

**September 30, 2009**

Technical Assistance for Conducting a  
Short-Term Summative Assessment of  
the National Institute for Literacy's  
K-3 Parents with Low Literacy Skills  
Build Knowledge about Reading

Final Report

Prepared for

National Institute for Literacy  
1775 I Street NW, Suite 730  
Washington, DC 20006-2401

Prepared by

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# Table of Contents

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Chapter	Page
1. Introduction.....	1-1
Parents as Co-Teachers of Literacy .....	1-1
Brief overview of program.....	1-2
Goals of the Current Study .....	1-2
2. Method.....	2-1
Participants.....	2-1
Facilitators.....	2-1
Parents.....	2-1
Measures .....	2-1
Data Collection Procedures.....	2-2
Analytic Procedures .....	2-3
Document Review .....	2-3
Qualitative Analysis of Interviews.....	2-4
3. Results.....	3-1
1. Assessing Fidelity/Quality of and Satisfaction with Written Materials .....	3-1
Topics.....	3-1
Facilitators' Impressions of How the Guide Worked.....	3-2
Facilitators' Opinions of the Curricular Materials .....	3-15
Facilitators Suggestions for Improvement to Curricular Materials.....	3-17
Parents' Opinions of the parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook).....	3-17
2. Assessing the Facilitators' Training and Training Materials .....	3-18
Training on Curricular Topics.....	3-18
Support Received for the Training .....	3-19
Additions to Training Content .....	3-20
3. Assessing Fidelity and Quality of Parent Training Program.....	3-20
Adherence of Training Program to Design .....	3-20
Dosage.....	3-20
Facilitators' Skills for Delivering Program.....	3-21
Parents' Evaluation of Facilitators' Skills.....	3-22
Essential Personal Qualities of Facilitators .....	3-23
Program Integration with Schools.....	3-23
Parents' Opinions about the Program Structure.....	3-24
4. Satisfaction with Materials and Training Program .....	3-27
Parent Expectations Regarding Our Reading and Writing Journey .....	3-27
Parent Satisfaction with Program and Features.....	3-29
Parent Satisfaction with Facilitators.....	3-31
Facilitators' Satisfaction with Program.....	3-32
Facilitators' Descriptions of Barriers and Strategies to Overcome Them.....	3-32

5.	Assessing Change in Participants and their Children.....	3-33
	Changes in Parents .....	3-33
	Changes in Children.....	3-39
4.	Summary, Lessons Learned, and Future Considerations .....	4-1
	Summary of Findings.....	4-1
	Lessons Learned and Future Considerations .....	4-2
	References.....	R-1
	Appendix A: Parent Survey .....	A-1
	Appendix B: Facilitator Survey .....	B-1

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## ***List of Exhibits***

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<b>Number</b>	<b>Page</b>
1-1. Crosswalk between Goals, Indicators, and Information Sources .....	1-3
2-1. Demographic Characteristics of Parent Participants .....	2-2
3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook).....	3-3



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## **Introduction**

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Since its inception, the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) has had the mission of providing leadership regarding literacy, coordinating literacy services and policy, and serving as a national resource for adult education and literacy programs. The institute disseminates information on scientifically based reading research pertaining to children, youth, and adults as well as information about development and implementation of classroom reading programs based on the research. While a significant amount of the institute's effort has focused on providing resources for those accustomed to accessing and using test-based materials, the needs of parents less likely or able to use such resources have sharpened interest in reaching parents with low levels of literacy (i.e., about 30 million are estimated to have no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills on the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy). This substantial population of parents presents some challenges to enlisting them to support their children's literacy development. Starting in fall 2007, NIFL attempted to reach these parents through a pilot program designed to help low literacy parents learn more about reading and their role in supporting it.

### **1.1 Parents as Co-Teachers of Literacy**

Parents have long been viewed as their children's first teachers—bearing the first, if not primary, responsibility for supporting child development. When it comes to supporting children's literacy, Teale (1986) and Sénéchal (2006; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Sénéchal, LeFevre, Thomas, & Daly, 1998) have noted the roles that parents play in their children's literacy development through both informal and formal literacy activities. Teale (1986) noted that informal and formal literacy activities are two distinct modes of interaction, each affecting different components of literacy development. Parents can support vocabulary development through informal activities, such as reading to their children (e.g., Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000; Jordan, Snow, & Porche, 2000; Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998; Sénéchal, 1997; Whitehurst et al., 1988), while parents' use of formal activities, such as naming letters and speech sounds, supports literacy building blocks (e.g., Ebey, Marchand-Martella, Martella, & Nelson, 1999; Kraft, Findlay, Major, Gilberts, & Hofmeister, 2001; Lopez & Cole, 1999). In addition, parents' beliefs and expectations about their children's literacy predicts the nature of the literacy-related activities in which the parents engage with their children (e.g., Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2006; Wiegel, Martin, & Bennett, 2006) and the resulting early literacy skills of their children (e.g., Curenton & Justice, 2008). Further, parental expectations and beliefs about their children's literacy are influenced by a range of factors, including sociodemographic factors (e.g., race/ethnicity, poverty) and, importantly, the parents' own levels of literacy (e.g., DeBaryshe, 1995; Gunderson & Anderson, 2003).

Sénéchal and Young (2008) concluded from their metaanalysis of family intervention programs that programs that used parents as agents of change in their children's literacy development, primarily through formal literacy activities, were effective in promoting young children's reading skills (see also Sylva, Scott, Totsika, Ereky-Stevens, & Crook, 2008). However, the capacity for parents to actively support their children's literacy may be severely compromised when the parents have limited literacy

## Introduction

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skills. According to the most recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL; Baer, Kutner, & Sabatini, 2009), about 14% of American adults (aged 16 or older) lack basic English literacy skills, and about 5% are nonliterate in English. If “Mama Can’t Read” (Cooter, 2006) and “Johnny’s Dad Can’t Read” (Bishop, 1991), engaging parents as agents of change in literacy programs presents a special challenge.

### 1.2 Brief Overview of Program

In the fall of 2007 the NIFL contracted the Education Development Center (EDC) to develop and manage a pilot training program designed specifically for low literacy parents of children in grades K–3, that would improve their knowledge of how children learn to read and their ability to support children’s development as readers. The pilot program supported the development of a trainer resource manual and parent activity and resource guide based on NIFL’s K–3 scientific reading research products, including *Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read* and *A Child Becomes A Reader* (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2006).

In winter and spring 2008, the pilot project was implemented in two elementary school districts: Warwick, Rhode Island and Somerville, Massachusetts. The pilot program for these two sites was called *Our Reading and Writing Journey: Helping your Child Learn to Read*. Facilitators were school staff who implemented the intervention. They were selected based both on their interest in implementing the program and on their qualifications. There was one facilitator in Warwick. She was a former second-grade teacher and was the current Title 1 Coordinator for the district as well as the director of the Family Center with responsibility for supervising staff who conducted parent education programs and performed parent outreach. There were two facilitators in Somerville. They were both teachers in the school in which the program was given. Both of the Somerville facilitators had expertise in teaching reading and working with English language learners. Each site met as a group once a week for 2 hours. Parent participants in Warwick, Rhode Island, came from throughout the school district. Parent participants in Somerville, Massachusetts, came from one school, Albert F. Argenziano School at Lincoln Park.

An overview of the lessons learned from implementation of the pilot project was provided by EDC to NIFL. In fall 2008, NIFL funded RTI International to conduct a summative evaluation of the pilot project.

### 1.3 Goals of the Current Study

This summative evaluation was guided by four goals:

1. To assess the fidelity and quality of the written materials used in the Pilot K–3 Parent Reading Program.
2. To assess the fidelity and quality of the training to parents in the Pilot K–3 Parent Reading Program
3. To assess satisfaction with the materials and training provided in the Pilot K–3 Parent Reading Program.

4. To examine changes in parents and children as a function of participation in the program.

These goals were articulated into a series of research questions, with indicators pegged to specific sources of data from the pilot project. The crosswalk (*Exhibit 1-1*) guided the study methodology (see Section 2) and provided the template for the surveys that were developed. Moreover, the crosswalk ensured that the summative evaluation findings would be most informative to NIFL.

**Exhibit 1-1. Crosswalk between Goals, Indicators, and Information Sources**

Goal of Summative Evaluation	Indicators	Source
<p>To assess the fidelity and quality of the written materials used in the Pilot K–3 Parent Reading Program.</p> <p>Answers questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well did the written materials reflect NIFL’s scientific reading model?</li> <li>• How useful did parents find the topics in the Activity and Resource Guide?</li> <li>• What would parents change about the Activity and Resource Guide?</li> <li>• How were facilitators trained to use the materials?</li> <li>• How helpful did the facilitators find the Draft Trainer Resource Manual?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Activity and Resource Guide topics</li> <li>• Draft Trainer Resource Manual topics</li> <li>• Suggestions for improvement made regarding Parent Activity and Resource Guide</li> <li>• Ratings of topics included in the Draft Trainer Resource Manual</li> <li>• Suggestions for Draft Trainer Resource Manual improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Parent Activity and Resource Guide</li> <li>• Review of Draft Trainer Resource Manual</li> <li>• Parent In-Depth Interview</li> <li>• Facilitator In-Depth Interview</li> </ul>
<p>To assess the fidelity and quality of the training to parents in the Pilot K–3 Parent Reading Program.</p> <p>Answers questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the reading program implemented as planned?</li> <li>• How much of the program did parents receive?</li> <li>• How useful did the parents find the training program?</li> <li>• How did the training change parents’ thinking about literacy practices?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of sessions provided</li> <li>• Attendance in program</li> <li>• Match between program and participant characteristics</li> <li>• Parents’ reflections about change in literacy and literacy practices</li> <li>• Facilitators assessment of parents’ change in cognitions and behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of attendance records</li> <li>• Parent In-Depth Interview</li> <li>• Facilitator In-Depth Interview</li> </ul>

(continued)

**Exhibit 1-1. Crosswalk between Goals, Indicators, and Information Sources  
(continued)**

Goal of Summative Evaluation	Indicators	Source
<p>To assess satisfaction with the materials and training provided in the Pilot K–3 Parent Reading Program.</p> <p>Answers questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was parents’ response to the Activity and Resource Guide?</li> <li>• What would parents change about Activity and Resource Guide?</li> <li>• How well did the program meet parent expectations?</li> <li>• How helpful did parents find the facilitators?</li> <li>• What were barriers to parents’ participation?</li> <li>• What would parents change about the Parent Reading Program?</li> <li>• What was the facilitators’ response to the Draft Trainer Resource Manual?</li> <li>• What would facilitators change about the Draft Trainer Resource Manual?</li> <li>• What were the limitations to program implementation identified by the facilitators?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of parents’ satisfaction with Activity and Resource Guide</li> <li>• Met and unmet parent expectations</li> <li>• Extent of parents’ satisfaction with classes</li> <li>• Extent of parents’ satisfaction with facilitator</li> <li>• Number and reasons for parents not attending and/or participating</li> <li>• Extent of satisfaction with Draft Trainer Resource Manual</li> <li>• Barriers encountered by facilitators</li> <li>• Suggestions for changes to be made regarding materials and curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent In-Depth Interview</li> <li>• Facilitator In-Depth Interview</li> </ul>

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## Method

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To conduct this mixed-method summative evaluation, we examined materials that were used by the facilitators to structure the sessions and those provided to the parents, and we conducted interviews with facilitators and parent participants. The participants, measures, and procedures are described in detail.

### 2.1 Participants

#### Facilitators

The one facilitator in Warwick was interviewed. One of the two facilitators in the Somerville Public Schools was interviewed. The second facilitator in Somerville was unable to accommodate our request for an interview. As described in the introduction, both facilitators who were interviewed were educators with experience working with this population.

#### Parents

*Exhibit 2-1* provides the demographic characteristics of the parent participants who were interviewed. Data are provided by site and overall. Altogether there were 13 parents who participated in the program in Warwick. Of these, 10 were interviewed for this study. All 4 parents who participated in Somerville's program were interviewed.

There were some similarities between the two groups of participants. In both sites, the participants tended to be older parents and mostly were married. Only a minority of parents in both groups tended to have a BA or higher level of education. However, there were striking differences between the two groups of parents. All of the Somerville participants were mothers, whereas there were fathers and grandmothers as well as mothers in Warwick. For ease of presentation, all adult participants will be known as "parents." Although a majority of participants in both sites were white, there was one Hispanic participant in Warwick and an African American participant and a Cape Verdean participant in Somerville. All of the Somerville participants were working full time, whereas in Warwick, there were two participants who were working only part time, two who were homemakers, and one who was not working due to a disability.

#### Measures

Surveys were developed for the facilitator and the parent interviews. These surveys were developed based on the crosswalk of research question and indicators that RTI developed to address the evaluation (see *Exhibit 1-1*). We used this crosswalk as a blueprint to guide the interview question development. Each survey was constrained by the Office of Management and Budget to be no more than 20 minutes, limiting the questions that could be addressed. Each of the interviews included both closed-format and open-ended questions that were designed to probe the facilitators and parents perceptions of

**Method**

the program, including their satisfaction with it and suggestions for improvement. Copies of the surveys may be found in *Appendix A* and *Appendix B*.

**Exhibit 2-1. Demographic Characteristics of Parent Participants**

	<b>Warwick (n = 10)</b>	<b>Somerville (n = 4)</b>	<b>Total (n = 14)</b>
<b>Relationship to Student</b>			
Mother	6 (60%)	4 (100%)	10 (71%)
Father	2 (20%)	0	2 (14%)
Grandmother	2 (20%)	0	2 (14%)
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Married	8 (80%)	3 (75%)	11 (79%)
Divorced	1 (10%)	1 (25%)	2 (14%)
Never married	1 (10%)	0	1 (7%)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
African American	0	1 (25%)	1 (7%)
Hispanic	1 (10%)	0	1 (7%)
White	9 (90%)	2 (50%)	11 (79%)
Other	0	1 (25%)	1 (7%)
<b>Highest Level of Education</b>			
High school graduate	2 (20%)	0	2 (14%)
Some post high school education	5 (50%)	3 (75%)	8 (57%)
BA	3 (30%)	0	3 (21%)
Post-BA	0	1 (25%)	1 (7%)
<b>Employment Status</b>			
Full time	4 (40%)	4 (100%)	8 (57%)
Part time	3 (30%)	0	3 (21%)
Not working	3 (30%)	0	3 (21%)
<b>Age (years)</b>	42.3 (29-52)	42.5 (39-47)	42.4 (29-52)

**2.2 Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection occurred in May–June 2009, about 1 year after the program ended. The telephone interviews with the facilitators and the parents were conducted by one of two trained researchers. All participants were sent a lead letter describing the study, which was followed up by a telephone call to either conduct the interview or set a time for the interview. Consent to conduct the interview was obtained verbally. Parents and facilitators were given a \$20 gift certificate to compensate them for their time. Interviews took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Interviews were tape-recorded using a digital recorder; recordings were downloaded to a secure share drive on RTI’s network and the recordings were destroyed. No identifying information was on the recordings. The interviews were transcribed. Quantitative data were summarized on excel spread sheets and the open-ended responses were analyzed

using qualitative procedures (see analytic procedures described in the next section). All procedures were approved by RTI's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

## 2.3 Analytic Procedures

### Document Review

The goal of the document review was to determine whether the curriculum developers used the NIFL research-based reading model as a framework for writing the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* curriculum *Facilitator Resource Guide* (Facilitator Handbook) and *Parent Activity and Resource Guide* (Scrapbook). If so, did they incorporate scientifically based strategies that support parents to encourage and develop early reading skills for children? We also considered how developers translated the lessons into culturally sensitive, learner-centered activities that parents could experience and practice in group meetings and ultimately use with their children in the home.

As background to the creation of parent and facilitator interviews, the RTI evaluation team also reviewed products developed by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), in preparation for the pilot projects in Somerville and Warwick and immediately after implementation in the two sites. Those documents provided insight into the thinking and critical judgments made in the curriculum design, selection of facilitators and school sites, participant recruitment, and procedures carried out to conduct the workshops. Following is a list of documents included in the review:

- *A Child Becomes a Reader* (Armbruster et al., 2006),
- A series of brochures published by the National Institutes for Literacy with a focus on how parents can help their children learn to read:
  - *Shining Stars: Kindergartners Learn to Read*,
  - *Shining Stars: First Graders Learn to Read*, and
  - *Shining Stars: Second & Third Graders Learn to Read*;
- *Report of the National Reading Panel* (2000);
- Statement of Work: Technical Assistance for Development of a Training Manual and Parent Activity and Resource Guide to help K–3 Parents with Low Literacy Skills Build Knowledge about Reading;
- *Help Your Child Learn to Read: A Parent Education Curriculum Implementation Plan*, Warwick Public Schools Oakland Beach School (draft prepared for NIFL by Education Development Center, Inc.);
- Lessons Learned and Recommendations Report: Technical Assistance for Helping K–3 Parents with Low-Literacy Skills Build Knowledge about Reading (Education Development Center, Inc., 2008).

### Qualitative Analysis of Interviews

The data were analyzed by reviewing the transcripts from each interview to identify common themes related to our topics of interest. The topics of interest grew out of the crosswalk of goals of evaluation and indicators and were modified by the project team during a debriefing at the conclusion of the interviews. The interview transcripts were coded based on these key areas. Coding was done using different methods for the facilitator interviews and the parents' interviews due to variation in the number of interviews within each group (2 facilitator interviews, 14 parent interviews).

Because of the small number of facilitator interviews, we used an interactive process to code the transcripts based on topics of interest. Key text illustrating each of the codes was organized into a tabular matrix where the rows contained the codes and the columns contained the interviewees' responses. For the parent interviews we used NVIVO to code the transcripts. NVIVO is a specialized software that is commonly used to code and analyze multiple interviews. This software facilitates the identification of specific themes across interviews, which is especially helpful when working with 14 different transcripts. For both parent and facilitator interviews the quantitative questions were tabulated using an Excel datasheet, which allowed for quick and effective summation of responses.

Both of these approaches allowed us to draw comparisons across interviews and to identify potential differences between group settings. This ultimately leads to a synthesis of the themes into an overall summary and enabled us to draw conclusions about the facilitators' and parents' experience with the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* program.

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## Results

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### 3.1 Assessing Fidelity/Quality of and Satisfaction with Written Materials

#### Topics

The RTI evaluation team’s review of the *Draft Our Reading and Writing Journey Facilitator Handbook* and *Parent Activity and Resource Guide* concluded that both documents incorporated all components of NIFL’s reading instruction model for children in K–3. Presented in 12 lessons, the Facilitator’s Handbook skillfully integrates model components into a series of 12 topics beginning with the importance of book reading and ending with ways to keep children reading independently. The 12 lessons each cover important concepts of the building blocks for teaching children to read, referenced in the findings of the National Reading Panel. Those concepts include Alphabeticity, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics Instruction, Fluency, and Comprehension—both vocabulary instruction and text comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Beginning with a brief introduction to guide the facilitator’s preparation for the workshops, the Facilitator’s Handbook provides a framework for each lesson, which includes a session overview, learning goals for parents, and two to three activities designed to help parents become familiar with the techniques for building children’s reading skills. Background information is available for facilitators to explain appropriate reading skills of K–3 children, and facilitators are instructed to include their own ideas for fun activities that would engage parents practicing the techniques.

The structure of each lesson is similar: facilitators first present the topic to parents and explaining the concepts and then model activities, guide their practice, and engage parents in hands-on activities to use at home with their children. Curriculum developers provided lists of materials that facilitators should gather to clarify and reinforce learning goals and suggested key points to present from relevant research information. Also provided are handouts and learning aids that support important concepts, and suggested types of resources and books for use in each session. Literature for parents to help their beginning readers was offered. *A Child Becomes a Reader: Proven Ideas from Research for Parents: Kindergarten through Grade 3* (Armbruster et al., 2006) was included among the recommended handouts.

At the conclusion of each session, facilitators summarized the day’s activities and referred parents to the *Our Reading and Writing Journey Scrapbook*, which is organized around lesson topics. The Scrapbook serves as a resource guide for both facilitators and parents because it reinforces skills taught in the workshop session. Its main purpose was intended to provide a place where the facilitator could break down beginning reading concepts and skills through further instruction, hands-on activities, tips, and ideas that parents could use at home with their children. The Scrapbook provides spaces for parents to plan at-home activities, record notes, organize materials, and display products that reflect their experiences, culture, and interests.

## Results

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*Exhibits 3-1* and *3-2* show the components of NIFL’s scientifically based reading model, recommended by the National Reading Panel’s 2000 report, along with key concepts for reading instruction supported in the research. The RTI evaluators reviewed the content of the Facilitator’s Handbook and found that related lessons and activities had closely followed the scientifically based reading model recommended by NIFL.

References listed in *Exhibit 3-1* represent a small subset of the many studies cited in the National Reading Panel’s review of literature and their final recommendations for evidence-based beginning reading instruction. The body of literature cited in the Facilitator’s Handbook provides strong evidence that topics and approaches selected for this curriculum adhere to the reading model. Examples of techniques for beginning reading instruction, handout topics, and suggested Scrapbook entries found in the Facilitator’s Handbook are included in the exhibit.

### Facilitators’ Impressions of How the Guide Worked

Overall, both facilitators thought the handbook either met or exceeded their expectations.

One facilitator commented about the curriculum:

*Yes, it went beyond. When I originally read the curriculum and saw the time commitment I had some reservations. My past experience working with parents made me nervous that they were going to fall off in the attendance, that the sessions were too lengthy and that the information was a little too intense for them. But, I am always willing to give something a try and it was the exact opposite. There was no drop in attendance, the parents loved every minute of it and some even wrote that the sessions could go longer. I am still talking about what a great experience it was.*

The other facilitator, who had parents that were non-native English speakers, was equally as pleased with the program. She noted:

*Yes. It was a great program. [We] had parents who spoke English, some who were bilingual. Thought overall it was successful.*

Even though materials were not always readily available ahead of time and had to be located and assembled for each lesson, facilitators were pleased with the way the handbook worked. Trying to locate specific types of books (informational, storybooks, rhymes, etc.) and other learning aids to support the concepts presented in the lessons was sometimes time consuming and frustrating. Both facilitators gave their impressions of learning and doing the workshops with very little preparation time:

*They [lessons] were not all complete, so some sessions... [we only had a] short time to review and then go and use and teach them. When started she [first facilitator] didn’t get a complete handbook to look at, but had a good amount of information (not all lessons were there, because they were being changed and updated).*

**Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook)**

<p>Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children<sup>1</sup> The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks</p>	<p>Lessons and Activities at a Glance</p>	
	<p>Session # and Title</p>	<p>Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook</p>
<p><b>Spoken Language (talking and listening)</b> <b>References</b> McKeown &amp; Beck (2006) <b>Key Concepts.</b> A supportive learning environment in which children and parents engage in easy, authentic, back and forth talk supports children’s language development and later acquisition of reading skills. <b>References</b> Dickenson &amp; Tabors (1991) <b>Key Concepts.</b> Types of parent and child conversations affect children’s listening and speaking skills. <b>References</b> Burns, Griffin, &amp; Snow (1999) <b>Key Concepts.</b> Parents sharing stories with their children about their child’, their own, or their family members’ lives communicates what they value and who they are as a family. Listening to and telling stories helps prepare children to better understand the stories they read in books. Greater exposure to stories helps children understand the common elements of a story: characters, setting, goals/problems, actions, and solution and improves their ability to compose their own stories. <b>References</b> National Reading Panel (2000).</p>	<p>1. Talking and Telling Stories with Children</p>	<p><b>Explanation of the Relevant Research</b> Explanation of what talking and telling stories looks like for K–3 children <b>Activity 1.</b> Green light to talk. A 20–25 minute activity to encourage parents and children to engage in meaningful back-and-forth talk. Parents are encouraged to give children permission (a green light) to ask questions and engage in speaking in complete sentences, describe things in detail, and ask and answer questions. Modeling and guided practice are included in each activity. Facilitator asks for a volunteer to model “green-light” questions; then she groups parents in teams of two or three to practice this activity. <b>Activity 2.</b> Parent scrapbook. Parents list green-light questions that they might ask children at home; open-ended questions encourage conversations with children. <b>Activity 3.</b> Sharing a story with my child. A 25–30 minute activity to encourage parents and children to exchange personal stories so as to build the child’s language ability and experience with stories. Explains five common elements of a story: who (characters), when and where (setting), what the character is trying to do (goal/problems), what happens (events), and how the story turns out (solution). <b>Activity 4.</b> Retelling a traditional tale. A 30–40 minute activity to introduce to parents a basic structure of stories to help children recall and retell stories in sequence (beginning, middle, end). Facilitator models telling the story of “The Three Little Pigs” or “The Gingerbread Man,” using voice and physical movement to dramatize actions and characters. Parents are invited to practice using stick puppets made during the session. For the scrapbook activity, facilitators provide stick puppets to make at home to encourage story retelling with children. In addition, facilitators provided parents with a handout from <i>A Child Becomes a Reader K–3</i> (3rd ed.).</p>

(continued)

<sup>1</sup> Armbruster, B.B., Lehr, F., & Osborn, J. (2006). *A child becomes a reader. Proven ideas from research for parents: Kindergarten through grade 3* (3rd ed.) Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy

Results

**Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)**

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Learn about Print and Books</b> <i>Key Concepts.</i> Reading develops over many years along a continuum from emergent, to beginning to developing to proficient. An early step toward reading is pretend reading, using pictures without the words. A version of pretend reading –taking a picture walk—helps beginning readers get a sense of the story. <b>References</b> National Reading Panel (2000) <i>Key Concepts.</i> Understanding common elements of a story can help the more experienced reader to reconstruct stories that they read to better understand them. <b>References</b> Teale &amp; Sulzby (1986)</p>	<p>2. Sharing Story Books</p>	<p><b>Explain What Sharing Storybooks Looks Like for K–3 Children</b> <i>Activity 1.</i> A 30–40 minute activity to promote listening skills. Listening to an audiobook together helps children to develop listening skills and exposes children to more complex and varied language than is used in everyday life. <i>Activity 2.</i> A 35–40 minute activity using wordless or simple storybook books to tell a story from pictures. <i>Activity 3.</i> A 30–35 minute activity using a bookmark for storybooks. The bookmark reminds parents to talk about the characters in a story, where and when the story takes place, what the characters are trying to do, what the problems are, and how the characters resolve their problems. Parents use their scrapbooks to write activities they plan to do at home with their children.</p>

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Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Build Knowledge of the World</b>  <i>Key Concepts.</i> When children are actively engaged in learning about the world, they gain the foundation they need to become enthusiastic, lifelong readers and learners.                      Children who have a wide range of general knowledge can more readily understand the books they listen to and read.                      As children gain and absorb new information through firsthand experiences, such as running daily errands with parents—visiting the doctor’s office, zoo, fire station, museum—they expand and revise their previous knowledge.  <b>References</b>                      Armbruster, Lehr, &amp; Osborn (2001); Adams (1990); National Reading Panel (2000); Anderson &amp; Pearson (1984)</p>	<p>3. Building Knowledge about the World</p>	<p><b>Explain What Building Knowledge about the World Looks Like for K–3 Children</b>  <i>Activity 1.</i> Making a scrapbook interest page. A 15–20 minute activity for parents to show interest in their child’s interests.  <i>Activity 2.</i> Learning more through informational books and magazines.  <i>Activity 3.</i> Using what you know to understand a book. A 20–30 minute activity to demonstrate how having background knowledge about a topic enhances one’s understanding of a book.  <b>Modeling:</b> Together with parents, the facilitator reads a book aloud and discusses ways in which background knowledge contributes to children’s understanding of a book.                      In small groups, parents practice reading and discussing a similar book and note background knowledge, words or concepts that would enhance children’s understanding of the book.  <b>Handouts:</b> What building knowledge about the world looks like for K–3 children, from <i>A Child Becomes a Reader</i>.                      In their scrapbooks, Parents write plans for at-home activities leading to learning goals discussed in the workshop.</p>

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Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Vocabulary</b>  <i>Key Concepts.</i> The number of words children know is a strong predictor of how he or she will progress in reading throughout the school years.                      Knowing words helps children learn to read, understand what they read, and express themselves.                      Books and magazines expose children to new words because written language tends to have more variety than spoken language.</p> <p><b>References</b>                      Armbruster et al. (2001); National Reading Panel (2000); Biemiller (2006); Snow, Burns, &amp; Griffin (1998); Tabors, Beals, &amp; Weizman (2001)</p>	<p>4. Learning and Using New Words</p>	<p><b>What Learning and Using New Words Looks Like for K–3 Children</b>  <i>Activity 1.</i> A 35–40 minute activity to encourage learning and using new words associated with a child’s interest.  <i>Activity 2.</i> Vocabulary bookmarks. A 25–30 minute activity to create a word-consciousness that helps parents become aware of words that are new to their children and provide parents with ideas to help their children become active word-learners. Parents identify unfamiliar words in a story or informational book and, from that list of unfamiliar words, learn to select a few of the most useful words for children to learn.  <i>Activity 3.</i> Using silly questions to help children understand new words. A 35–40 minute activity for parents to practice helping children understand new words they learn as they appear in different contexts, supporting children in using new words in sentences, and focusing on how having fun promotes a lasting experience.  <i>Sample Activities:</i> Does a bird gallop? Does a horse honk?                      Facilitator modeled reading from a book for emergent and beginning readers, using think-aloud techniques to help parents choose which words to best focus on for their children.                      In small groups, parents practiced the same techniques and selected new words that their children might not know.                      Parents wrote specific word learning strategies in their scrapbooks and planned activities to do at home with their children, using the bookmark and other tips given in the handouts and scrapbook.</p>

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**Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)**

<p>Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks</p>	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Letters and Alphabet</b> <i>Key Concepts.</i> To become proficient readers, emergent and beginning readers must have a strong grasp on how print (written words) and print conventions (rules for print) work. Children absorb information about print and print conventions by observing others reading and tracking print, as their parents demonstrate how to read books or point to words at they read them. Parents help children to gain important insights into print and print conventions when they call attention to print in the world around them. Children discover where words appear in a variety of places—on billboards, on grocery lists, in store windows, under photographs in magazines—and gain clues about what they are for and what they mean. <b>References</b> Adams (1990); Snow, Burns, &amp; Griffin (1998); National Reading Panel (2000); Clay (1991); Sénéchal &amp; LeFevre (2002).</p>	<p>5. Learning about Print</p>	<p><b>What Learning about Print Looks Like for K–3 Children</b> Copy of <i>A Child Becomes a Reader K–3</i> (3rd ed.) handout; Word Bank Record. <i>Activity 1.</i> Show How Print Works. A 20–3- minute activity to demonstrate for parents how to show emergent and beginning readers how print works. <i>Activity 2.</i> Creating a book. 30–40 minute activity to help parents help children make their own book. Book contains pictures, mementos, photos, and can serve as a keepsake book of family events. To help parents understand how the book they make will be used, facilitators modeled the steps for making the book and attaching the Author Dedication page. Parents practiced in small groups and discussed how they will use the book with children. <i>Activity 3.</i> Print hunt. A 15–20 minute activity to help parents acquire the habit of calling children’s attention to print in the home, the neighborhood, and daily environment to support children’s understanding about various ways print is used. The game <i>I Spy</i> was introduced to help children identify print in everyday context, for example, on cereal boxes or stop signs. <i>Handout:</i> Word Bank Record for recording new words that children identify in the <i>I Spy</i> game.</p>

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Results

Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Phonological Awareness (Sounds and Spoken Language)</b>  <i>Key Concepts.</i> Skill with phonological awareness is a good predictor of later success or difficulty with reading. Phonological awareness refers to the general appreciation of the sounds of speech, as distinct from their meaning. Phonemic awareness refers to the smallest unit of spoken language, phonemes.                      With experience, children can learn to focus attention on smaller and smaller sound segments of words.                      By focusing on sounds at the beginning and end of words, children build their later ability to spell and read new words.</p> <p><b>References</b>                      Ehri &amp; Nunes (2002); Adams, Treiman, &amp; Pressley (1998)</p>	<p>6. Listening for Sounds in Spoken Language</p>	<p><b>What Listening for Sounds in Spoken Language—Phonological Awareness—Looks Like for K–3 Children</b>  <i>Activity 1.</i> Clapping names into syllable parts. A 20–30 activity to help parents to call their children’s attention to syllable parts in words or names that are familiar to them.  <i>Activity 2.</i> Rhyming sounds. A 25–35 minute activity to help parents use rhyming games to help children hear different sounds at the end of words and gain skills rhyming. Nursery rhymes and word games are used.  <i>Activity 3.</i> Playing with beginning sounds—tongue twisters and think-of-a-word games. A 30–35 minute activity to help parents use tongue twisters—playful phrases that use repetition and alliteration to highlight sound similarities in words. Tongue twisters call children’s attention to sound segments at the beginning of words in spoken language.</p>

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**Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)**

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Learn and Use Letter Sound Relationships (Phonics)</b>  <i>Key Concepts.</i> Being able to rapidly name letters by recognizing each unique letter shape is one of the strongest predictors of successful reading.                      Understanding and knowing how to use the alphabet are also precursors to building comprehension and spelling skills.                      Developing and proficient readers have mastered both uppercase and lowercase letters and can rapidly translate the letters and letter combinations to the sounds and words they represent.</p> <p><b>References</b>                      Snow, Burns, &amp; Griffin (1998); Adams (1990); Armbruster, Lehr, &amp; Osborn (2003, 2006); National Reading Panel (2000)</p>	<p>7. Learning Alphabet Letters</p>	<p><b>What Learning Alphabet Letters Looks Like for K–3 Children</b>  <i>Activity 1.</i> Using alphabet books. A 30–40 minute activity to review with parents various alphabet books that can be used to build and strengthen their children’s knowledge of the alphabet.  <i>Activity 2.</i> An alphabet hunt. A 20–30 minute activity to show parents that they can reinforce their children’s alphabet knowledge with a game that will help them apply and extend their knowledge to their home environments.  <i>Activity 3.</i> Letter matching and naming games (for emergent and beginning readers). A 20–30 minute activity to support emergent and beginning readers in quickly recognizing both upper and lowercase letters and in using alphabet letters to create words, thus advancing these children’s ability to read.  <i>Handouts:</i> Letter formation charts for upper- and lowercase letters.                      Excerpt from <i>Shining Start: First Graders Learn To Read. How Parents Can Help Their First Graders Learn To Read.</i></p>

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**Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)**

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Learn and Use Letter Sound Relationships (Phonics)</b>  <i>Key Concepts.</i> Children learn to read by drawing on their knowledge of letters, awareness of sounds, experiences with spoken sentences, and their expectation that reading makes sense based on their knowledge of vocabulary and the world.                      Phonics instruction teaches children a system for remembering words by calling their attention to patterns of letter strings and their corresponding sounds.                      Effective instruction in phonics helps children to recognize words, decode unfamiliar words, and spell words in writing.                      Parent can support children’s reading development at home when they provide ample opportunities for children to apply what they are learning about letters and sounds to the reading of words, sentences, and stories.</p> <p><b>References</b>                      Adams (1990)</p>	<p>8. Connecting Letters to Sounds</p>	<p><b>What Connecting Letters to Sounds Looks Like for K–3 Children</b>  <i>Activity 1.</i> Picture sort by beginning sound and letter. A 20–30 minute activity to practice an effective approach to help children match letters to beginning sounds in words, one of the first steps in mastering phonics skills.  <i>Activity 2.</i> Word family puzzles—common word families. A 20–30 minute activity to provide children practice in identifying common letter patterns—word families such as -at, -an, and -it—and learning the predictable sounds these word parts represent. To gain an awareness of word families and how to blend beginning and ending parts to make words.  <i>Activity 3.</i> Using names to make puzzles and words. A 20–30 minute activity to provide additional practice for making words with letters—in this case the letters in one’s name—and to associate those letters with sounds.  <i>Handouts:</i> Word family handout, word puzzle.</p>

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**Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)**

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Spell and Write</b> <i>Key Concepts.</i> Writing is the flip side of reading, and practicing one helps children to do the other. In writing, children have to construct words with letters and word parts that represent the sounds they hear. In reading, children take words apart by translating the letters and word parts into speech sounds and then blending them together into words. At home parents can support this type of rich learning by supporting children’s writing around their interests and modeling many different ways to use writing to communicate.</p> <p><b>References</b> Armbruster et al. (2003, 2006); Snow et al. (1998); Adams (1990); National Reading Panel (2000)</p>	<p>9. Writing with Children</p>	<p><b>What Writing with Children Looks Like for K–3 Children</b> <i>Activity 1.</i> Creating a message center. A 20–30 minute activity to encourage children to write by engaging them in meaningful, family-centered, written communication. <i>Activity 2.</i> Making a memory book. A 35–45 minute activity to encourage parents and children to write together about something they both know and have experienced. Parents and their children will record memories of things they have experienced together. <i>Activity 3.</i> If animals could talk. A 20–30 minute activity to encourage children to view writing as an enjoyable activity where they can express their humor, feelings, and creativity. <i>Handouts:</i> Animal pictures and story planner.</p>

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Results

Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Comprehension</b>  <i>Key Concepts.</i> Making connections in, predicting, visualizing, asking questions about, and paying attention to how stories or information is organized are essential thinking strategies for children’s comprehension. When children make connections, they learn to connect a new piece of text they listen to or read to what they already know. When children pay attention, they make predictions about what may happen next or at the end of the book. Parents have a supporting role in helping children to understand what they read by helping them think aloud; visualize; ask open-ended, green light questions; and remember.</p> <p><b>References</b>                      Armbruster et al. (2003, 2006); National Reading Panel (2000); National Research Council (2002); S��n��chal (2006)</p>	<p>10. Talking about and Understanding What’s Read</p>	<p><b>What Talking about and Understanding What’s Read Looks Like for K–3 Children</b>  <i>Activity 1.</i> Using think-alouds for making predictions. A 20–30 minute activity to engage children in thought-provoking, stimulating conversations about books through using think-alouds to help them make predictions and connect with what’s being read.  <i>Activity 2.</i> Making mental pictures. A 30–40 minute activity to show parents how they can help children create a picture in their minds—to visualize what the author is presenting in the story with words.  <i>Activity 3.</i> Using books that reflect parents’ cultures. A 35–40 minute activity to encourage active engagement with books by drawing on parents’ and children’s unique cultural backgrounds in choosing and discussing books. Facilitators model connecting books to one’s culture by presenting a book that reflects broad aspects of the facilitator’s own culture. In small groups, parents practice sharing books that reflect their experiences.  <i>Handout: Shining Stars: 2nd and 3rd Graders Learn to Read. How Parents Can Help Their 2nd and 3rd Graders Learn to Read.</i></p>

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**Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)**

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children  The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Read Quickly and Naturally (Fluency)</b>  <i>Key Concepts.</i> The ability to read fluently allows the reader to focus attention on understanding what he/she reads. An important way to promote fluency is to select books that match a child’s reading ability and allow the child to practice how to read the book accurately and with meaning. Parents can support fluency in children’s reading by reading aloud or playing audiobooks. Children can hear how fluent readers group words into meaningful phrases and make their own oral reading sound more like talking in its pace, tone of voice, and phrasing.</p> <p><b>References</b>                      Armbruster et al. (2003, 2006); National Reading Panel (2000); Sénéchal (2006)</p>	<p>11. Reading Like Talking</p>	<p><b>What Reading Like Talking Looks Like for K–3 Children</b>  <i>Activity 1.</i> Modeling and practicing fluent reading with audiobooks. A 20–30 minute activity to introduce parents to a way for them to provide both a model of fluent reading and a means to develop fluency by rereading a book aloud—an effective strategy for developing reading fluency.  <i>Activity 2.</i> Listening to your child read aloud and knowing how to encourage fluency. A 20–30 minute activity to encourage parents to develop the habit of listening to their children read aloud and to learn ways to provide encouraging feedback so as to support their child’s oral reading.  <i>Activity 3.</i> Common sight words. A 20–30 minute activity to introduce parents to fun ways to help their children recognize words and how those skills contribute to fluent reading.                      Facilitator distributed <i>Sight Word</i> handout for children in each grade level.</p>

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**Exhibit 3-1. Draft Facilitator Resource Guide (Facilitator’s Handbook) and Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook) (continued)**

Scientifically Based Research for Developing Reading Skills in K–3 Children The NIFL Model of Reading Instruction Building Blocks	Lessons and Activities at a Glance	
	Session # and Title	Lessons and Activities from Teacher Resource Guide and Parent Scrapbook
<p><b>Being Read To and Reading On Their Own</b>  <i>Key Concepts.</i> When parents make reading a part of everyday family life, they promote their children’s lifelong love of learning.                      Reading ability is also positively correlated with the extent to which children read for fun outside of school. Research demonstrates that if children do not continue to read over the summer, they lose ground in their reading ability’  <b>References</b>                      Adams (1990); Armbruster et al. (2006); National Reading Panel (2000); Snow et al. (1998)</p>	<p>12. Keeping It Going</p>	<p><b>What Keeping It Going Looks Like for K–3 Children</b>                      This session is designed to take place at a library. The sessions focus on helping “parents use the library and other resources to help their children find age- and skill-level appropriate books to read independently.”  <i>Activity 1.</i> Reading just right books at home. A 20–30 minute activity to help parents use the library and other resources to help their children find age- and skill-level appropriate books to read independently.  <i>Activity 2.</i> Finding books to expand children’s interests, vocabulary, and background knowledge. A 20–30 minute activity to help parents help children find books that will expand their interest, vocabulary, and background knowledge.  <i>Guided Practice:</i> Parents work in groups to browse through preselected books to identify which books are most appropriate for their child’s reading level and interests.</p>

When asked whether the order of the lessons as they were presented in the handbook worked well, the facilitators said they needed to modify lessons slightly if parents did not seem to understand the materials or if they needed a different approach to get the message across. None of the modifications noticeably changed the main components of the curriculum or deviated to any degree from the framework presented in the handbook.

As one facilitator noted:

*For the most part, yes I know that when we reviewed it we did tweak a few things and make some suggestions. I don't think we changed the order of the sessions, but we changed the order of the activities.*

*There were a couple activities that didn't go well so when doing it again I would change a couple of them, because they didn't work well with the parents. When the people from EDC observed the lessons they were in agreement with my suggestions.*

### **Facilitators' Opinions of the Curricular Materials**

Both facilitators thought that the format of the lessons was good, beginning with a follow-up from the previous session, presenting the research and the activities. Of the twelve sessions, facilitators felt that session seven, connecting letters to sounds, was one of the best and most fun for parents. Parents enjoyed making the alphabet cards and using games to connect letters to sounds. Facilitators observed the following:

*Session 7, learning the alphabet letters was a great lesson; connecting letters to sounds the parents had a lot of fun with that, and writing with children. These lessons were good because for example the writing with children didn't take any convincing because the activities were fun. The parents wanted to do them, because they were fun. The strength of the sessions came from the activities. The parents loved creating the alphabet sound cards and then they would take them to the next step. They loved that and had fun with that. The other one where we did tongue twisters was really fun. In session 10 they loved the activities with the visual imagery, drawing the picture and making predictions when I read part of the story they really had fun with that part. They liked activity 2 where you would read part of the book and they would tell about personal connections.*

*They were all successful. Big one was to connect sounds and listening for sounds and how to help child understand sounds. Even the games allowed parents to go home and practice with kids at their level and extend it as they learned new sounds. All lessons seemed to connect so parents could see how they build on one another. Writing was very good and could get at child's level, they were writing sounds, letters, labeling, making meaning of writing. Parents were leaving notes for children before school or in lunch bag. They were involved and seeing the connection.*

Incorporating games into the learning process seemed to make teaching the concepts more accessible to parents and their children.

When asked whether the guidebook and materials provided were sufficient for the lessons, both facilitators thought there was too much information for parents to absorb in each lesson. Facilitators said they typically prepared all three activities even though the amount of material was sometimes too much

## Results

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for parents to absorb at once. Based on the needs of the parents, they sometimes found it was necessary to cut some activities or bullet key points. They would try to do each activity, but some were lengthier than others, which meant they had to decide what to use in their sessions and when to add some of their own ideas to get the concepts across to parents. Facilitators indicated that they would cut it back in future programs.

The order of the lessons did not change, but some of the activities were slightly modified to make them work better. The fact that lessons were designed for flexibility was helpful, because it allowed parents to adjust the at home activity to the age or ability of the child. For example, one facilitator noted,

*when we were doing the alphabet card, I was able to say, "If your child is an emerging reader, do this and so on."*

By adjusting the activity, parents could observe what their children were able to do and make adjustments accordingly. As one facilitator observed,

*[Parents] talk to teachers and get report cards, but for the first time, they were doing the observing and they loved that.*

In one site, the children were mostly K–1, with one second grader, but parents worked well together because their children were at similar ability levels.

Facilitators in both sites thought the lessons worked well overall, but acknowledged the need to supplement some activities and make adjustments based on how much information parents could receive and process. One facilitator thought the book reading activity in Lesson 3 was difficult for some parents. They could not grasp the concept of reading a book and thinking about how their children might like the book. Moreover, the book marker activity did not have enough material to engage parents' interest. She noted:

*I think activity 3, where the parents would read something and they had to respond to how they thought their child would like the book, they couldn't get their heads around that. It didn't have enough meat to it. We thought it would be fun to make a bookmark with their child's interest. Not to take the activity out, but to add something to it to make it more tangible. The best activities were when they had something to do besides think and talk, even if it was just writing or drawing as long as they had something a little beyond the discussion.*

In contrast, the other facilitator thought things worked well in her site, because as a teacher, she was capable of making the necessary adjustments to make the lesson work for parents. She commented about their experience as teachers:

*Because we are teachers – [we] knew how much or how little to give, knew the background in explaining and what activities needed to be explained more.*

Overall, facilitators reported that parents were very accepting of the lessons and willingly shared their ideas and reactions to the workshop content. Gauging how much or how little to share with parents,

facilitators relied on their strengths as teachers and as a parent educator to get the information across to parents, making adjustments as they saw the need.

### **Facilitators' Suggestions for Improvement to Curricular Materials**

Neither facilitator thought major changes were needed to the curriculum; only a few minor adjustments were necessary. One facilitator did combine activities for Listening to Sounds and Connecting to Sounds activities (Session 6). She also indicated that Learning Alphabet Letters (Session 7) could be combined with activities in Writing with Children (Session 9). She also added information/activities that she thought would connect with the concepts. Otherwise, she thought the lessons were ordered in a good sequence.

Because facilitators did not have much lead time to prepare for the lesson, one facilitator said that, in the future when she had additional time to prepare, she would create a long-range plan and schedule. Then she would know what is needed for each week's lesson, especially when preparing for a lesson that would build on a concept covered in a previous lesson. With more time to prepare, the lessons would be more seamless.

According to facilitators, a couple of activities did not go well, and the curriculum developers agreed with the suggestions for changes made by the facilitator. The most important change was to provide a list of books that illustrate a concept before presenting the lessons. The facilitator said she spent a considerable amount of time trying to find books that illustrate a concept. It would be helpful to have a list of books to choose from for each lesson. She recognized that NIFL cannot endorse a set of books, but if teachers are expected to download the curriculum and use it, a list of books would save on the time needed to assemble materials for the lesson. Besides needing books to illustrate concepts, the facilitators said some lessons could have been taught earlier and some lessons could have been combined. It would have helped to have all the lessons at once to understand the big picture and sequencing of lessons.

In addition, there is a need for a large supply of books available for parents to take home. One facilitator suggested the following:

*The other thing is there has to be tons and tons of books available that the facilitator could just put their hands on. Many of the activities involved having the parents select a book to take home with their child. You can't just have one per parent because they want to select their own. At the beginning of the week you need to have 40 different alphabet books and I was luckily enough that I did. If I didn't have this resource library it would have been a struggle. Even using a public library is a problem because you are giving the books away to these parents and suppose that parent never comes back. You have to have the resources available. Title one teachers do have tons of resources, but if it was done where the person facilitating didn't have access to a lot of books it would be a problem. That is the biggest one because not only books, but books on tape.*

### **Parents' Opinions of the Parent Activity and Resource Guide (Scrapbook)**

Parents found the *Parent Activity and Resource Guide* extremely helpful, especially because they were able to take it home and come back and share. Everything was all in one place—a good idea because the guide was organized and parents could write in it if they chose to do so. Along with the scrapbook,

parents received a tote bag, which facilitators said they loved. The size of the book, which had large pages, and the fact it was a beautiful book excited parents. Parents went beyond what they were told to put into their books. The scrapbook gave them instructions for each activity, so they could look back over the main concepts at home. With a consistent format for each session, parents knew where to find information from week to week.

## 3.2 Assessing the Facilitators' Training and Training Materials

### Training on Curricular Topics

According to the facilitators, the training consisted of a 1-day meeting with the curriculum developers to review the sessions and become familiar with materials and the workshop structure. EDC's approach to training facilitators, as described in the Lessons Learned Report, was to provide individualized technical assistance rather than a formal training session (Education Development Center, 2008). Even after the sessions started, training materials were still under development and would change weekly as facilitators tried different lessons.

Both facilitators found the training helpful as it gave them a general idea of what they hoped to accomplish, the goals of the program, and ideas about how to present the lessons to parents. However, not having the complete set of materials ahead of time made the learning process difficult for one facilitator, because it was all new. Reflecting on her training experience, she recalls the following:

*Only thing that was difficult was not having the complete materials ahead of time because it was all new and trying to make changes and improvements to make it better. If had everything all set prior then could go off of that and it would run smoother.*

In contrast, the other facilitator said that having all the materials at one time would not have been that helpful to her. When asked if it would have cut down on preparation time to have been able to review the activities during training, she replied:

*I don't think so, because what I ended up doing was, for each of the 12 modules I had to go read through everything before I had a really good handle on each activity. Each activity was very specific to what I was trying to teach the parent. During the training, if I went through each activity I don't think I would have really gotten the connection between what I was trying to let the parents learn. I don't think it would have been possible to try and absorb that all in the training. Even though it was intensive for me with the prep time, each module had to be done in isolation for me to get a real good handle on it.*

While the draft handbook provided adequate information, she felt the need to do her own research, and she spent some time on the internet reading background information and reflecting on the process. She remarked:

*It would have been helpful to have more background information on the continuum of steps that lead to a child learning to read.*

To better prepare themselves, both facilitators said that they had spent personal time looking for different topics and activities to do with the parents and searching online for materials and books. Each drew on her own professional experiences and incorporated successful strategies in the lessons to share with parents to try at home with their children.

### **Support Received for the Training**

With only a few weeks between the training and the start of sessions, facilitators had to learn about the program and the lessons. To reduce the learning curve, facilitators stayed in contact with curriculum developers as needed, by e-mail and during telephone debriefing sessions held after each session. During these calls, facilitators could request additional materials, discuss what the session was like, and talk about what needed to change.

*One of the most positive things is they [the trainers] were extremely available. I could send them an email and they would respond in 15 minutes and I bugged them a lot. They were always very helpful. When I went in to do a lesson with the parents I wanted to make sure that I was giving it to the parents in the spirit in which it was intended. I would read something for the activity and I would think, "Am I doing this right, I am just not quite sure. Can I tweak it in this way?" And I would email them. They would be back to me immediately and were really supportive. They would say, "What can I do to help you?" I could contact one of three people.*

Both facilitators were pleased with support provided by curriculum developers and felt they were open to any ideas posed for making small modifications to the lessons. If materials were needed, they were brought to them and other teachers were available to provide help and support through telephone calls and e-mail.

An experienced literacy consultant, hired to sit in on the sessions in one site, provided support, gave feedback, answered questions, and was always accessible, according to the facilitators.

*Trainers were always available. The other support they gave me was anytime I did need a particular kind of paper, glue or card stock they would provide that for me. They really helped me with that. They went and got it and brought it to me; it was like room service it was wonderful. They also had an experience person from our state that was hired to sit in our session to provided support. She was wonderful too. She was there every time even during the training. She would provided feedback and asked if I needed any help understanding anything. She was a literacy consultant, but she was not employed by the people who wrote the curriculum. She was great.*

The facilitator in the Somerville site went on maternity leave during the program cycle and was replaced by another teacher in the school. The two continued to exchange information about lessons or how to present a particular topic to parents; other teachers in the district also provided support by e-mail and telephone calls.

## Additions to Training Content

Facilitators were asked their views on what additions should be added to the content of the training handbook. Generally, both thought the materials were sufficient. Except for the lack of a guide to what materials the facilitators would need for preparation. As noted by one facilitator,

*I suggested to them that it would have been helpful to add another page about what I needed for prep. We had a 1-week turnaround so between that and all the other things I needed to do. It would have been helpful to have some kind of guide sheet that said what I needed to collect for the session. Sometimes what would happen is on Saturday morning I would be preparing everything and I open the book I find out that I need 35 books that meet a particular characteristic. So now it is Saturday, I can't get into the school until Monday and Monday I have a meeting. So trying to do that was hard and it created a lot of catch up. If they could include something to give people a kind of heads up like on the first page have a list saying this unit is going to call for me to have these things on hand. For me to try and pull those out was very time consuming.*

### 3.3 Assessing Fidelity and Quality of Parent Training Program

#### Adherence of Training Program to Design

*Our Reading and Writing Journey* was designed to be a 12-lesson program covering the topics described in *Exhibit 2-1*. Each of the 12 lessons was delivered with some tweaking. As indicated in the section "Facilitators' Suggestions for Improvement to Curricular Materials," one facilitator combined activities across sessions and added activities that she thought would enhance the sessions. However, it does not appear that any material was omitted. Rather, there was a concern that there may have been too much information presented in each lesson for parents to absorb.

#### Dosage

##### Attendance

In both locations, *Our Reading and Writing Journey* classes met one night each week for 2 hours or 2.5 hours for 12 weeks total. In addition, parents received weekly assignments to complete at home with their children. Attendance was high at both sites. Attendance records from the facilitators indicated that the 17 participants attended 8.9 classes on average, with a range of 2 to 12 classes. Among those who were interviewed for this study, the average was 9.1 classes, with the same range. A majority attended all or most sessions (i.e., 4 attended all 12 sessions, 2 attended 11 sessions, and 4 attended 10 sessions).

Those who had to miss a class provided a variety of reasons for their absences, including illness, work conflicts, and lack of transportation. One parent who had to miss one session noted how helpful the facilitator was in ensuring that she did not fall behind. All the materials from the previous class were readily available the following week, and the facilitator reviewed the missed content. One Warwick participant made the decision to stop participating after several sessions because he expected the program to work collaboratively with the children. He expressed disappointment at being separated from his daughter for the whole night and as a result decided to cease participation. However, besides this one case, parents were generally highly invested in the program and only were absent because of extenuating circumstances that prevented them from attending one or two classes.

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***Strategies for Maintaining Attendance***

Facilitators were asked to comment on how well the schedule worked for parents and whether they used specific strategies to keep attendance high. The facilitators indicated that the schedule worked well, having evening classes that ran from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in one site, which included a dinner meal. The other site did not provide dinner, and parents came later.

Neither site used incentives for attendance and said they did not need any. The facilitator in Warwick mentioned being surprised that she did not have to use any specific strategies to encourage good attendance. She mused,

*We were giving them a lot of work to do and they came back; I was like wow!*

One of the facilitators in Somerville reported similar observations and emphasized that parents really wanted to learn and try new methods of teaching with their children. They were excited to participate and contribute to their children's education. Whether this is a product of the type of parents attracted to the program, which was voluntary, or a result of the program content is hard to say because of the small sample size.

Parents were highly motivated by the desire to get the information for their children. Parents who could not attend sent a substitute in their place, a parent's sibling, the child's grandparent or dad, or a friend. Responding to the question, one facilitator concluded that motivation to help their children affected attendance. She observed:

*We had great attendance; parents were very dedicated. Parents wanted to learn, knew their children were learning. They would come back saying child did this, or that. They were very involved, another way for parents to go home and try something new. They were excited to come and participate and take part in child's education. It was really good.*

***Barriers to Attendance***

One facilitator said the length of the cycle seemed long for parents and for herself. At 12 weeks, the program was a long commitment and maybe 6 weeks would work better. The change would require some thought about how it would alter the program. According to the facilitator, parents did say it was a long commitment. Yet despite the length of the program, parents kept coming back.

***Facilitators' Skills for Delivering Program***

Facilitators used various approaches to accommodate different learning styles and abilities among participants. Providing careful attention to the books selected and the activities, facilitators always provided options for parents so that if a parent was not a strong reader, he or she could be the recorder or just comment on materials presented in the group. They left things open so that participants could choose their involvement, and if they were not comfortable with their level of skill, they could still participate. There were parents who did not speak up, and so the facilitator tried to engage those parents to let them know that what they had to say was valuable and to show respect for what they were saying.

## Results

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A variety of teaching strategies kept participants engaged in workshop activities. For example, making posters and charts, taking turns speaking, and working in small groups or with a partner all helped parents participate at levels that made them feel comfortable. Recognizing that some parents were not fluent in English, facilitators did what they could to make them feel comfortable and give them opportunities to participate apart from speaking.

Parents seemed to enjoy their experiences and sharing them in small groups, especially what they did at home with their children. During the first part of the sessions, parents had an opportunity to share what they had done for homework and commented on their children's work. They seemed to enjoy this part of the workshop. Small group discussion and sharing their experiences with other parents was an important part of the workshops.

### Parents' Evaluation of Facilitators' Skills

Responses to questions about the facilitators' skills were overwhelmingly positive. All parents were impressed with how knowledgeable, prepared, and willing to help the facilitators were. One parent even confessed that the main reason he signed up for the class was the chance to work with this particular teacher. Several parents noted that facilitators successfully drew upon their personal experiences teaching their own children or other students as a tool to facilitate. It was beneficial for program participants to hear personal anecdotes and get an idea of what worked or didn't for a particular facilitator. They also appreciated that facilitators were knowledgeable about different age groups and developmental stages.

While some parents were unable to comment personally on feedback received from the facilitators, other parents reported positive experiences. Most were impressed with the facilitators' willingness to take the time to cater to parents' individual questions. One parent noted,

*I could call her anytime during the week to ask a question and she was always there. If she wasn't there, she would get back to you.*

Another parent marveled at the creative strategies the facilitator introduced to address an issue, saying

*She pulled so many things I never dreamed of doing.*

Those who reported receiving feedback from the facilitators responded that they were always encouraging, positive, insightful, and willing to help. Similarly, parents were very impressed with the facilitators' ability to answer questions. Again, parents reported that their answers were always clear and that they had effective methods for breaking down a problem in a way that was understandable. Facilitators would also seek outside sources if they were unsure of the answer themselves. One parent explains,

*If she didn't have the answer, she had places you could go and find it. If she felt you needed more materials or more ideas, she was there with resources to check it out with.*

One important measure of program effectiveness and impact is the group atmosphere and dynamic. Parents were asked if their facilitator was able to keep the group working well together or not

and then were asked to elaborate on their responses. Every parent who answered this question (13) responded positively, meaning that the facilitators were successful in creating a good working environment. Several parents noted the strategy of having participants work in small groups and then switching group members in order to build relationships and create group synergy. Others mentioned the facilitator's skill in maintaining a lively discussion and high levels of interaction. Others indicated that personality traits were vital to managing a group. They mentioned the facilitators' ability to keep people's attention and motivate them by how they presented themselves, explained things, and shared experiences. Constant interaction was also essential, according to parents, who enjoyed that the facilitators,

*Would ask a lot of questions and not sit there and talk at us.*

Parents clearly appreciated the hands-on approach to facilitation and the opportunity to be involved and active during class time.

### **Essential Personal Qualities of Facilitators**

Flexibility and the ability to make adjustments during the workshops are essential qualities. Even with a specific curriculum, problems may come up that require changes. These problems or situations play into how parents engage in the lessons and whether or not they can complete the activities at home. The ability to read parents' cues is an important quality for facilitators. They must be very responsive to what parents are able to do and notice when something is not going well. Quick thinking and the ability to change directions, improvise, and switch activities are important to keep parents engaged and involved. According to one facilitator,

*Sometimes the best written activity with the particular group you are working with just doesn't go well. You have to recognize that and improvise.*

Facilitators must be well organized and able to plan ahead of the workshops. The most time consuming part of the program was the preparation, which facilitators said was very lengthy. Both facilitators saw the value of having everything prepared for the lesson ahead of time. Because the lessons required a lot of materials for each activity, including handouts and books, it was important to have all the materials readily available at hand.

### **Program Integration with Schools**

Support for the program came from principals and teachers at the two pilot sites. Principals were very happy to offer the program to parents, and Title I reading teachers in one site across the city expressed interest in the kind of instruction parents had received. They were pleased that parents attended consistently. In addition to this program, the principal at one site offered a math night, and a literacy night was in the planning stages. Positive feedback came when the children mentioned that their parents were involved in a program and the teachers would call to say,

*What is this that I am hearing about?*

Facilitators concurred that the program was successful in helping the school meet their family involvement goals and helping children improve reading and literacy skills.

## Parents' Opinions about the Program Structure

An overwhelming majority of the parents responded positively when asked about the usefulness of the program structure. Although there were some differences in the Warwick and Somerville program designs—the biggest being the children's program offered simultaneously at Warwick—many common themes emerged from the participant responses. The parents felt that the small group format made the experience personal and permitted one-on-one time with the instructor. According to the parents, the intimate setting allowed the group to cover more material while at the same time creating a comfortable atmosphere where the parents could share their ideas and experiences.

Parents enjoyed sharing their personal experiences with the group and found that the exchange of information was integral to their success when working with their children. Parents' comments showed that the benefits of the open discussion format were twofold. First, each parent was able to share his or her unique way of presenting the information to their child and their child's reaction. This gave the other parents ideas on different ways to incorporate the activities and lessons into their daily lives. This additional source of information helped parents think creatively so when one way of presenting the material did not work for their child they were able to draw on the group's experiences for alternate solutions. As the following parents commented,

*I like that it was easy to share ideas and information. They would present some ideas to do at home one week, and the next week you would come in and say how that worked for you. Some people had different ways that they did it and different suggestions that you could try. It was good to share ideas with the other parents and I think the kids were able to receive a little extra attention as well.*

*I like the hints on helping, trying to sneak them into reading little things like having them read the shopping list so you are encouraging them to read. Little hints I wouldn't have thought of on my own.*

The other primary benefit of the program stemmed from the mix of grade levels within the groups. Some parents found it helpful to hear the reactions of other children on the same grade level or higher. They were interested to see how other children were adapting and interpreting the lessons. For example one parent commented,

*I could see what is coming up for the next year. Like for this year that Emily is going through the 1st grade I knew what to expect because they covered K-3. So I found it beneficial because then you would know what to expect later on. There was almost like a comparison well he does this, she does that, and wait to you get to this point because you will see that she does this.*

However, this did not apply for parents with older children as one parent explains,

*If the child's response was totally different from anything your child did or said then the discussion wasn't helpful, because it really didn't apply. That happens anytime you are working in a group dynamic. Everything you say can't be applicable to everyone in the group... When they were talking about the steps kids go through when they are learning how to read and talking about letter recognition and Kindergarten level things; well my granddaughter was in 2nd grade so she was past letter recognition and learning the*

*sounds.*

In addition, parents of older children felt that the span of reading abilities made it particularly difficult to find a weekly book that supported the activity and was appropriate for the whole class. They expressed the fact that often the books chosen were too easy. The parents suggested having two separate groups, but if not possible they also suggested having everyone do the same activity, but then sending the parent home with books that are appropriate for their child's reading level.

Even though there was a general consensus that sharing with the group was beneficial. Three parents expressed experiencing personal discomforts when they had to share with the group,

*I didn't like to share the fact that he didn't want to do what he was suppose to do.*

*For me and it is personal. Sometimes I just felt like I didn't have a lot of knowledge. I wasn't treated that way, but I always felt that way.*

*I don't like to speak. They asked question you have to answer. I got more comfortable.*

No major differences were found between programs, but participants in the Warwick group liked that both the children and parents were learning simultaneously and thought the children's group was extremely helpful. As two participants remarked,

*I liked that the kids were in one place and we were in another; that way it wasn't a distraction. I was able to absorb more of what she was saying instead of have to check on the kids.*

*In the parent reading programs that they do it is really hard to incorporate the other information into it when the kids are in the room with you, because you are listening to the kids reading or doing a craft project with them and it is distracting. It is good for the kids, but in this reading program it was learning all that reading material and then bringing it home to teach the kids was the most useful part of it.*

Participants mainly shared their experiences with the weekly activities. The goal of the activities was to help participants work with their children at home to become better readers and writers. During the weekly session facilitators modeled how the activities were done, the parents practiced the activities, and then the participants planned the activity they would do with their child during the week. Modeling provided a great point of reference for the parents and helped them to clarify the concepts. It gave them direction on where to start and helped them effectively introduce the activity to their child. For example three parents aptly pointed out,

*If you were to just read the instruction you would not know how to incorporate it effectively, but seeing them model it and showing you how to present it to your child was helpful. As a parent you might read it and then not present it in the most interesting way. Seeing them model it and how to interact with your child was very helpful to get it on their level and present it in a way that your kid would find interesting.*

*In a lot of cases, you would have done just fine if it hadn't been modeled, but when it was modeled you had a clearer idea of how things should go and how to respond to some of*

Results

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*the things the child did before you actually had to work with your child. You might have figured it out as you went along when you were working with the child, but it gave you a head start.*

*Having it modeled it was like you didn't have to stick to that one way to do it. You could do different varieties. One person would show it one way and another person would show it another way. So it was nice to know you didn't just have to stick to black and white. They would accommodate it. We had K, 1st, 2nd, so not everyone was on the same level. They were able to show you to adjust it for different age groups."*

After the facilitator modeled the activity, the parents would practice the activity in small groups or pairs. This approach permitted the parents to share their perspectives on the activity with each other. Practicing the activity in class allowed parents to get a feel for the activity before they introduced it to their child. Parents felt that this also helped them understand the lessons they were trying to incorporate because it helped things run smoothly once they were home. The following parents explained,

*It gave you a change to practice and make sure you did understand it. It helped get all the kinks out.*

*If you practice it and thought about it a little bit, makes you more ready to work with your child at home. With time being so short a lot of times by having practiced it before hand you knew exactly what you wanted to get to so you could accomplish a lot once you finally got to work with the child.*

*It was easier for me to introduce it to him at home an easy way to go about it. Instead of it being like work, it seemed more like fun.*

*Yes, it was because I felt that I could understand it. So if I could understand it I could better explain it to my daughter.*

*You could get a feel for it before you brought it home to your child or even to family members who were going to help. I never just did it myself with Emily. We took turns so everyone would be involved with it.*

During the modeling, parents were able to ask the instructor questions about the activity and were shown how to adapt the activity to fit their child's needs. Parents expressed feeling very comfortable with the assignments they had to take home and felt that the facilitator was available if there were any additional problems or questions at home. For example, one parent remarked,

*The teacher that was there was very thorough; she made sure everyone understood the lesson. If I did have a problem, which I didn't, she always gave the phone number where I could call if I had question. There was a book that you could go back on and look and maybe do again. The book was like a journal kind of book where you got pages of different activities as well as the activity you got at the group... There was more than one, there were three or four different ideas. I would do one or two each week. But I always felt more secure, because if those two didn't work out and she didn't get anything out of it I would always have two more to fall back on.*

Additionally, one parent commented that working in the small groups or with a partner helped improve her grasp of English slang. On a negative note, one parent found practicing the activities helpful, but did not enjoy the role playing.

Finally, the parents were given time to plan for the weekly activity. In both groups, the materials needed for the week's activities were provided. Once the parents got home from the weekly session they were ready to jump in with both feet and immediately begin working with their children. Parents commented that the planning time contributed to this sense of preparedness and helped to ensure that the participants fit the activities into their busy schedules. For example, one grandmother explained,

*in my case my granddaughter doesn't live with me. I have her an awful lot, but not all the time—it made it so I could have something ready and set aside for her. When it came time to have a reading session there was something prepared, something ready, something to go with where the preparation had been done ahead of time. It made it so I could make really good use of the reading time we spent together.*

In addition, the Warwick group had time during the session to bring the children in to show them what the parents had been working on. The parents found this to be a very effective way to excite the children about the activity before bringing them home. Then, during the week the child would remember learning about the activity from the reading program. Despite all of this one participant still struggled to fit in the activities as they explained,

*It was hard trying to planning them around his homework and the tiredness, just getting him back into the mode. We would try to do it the next night and it was good, but then if he went with either parent they wouldn't keep that up. It was one step forward, one step back. That accomplishment for that week was not what I expected of him.*

Overall, comments show that the program successfully prepared the parents to work at home with their children. The modeling, practicing, and planning were well received and contributed to the parents' success at home. Parents found the activities to be a fun, interactive way to help their children learn while at the same time spending quality time with them. In addition, parents considered the small group size and open discussion format to be integral parts of their overall experience. In the end, parents felt they were able to attend a productive and supportive group with lessons that greatly benefited their children.

### **3.4 Satisfaction with Materials and Training Program**

#### **Parent Expectations Regarding Our Reading and Writing Journey**

During each interview, parents were asked to assess their reasons for participation and their expectations prior to the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* program. Parents generally noted that, prior to the program, their children struggled with reading, and many of the parents were referred to the program by their schools' Title I teachers. Therefore, the main reasons parents decided to participate in the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* was to increase their children's reading enjoyment and ability, and to learn teaching skills to help their children at home. The Warwick participants also noted that their decision to participate in the program was influenced by the children's reading program, which seemed fun and enjoyable for their children.

## Results

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These expectations were in line with what they hoped to get out of the group sessions. Generally, parents were similar in their desire to support their children's reading development through fun interesting approaches to learning. They hoped to find ways to either keep their children enthusiastic about reading or to spark their interest for the first time. For example several parents commented,

*I hoped to maybe learn things that I could do at home to help him work on his reading skills. I wanted to help him grow in his reading development through the program. Also to learn about how he was developing and different ways to try and help him work on that.*

*I was hoping for her reading skills to come up to grade level, and while we were getting her to read more and read better I was hoping to keep her enthusiastic about reading. Even though she didn't read well she still liked books and liked to read.*

*I hoped to get more satisfaction in seeing my daughter succeed better at reading. I like the idea that they took the parents aside and helped us understand how to approach teaching our children at home the essentials they needed for the first grade. She was in Kindergarten at the time so it kind of gave her a leg up on getting into first grade so she was more secure.*

Additionally, two participants commented that they were hoping to meet other people in their same situation. For example one grandparent commented,

*He was lacking in reading and vocabulary. I just wanted to go out there and see if I am not the only grandparent that went through this, which I didn't think I was. There was another one in the class also. It made me feel like I am not the only one that has to push to get him what he deserves and to get him up to speed.*

In the end, 10 parents reported that the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* was better than they expected, while 3 reported it was exactly what they expected, and 1 reported it was not what they expected. Parents who felt the group was better than expected commented on why this was the case,

*Just the way they approach you and playing mind games with the kids using the reverse. It was so much different from when my kids were in school so it was quite an experience.*

*I learned so many things and it opened such a communication factor between my daughter and I and the family.*

The parent who stated that this program was not what he expected explained that he had not realized he would be separated from his daughter the whole time. In previous reading programs, they were together, which he preferred, stating that there was limited time for them to see each other. Although he felt that this program provided good ideas about how to encourage and help with reading, he saw the separation from his child as a drawback. He suggested that program organizers should be very honest about informing participants how future programs would be run and thought it would be beneficial to keep the children and parents together. This discrepancy between what he expected and how the program was set up led him to be somewhat dissatisfied with the program. Another parent echoed a similar sentiment, stating

*They had the kids come at the end of the class, but maybe every 3 or 4 weeks have a combined class. Even have the parents go to where they were just to interact and see how they were doing things.*

### **Parent Satisfaction with Program and Features**

The congruence between expectations met and parents' satisfaction was seen in many of the parents' responses. Most parents were satisfied with the program and felt that it was an enjoyable learning experience. One parent notes a memorable lesson:

*I did learn a lot of interesting sections. I remember the one about how to read to the kids and to point to each word. I found that interesting because I didn't remember it from years ago. I didn't know it was good to teach the kids how to read when you point to each separate letter. I thought it was interesting.*

This overall satisfaction was often reinforced by improvement they saw in their children's reading; for example, one participant described,

*When my son went in the program he was in kindergarten and he was a typical kindergartener learning basic reading skills. Now a year later, he is in the 1st grade and we have done a few reading programs and now he is reading at the 3rd grade level. Not saying it is all the program, but that alludes to how effective it can be if you go and use the tools that they give you.*

In addition to improving reading skills, three Warwick parents commented that the children's reading group helped to socialize the children and boost their self-esteem. For example, two parents explained,

*I was very satisfied. It met everything that it said it would. It encouraged my son to read more. He was a lot more confident with reading not just at home, but in a classroom setting. He felt a lot more comfortable and at ease. Beforehand, he was hesitant to do so because there were some things he would pronounce the wrong way, and he was afraid that he would be laughed at or ridiculed. So it helped boost his self esteem.*

*I thought it was beneficial. He was in the middle of the age and it showed him that even though he was having problems there were older children that were having problems as well. So therefore he shouldn't feel like he was behind the rest of the kids.*

Each parent was asked about their favorite topic. This proved to be a difficult question for parents to answer both because the program was completed a year before the interview, a while ago, and many participants enjoyed multiple lessons so they found it hard to pick. However, parents commented most often on the weekly activities. The two that repeatedly stood out for parents were the activity in which the children wrote their own book and the activity in which children made a book about their favorite things using descriptive words. For example,

*I think it was the reading one because that was when they encouraged us to have our children write their own books. We got some construction pieces together, let them draw and then help them write what it is there story was about. That was really interesting, because it got my son into writing and just thinking about stories to write about his*

*doodles that was the topic I found most impressive.*

*The best section—I liked two activities that we had done. It is funny because one of the activities my son had done in high school. Make a book to represent themselves and put what would be their favorite, but using descriptive words like delicious strawberries to expanded their vocabulary. That was either 1st or 2nd session. I used it immensely all through the rest of the year. It was to expand their vocabulary, being descriptive, using describing words. They put it in two categories they will ask a yes or no questions or an explanation question. You wanted to pull from your child. You wanted your child to talk and have conversations instead of “Did it rain today?” “Yes.” You would say, “So how was the weather today?” “It was a little cloudy, a little this” that session.*

*She really enjoyed the first lesson (picture walk) where [she] drew pictures [and] made up a story to go with it. Both kids loved it and wanted to share. The kids are very comfortable with drawing so then could add in the extra component of putting words to the pictures. Another good lesson was when they made a little book, where they had a topic and cut out pictures to go with it and putting words to pictures. They were able to go through magazines and calendars to get pictures and create stories.*

Other session highlights mentioned were the *Go Spy* game using words and letters instead of objects, pairing off in twos and having the parents read to each other to model how to interact with a book and a child, storytelling, and general strategies about teaching children to read. One parent added,

*I found everything there to be useful and helpful and integrating into our daily activities. My favorite part of the program was learning things to do at home, games and activities to do with your kids aside from just reading with them every day. We use to make reading fun. This was pretty effective for my kid because he was just starting to recognize letters and words so when we were out driving or at the grocery store we would play [the] *I Spy* game with letters and words. For example, I spy the letter S and everywhere we went he would look at signs and recognize letters and eventually he was learning the words and putting together sentences. The memory games, instead of doing it with pictures, do it with words, that type of thing. Little fun games that you can turn into opportunities to teach your kid to read.*

In an effort to get participants’ feedback on the benefits and drawbacks of the *Our Reading and Writing Journey*, we asked what they would say to a friend or relative about participating in the program. Overall, they said that they would encourage others to participate in the program stating that the major benefits included learning how to teach your child while getting your child to read using fun, interactive games. The program helped parents understand what their children were experiencing as they were learning to read. This program helped participants bridge that gap and brought them up to date on current reading and writing teaching techniques. For example, two parents shared,

*I would tell them definitely do this program, so much knowledge, so much fun. It is a relaxed atmosphere and you spend quality time with your own child that you never thought twice about and it is fun quality time. I would definitely. It is amazing the things I never thought about. I was a child professional for 8 years in the Kindergarten classroom in that school... They were like, “why are you here?” A lot has changed since then and it is unbelievable what I learned.*

*It's a great way to read to your children, encourage books and learning. There are fun games to create words and sentences; they make interesting twists. Kids were excited and always wanted to know what did we learn this week? Parents can be uncomfortable in teacher role and the program gave them chance to do it successfully.*

The only drawback mentioned when asked about encouraging friends or relatives to participate in the program was the 12-week, 2-hour commitment, which they saw as a possible drawback for many busy parents. Somerville participants were surprised that not more parents participated in the group. They felt that a larger group would enhance the classroom discussions, but they noted that child care was an issue for single parents.

Despite this concern, when participants were asked how satisfied they were with the number of sessions, they responded that it was an appropriate number, given the amount of material. Many commented that they wished the program had gone on longer and some even suggested having a 10-week program, a break, and then more sessions. With regard to the length of the individual sessions, there were mixed responses. Some participants commented that 2-hour sessions were a bit long, but felt that it was necessary for the amount of information covered. For example, one participant commented,

*The 2-hour session was about right. It made it so it took the whole evening. If you have a program to go to that is only an hour you can run an errand before or after you go. When it is 2 hours on a school night that is pretty much the night so in that respect it was kind of hard. But, on the other hand we covered so much material and sometimes we went really quickly to get it all covered. We couldn't have accomplished all that if we didn't have 2 hours. The bottom line is 2 hours is a little long, but I think it needed to be to be effective.*

Some parents suggested shortening the sessions, but increasing the number of weeks to ensure all the material was covered; whereas other parents wished the sessions were longer because once they got going, the session would be over. Despite the 12-week, 2-hour commitment, parents' attendance records and responses show that the program was something they prioritized each week because it was educational and enjoyable. Parents did not lose interest in the program because they felt they were learning something new and valuable every week.

For many parents, this was the first reading program in which they had participated, but those who had participated in other groups reported that the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* provided about the same, if not more, information. One participant stated,

*I thought it was going to be too much pushing him, but let me tell you the more they pushed him the more they sucked into their brains and it really worked.*

### **Parent Satisfaction with Facilitators**

The success of the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* was in the hands of the facilitators at each site. According to the participants, these facilitators played an integral role in their overall experience with this program. Both facilitators brought together parents from different backgrounds with different reading levels and taught them to rethink what they thought they knew about learning how to read. The facilitators were successful in their teaching methods and received rave reviews from the participants.

## Results

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Participants appreciated that the facilitators were knowledgeable and willing to share teaching tricks and what worked for them. The facilitators' positive approach and enthusiasm for teaching and helping children succeed made parents want to participate. The facilitators' personalities made each individual feel comfortable, which fostered group participation. Furthermore, the facilitators were available during the week for the parents to call if they had any questions about the activities they took home. The parents noticed the time and effort the facilitators put in each week prepping for the sessions, and they were grateful for their dedication to the program.

Throughout the interviews, each parent spoke highly of the activities provided by the program, the comfortable environment (except the participant who did not like being separated from his child) and the one-on-one time with the facilitator. All of these things together made this program an extremely beneficial experience. Parents felt so strongly about the benefits of this program that they continually reiterated how they hoped the program would be continued in the future. Additionally, one parent felt that this program would even be beneficial to school teachers.

*My biggest point is if they could bring this into the schools for the teachers to do this as a workshop they would really benefit from it. It is not that black and white issued book that they have to go by. This would give them so much more hands on and an incentive to make it lighter for them (the students) to learn. I wish they would offer it if not at least once every year, twice a year would be fantastic. I just strongly believe in it. It was really great. I learned so much. I worked in a Kindergarten for 8 years so if anyone had knowledge it was me and for me to be so taken back, well that just tells you.*

### Facilitators' Satisfaction with Program

Both facilitators thought the program met or exceeded their expectations and was successful. One facilitator initially thought it was too much work and did not think parents would respond but commented,

*They loved it and I was pleasantly surprised.*

Facilitators agreed that despite many personal challenges, the parents wanted to do this, and they felt that parents thought it was a success.

### Facilitators' Descriptions of Barriers and Strategies to Overcome Them

Neither facilitator experienced barriers to implementing the program. The only drawback was not having all the lessons ahead of time and not having the list of books to support the concepts. They did what was required to implement the program and worked out the snags. In one site, a few parents were English language learners; however, facilitators did not view this as a challenge or barrier, rather they made every effort to make things work for these parents by giving them time to speak. It was important to make participants feel comfortable and to overcome the fear of talking in a group. Homework and scrapbook items, shared at the beginning of the session, became conversation starters for facilitators to become more familiar with students and connect the students with each other. If someone mentioned a favorite hobby, the facilitator would tell another person in the group and make the connection. One facilitator related a time when the group was doing the session on informational books and one parent picked up a book on fishing and gave it to one of the dads that she knew loved fishing:

*If one person said she was interested in a hobby, I would say, “Oh, did you know she did that too?”*

Other techniques involved probing parents asking “*What do you think?*” or “*How do you feel?*” to get them talk and share their ideas. Engaging parents on a personal level seemed to build cohesiveness in the group.

Facilitators also indicated that there is a need for a large supply of books available for parents to take home. One facilitator suggested the following:

*The other thing is there has to be tons and tons of books available that the facilitator could just put their hands on. Many of the activities involved having the parents select a book to take home with their child. You can’t just have one per parent because they want to select their own. At the beginning of the week you need to have 40 different alphabet books and I was luckily enough that I did. If I didn’t have this resource library it would have been a struggle. Even using a public library is a problem because you are giving the books away to these parents and suppose that parent never comes back. You have to have the resources available. Title one teachers do have tons of resources, but if it was done where the person facilitating didn’t have access to a lot of books it would be a problem. That is the biggest one because not only books, but books on tape.*

### **3.5 Assessing Changes in Participants and their Children**

#### **Changes in Parents**

Parents were asked a series of questions to self-assess their level of change on several measures: attitudes and feelings, home environment, behaviors, and receipt of other sources of supports. The majority of parents experienced changes during and after completing the program, especially in learning how best to help their children and encourage reading in the home. The facilitators were also asked to share their thoughts on how parents were affected by the program.

#### ***Attitudes and Feelings***

The class was designed to aid parents in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully help their children learn to read and write. Parents were asked to assess whether the program made them feel more confident about helping their children become better readers and writers. The majority of the parents interviewed did experience a boost in confidence and credited a variety of reasons for the change. Some focused on the practice of creating a routine to read books at home. The program provided a catalyst for families to make reading and writing a priority. Parents were grateful to learn new techniques to use with their children, and were excited that the facilitators were “teaching how to help.” Parents were confident in the activities they were bringing home, which in turn made them feel like competent teachers for their children. One parent felt that she was bringing something new to her children each week that they were excited about and encouraged by. She reflected about how good it made her feel, resulting in wanting to share more and more with them,

*Each week, I felt that I was bringing something new to them, and they were excited and felt encouraged. It made me feel good and want to share more with them.*

## Results

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When asked if parents' ideas about being able to help their children learn to read and write changed, participants were split (eight responded that their ideas had changed, and six responded that they had not). Those who did not believe their ideas had changed often reported that they already possessed the ideas about how to help but lacked the skills.

Several parents agreed that the program confirmed and reinforced their beliefs and then helped them actualize their beliefs into concrete methods. Participants who felt like their ideas did change mostly reported being exposed to new techniques and changing the way they read. One father noted changing a tendency he had to correct his daughter when she stumbled on a word. Now, he has broken this habit, allowing his daughter to sound it out herself and actually learn for herself.

### **Home Environment**

Participants were asked if any changes were made in their home environment as a result of the program; all but two responded that they did. Several parents set up bookcases or mini-libraries in their homes, allowing their children to build a collection of books. Many children now have a designated work area to encourage reading and learning activities. One mother now tries to have books in every room. Others reported making more time for reading and practicing the activities learned in the program. The two participants who responded "no" to this question explained that they had already had rich home environments that encouraged reading and writing.

To enhance the understanding of how the program had changed the home environment, participants were asked how it had changed the type of books that parents selected for children. Most parents did alter how they were selecting books, but the reasons were highly varied. One mother explained that before the program, she would have chosen more difficult books for her children, with more words than pictures. After participating, she learned that it can be important and beneficial to keep it simple sometimes.

*Even picture books are helpful for preschool and kindergarteners so they feel comfortable and confident reading. We had started to move some of those books away, but the facilitators encouraged us to keep the alphabet books around so that he'll [her son] feel more confident and can share it.*

Another parent expressed similar feelings,

*We read more simple books. I had the impression that I always had to read longer and more difficult books. I realize that using simple books would help her learn to read faster.*

Others had opposite feelings and now challenge their children more, mainly because with the extra help they believe their children are ready to read at higher levels. One participant was surprised to find that selecting harder books was more helpful than choosing easier books that she knew he could read. One participant believes she is more selective now, especially in trying to avoid "silly" books. Several parents reported trying to let their children choose what most interests them. Instead of parents taking on responsibility for choosing books, they are now letting their children pick.

*I am up for letting him pick an audiobook whereas before I would be like why do we need*

*that, we can read. But I found through the program that it is fairly good because they can sit and read along with the audiobook. I do that for both my kids now. I let him have more freedom to choose what he is interested in.*

### **Behaviors**

Parents also commented on behavioral changes that have occurred since participating in the program. They were asked to report on a number of different activities, including continuing techniques learned, visiting the library, changing personal reading habits, and being involved in their children's education.

Because about a year had passed between the end of the program and the survey, participants were asked if they had continued practicing any of the activities they learned. Of the 14 respondents, 12 answered that they had continued the activities, and 2 had not. Because most of the children enjoyed the activities, parents had incorporated many of the activities and practices into their daily home routines. Some had maintained specific activities, such as the "picture walk," in which parents and children drew pictures and then created a story to match, and the "parking lot," in which children could identify words and list them in a specific place. Others reported blending some of the techniques learned, taking bits and pieces, and making it work for their particular family. Some participants mentioned that they continued to read nightly with their children, often choosing books that they had obtained as part of the program. They also used methods they learned, such as taking turns reading each page. One parent spoke about her favorite activities when asked about which methods she continued to use,

*Yes, like that "-ing family," only now instead of "ring," put the "br" together so we're expanding the words to make them longer and she's realizing were working into compound words... I love the parking lot. When she got a word she could put it in the parking lot. All these different games. We also put books together, you make your own book, she's got to do her illustrations and become the author and everything.*

The majority of participants interviewed had clearly learned from the skills taught in the program and had continued to practice them at home. Most received positive responses to the activities from their children, providing the motivation to incorporate the lessons into their routines. One parent pointed out,

*She likes them, she thinks it is fun, thinks it is a game. I don't think she realizes that she is learning.*

Visiting the library was one behavior emphasized by the program. Almost all participants (13) reported visiting the library since the completion of the program, and the one who did not, explained that he personally hadn't gone but his wife had taken his child. Many reported visiting the library frequently, weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly.

To gauge further behavioral changes in teaching methods, participants were asked about the different ways in which they had helped their children to learn since the program ended. Generally, parents seemed more aware of teaching methods after completing the program. Several participants now find that they are using some of the games or methods in multiple settings, like a zoo outing or car ride. One mother explained,

Results

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*When we go to the zoo or museum, we incorporate it into something he might be reading.*

Another mother found that simply walking around her neighborhood could become a reading game in which she pointed out words on signs. Parents also reported allowing their children to be more independent after completing the program. One parent reflected,

*I have him try harder before I step in and help him sound it out. I let him make choices on his own books a lot more than I did before.*

Another mother agreed,

*We [participant and partner] learned to let the kids set the pace. In picture walks, let them take the lead. At first, we had focused on reading the story and not stopping on pages but now we are learning to stop and let them take in pictures, etc.*

Similar to the question about continuing activities, participants mentioned reading more frequently and adopting new techniques, like compiling word lists. However, some reported that they have not incorporated new teaching methods, and explained that they had practiced similar methods before and after the program, such as reading books and playing games with the words.

When asked about their personal reading habits, participants offered a range of responses. Several reported unchanged reading habits, noting that they had read before and still read at the time of the interview, or that they never had time to read personally before and still did not. When asked about reading habits, one mother did report a big change,

*Yes, I never ever read before.*

One mother mentioned reading less since having kids and shifting reading materials from books for pleasure to newspapers and magazines. Based on the responses, it seems that participants were much more concerned with their children's reading habits than their own.

Because participants volunteered to attend the program, we were curious about whether they had become more involved in their children's education. Of the 12 participants who provided responses to this question, 7 reported being more involved, and 5 did not. Involvement was not explicitly defined; therefore, some parents spoke about involvement within the school, and others interpreted it as involvement with education at home. Those who answered negatively explained that they always felt involved in their child's education. Alternately, feelings of more involvement were mostly attributed to spending more time reading and teaching their children at home. One parent noted,

*Again, just being aware of the things in our environment and trying to tie them into something he may have read or watched recently. Trying to make everything a learning experience.*

Another parent spoke of taking on a bigger role at the school by joining the school parent-teacher association (PTA). She now helps to plan activities for children, such as community service in which they can complete hands-on activities. Every participant interviewed felt involved in his/her child's education,

but whether it was a direct result of the program varied. For some, it had been an important catalyst to start and continue taking an active role in education.

### ***Other Source of Support***

Another interesting measure of impact and involvement was whether parents had continued to participate in other groups designed to help their children read and write or whether they had sought outside resources, such as the library or school. The majority of the 14 respondents (10) had not continued participating in other similar groups for multiple reasons. One parent had a logistic conflict,

*He got into soccer, and it coincided, so he chose that over the reading group.*

Another simply had not heard about any other groups being offered so had not had the chance to participate. Yet another opted out of participating in other groups because she felt her son was at the level he should be. Four participants had worked in other groups since the program ended; however, these activities differed from the structure of the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* program. One father reported that his son attended speech therapy as well as library nights at the library. Another participant mentioned attending a church group that improved children's reading and comprehension skills through reading and explaining the Bible. The program that sounded most similar to *Our Reading and Writing Journey* was mentioned by one mother who attended a bi-weekly group in which parents, children, and one teacher read a story together. Children would take turns reading aloud, discussing the book, and completing a craft activity. Some parents expressed the desire to participate in similar programs; one encouraged incorporating this program into others or replicating it. However, several participants were simply not aware of other programs that were available.

Likewise, more respondents reported not seeking additional resources (9) than those who did (5). Those who sought more information commonly mentioned schools and libraries. Schools provided events that promoted learning and distributed information through vehicles such as monthly newsletters. One mother commented on activities the school offered,

*They had an "Ethnic Night" where kids were able to make books themselves, bookmarks, their shields that describe the country that they are from... Instead of just the regular book fair, they had family book fair night. You could browse books and buy them, but also bring a book so you could swap a book. Those were things that the PTA had done to get the younger kids more involved.*

Library events also drew several participants by offering reading nights. Some reported that they had not received additional information or guidance. Two participants had switched schools and had yet to become involved and felt "out of the loop at this point." In general, participants seemed very receptive to additional help that was often readily available through schools or libraries.

### ***Facilitators' Rating of Impact on Parents***

Facilitators from both sites thought the program had a positive effect on parents. Parents seemed to learn a lot and liked the handouts, according to facilitators. They enjoyed the lessons because they were learning new ideas and saw that it was helping their children learn and grow. Reflecting on the positive response of parents in her group, one facilitator said,

## Results

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*I think that not only did they feel better about helping their children, but they learned how to help them. The section in each session where we talked about if your child is in this grade then these are the things they are expected to do; the first session when I delivered that information I thought I would go through that really quick, but the parents were absorbed in this information. They didn't want me to go to the next grade they really wanted to understand it.*

Parents especially absorbed the information about expected skill levels for their children. According to one facilitator, parents said this was the first time they knew what was expected from their children. They were all drawing from their own educational background and what was expected of them from grade school 25 years ago.

She went on to explain,

*They [parents] were amazed at what their children were expected to do. The higher the grade level went the more overwhelmed they became with the fact that their children were expected to have those advanced skills. It was such a big piece that you could make it a workshop all on its own, an informational session for parents. They really loved that because knowing what was expected of their children told them when to push and when they didn't have to push.*

The facilitator indicated that parents were pleasantly surprised by their children's response to reading instruction and that teachers encouraged children to follow the words on a page with their finger, which parents believed had been discouraged in the past. Learning this strategy in the workshop changed their perspective. The facilitator explained,

*With the reading instruction it just amazed them to have a child make the connection between the words on the page and what they heard. Their kids were coming home and reading along with their finger and their parents were telling them to stop that because their experience taught them to never touch the page so the children were getting conflicting messages between school and home. The parents getting the reading instruction information eliminated that.*

As explained by the facilitator, parents were given valuable information that had not previously been shared with parents in workshops. Some parents said they had attended other parent workshops but had not received the type of detailed information provided in the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* workshops.

Facilitators were also asked to rate parental involvement as a result of the program, and unfortunately both facilitators interviewed felt unable to fully answer the question. After the sessions ended, neither facilitator had much contact with the participants. In one site, the parents were recruited from 10 different schools across the city. Both facilitators were aware that parents had continued using the skills they had learned in the workshops, borrowing materials from the resource center, working with the children and in the classrooms. In one site, parents expressed a strong interest in a follow-up activity over the summer and registered for additional workshops offered by the school. Even if the parents did not meet eligibility criteria, they asked to be placed on a waiting list for additional services. One facilitator commented,

*They were all interested to see if we were going to run a summer program. They have come into the Family Center and borrowed materials. They have contacted me to sign up for other sessions that I am holding... So in that way, yes, they have been more involved.*

Both facilitators agreed that they were able to witness clear improvements during the 12 weeks of programming. They indicated that it was vital that the program address the skills needed to successfully educate children, instead of just teaching content. Participants were able to develop these skills with clear positive results. Although the facilitators were able to witness change during the program, they had less contact with parents after they completed and could not comment fully on whether the impact was sustained.

## **Changes in Children**

### ***Parents' Assessment of Benefits***

Ultimately, the program was designed to benefit the children of the participating parents. Both facilitators discussed the impact of the program on the children from different perspectives. One facilitator said parents came back to her with products they were making and doing at home with the children. They often shared experiences about the children and new information they were learning. The second facilitator observed children's excitement to see what their parents were doing in the workshops and were pleased that their parents had come to their school. They both indicated that parents were extremely pleased about the impacts on their children that they witnessed during the program. Several parents noted drastic improvements in reading abilities,

*He went from being a typical kindergartener and now he is reading on a 3rd-grade level.*

Some parents, who had enrolled in the program because their children were struggling were very grateful to the program for helping their children improve,

*He was struggling, he was having a hard time... even his teacher says he's doing better so I'm sure it helped him in some way. It made him a more confident reader.*

*He benefited a lot knowing someone really cared about where his level should be.*

Another mother shared her personal story about how important this program had been for her daughter. Before completing the program, the school requested that her daughter be tested for reading in order to receive special services. When she was retested after the class finished, the results showed that she had no reading problems. This parent also spoke about her older children who needed extra help throughout elementary school, and she believed that her daughter would be able to circumnavigate special education,

*They tested her in September and said she doesn't need this, she's quite bright, she knows how to read. So I feel it has benefited her drastically. I think about Emily and there is something going on here and I really believe it is because of this class. I think about starting out with Emily and I feel like they have made it so I don't have to fight with her anymore. They made it fun so we get quality time and she learns and makes me at ease and feel comfortable too.*

**Results**

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There was one father who was disappointed in the structure of the class and, as a result, felt the program did not benefit his daughter and decided to stop after attending the first few sessions. He explains,

*When she realized that, I'm going to go there and not be with mom and dad the whole time and then I'm going to have to come home and go right to bed... she didn't want to go... it didn't work for us... We did try a few of the activities and she did like them but she'll like anything that we sit down and do together.*

With this one exception, parents overwhelmingly expressed that the program was highly beneficial for their children. Some even attributed major skill changes solely to this program. Not only did participants learn the skills, but the class also encouraged routine practice and reading that continued even after the sessions had ended.

**Facilitators' Assessment of Impacts on Children**

Facilitators were also asked to assess the impact on the children, yet they were less able to give direct feedback than parents, who were constantly witnessing changes. Both remarked at the excitement of the children about the activities that were brought home. The facilitator in Warwick reflected on the atmosphere after the parent's and children's groups ended,

*The kids wanted to look at everything so the excitement level was right there in my face. It was great because they would run right into the room and say "What did you do?!"*

The facilitators also reported that parents loved to share their children's products from the activities created at home. To their knowledge, children were benefiting from the program and were excited about the activities.

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## Summary, Lessons Learned, and Future Considerations

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This summative evaluation of NIFL’s pilot reading program for parents *Our Reading and Writing Journey* was designed with four goals in mind:

1. To assess the fidelity and quality of the written materials used in the Pilot K–3 Parent Reading Program.
2. To assess the fidelity and quality of the training to parents in the Pilot K–3 Parent Reading Program.
3. To assess satisfaction with the materials and training provided in the Pilot K–3 Parent Reading Program.
4. To examine changes in parents and children as a function of participation in the program.

We systematically reviewed the materials that were used in the program to address the first goal and interviewed facilitators and parents to address the rest. We interviewed 2 of the 3 facilitators and 14 of the 17 parent participants.

### 4.2 Summary of Findings

Our review of the *Facilitator Resource Guide* (i.e., Facilitator Handbook) and the *Parent Activity and Resource Guide* (i.e., Scrapbook) indicates that both guides adhered to the NIFL research-based reading model as a framework. The topics presented and the activities suggested were drawn from the NIFL model of reading instruction building blocks as presented in *A Child Becomes a Reader*. Moreover, the curriculum used sound learning principles that were geared to adults such as learning by doing, using small groups, and providing careful attention to content sequencing.

Based on interview data, there was general consensus that *Our Reading and Writing Journey* was a success. Despite the time commitment involved, parents attended, enthusiastically participated in class, and worked with their children at home. Although meals were provided at one site, incentives were not used in either place to encourage attendance. Parents came because they wanted to learn how to help their children learn to read and were positive about the materials and facilitators alike. Parents felt that the modeling, practicing, and planning that occurred during the weekly sessions prepared them to work at home with their children. Moreover, they felt competent and saw changes in their children. The facilitators also considered the program to be a success, and in fact, were surprised that parents willingly followed through on the homework despite the amount of work involved. They indicated that the program had exceeded their expectations.

### 4.3 Lessons Learned and Future Considerations

Based on our findings, there are improvements to both the materials and to the organization of the program that could be considered. The curriculum developers noted that facilitators did not take advantage of the flexibility they had built into the curriculum. In their *Lessons Learned* report, EDC noted that the facilitator at one site attempted to implement all three activities as they were presented in the Facilitators' Handbook and ultimately ran out of time. Obviously, this added to the time it would take to locate materials and books for each of the three lessons. If this message was not clearly communicated to facilitators, NIFL might consider reorganizing the handbook to include one activity to support each topic and place other optional topics in a section at the back of the handbook entitled "Supplemental Materials" or Alternative Approaches. It would also be helpful to have a separate page in the Handbook that would explain what is needed for preparation. Similarly, it would be useful to have a table of contents in the guide and add a list of materials required for each lesson in a prominent place in the handbook. Facilitators commented frequently that having all the materials at the outset would have made things work more smoothly.

Although the parents in this pilot program were devoted, many pointed out that the 12-week, 2-hour commitment was a possible drawback for many busy parents. However, they recognized that there was a lot of material to cover. One facilitator who also found that it was a long commitment suggested that perhaps 6 weeks would work better. It might be possible to have the program in two parts of 6 weeks each with a break of a month.

Somerville participants were surprised that not more parents participated in the group. They felt that a larger group would enhance the classroom discussions, but they also noted that child care is an issue for single parents. Although children were involved in their own program in Warwick, it potentially could be an issue for siblings. Facilitators thought 12 weeks was a huge and possibly expensive commitment on the part of parents, especially if they had to pay for child care. If such a program is replicated, the school should consider offering child care.

Another suggestion is to have classroom teachers involved, working with parents and sharing their experiences. If the workshops were connected to classrooms, parents could see how important the program is for children's learning, and teachers could play an important role in making those connections happen. Having teachers provide information to parents regarding developmental expectations will perhaps make an even greater impact on children's success. If the program is set up as partnership then activities planned for parents will better support children's classroom experiences.

Aside from a well-specified, scientifically based curriculum and materials, the success of the pilot implementation of *Our Reading and Writing Journey* was in no small measure a function of the facilitators. Facilitators in each site had unique backgrounds and skills upon which to draw as workshop leaders. The two teachers in the Somerville site were grounded in reading instruction for children in the early grades and had knowledge of what is expected of children at these grade levels. This knowledge served them well, as they were able to adapt the workshop content to integrate lessons into activities children would experience in the classroom. They understood what parents needed to do in support of their children's learning. The facilitator in the Warwick site brought her expertise as a parent educator and

the knowledge of Title I into the workshops. Both content knowledge and parent educator skills are needed for a successful program. It was clear that the Warwick facilitator felt more comfortable presenting to parents, while the Somerville teachers skillfully adapted lessons based on knowledge of reading instruction. Ideally, successful facilitators in the future will be skilled at both working with parents and have background in reading development.

Future replications will need to carefully choose the facilitators if they wish to ensure the same degree of success with the program. There are several qualities that are important. Flexibility and the ability to make adjustments during the workshops are essential qualities. Even with a specific curriculum, problems may come up that require changes. These problems or situations play into how parents engage in the lessons and whether or not they can complete the activities at home. The ability to read parents' cues is an important quality for facilitators. They must be very responsive to what parents are able to do and notice when something is not going well. Quick thinking and the ability to change directions, improvise, and switch activities are important to keep parents engaged and involved. Facilitators must also be well organized and able to plan ahead of the workshops. The most time consuming part of the program, according to the facilitators, was the preparation. Both facilitators saw the value of having everything prepared for the lesson ahead of time. Because the lessons required a lot of materials, including handouts and books, for each activity, it was important to have all the materials readily available at hand.

We recognize that our conclusions are limited by the fact that the pilot program was small and we were not able to interview all of the participants. Nevertheless, the opinions provided by the facilitators and parents do indicate the strengths of the program and areas for future improvement.

In sum, the pilot implementation of *Our Reading and Writing Journey* was successful. The changes recommended for future replications are relatively minor and should only enhance the program. The recommendations include some changes to the organization of the materials, alternative scheduling arrangements, involvement of classroom teachers, sufficient books for parents to take home, provision of child care, and careful selection of facilitators. The eventual dissemination of this program can be one cornerstone in helping parents support their children as they become readers.



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## ***Appendix A: Parent Survey***

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# National Institute for Literacy

OMB No: 1800-0011 v.123

Expiration Date: 03/01/2010

## National Institute for Literacy Parent Interview Experiences and Satisfaction with *Our Reading and Writing Journey*

[SKIP IF JUST ADMINISTERED TELEPHONE INTRODUCTORY SCRIPT AND CONSENT]

**INTRODUCTION:** I am \_\_\_\_ from RTI International. We have been asked by the National Institute for Literacy to find out about the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* program that you participated in last summer. Before beginning, I'd like to tell you some more about what we will be doing and get your permission for this interview.

### ADMINISTER INFORMED CONSENT

## Part I. Experiences and Satisfaction with the Program and Staff

### A. General Experiences with *Our Reading and Writing Journey*

First, I'd like to talk with you about your experiences with *Our Reading and Writing Journey*. Remember, you can skip anything that you don't want to answer.

A1. Why did you decide to participate in *Our Reading and Writing Journey*?

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A2. What are 3 things you hoped to get from participating in the program?

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A3. How well did the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* sessions meet your expectations? Would you say they were...?

- \_\_\_ better than you expected?  
 \_\_\_ exactly what you expected?  
 \_\_\_ not what you expected?

A3a. Would you explain to me why they were [better than/exactly what/not what you] expected?  
PROBE FOR SPECIFICS

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A4. What did you like about the small group format?

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A5. What didn't you like about the small group format?

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A6. What did you like about sharing with the group?

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A7. What didn't you like about sharing with the group?

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A8. What was helpful about seeing the activities modeled?

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A9. How could modeling have been more helpful?

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A10. What was helpful about practicing the activities with the group?

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A11. How could practicing the activities have been more helpful?

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A12. What was helpful about having time for planning the *Learning and Using New Words* activities that you would do at home?

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A13. How could it have been more helpful?

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A14. Overall, how many of the group sessions did you attend? Would you say you attended...?

\_\_\_\_\_ all 12 sessions? GO TO ITEM A18

\_\_\_\_\_ most sessions (i.e., 10 or 11)?

\_\_\_\_\_ some sessions (10 or fewer)? (Please specify how many \_\_\_\_\_)

IF PARTICIPANT DIDN'T ATTEND ALL 12 SESSIONS, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE GOTO A18

A15. Please tell me about any issues that made it difficult or impossible for you to attend all group sessions. [PROBE FOR CONFLICTS WITH WORK, CHILD CARE, TRANSPORTATION, AND ILLNESS]

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A16. Who else in your family attended the program if you were unable to attend sessions? [MARK ALL THAT APPLY]

- CHILD'S MOTHER/FATHER [OTHER PARENT]
- SPOUSE/PARTNER [IF NOT CHILD'S PARENT]
- SISTER
- BROTHER
- RESPONDENT'S MOTHER [CHILD'S GRANDMOTHER]
- CHILD'S OTHER GRANDMOTHER
- RESPONDENT'S FATHER
- CHILD'S OTHER GRANDFATHER
- FRIEND
- OTHER [SPECIFY] \_\_\_\_\_

A17. Did you lose interest in coming to the sessions?

- YES [GO TO ITEM A17a]
- NO [GO TO ITEM A18]

A17a. Why did you lose interest in the sessions?

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A18. How satisfied were you with the length of the program? [PROBE FOR NUMBER OF SESSIONS, LENGTH OF INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS, AND SPACING OF SESSIONS]

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**B. Perception of *Our Reading and Writing* Facilitator**

Now, I'd like to hear your views about the Facilitator who worked with your group. Remember, none of the information you share with me today will be given to your Facilitator. And you can skip anything that you don't wish to answer.

B1. Describe how knowledgeable you think the Facilitator was about teaching children to read and write.  
[PROBE FOR SPECIFIC EXAMPLES]

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B2. How helpful was the Facilitator's feedback to you about your skills?

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B3. Describe how well she addressed your questions on topics discussed in group sessions.

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B4. Did you feel that your Facilitator was able to keep your group working well together?

- \_\_\_\_\_ YES [GO TO ITEM B4a]
- \_\_\_\_\_ NO [GO TO TIEM B4b]

B4a. Please tell me why you think your Facilitator was able to keep your group working well together.

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B4b. Please tell me why you think your Facilitator wasn't able to keep your group working well together.

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B5. What did you like the most about the Facilitator of your group?

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B6. What did you like least about the Facilitator of your group?

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**C. Satisfaction with *My Reading and Writing Journey***

C1. Please describe how satisfied you are with the *My Reading and Writing Journey* program.

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C2. If a friend or relative of yours had the chance to be involved with *My Reading and Writing Journey* and she wanted your opinion about the benefits of participating, what would you say?

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C3. And what would you say if she then asked for about the drawbacks or disadvantages of participating in *My Reading and Writing Journey*?

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C4. What was your favorite session topic? Why was it your favorite topic? [PROBE FOR INTEREST IN TOPIC, PREPARATION FOR DOING ACTIVITIES, CHILD’S REACTION TO ACTIVITIES] IF THEY HAVE THEIR SCRAPBOOK “OUR READING AND WRITING JOURNEY,” HAVE THEM USE THIS AS A REMINDER. IF NOT, USE THE BLANK COPY.

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C5. What are some ways you think the program could be improved, overall? [PROBE FOR LESSONS THAT DIDN’T WORK WELL]

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C6. Describe whether and how the program made you more confident about helping your child become a better reader and writer. [PROBE FOR SPECIFICS – WHAT DID THE PROGRAM DO TO MAKE THEM FEEL MORE CONFIDENT; IF THE PROGRAM DIDN'T MAKE THE FACILITATOR MORE CONFIDENT, DESCRIBE]

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C7. Have you changed anything in your home environment to support your child's reading since completing the program?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO [GO TO ITEM C8]

C7a. What have you changed?

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C8. How has being a part of this program changed the type of books you select for your child?

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C9. What kind of books do you now read with your child?

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C10. Have you visited the library with your child since completing the program?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

C11. Have you continued the activities you learned in *My Reading and Writing Journey* with your child?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES [GO TO ITEM C11a]

\_\_\_\_\_ NO [GO TO ITEM C11b]

C11a. What is your child's reaction to continuing to do reading and writing activities?

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AFTER ITEM C11a, GO TO C12

C11b. Why didn't you continue do the reading and writing activities you learned in *My Reading and Writing Journal*?

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C12. What other ways of helping your child learn do you now do differently with your child?

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C13. Since your parent group sessions ended, have you continued to participate in any groups designed to help you work with your child as s/he learns to read and write?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO [GO TO ITEM C14]

C13a. Please tell me about this group. [PROBE FOR WHO AND HOW HELPFUL]

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C14. Have you received information or guidance from other resources since completing the training such as the library or school?

- YES
- NO [GO TO ITEM C15]

C14a. Please tell me about this information or guidance. [PROBE FOR WHO AND HOW HELPFUL]

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C15. In what ways have your personal reading habits changed?

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C16. Are you more involved with your child's education since participating in the program?

- YES [GO TO C16a]
- NO [GO TO C16b]

C16a. In what ways are you more involved? [PROBE FOR SPECIFICS]

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C16b. Why are you not more involved? [PROBE FOR SPECIFICS]

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C17. Since you started coming to the "Our Reading and Writing Journey," have your ideas about being able to help your child learn to read and write changed?

- YES
- NO [GO TO ITEM C18]

C17a. In what ways have your ideas about helping your child changed?

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C18. How much do you think your child has benefited from your participation in *My Reading and Writing Journey*? Why?

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C19. Compared with other parent education classes you may have participated in, would you say *Our Reading and Writing Journey* provided.....

- \_\_\_\_\_ about the same information as most programs
- \_\_\_\_\_ More information than other programs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Less information than other programs

## Part II. Participant Background and Demographics

Now we'd like to find out a little about you and your family.

1. What is your current marital status?

\_\_\_\_\_ MARRIED

\_\_\_\_\_ SEPARATED

\_\_\_\_\_ DIVORCED

\_\_\_\_\_ WIDOWED

\_\_\_\_\_ NEVER MARRIED

\_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW

\_\_\_\_\_ REFUSED

2. How many children in your home are less than 5 years of age?

\_\_\_\_\_ [RECORD NUMBER]

\_\_\_\_\_ REFUSED

3. How many children in your home are between 5-8 years of age?

\_\_\_\_\_ [RECORD NUMBER]

\_\_\_\_\_ REFUSED

4. How many children in your home are older than 8 years of age?

\_\_\_\_\_ [RECORD NUMBER]

\_\_\_\_\_ REFUSED

5. How old are you |\_\_\_\_\_|\_\_\_\_\_| YEARS

6. Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO [GO TO ITEM 8]

\_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW [GO TO ITEM 8]

\_\_\_\_\_ REFUSED [GO TO ITEM 8]

7. Which one of these best describes you...

\_\_\_\_\_ Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano,

\_\_\_\_\_ Puerto Rican,

\_\_\_\_\_ Cuban, or

\_\_\_\_\_ another Spanish/Hispanic/Latino group?

\_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW

\_\_\_\_\_ REFUSED

8. What is your race? [MARK ALL THAT ARE MENTIONED]

\_\_\_\_\_ WHITE

\_\_\_\_\_ BLACK, AFRICAN AMERICAN, OR NEGRO

\_\_\_\_\_ AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE

\_\_\_\_\_ ASIAN INDIAN

\_\_\_\_\_ CHINESE

\_\_\_\_\_ FILIPINO

\_\_\_\_\_ JAPANESE

\_\_\_\_\_ KOREAN

\_\_\_\_\_ VIETNAMESE

\_\_\_\_\_ OTHER ASIAN

\_\_\_\_\_ NATIVE HAWAIIAN

- GUAMANIAN OR CHAMORRO
- SAMOAN
- OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER
- ANOTHER RACE (SPECIFY) \_\_\_\_\_
- DON'T KNOW
- REFUSED

9. What is the highest grade or year of school or degree that you completed? (MARK ONE RESPONSE.)

- UP TO 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE
- 9<sup>TH</sup> TO 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE
- 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE BUT NO DIPLOMA
- HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR EQUIVALENT
- VOC/TECH PROGRAM AFTER HIGH SCHOOL BUT NO VOC/TECH DIPLOMA
- VOC/TECH DIPLOMA AFTER HIGH SCHOOL
- SOME COLLEGE BUT NO DEGREE
- ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE
- BACHELOR'S DEGREE
- GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL BUT NO DEGREE
- MASTER'S DEGREE (MA, MS)
- DOCTORATE DEGREE (PHD, EDD)
- PROFESSIONAL DEGREE AFTER BACHELOR'S DEGREE (MEDICINE/MD;  
DENTISTRY/DDS; LAW/JD/LLB; ETC.)
- DON'T KNOW
- REFUSED

10. Are you currently working full-time, working part-time, looking for work, in school, in a training program, keeping house or doing something else? (MARK ONLY ONE)

\_\_\_\_\_ WORKING FULL-TIME (35 HOURS OR MORE PER WEEK)

\_\_\_\_\_ WORKING PART-TIME

\_\_\_\_\_ LOOKING FOR WORK

\_\_\_\_\_ LAID OFF FROM WORK

\_\_\_\_\_ IN SCHOOL/TRAINING

\_\_\_\_\_ IN MILITARY

\_\_\_\_\_ KEEPING HOUSE

\_\_\_\_\_ SOMETHING ELSE (PLEASE SPECIFY)

\_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW

TYPE OF BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW

KIND OF WORK \_\_\_\_\_

IMPORTANT DUTY \_\_\_\_\_

TO BE CODED BY INTERVIEWER

OCCUPATION CODE    \_\_\_ \_\_\_

OCCUPATION CODE:	
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial Occupations.....	1
Engineers, Surveyors, and Architects .....	2
Natural Scientists and Mathematicians .....	3
Social Scientists, Social Workers, Religious Workers, and Lawyers .....	4
Teachers .....	5
Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners .....	6
Health Assessment and Treating Occupations.....	7
Writers, Artists, Entertainers, and Athletes.....	8
Health Technologists and Technicians .....	9
Technologists and Technicians, except Health .....	10
Marketing and Sales Occupation .....	11
Administrative Support Occupation, including Clerical.....	12
Service Occupations.....	13
Agricultural, Forestry, and Fishing Occupations .....	14
Mechanics and Repairers .....	15
Construction and Extractive Occupations.....	16
Precision Production Occupations .....	17
Production Working Occupations.....	18
Transportation and Materials Moving Occupations.....	19
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, and Laborers .....	20
Miscellaneous Occupations .....	21
NEVER WORKED/HOMEMAKERS .....	22
DON'T KNOW.....	97
REFUSED.....	98

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## ***Appendix B: Facilitator Survey***

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# National Institute for Literacy

OMB No: 1800-0011 v.123

Expiration Date: 03/01/2010

## National Institute for Literacy

### *Our Reading and Writing Journey* Facilitator Interview

**[SKIP IF JUST ADMINISTERED TELEPHONE INTRODUCTORY SCRIPT AND CONSENT]**

**INTRODUCTION:** I am \_\_\_ from RTI International. We have been asked by the National Institute for Literacy to conduct an evaluation of the Pilot K-3 *Our Reading and Writing Journey* curriculum and Parent Activity Guide. Before beginning, I'd like to tell you some more about what we will be doing and get your permission for this interview.

#### **INFORMED CONSENT**

### **Section I: Facilitator's Background, Training, and Overall Impression of Program**

#### **BACKGROUND**

1. How did you first learn about the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* program? (Probe for who contacted the facilitator: principal, district personnel, Title I Coordinator, etc.)

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2. What attracted you to the role of facilitator?

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3. Overall, did the program meet your expectations?

\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_ NO (In what ways did the program fail to meet your expectations?)

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4. What has been your experience working with parents in the past?

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5. Did you have prior experience or training in reading instruction?

\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_ NO

6. What type of prior education or training would have better prepared you for this position?

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7. What personal qualities are essential for someone filling this position? Please explain.

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**II. TRAINING AND PREPARATION**

8. Describe the training you received to deliver the *Our Reading and Writing Journey* curriculum.

[PROBE FOR CONTENT, STRUCTURE, AMOUNT OF TIME, ETC.]

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9. What features of the training you received was helpful?

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10. What did not work or could have been improved?

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11. What additional training would have better prepared you for this role?

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12. What additional training materials would have been useful?

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13. Based on the training you received, did you feel sufficiently prepared to use the curriculum?

\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_ NO (Please explain why you did not feel sufficiently prepared to use the curriculum)

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14. What do you recommend adding to the content of training for facilitators?

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15. What could have been done differently?

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16. Please describe the type of supports you received to make this program a success. [PROBE FOR DETAILS AND TYPE OF SUPPORT]

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**III. LESSON PRESENTATION AND RESOURCES**

17. Did the order of the lessons as they were presented in the Facilitator Handbook work well?

\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_ NO (What would you change?)

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18. Was the amount of material presented in each lesson adequate for the allotted time?

\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_ NO (What would you change?)

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19. What would you do differently with the resources provided to you?

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20. What barriers did you face while attempting to present the lessons? For example, did you have adequate time to plan lessons? Were resource materials adequate?

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21. Was the space where classes were held adequate and comfortable?

\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_ NO (If NO, What would you change?)

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22. How well did the class schedule work for parents? [PROBE WHETHER 12-WEEKS WAS ENOUGH TIME OR TOO LONG AND WHETHER TIME OF THE DAY WAS A PROBLEM]

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23. What strategies did you use to maintain good attendance?

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24. Now, thinking about the adults you worked with, please describe how you addressed different learning styles in your classes?

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25. What approaches seemed to work well and what did not? (Probe for how well parents worked in small groups or teams, modeling activities, practicing home work activities)

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26. What were the challenges you faced working with the parents in your program? [PROBE FOR SPECIFIC PROBLEMS, I.E., LANGUAGE BARRIERS, DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING MATERIALS, ABSENTEEISM]

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27. How did you resolve those challenges or overcome barriers?

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**IV. DELIVERY OF LESSONS**

28. Did you feel the lessons allowed for flexibility in the way they were delivered?

\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_ NO (Please explain.)

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29. If you were delivering these lessons again, what would you change?

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**V. IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM ON PARENTS AND CHILDREN**

30. What affect do you think the curriculum has had on parents? [PROBE FOR WHETHER PARENTS SEEMED MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT HELPING THEIR CHILDREN WITH SCHOOL WORK]

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31. Are you aware of any parents becoming more involved with their children’s class or other school activities, as a result of their participation in the program? If yes, please explain.

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32. How do you think participation in the Reading and Writing Journey program affected their children? [PROBE FOR OBSERVED CHANGES IN CHILDREN’S LANGUAGE USAGE, VOCABULARY, INTEREST IN READING, ETC.]

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**VI. HOW THE PROGRAM FIT WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

33. How do you think the program was viewed by the school administration? [PROBE FOR RESPONSES TO THE PROGRAM OF OTHER TEACHERS OR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

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34. Did this program seem to support your school's goals for children?

YES

NO (What would make it more of a fit?)

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35. What are the essential elements that would make this program a success in other settings?

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**SECTION II: FACILITATOR'S IMPRESSION OF THE LESSON CONTENT**

[FACILITATORS NOTE: START FIRST WITH OVERALL IMPRESSION OF ENTIRE TRAINING CONTENT. IF THERE IS TIME, THEN GO TO INDIVIDUAL SESSION QUESTIONS. IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME, SKIP THE INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS AND PROCEED TO SECTION III]

Now I would like to ask you about all of the sessions of *Our Reading and Writing Journey* and the Parent Resource Guide as a whole. I would like to know what you like about the sessions. What parts did you enjoy least and why? What was easy or difficult for parents and what you would change?

36. What did you like best about the sessions and lessons? What components worked well for parents?

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37. What components of the sessions and lessons did not work well for parents? Probe for problems with lesson content, resource materials, handouts, and sequence of activities)

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38. What would you change about the sessions and lessons?

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[IF THERE IS TIME TO ASK ABOUT INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS, KEEP GOING AND PROCEED TO QUESTION #40. IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME STOP HERE AND PROCEED TO QUESTION #76]

Now I would like to ask you about each of the 12 lessons in *Our Reading and Writing Journey* and the Parent Resource Guide. I would like to know what you like about each component of the lessons. What parts did you enjoy least and why? What was easy or difficult for parents and what you would change?

[PROBE FOR ADDITIONS OR CHANGES NEEDED IN EACH SECTION. ASK THE FACILITATOR TO DESCRIBE SECTIONS THAT SEEMED TOO DIFFICULT FOR PARENTS OR THAT WERE PROBLEMEATIC TO TEACH]

**SESSION ONE: Talking and Telling Stories with Children**

40. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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41. What components of this session did not work well for parents? Probe for problems with lesson content, resource materials, handouts, and sequence of activities)

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42. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION TWO: Sharing Storybooks**

43. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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44. What components of this session did not work well for parents? [PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, AND SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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45. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION THREE: Building Knowledge About the World**

46. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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47. What components of this session did not work well for parents? [PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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48. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION FOUR: Learning and Using New Words**

49. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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50. What components of this session did not work well for parents? [PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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51. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION FIVE: Learning About Print**

52. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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53. What components of this session did not work well for parents? [PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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54. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION SIX: Listening for Sounds in Spoken Language**

55. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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56. What components of this session did not work well for parents? PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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57. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION SEVEN: Learning Alphabet Letters**

58. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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59. What components of this session did not work well for parents? PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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60. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION EIGHT: Connecting Letters to Sounds**

61. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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62. What components of this session did not work well for parents? PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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63. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION NINE: Writing with Children**

64. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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65. What components of this session did not work well for parents? PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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66. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION TEN: Talking About and Understanding What's Read**

67. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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68. What components of this session did not work well for parents? [PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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69. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION ELEVEN: Reading Like Talking**

70. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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71. What components of this session did not work well for parents? [PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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72. What would you change about this session?

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**SESSION 12: KEEPING IT GOING**

73. What did you like about this session? What components worked well for parents?

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74. What components of this session did not work well for parents? PROBE FOR PROBLEMS WITH LESSON CONTENT, RESOURCE MATERIALS, HANDOUTS, SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES]

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75. What would you change about this session?

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**SECTION II: FACILITATOR'S IMPRESSION OF THE PARENT ACTIVITY  
GUIDE**

76. How helpful was the Parent Activity Guide (the scrapbook)?

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77. What features worked well?

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78. What features did not work well?

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79. How well did the scrap book support the lessons?

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80. Did parents use the scrapbook as intended?

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81. Were any concerns raised about the amount of work or level of difficulty with the homework activities?

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82. Did you feel the materials in the Parent Activity Guide represented people of diverse backgrounds and cultures?

YES

NO (How could the Parent Activity Guide be more inclusive of diverse cultures?) [PROBE FOR EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS, ACTIVITIES, RESOURCES, ETC.]

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83. Overall, did parents' response to the curriculum meet or exceed your expectations?

Met my expectations

Exceeded my expectations

Did not meet my expectations Why not?

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