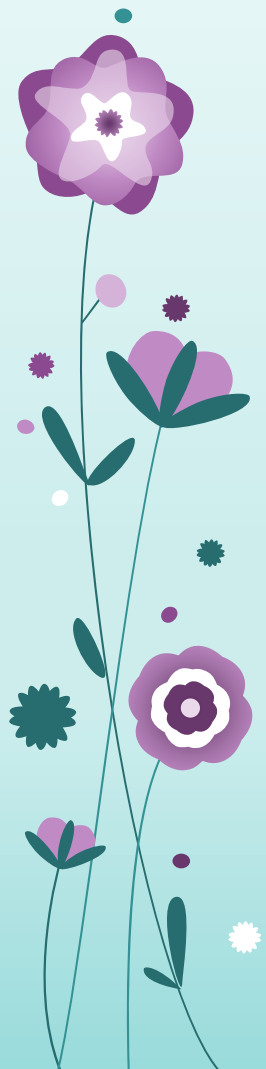
Preschoolers at Risk



David Elkind

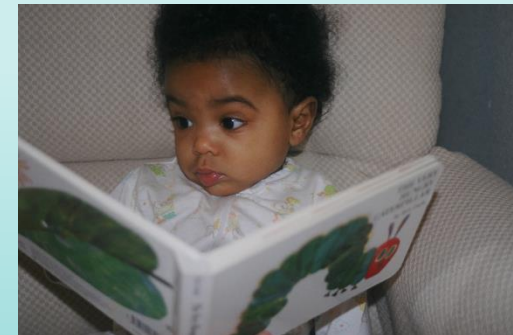
AUTHOR OF THE HURRIED CHILD

What We Know





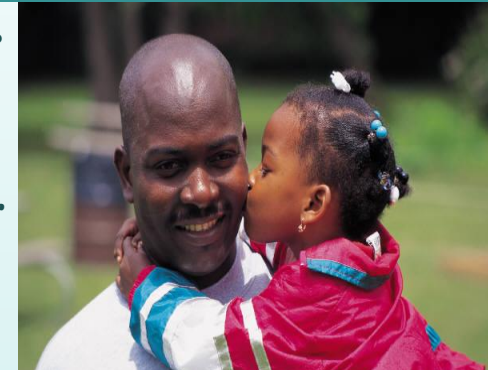
- The path to literacy begins long before children begin formal reading instruction, and experiences that occur in the home influence the later course of children's reading success. (Peterson, 2007, p. 8)



Families

Families provide the foundation for reading achievement

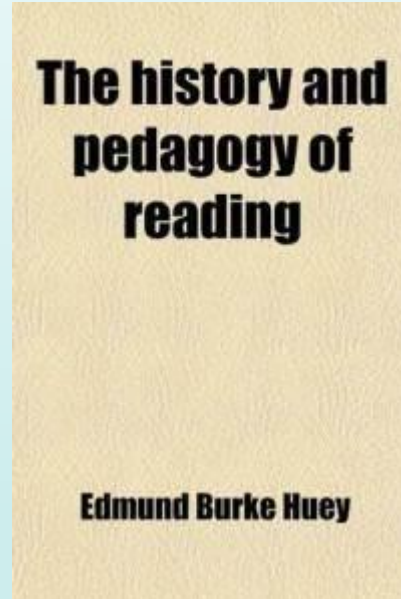
“Literacy begins in the home, not the school... instruction should build on the foundation for literacy learning established in the home”
(Au, 1993, p. 35).

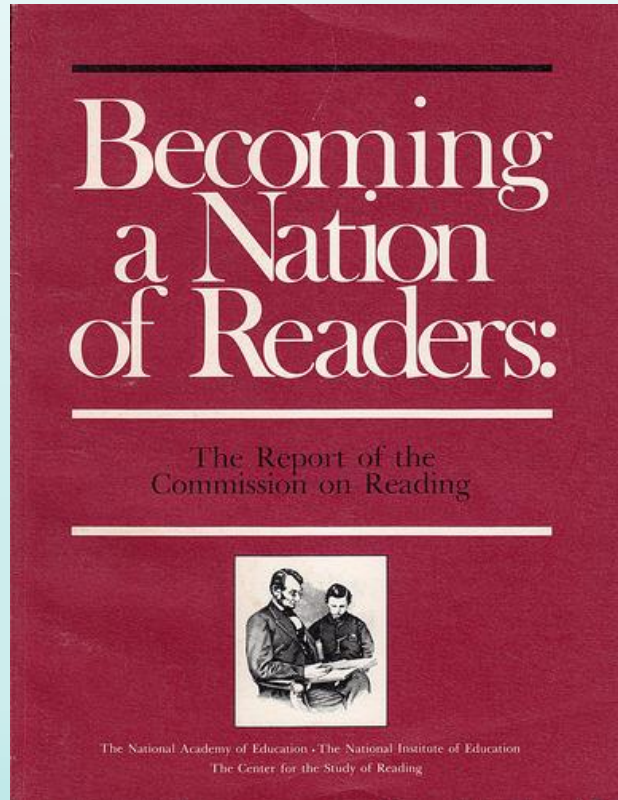




Edmund B. Huey

In 1908 in *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*, Edmund B. Huey wrote of children who seem to learn to read without any direct or explicit instruction. “The secret of it all,” wrote Huey, “lies in parents’ reading aloud to and with the child” (Huey, 1908, p. 332).

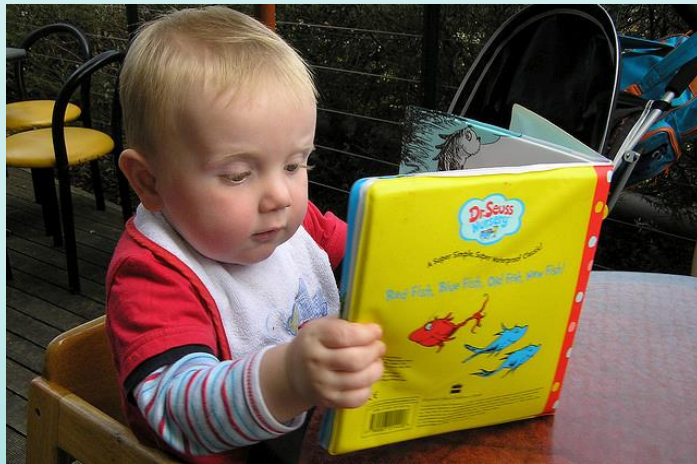
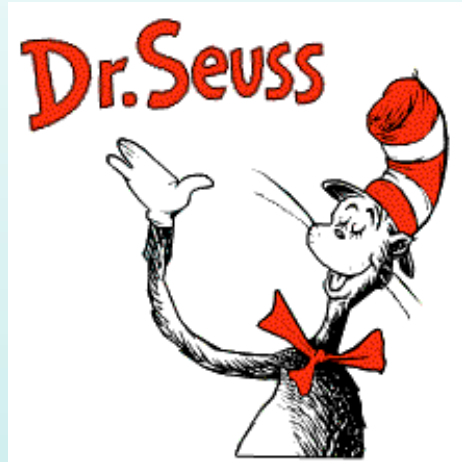




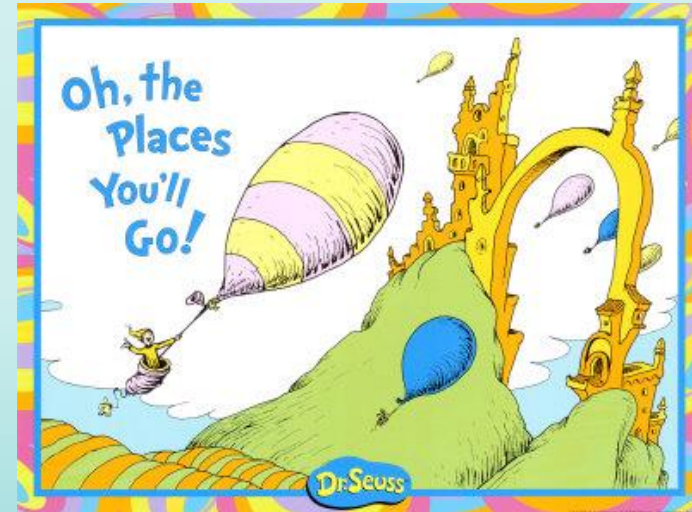
A similar conviction can be found in contemporary documents such as *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (1985) which asserts, “The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children” (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985, p. 23).

Interestingly

As Dr. Seuss wrote....



“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more you learn, the more places you'll go”
(Seuss, 1978).

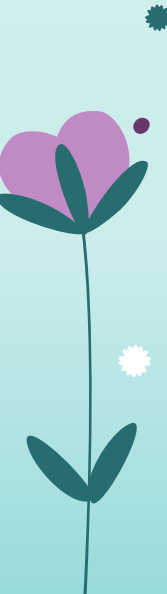




Developing a Love for Reading

“Few children learn to love books, by themselves. Someone has to lure them into the wonderful world of the written word; someone has to show them the way.”

Orville Prescott, *A Father Reads to His Children*



Family as Educator

- Significantly related to
 - child language and literacy outcomes
 - book-related knowledge
 - receptive language skills
 - expressive language skills

Bennett, Weigel, & Martin (2002). Children's acquisition of early literacy skills: examining family contributions
Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 17, 3, 295-317.

Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, and Hemphill (1991)

- “All children, regardless of socioeconomic status, racial, or cultural background of the family benefit from home literacy environments that foster their language and literacy skill development.”

Karen Mapp, 2014



Interesting Fact

- By one estimate the typical middle-class child enters first grade with **1,000 to 1,700** hours of one-on-one picture book reading, whereas a child from a low-income family averages just **25 hours**.
- Source: Every Child Ready to Read, Association for Library Service to Children

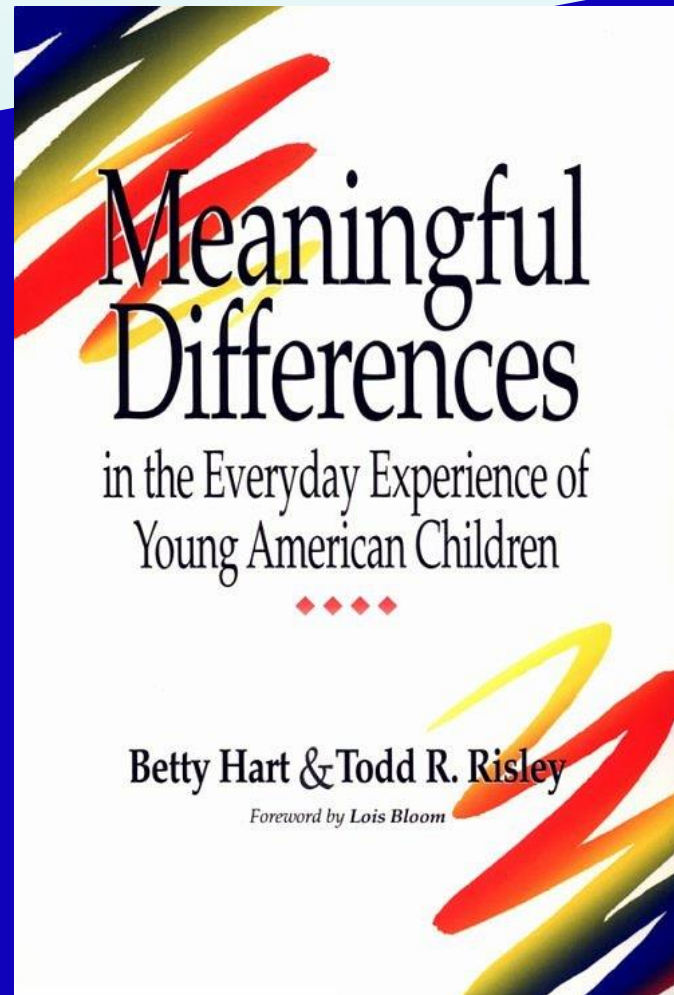
The Sleeper Effect



The new vocabulary words children learn as a preschooler and kindergartener are money in the bank for 3rd grade reading comprehension and beyond (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Snow, Tabors, & Dickinson, 2001).



Language

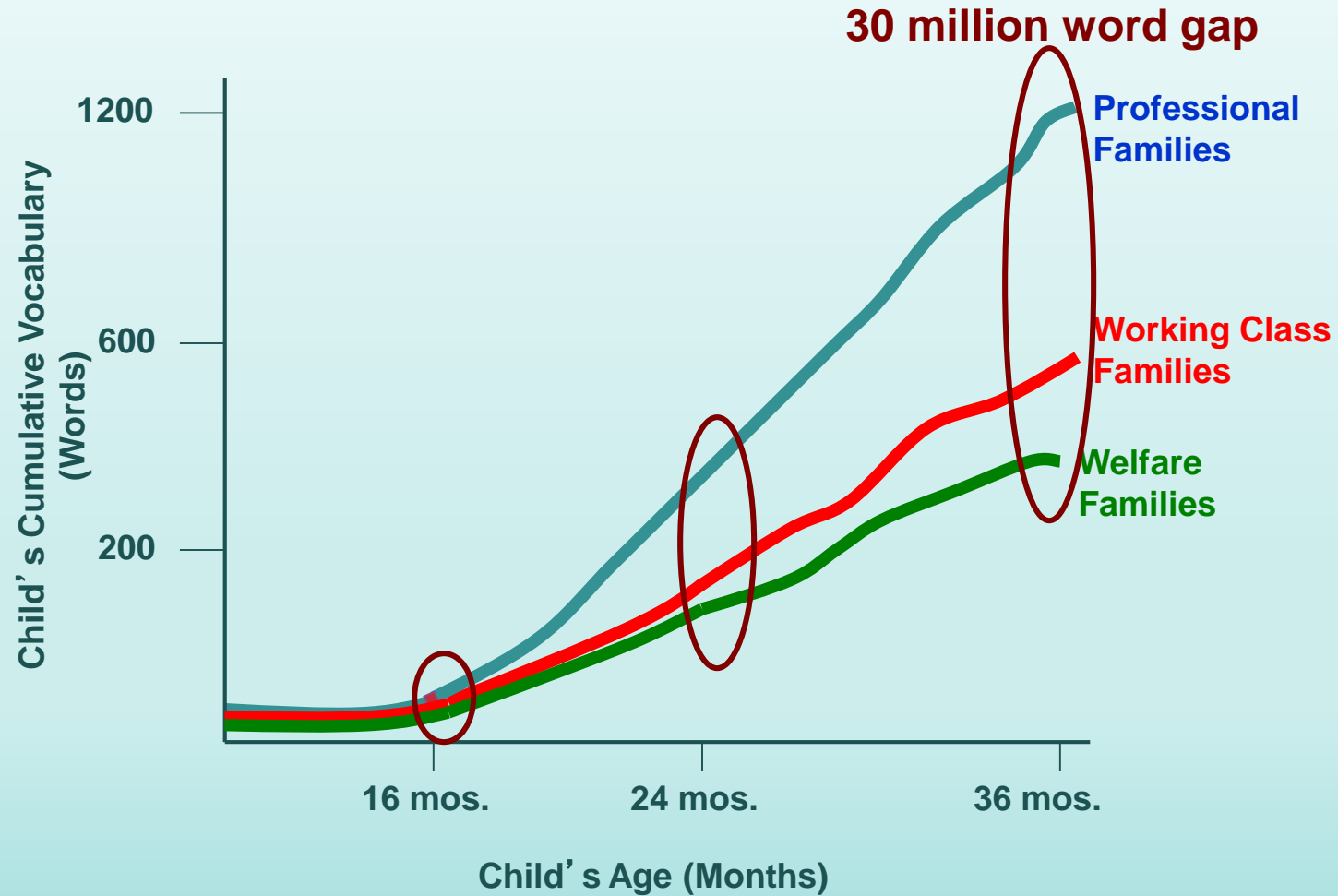


Hart and Risley (1995) conducted a longitudinal study of children and families from three groups:



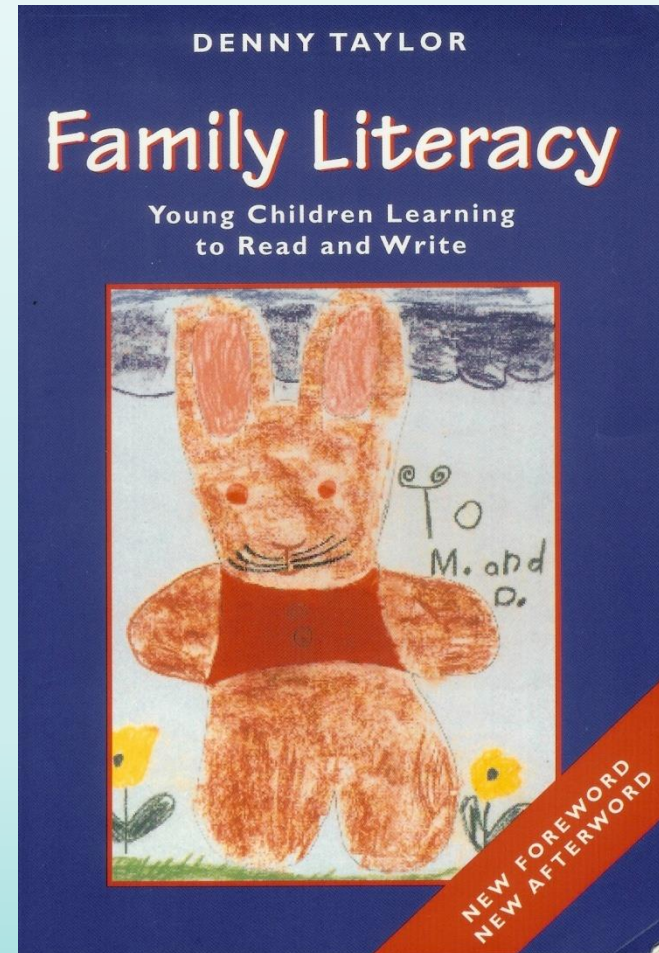
- **Professional families**
- **Working-class families**
- **Families on welfare**

Disparities in Early Vocabulary Experience



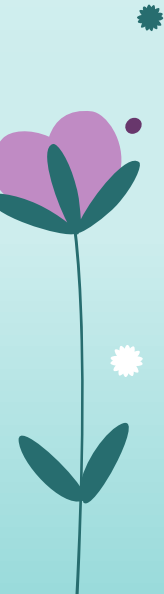
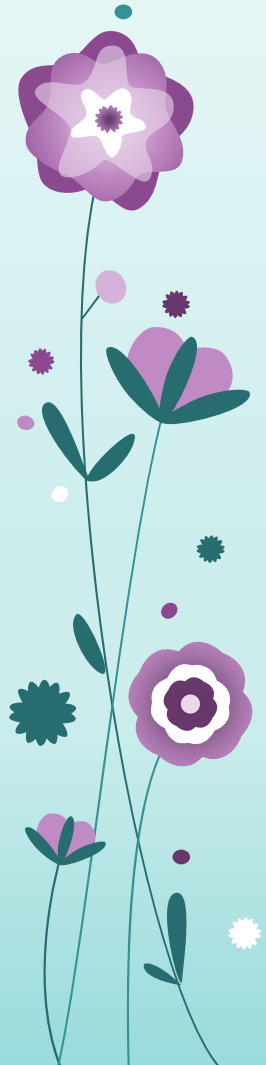
Source: Hart & Risley (2003)

Denny Taylor coined the term family literacy in 1983



What is Family Literacy?

- Family literacy can be defined a couple of different ways:
 - Parents and children participate in literacy activities together.
 - Family literacy implies a customized curriculum for parents on how to improve literacy in the lives of their children. (Paratore, 2005)



Why Family Literacy?

“Parent-child literacy activities in the home, such as helping children to recognize letters, reading to children or assisting children with reading and writing assignments, have been found to improve children’s language skills and heighten their interest in books.”

All About Families, Facts & Figures from the National Center for Family Literacy Research Department, Issue 2, January 27, 2003



Strengthening Family-School Partnerships

“The school of the future will have as one of its important duties the instruction of parents in the means of assisting the child’s natural learning in the home.”

Huey (1908) *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*, New York: Macmillan

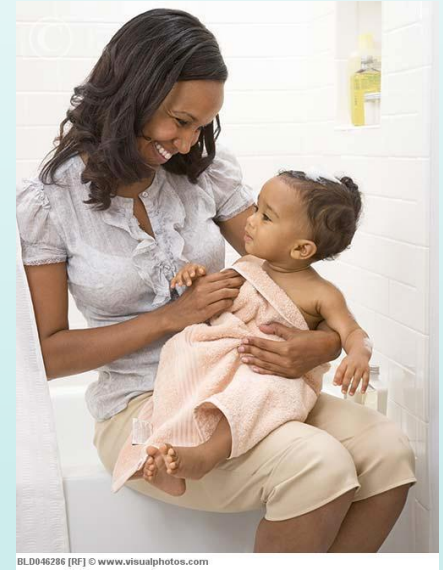


It's never too early to give a baby a book!



Nurturing Relationships

- Relationships are the foundation of all infant learning
- All early experiences are in the context of a relationship with an adult
- Language develops as a result of experiences
- Any other “bites” of research?



Modeling





Experiences

Experiences with Print and Writing



Environmental Print

What are the everyday experiences children have with print and writing?



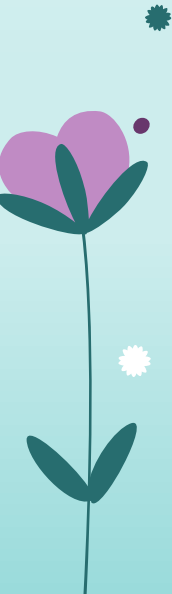
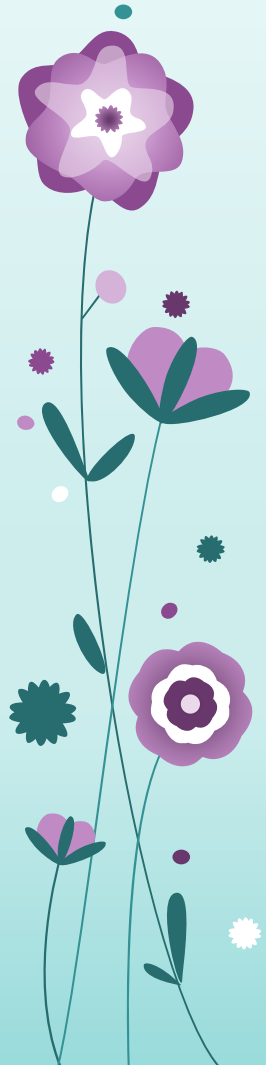
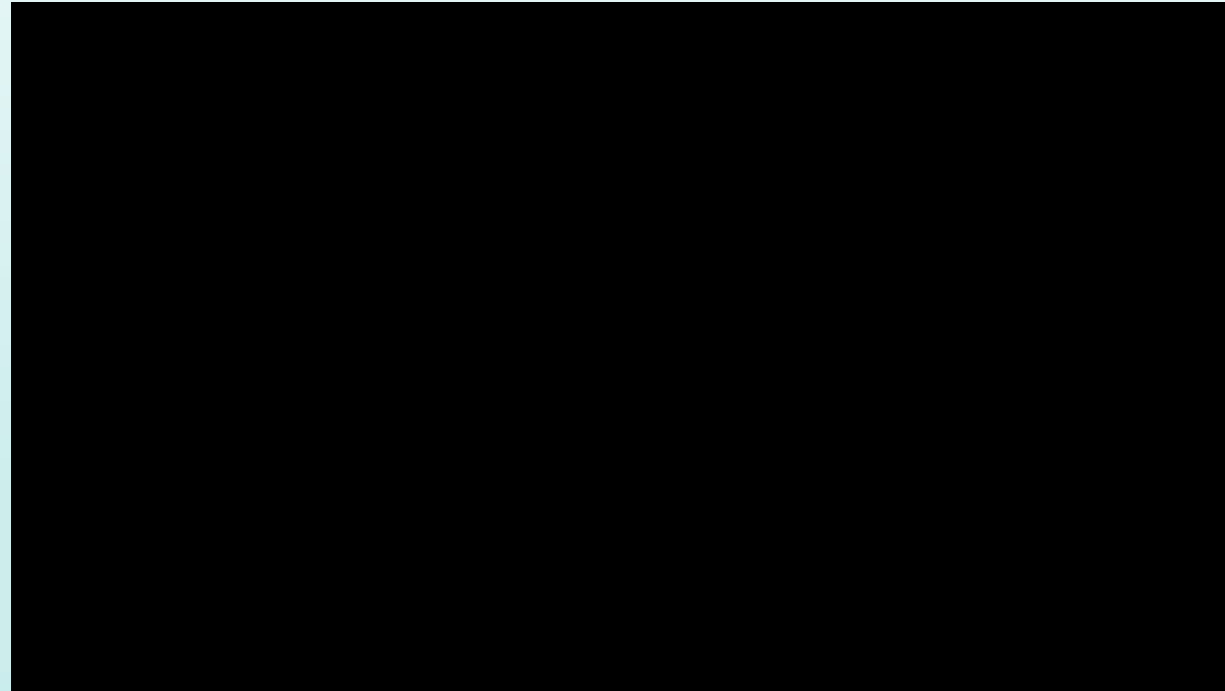
Twin Boys Having A Conversation



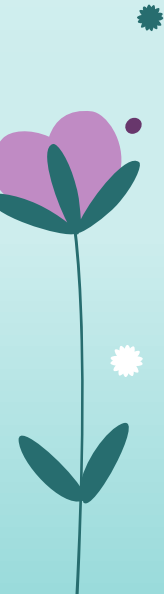
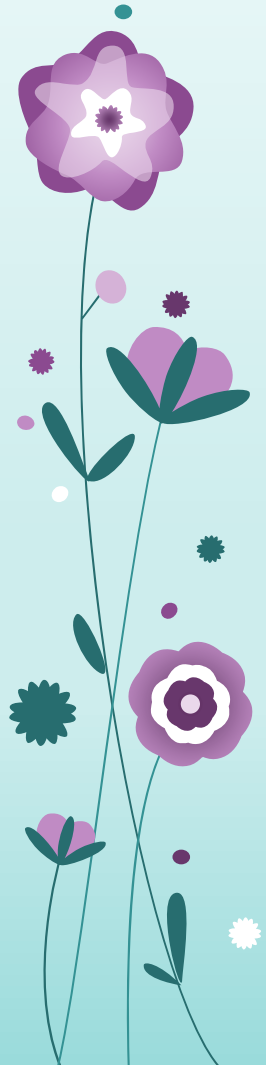
Baby Laughing



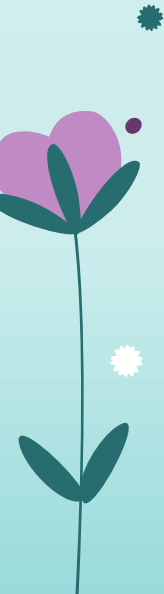
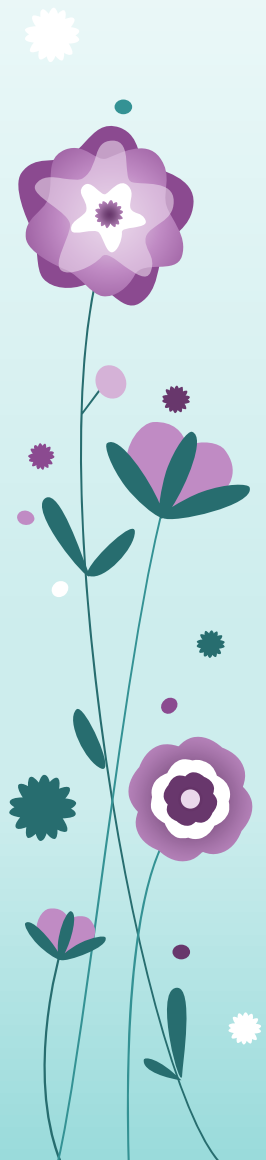
Child Pretend Role Play Toy kitchen



Children Interacting with their Parents



Pledge of Allegiance



My Three Year Old Argues and Debates Everything



The Face of a Child

Adapted from:

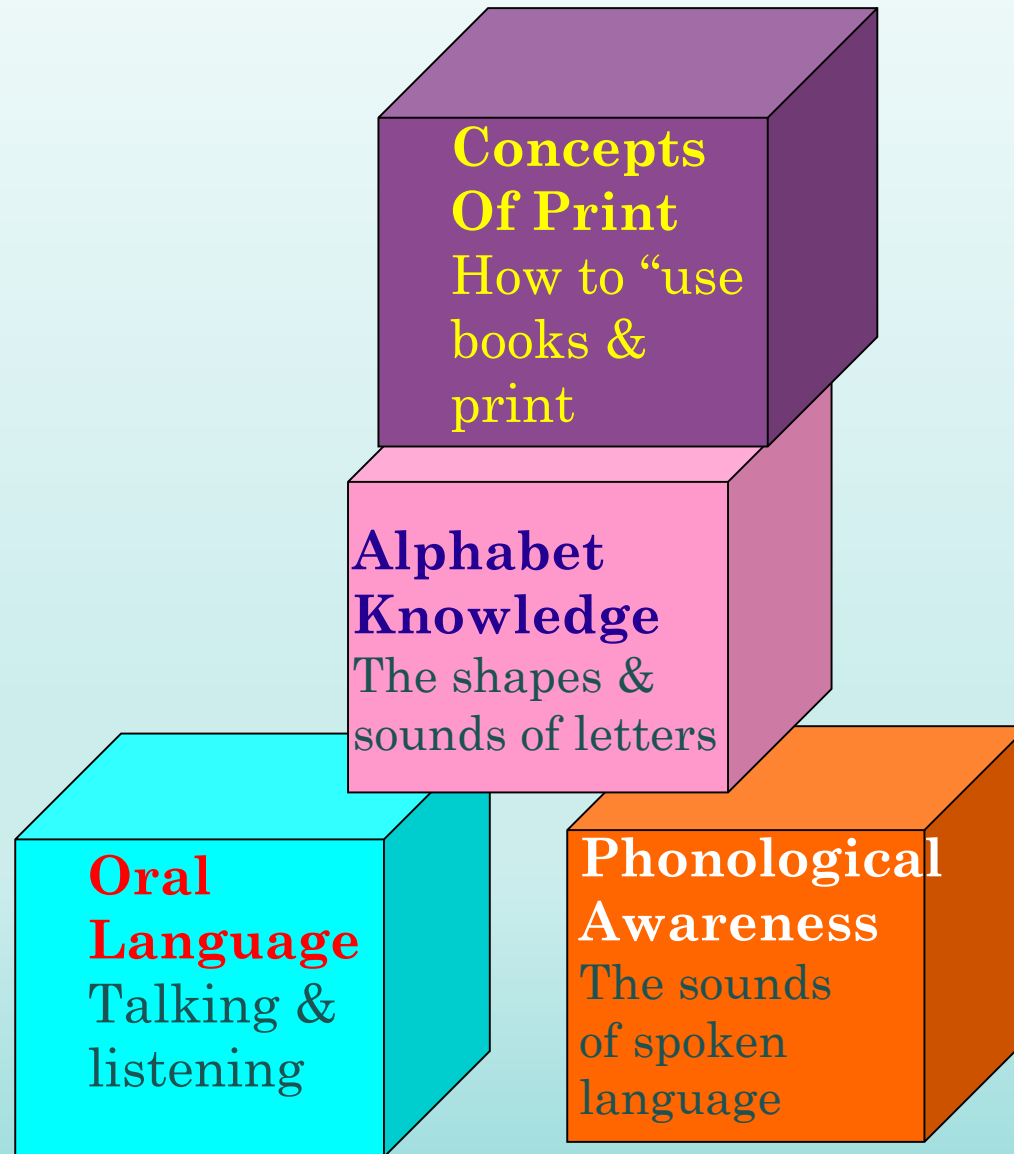
Annual Growth For All Students, Catch-up Growth For Those Who
Are Behind

- Lynn Fielding, Nancy Kerr, and Paul Rosier

“We never really leave our non-reading children behind. We may forget about them, but we are chained to them socially and economically. Like a ship and its anchor, we must either lift them up or drag them along behind us. It is time we teach our Tony’s to read. It’s the promise of education.” (p. 145)



The Building Blocks of Literacy



Nutrients for Growing Literate Children

Read to your child

Be a good literate role model

Provide book, magazines, etc. for your child to read

Build a reading atmosphere at home (place, time, library area)

Talk and listen to your child

Exemplify a positive attitude toward reading

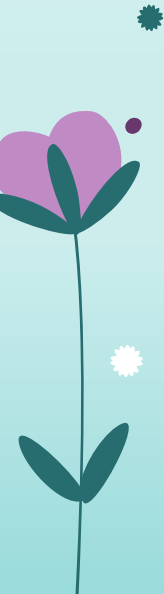
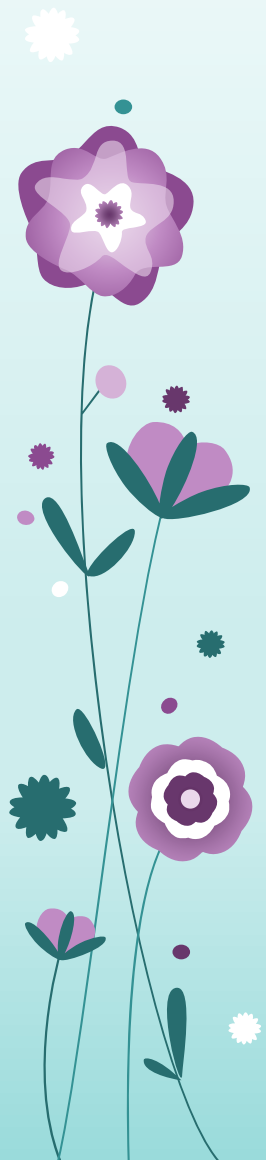
Provide experiences that are reading related, e.g., library trips, or that can be used to stimulate interest in reading

Read environmental signs; capture reading opportunities in the environment

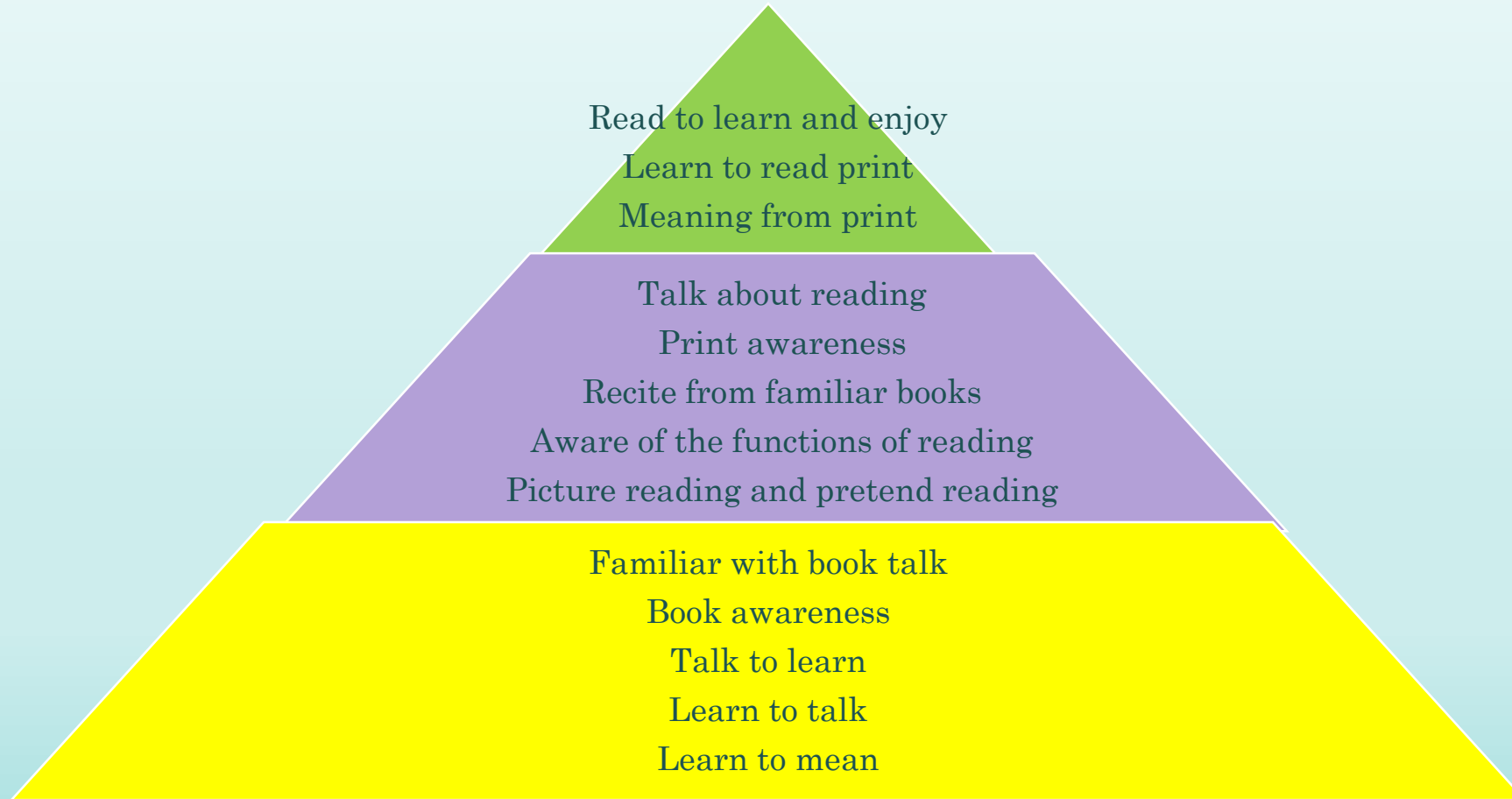
Provide contact with paper & pencils

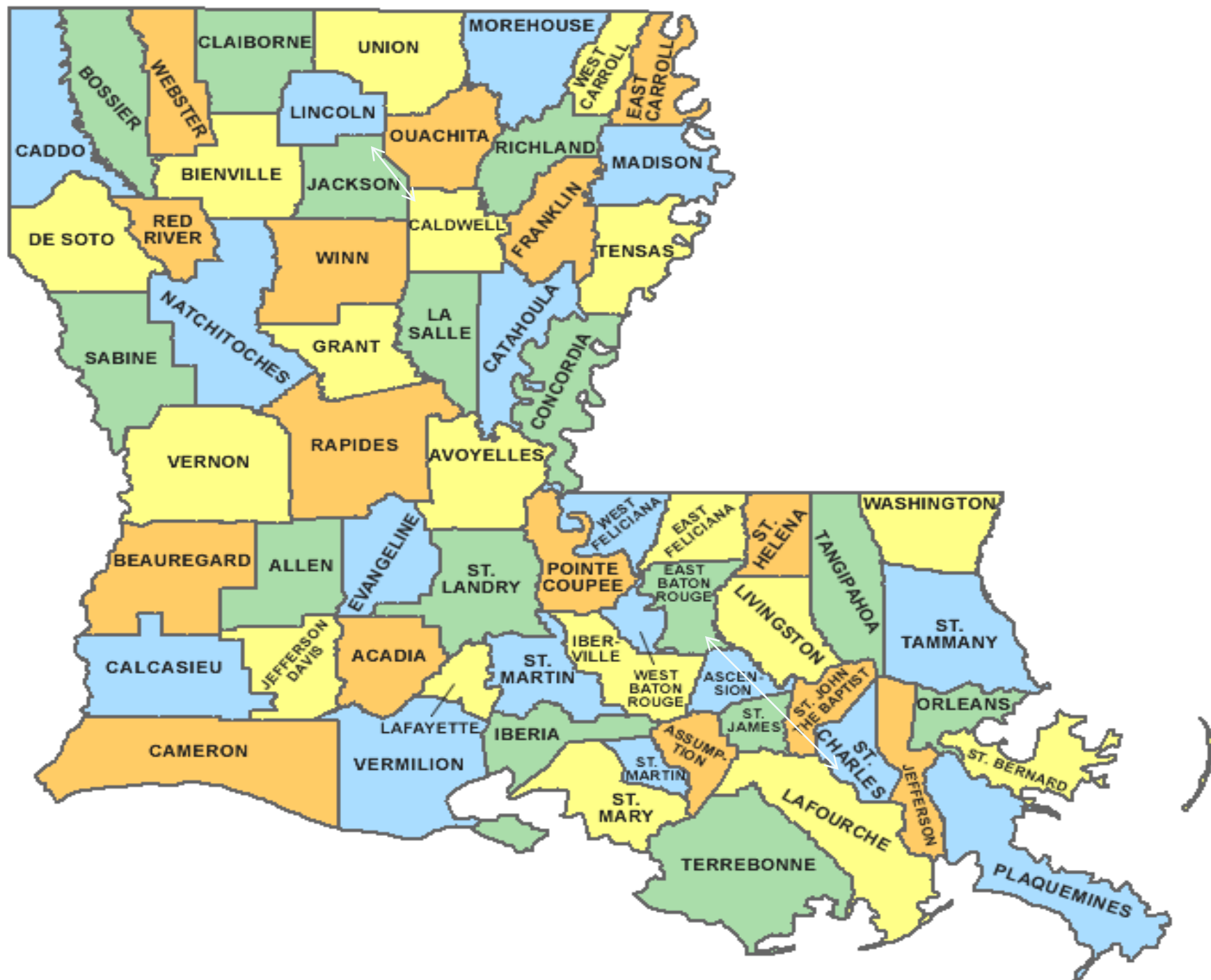
Be aware of your child's interests

Point out similarities and differences in objects in the environment



Nutrients for Growing Literate Children

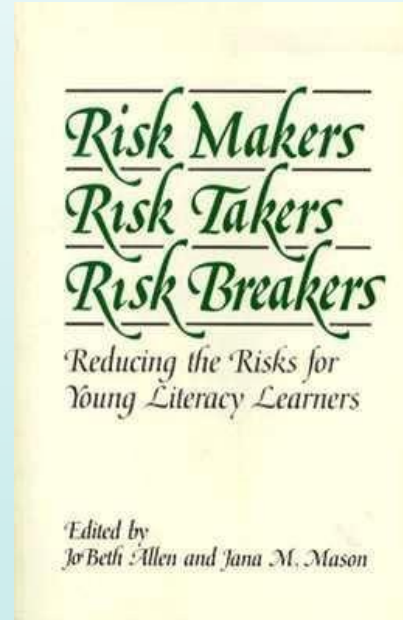




What does read to your child mean?
Ruston Head Start Program



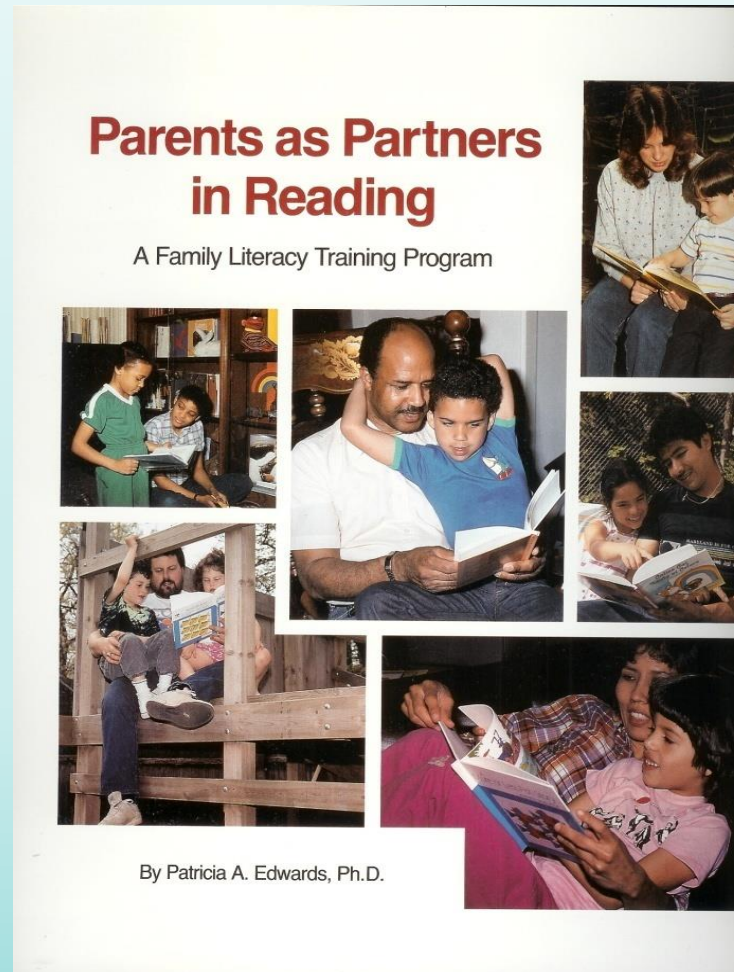
Jo Beth Allen



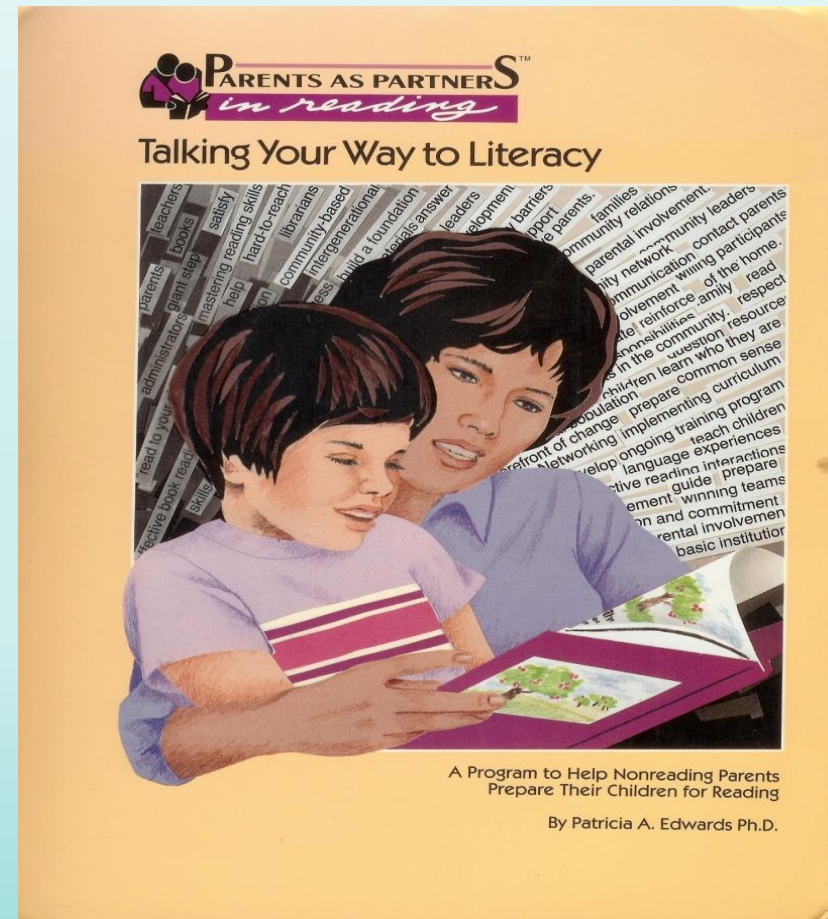
Jana Mason

Edwards, P.A. (1989). Supporting lower SES mothers' attempts to provide scaffolding for book reading. In J. Allen & J. Mason (Eds.), *Risk Makers, Risk Takers, Risk Breakers: Reducing the Risk for Young Literacy Learners* (pp. 225-250). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Parents as Partners in Reading: A Family Literacy Training Program (1990)



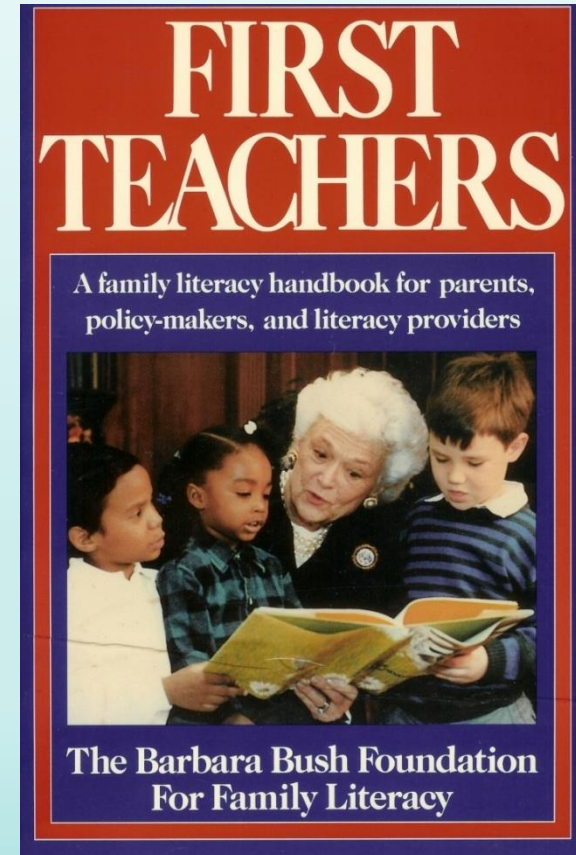
Talking Your Way to Literacy: A Program to Help Nonreading Parents Prepare Their Children for School (1990)



A Personal Milestone



First Lady Barbara Bush & Dr. Patricia A. Edwards



Shift from “telling” to “showing” parents how to read to their children --The Donaldsonville Story



Dan Rather



Donaldsonville Elementary School,
Donaldsonville, Louisiana



Former First Lady Nancy Reagan



Former First Lady Barbara Bush



"I strongly believe that if every man, woman, and child could read, write, and comprehend, we would be much closer to solving many of our nation's serious problems."

-First Lady Barbara Bush

Former First Ladies Laura Bush & Barbara Bush

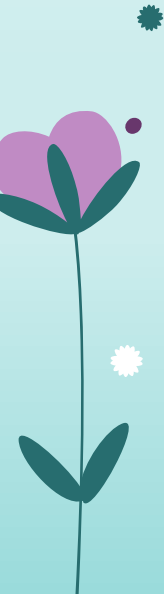
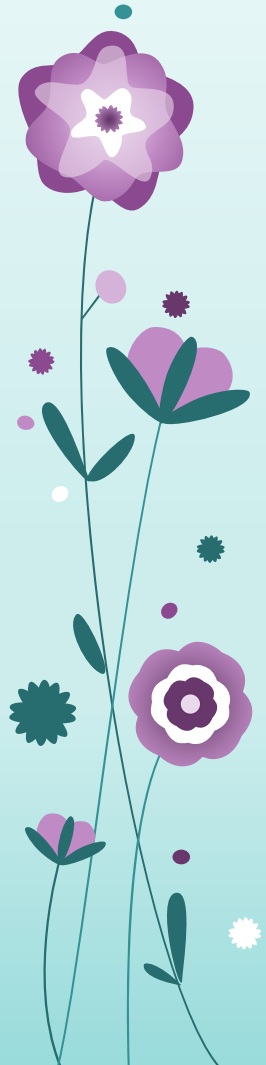


Former First Laura Bush Library Initiatives



Two Terms Defining Parental Involvement

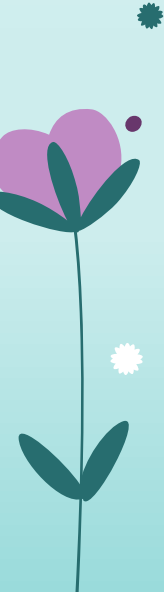
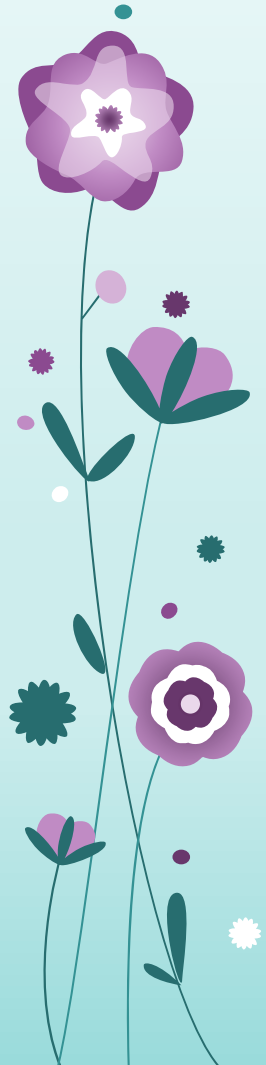
- I coined two terms *differentiated parenting* and *parentally appropriate* (Edwards, 2004). I proposed the concept of *differentiated parenting* as a way to urge schools not to place all parents into one basket. When schools design programs for parents, one size does not fit all. I used the term *parentally appropriate* to stress the point that “because parents are different, tasks and activities must be compatible with their capabilities” (p. 83). This is not to say that parents’ goals for their children vary greatly (they all want their children to succeed in school), but it’s clear that their children’s perspectives, and abilities affect their capacity to support their children in particular ways.



Children Enter School on Different Levels

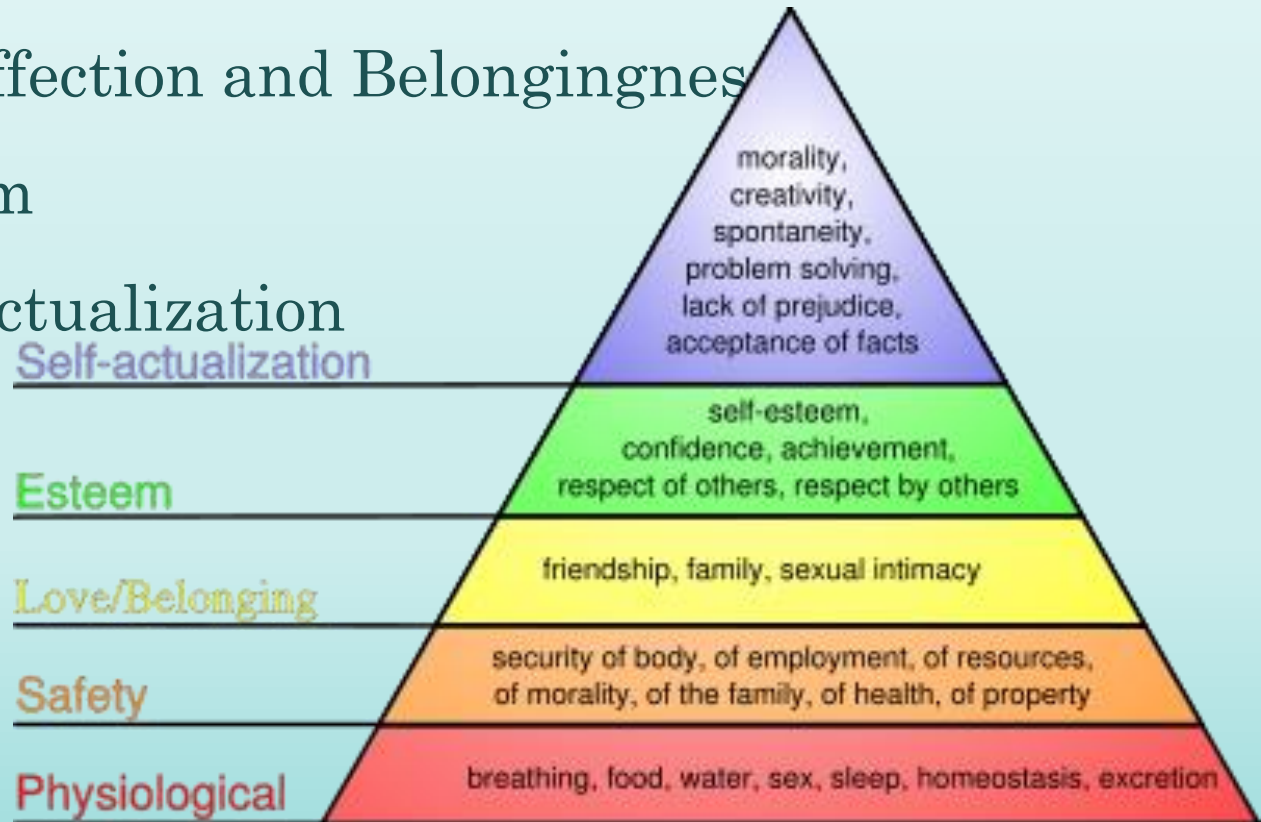
Emergent	Early	Fluent

Effects of the Home Literacy Environment



Maslow has set up a hierarchy of five levels of basic needs

- Physiological Needs
- Safety Needs
- Needs of love, Affection and Belongingness
- Needs for Esteem
- Needs for Self-Actualization



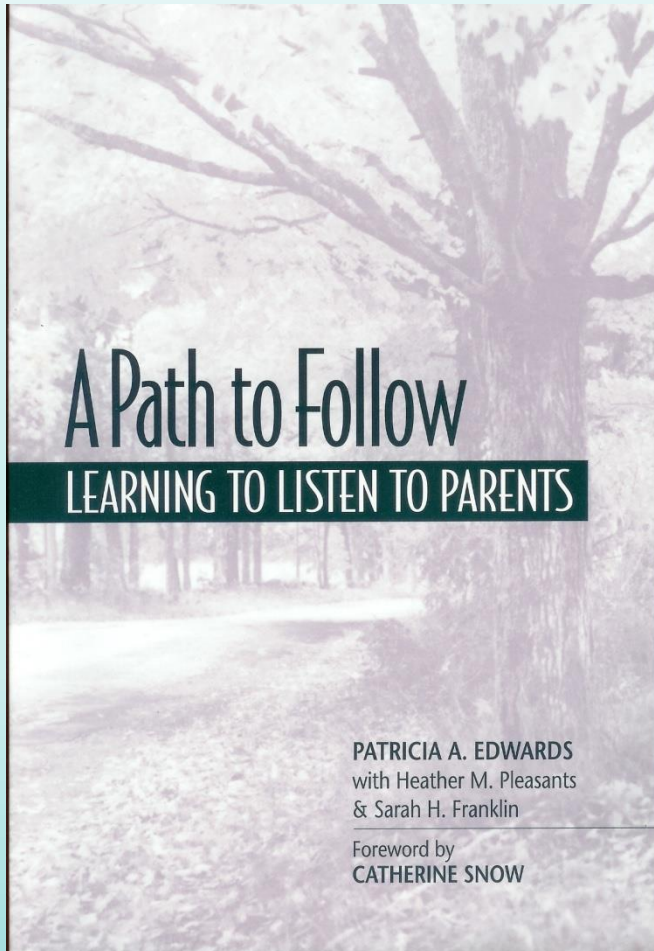
What Do We Mean by literacy Now?



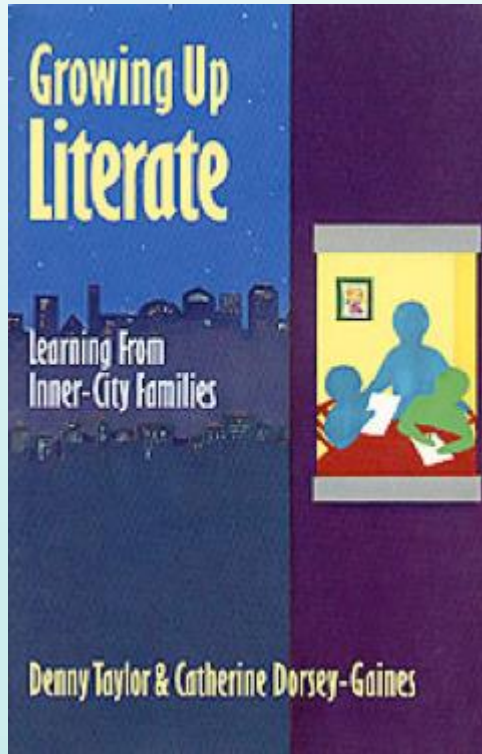
Jerome c. Harste

Every now and then we really do have breakthroughs in our understanding of literacy. Two of the most recent insights are “multiple Litearcies” and “literacy as a social practice.”

A Path to Follow: Learning to Listen to Parents (1999)



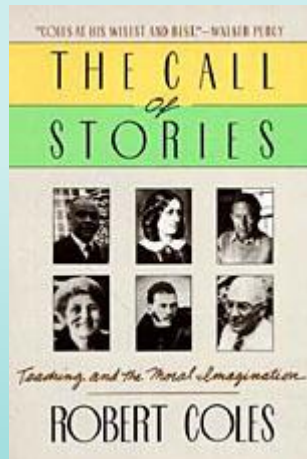
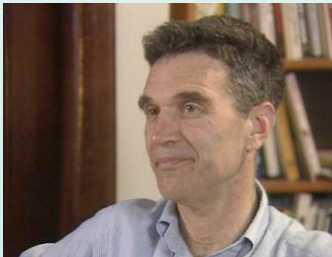
Pat Edwards and her coauthors suggest in *A Path to Follow* that parent “stories” can be a highly effective, collaborative tool for accessing knowledge that may not be obvious, but would obviously be of benefit.



- According to Taylor & Dorsey (1988):
If we are to teach, we must first examine our own assumptions about families and children and we must be alert to the negative images in the literature...Instead of responding to pathologies, we must recognize that what we see may actually be healthy adaptations to an uncertain and stressful world. As teachers, researchers, [administrators], and policymakers, we need to think about the children themselves and try to imagine the contextual worlds of their day-to-day lives. (p. 203)

What are Parent Stories?

- According to Vandergrift and Greene (1992) “every parent has his or her own story to tell” (p. 57)
- Coles (1989) further contends that “one’s responses to a story is just as revealing as the story itself” (p. 18).



Collecting Data



Doctors Collect Family Histories



Lawyers Collect Depositions



Realtors Collect Information about Lifestyles



Teachers Should Collect Parent Stories

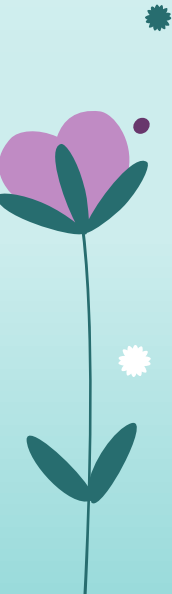
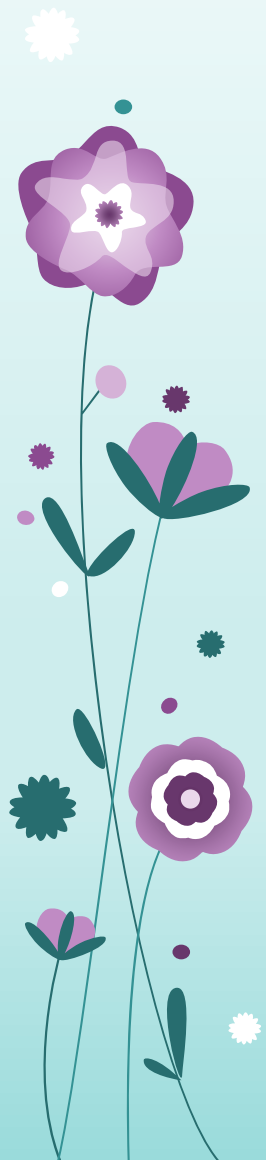
One Dimensional Questions



- How many hours per week do you routinely spend reading stories to your child?
- Have you set aside a certain time every day to read to your child?
- Do you encourage your child to read or tell you a story?
- Do you provide books and magazines for your child to read?
- Do you talk and listen to your child?
- Do you and your child visit the library regularly?
- Are you selective in the TV programs your child can watch?
- Do you talk about and discuss the program with your child?

What are Parent Stories?

Although multicultural curriculum in teacher preparation programs has helped “the cultures” of school accommodate the customs of other cultures; multicultural education has not permeated pedagogy. Too often teachers focus on large or historical cultural traditions in their classrooms and fail to consider the “personal knowledge” of students that accompanies those traditions. Therefore, I offer parent stories as a mechanism for helping teachers consider the “personal knowledge” of families and children. (Edwards, 1999, *A path to follow*)



What are Parent Stories?

Parent “stories” are the narratives gained from open-ended conversations and/or interviews. In these interviews, parents respond to questions designed to provide information about traditional and nontraditional early literacy activities and experiences that have happened in the home.

(Edwards et al., 1999, pp.xxii-xxiii)



What are Parent Stories?



- Victoria Purcell-Gates (1995) states: “When we seek to understand learners, we must seek to understand the cultural contexts within which they have developed, learn to interpret who they are in relations to others, and learn how to process, interpret, or decode, their world” (p. 5).



- Courtney Cazden (1989) states: “Teachers, like physicians and social workers, are in the business of helping others. But as a prerequisite to giving help, we have to take in and understand” (p. 26).



- Lauren Resnick (1990) contends that school is only one place where literate activities occur: To understand the literacy crisis and imagine possible solutions, it is essential to examine the nature of literacy practice outside school as well as within” (p. 170).



Why are **Parent
Stories** important?



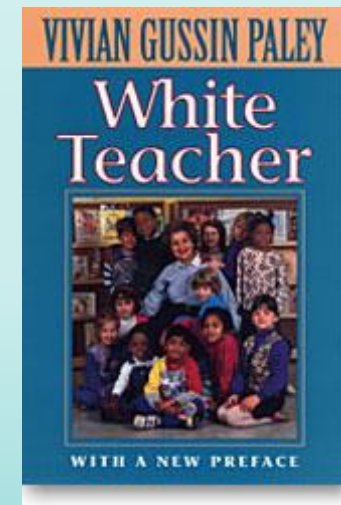
First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt



We have to face the fact that either all of us are going to die together or we are going to learn to live together and if we are to live together we have to talk.

Important Message to Teachers from Vivian Paley, author of *White Teacher*

Each year I greet thirty new children with a clear picture in mind of who shall be called “bright” and who shall be called “well-behaved.” Ask me where these “facts” come from and I will probably refer to my professional background. Yet, I doubt that the image I carry of the intelligent, capable child has changed much since my own elementary school days. It has been intellectualized and rationalized...(1979, p. 11)

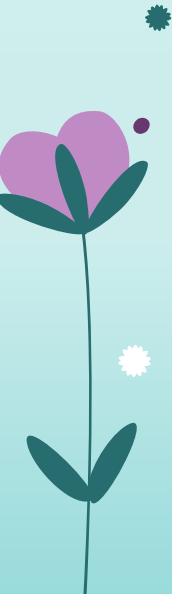
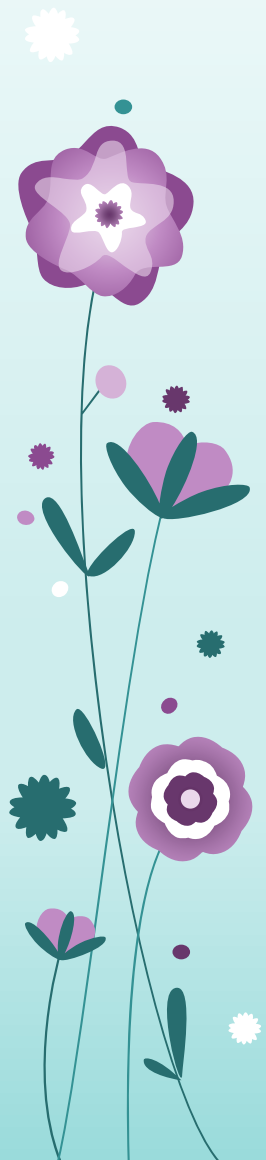


James Baldwin noted author stated:

- “We learn who we are by how others perceive us.”

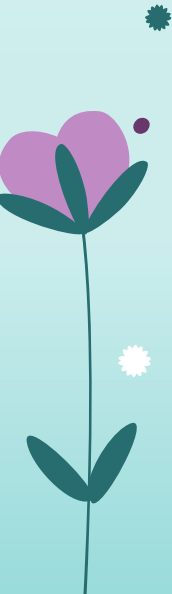
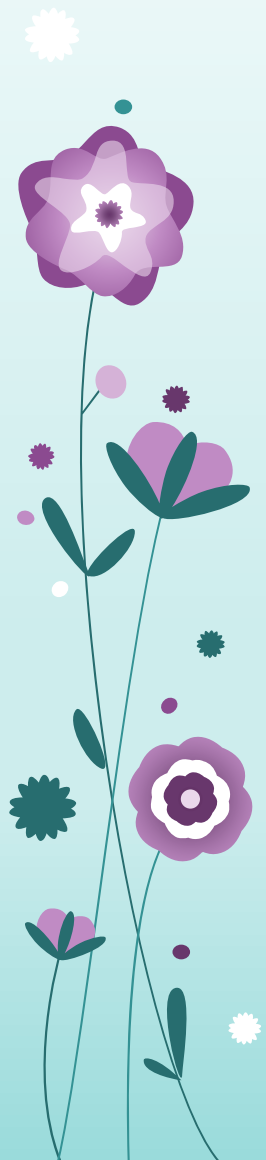


- Tell me what to do.
- Tell me about the cultures of these students.
- Give me some tips to help me teach them.
- I have heard that these students learn differently.
- What does research say about the way these students learn and are socialized?

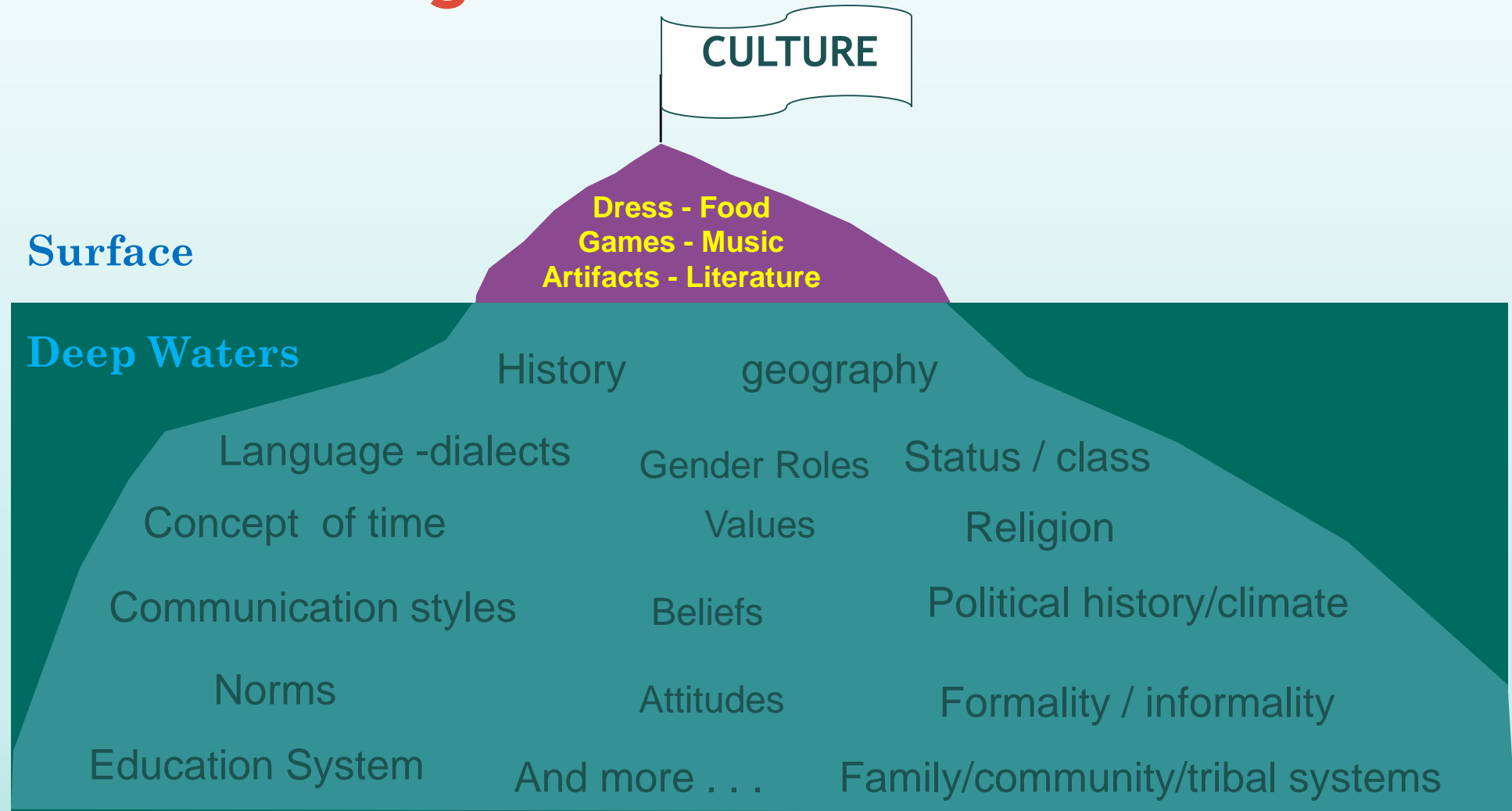


Teacher Education

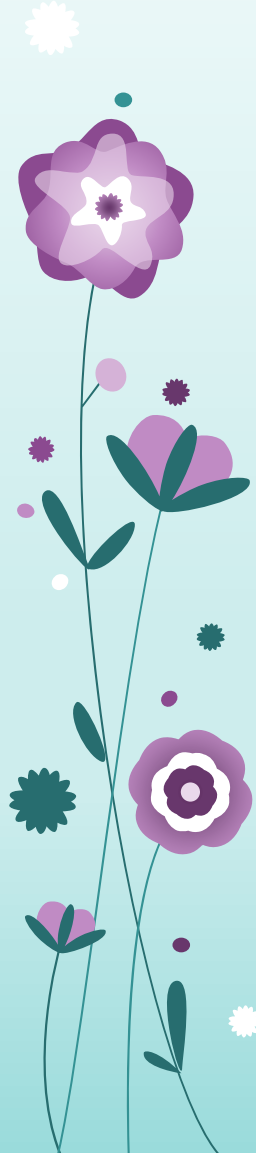
“Many teachers find themselves **ill-prepared to comprehend the multiple cultures that students bring to the classroom**, let alone bring dignity and respect for those cultures. They are taught subject matter, but not what to do when the subject matter does not pertain to the life experiences of the students. **Teacher education programs rarely prepare teachers to make education meaningful to diverse groups of students**” (Krevotics & Nussell, 1994, p. xi).



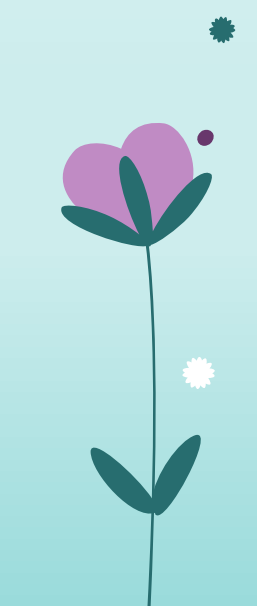
The Cultural Iceberg



Just as nine-tenths of an iceberg is below the waterline & out of sight, nine-tenths of culture is below conscious awareness.

A decorative floral illustration on the left side of the slide. It features a tall, thin green stem with several leaves. At the top is a large purple flower with a white center. Below it are smaller purple and pink flowers, along with small white and purple dots. The background is a light blue gradient.

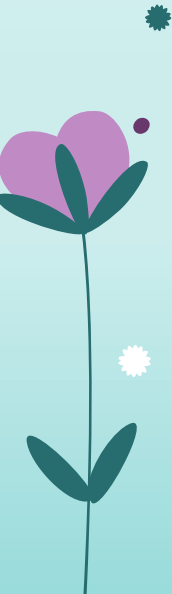
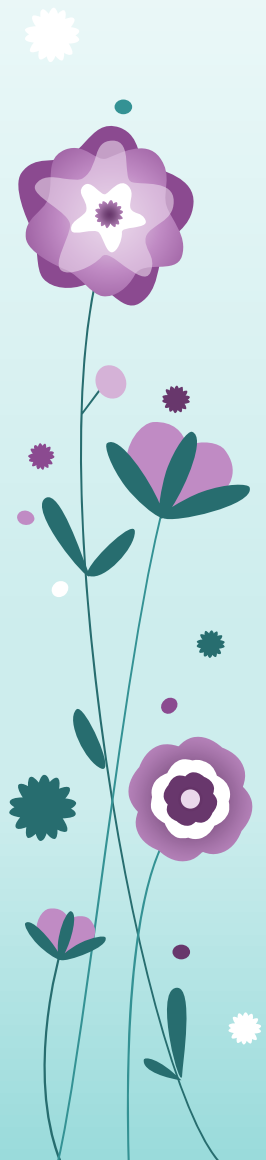
How can I use **Parent Stories** to support my students' literacy development?

A decorative floral illustration on the right side of the slide. It features a tall, thin green stem with several leaves. At the top is a large purple flower with a white center. Below it are smaller purple and pink flowers, along with small white and purple dots. The background is a light blue gradient.

What Can Parent Stories Provide for Teachers?

- Routines of parents and children
- Parents' recollections of their children's early learning efforts
- Parents' perceptions as to whether their occupations determine how they raise their children
- Descriptions of parents' "teachable moments"
- Artifacts of children's literacy histories (scrapbooks, audio cassettes, videotapes, photographs, etc.)

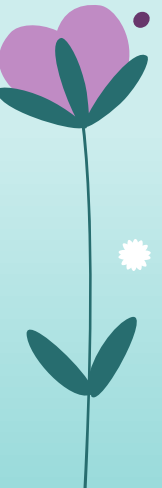
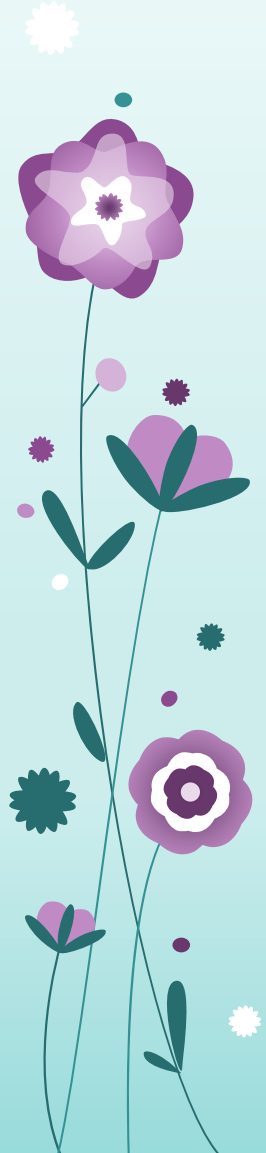
(Edwards et al., 1999, p.xviii)



What Can Parent Stories Provide for Teachers?

Parent stories can also provide teachers with the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the “human side” of families and children (i.e., why children behave as they do, children’s ways of learning and communicating, some of the problems parents have encountered, and how these problems may have impacted their children’s views about school and the schooling process).

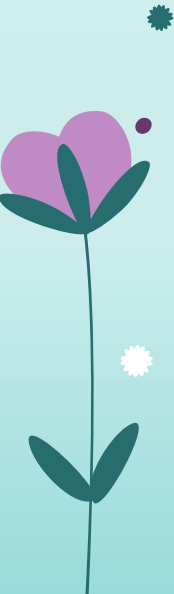
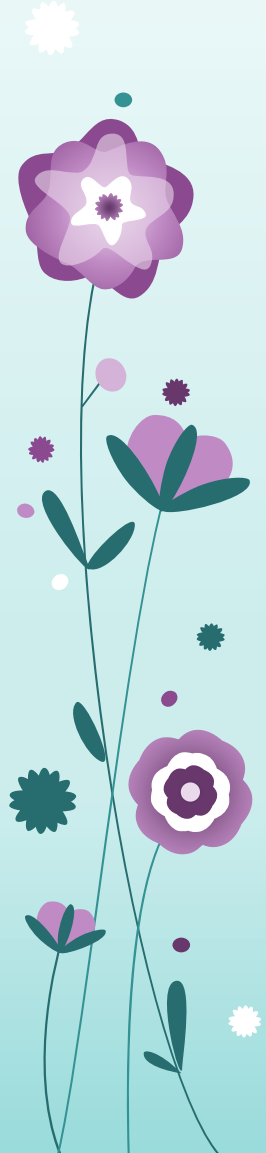
(Edwards et al., 1999, p.xviii)



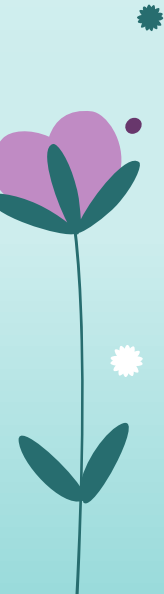
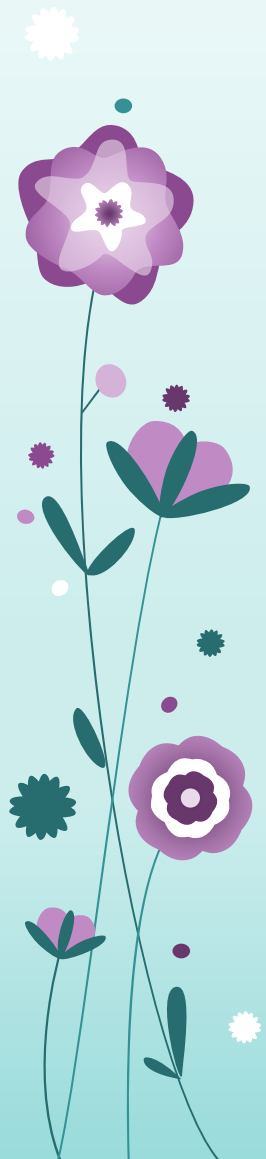
What Can Parent Stories Provide for Teachers?

Further, parent stories offer a route out of the blame cycle and the justification teachers sometimes give for not successfully teaching labeled at-risk. Parent stories allow teachers to identify what it means, specifically, when we use the words “home literacy environment” to talk about students’ success or lack of success in school. By using parent stories in this way, teachers are able to look at specific issues, problems and strengths of homes, which influence the literacy development of students. This is the first step towards making connections between parent stories and how they can be used to better educate every child.

(Edwards et al., 1999, p.xxiv)



Collecting **Parent** **Stories**





Tools for Collecting Parent Stories

- Writing Utensils and a Notebook

- Tape Recorder

- Skype

- Zoom

- Google Hangout

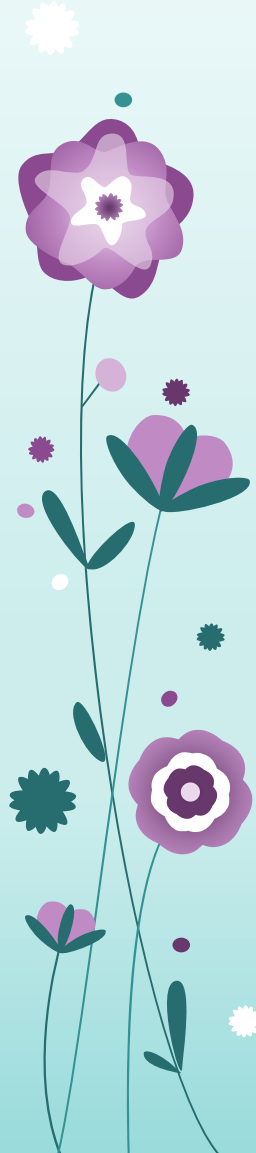
- Transcribing Machine

- Laptop Computer

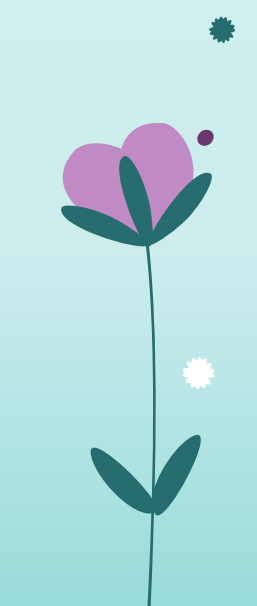
- Photocopy Paper
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Choosing Whom To Talk To

(List of Students in Classroom)

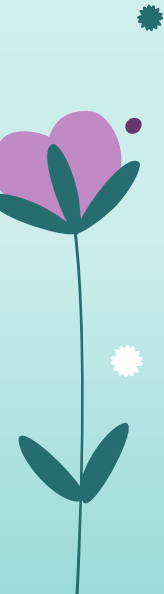
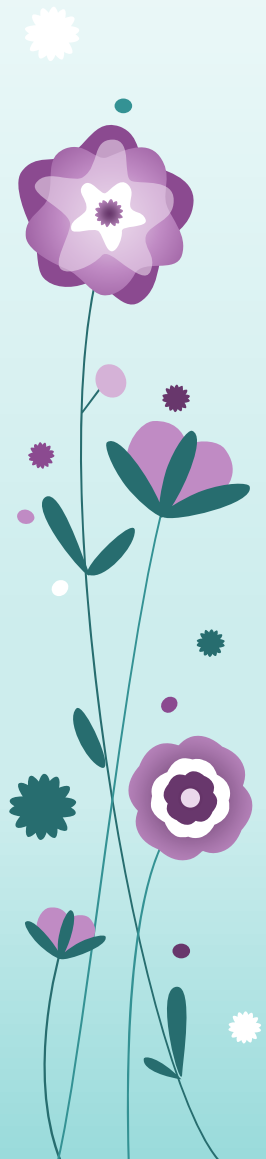


Name of Student	A Few of the words I would use to describe this student are



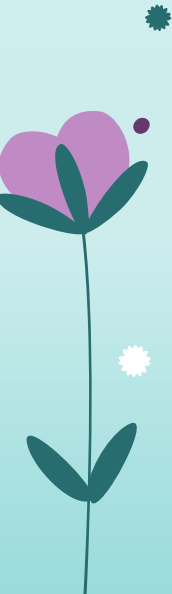
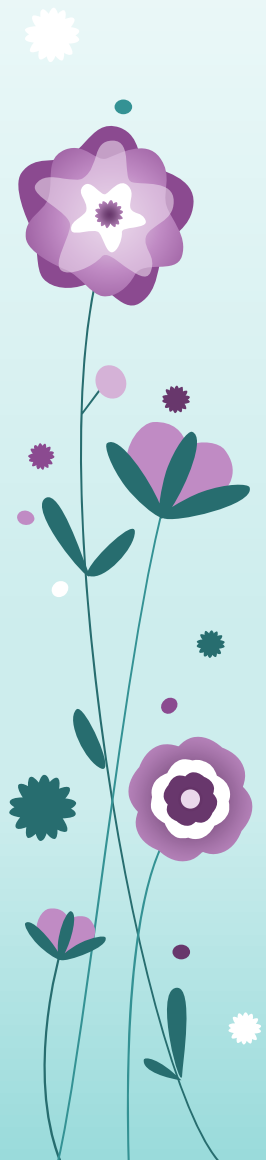
Questions You Can Ask Yourself

- In as much detail as possible, describe why you want to talk to _____'s parent(s):
- If you feel that _____ is a child, who is “at-risk,” describe the nature of his/her “at-riskness” in as much detail as possible:
- In general, what would you like to see happen in order for the student to improve their academic and/or social development?
- Specifically, what would you like to see happen in order for the student to improve their academic and/or social development?
- Take a moment to think about your knowledge of this student's parent(s) or caregiver(s). What have others said about them? In what circumstances have you interacted with them? Describe your interactions with them and discuss your intuitive impressions and things they've said that really “stick out” in your mind.
- Given what you know about your students' parents/caregivers, how easy or difficult do you think it would be to approach them and ask them questions regarding their child's home life and literacy experiences? Why?
- Do you think you would get the whole story from them? Why or why not?
- Be creative! Think about three ways you could engage and communicate with this child's parents/caregivers in order to find answers to your questions. Would you offer anything in result for this information? (A personal revelation of your own, a fun instructional book for their child, some suggestions for what they could do at home) If yes, what would you offer? If not, why not?



Description of the Edwards-Pleasants Parent Stories Questionnaire
Source: *A Path to Follow: Learning to Listen to Parents* (Edwards et al., 1999)

- There are fifty (50) questions and eleven categories in this questionnaire. The categories of questions include: (1) parent/child family routines and activities, (2) child's literacy history, (3) teachable moments, (4) homelife, (5) educational experiences, (6) parent's beliefs about their child, (7) child's time with others, (8) parent/child/sibling relationships, (9) parent's hobbies, activities and interests in books, (10) parent/teacher relationship, and (11) parent's school history--ideas about school.



What Can Parent Stories Provide for Teachers? --A New Way to Listen to Parents

- Can you describe “something” about your home learning environment that you feel might be different from the learning environment of the school?
- Can you describe “something” about your home learning environment that you would like the school to build upon because you feel that this “something” would enhance your child’s learning potential at school?
- Is there “something” about your child that might not be obvious to the teacher, but might positively or negatively affect his/her performance in school if the teacher knew? If so, what would that “something” be?

A Word of Wisdom from P. D. Pearson about Teaching ALL Children



Dr. P. D. Pearson

Children are who they are. They know what they know. They bring what they bring. Our job is not to wish that students knew more or knew differently. Our job is to turn each student's knowledge and diversity of knowledge we encounter into a **curricular strength rather than an instructional inconvenience**. We can do that only if we hold high expectations for all students, and convey great respect for the knowledge and culture they bring to the classroom, and offer lots of support in helping them achieve those expectations (p. 272).

If I Had My Child to Raise Over Again

If I had my child to raise all over again,
I'd build self-esteem first, and the house later,
I'd finger-paint more, and point the finger less.
I would do less correcting and more connecting.

I'd take more hikes and fly more kites.

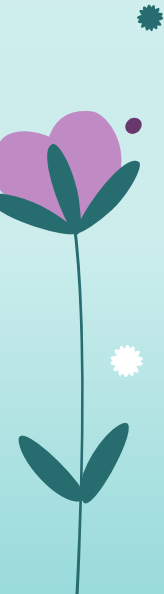
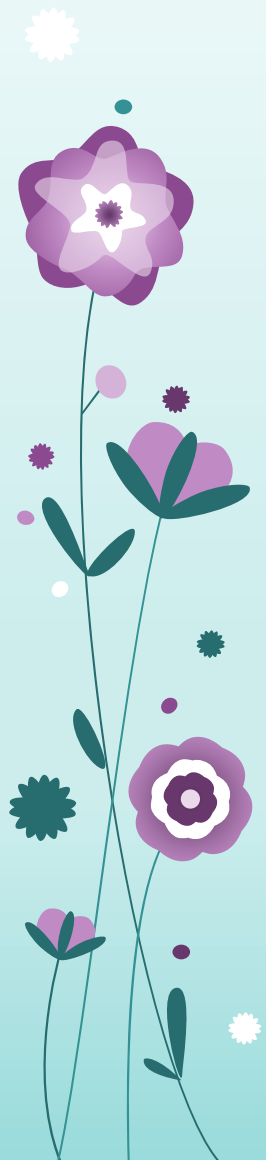
I'd stop playing serious, and seriously play.
I would run through more fields and gaze at more stars.

I'd do more hugging and less tugging.

I'd see the oak tree in the acorn more often.
I would be firm less often, and affirm much more.

I'd model less about the love of power,
And more about the power of love.

By Diane Loomans



Growing Children's Needs

Children are as fragile

As the petals of a rose.

Their need for love and guidance

Will go on each year they grow.

Walk lightly through the flowers

Making certain they have room,

For if you overcrowd or step on them

You may never see them bloom.

Nurture them with kindness

As you see to all their needs.

Treat children as you would a plant

You've started from a seed.

The fruit of all your labor

Will be sweet and bring you pride,

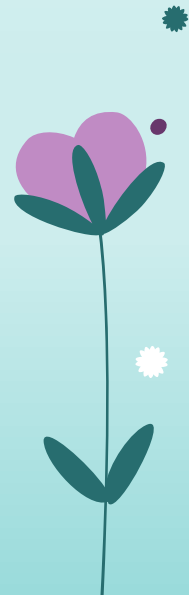
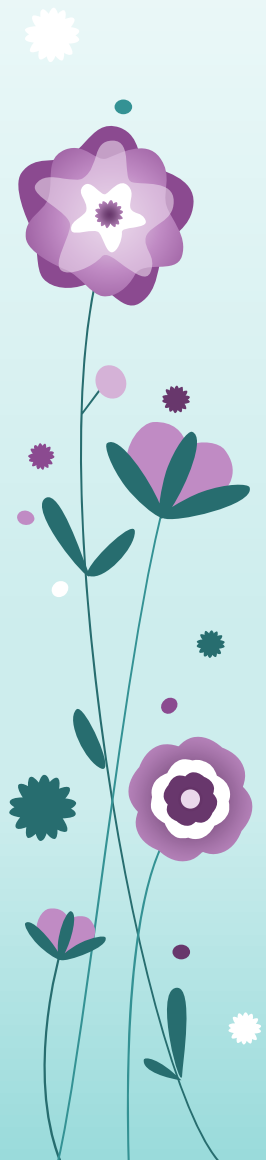
For guidance builds good children

When it's tenderly applied.

By Lyle Nachand

Edwards, P.A. (1993). *Parents as Partners in Reading: A Family Literacy*

Training Program. Second Edition. Chicago, IL: Childrens Press.





America's future walks through the doors
of our schools every day.

Mary Jean LeTendre



- **For More Information...**

- **Contact:**

Patricia A. Edwards, Ph.D.

Michigan State University

Teacher Education Department

304 Erickson Hall

East Lansing, MI 48824-1034

Phone: 517 432-0858

E-mail: edwards6@msu.edu

Questions?



Thank you!

