Books for Baby and Me
... a research and development project

Paula Kelly Paull
Manager Learning Communities
Hobsons Bay City Council
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Making a difference in cycles of disadvantage: Children’s librarians enabling and fostering early literacy practices, for parents and their very young children experiencing vulnerable circumstances in the geographical area of Western Metropolitan Melbourne.
Barrett Reid Scholarship
Project Executive Summary

Books for Baby and Me … a research and development project

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An evidence-based model for training librarians to support parents of very young children, as their child’s first teacher, in shared book reading for best early literacy outcomes.

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The Barret Reid Scholarship project scope was to develop a training program and research implementation that sought to make a difference in cycles of disadvantage. Its focus was on the role of children’s librarians in enabling and fostering early literacy practices, working with parents and their very young children experiencing vulnerable circumstances in the geographical area of Western Metropolitan Melbourne.

Originally scoped in the scholarship request as part of the completion of PhD studies with the University of Melbourne, the plan for the implementation of a case study research project has been completed. It was always designed to be a stand-alone delivery despite its original context nested within a PhD candidature.

The research project focussed on the development and implementation of a specialised training program - an evidence based intervention model targeting children’s librarians to work with families who reside in highly disadvantaged communities in the inner Western suburbs. Specifically the Laverton and Altona Meadows areas in the Hobsons Bay municipality represent significantly challenged communities where SEIFA index, ABS statistics and Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) figures point to challenges for the likelihood of educational success for the children who grow up in these neighbourhoods. Despite the significant work public libraries have been engaged in specifically over the past ten years in building early literacy programs and deliverables in the communities they serve, the population figures are damming in regard to Victoria’s overall position in the literacy stakes. With a significant body of evidence that showcases the need for paying attention to brain science and windows of opportunity for early literacy development focused on 9 month to 2 and a-half-year-old brain capabilities, this project has sought to intervene to make a difference where it could make an impact with parents of children in 0-3 cohort.

The scholarship has enabled further research in the field of public library services in early development in the advancing of the skills of public librarians. Specifically the children’s librarian role in supporting and mentoring parents of very young children in their skills and behaviours in advancing language development and literacy as their child’s first teacher, has been addressed in this project. The research has taken an assets-based approach where nurturing development of parents rather than highlighting deficiencies has been fundamental.

The scholarship has funded research support in administration and data collection and analysis, as well as time for training development and program delivery, include feedback and review by the participants. The scholarship also provided the funds to purchase books for families which have facilitated the modelling and practices of parents in their home environment. This has been a particularly important part of the project delivery alongside the change in behaviours of children’s librarians in their understandings and practice.

The Key performance indicators have all been met for the project which included:
• training a minimum of four children’s librarians as specialists in early childhood parenting support focused on language development and shared book reading
• a summary of quantifiable and qualitative evidence that demonstrates attitudinal change and knowledge base increase in the professionals in the program
• providing a model of training that is repeatable and grounded in research on how public libraries can best support early literacy outcomes for highly disadvantaged sectors of the community
• a written report that is evidence based and underpinned by research that makes the substantive case for working in this space of critical importance, articulates the approach to training and implementation and measures success.

The Key outcomes of the project include:
• Increased understanding of best practice of children’s librarians in the early literacy
space adding to the educational outcomes of vulnerable young children in our community
• Increased participation of communities at risk in early literacy practices
• Increased resourcing of families who may not have had a book culture in the home and those who are identified as being at risk in educational outcomes
• The development of an evidence base from which sponsorship opportunities can be sought for further Victorian Public Library, local government or state wide initiatives in early literacy supported practice.

Hobsons Bay City Council has benefitted by participating in this research project. Council now has a tried and tested best practice model of training and implementation that has proven to have significant impact for the practice of its children’s librarians and the families within its boundaries, specifically those for whom school readiness and early literacy competencies have been challenging. It puts the Council at the forefront of best practice in supporting parents as first teachers and turning around the wave of increased disadvantage indicators that are currently evident at a local level. Our children’s librarians have now been trained to implement an innovative best practice evidence-based model, in partnership with supported family playgroups and educators supporting Hobsons Bay City Council to achieve its goals in supporting families and children to learn and grow – focused on those who need it most. This project has affected systemic change in developing a lasting and deep connection to the supported playgroup facilitation area of Council’s Family and Children’s Services, which targets families who are experiencing multiple vulnerabilities. The work continues and program implementation has now been embedded in targeted outreach programs jointly funded by both the Hobsons Bay Libraries and Council’s Children’s Services supported playgroup area. The specific techniques appropriated for this project under the framework of the Abecedarian Approach are also being embedded in ‘business as usual practice’ for our other library based children’s early literacy programs hence taking both a universal and a place based approach to ongoing intervention. This approach is in line with the intent of the Hobsons Bay Learning Communities Strategic Plan 2017-2019.

The Victorian Public Library sector has benefitted already through the delivery of initial training and findings of this research and development project, delivering two training sessions in late May 2017 to some 50 participants. The training was well received and participants are asking for more. The sector is gaining leadership recognition in providing mentoring support and expertise to colleagues who wish to embark on such a mission as well. Other library services are seeking to utilize the research to develop and deliver localized programs and the sector is drawing on the initial findings to seek sponsorship support for either State wide or local interventions. The work of the PLVN and the State Library jointly in awarding the scholarship program is being cited for supporting further research and program development in this arena. This support will also be acknowledged further in industry and academic publications where papers about this project will appear both nationally and internationally over time.

The scholarship award of $15,000 was fully expended in developing and delivering this project which enlisted the expertise of both Paula Kelly Paull, scholarship recipient, and early literacy specialist consultant Christine Andell in working closely with the children’s librarians of Hobsons Bay as research project participants, the other Council staff involved in the project, and families engaged through the project implementation.

The Hobsons Bay Libraries staff, and broader Family and Children’s Services staff (specifically Council’s Supported Playgroup Educators) were fundamental to the success of this project. It is with gratitude for their enthusiasm and embracing of this project that it has indeed been able to make difference in cycles of disadvantage through early literacy intervention within targeted areas of the Hobsons Bay municipality.

Thank you to the Library Board of Victoria and the Public Library Network of Victoria for the opportunity of this scholarship to affect not only the support of best practice for Children’s Librarians in Hobsons Bay, but also in providing a model of practice that can be drawn form for broader implementation across public libraries in Victoria and beyond.

Paula Kelly Paull
Manager Learning Communities
Hobsons Bay City Council
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CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Research Aim

The Nobel prizewinning economist James Heckman espoused that the greatest economic return on investment in human capital is in the area of early intervention (Heckman, 2008; Schweinhart et al., 2005). Further it has been established that language modelling and development for young children is significantly compromised in disadvantaged and vulnerable communities (Hart & Risley, 1995; Hart & Risley, 2003).

This study has its focus on one of the agents in this space - the professional children’s librarians concerned with the very early childhood years and their support of parents of very young children from 9 months to 2½ years old. The study targets these professional children’s librarians’ work with parents of very young children, in highly disadvantaged areas of Western Metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria, where a drop off in the support sought by parents through established and documented avenues is evident. Specifically, a decrease in Maternal and Child Health Services interaction by two years of age is noted in statistical reporting (Kelly, Andell & Hiskens, 2011), and participation rates in kindergarten are compromised and lower than state averages in Western Metropolitan Melbourne (Children’s Plan 2009-2013 Hobsons Bay City Council; Early Childhood Community Profile – City of Maribyrnong, 2010; VCAMS Kindergarten participation rates 2014).

Parenting support programs will be delivered in specific pockets of select Western municipal areas, by newly trained children’s librarians in Conversational Reading techniques as an intentional design feature of the study. The areas examined include the municipalities of Hobsons Bay, Melton, Maribyrnong, Moreland and Wyndham. As an example of the challenges faced by the proposed research locations in Western Melbourne, and specific to the Hobsons Bay planned intervention site for the parenting support programs, the Laverton area has experienced some 80 years of disadvantage (Laverton Community Action Plan, 2006). With one of the highest unemployment rates in the state (12%) as well as lowest further education participation, these are areas that stand to benefit from an intervention that injects support for betterment of these longitudinal outcomes. Further to this less than 50% of children in this area attend formal Kindergarten programs, and uptake of formalised childcare is also lower than in other communities (Laverton Community Action Plan, 2006), which would be another usual opportunity for literacy and language development for the young that much of the community is missing out on. Altona North/ Brooklyn is an adjacent community and is also a catchment area for families of low socio economic means and newly arrived immigrants. The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA, 2011) also support the notion of disadvantage experienced in these geographical pockets which adds to this challenging picture.

The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC, 2014-15) further indicates that the children living in specific suburbs of these areas are developmentally vulnerable in communication skills and language development to levels that are up to double that of their Victorian average counterparts (AEDI – Community Profiles 2012). In neighbouring Altona North/ Brooklyn the scores reflect similarly to Laverton, with children likely to have three times more incidence of communication and social development vulnerabilities (Australian Early developmental Index Community Profile 2012, Hobsons Bay Victoria). Other communities in Western Metropolitan Melbourne demonstrate similar indications showing concerning trends for these communities, and an opportunity for an early intervention that could make a difference to the educational outcomes for vulnerable children in these catchments would be a desirable outcome of the pilot study grounded in the Hobsons Bay municipality.

Within the context of these challenges, one significant way to address vulnerability is through a focus on pre reading behaviours well before school, given it is clearly established that reading competencies are the precursors to success in school, (Foundations for School Readiness, n.d.). Addressing the ‘window of opportunity’ to build language and early literacy competencies in very young children in the 9 month to 2½ year age group leverages the findings of brain research which identifies this period of opportunity for language growth (Hamer, 2011; Mendellson, 2009; Nelson, 2000; Ting Fang, 2007). In this window the very young child’s brain development is such that it favours the development of language (Mendellson, 2009; Nelson 2000). The relevance of this window is significant to the study and is reflected in the proposed recruitment of the parent groups involved in the study, and critically, the age of
their children, that the children’s librarians will work with in the application of their learnings. Parent support services can assist with a child’s preparation for school success through a focus on developing literacy competencies from this young age working in the space to capitalise on this ‘window’. The inclusion of communication skill development in its key outcomes area in the National Quality Standard (ACECQ 2011a), a key component of the National Quality Framework (AECQ 2011b) for Australian childcare and early education referring to curriculum that contributes to learning outcomes that help children become effective and confident communicators, is significant. A similar focus in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF, 2009) on communication skills, also contributes to an inherent focus on receptive and expressive language in these preschool educational years, providing the building blocks of literacy. Further, the core Maternal and Child Health program deliverables at Key Age and Stage check-ups in Victoria that nominate communication and language development are testaments to the fact of the importance of early literacy and language development (Maternal and Child Health Service: Key Ages and Stages Framework, 2009). Early Childhood professionals and Maternal and Child Health nurses have clear early literacy goals embedded in their practices and frameworks that guide their work against which they are measured.

Public libraries too are demonstrating a significant interest and increase in activities in their role in the early literacy area. A further link to the importance of this study is the work currently being undertaken by the State Library of Victoria and the Public Library Network of Victoria. They are seeking to develop a state wide training program for public librarians addressing the question of early literacy development in the current triennium of State Wide projects. A best practice model that will equip children’s librarians with skills and understandings to impact their communities positively, making a difference especially in socio demographic and geographical areas of disadvantage is sought in, by implication, those areas where school readiness and school entry literacy scores are identified as ‘vulnerable’.

It is hoped that this study can identify such a model for training, support and intervention that can be subsequently rolled out across all public libraries in Victoria in a targeted fashion. The development of the State of Victoria’s Literacy for All Framework (2015) has a focus on early literacy and the role of librarians in fostering early literacy practices that support the development of vulnerable children.
Libraries are in the core business of promoting reading, and yet they have not traditionally employed people with early literacy expertise. Rather they have focused on librarianship skills and training, reflected in the requirements of most public library positions to be eligible for national peak body membership, but not necessarily any early literacy or education qualifications. In the main professional children’s librarian positions still carry the requirement to meet ALIA membership eligibility dictating the need for a professional qualification in librarianship. However there are not usually requirements for educational or early literacy qualifications. Teacher Librarians on the other hand have a joint statement outlining specific requirements relevant to the role (ALIA, 2009) which includes expertise and training with both areas – education and librarianship.

For this reason, this study has a focus on training the professional behaviours and practice of those who can affect change in early literacy practices with a cohort of vulnerable families with very young children, especially those who are not yet engaged in formal childcare, 3 or 4 year old kinder, or Maternal and Child health programs, where they might otherwise gain appropriate support. Specifically, the role of the children’s librarian in the public library environment is being examined, in supporting parents of very young children in facilitating their children’s early literacy and language development. This is critical given public librarians are not early literacy specialists and library profession training in Australia has not traditionally focused on this aspect of preparation for their role.

As noted in Library services from Birth to Five (Rankin & Brock, 2015) designing developmentally appropriate literacy programs that engage 05 year old children is challenging for library staff without the knowledge and skills of being early childhood specialists. This opportunity to grow the enabling professions in the early childhood space cannot be emphasised enough, since the presence of trained educators working in early childhood environments has been evidenced in the longitudinal studies as improving literacy and learning and development outcomes (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2012; Kontos & Feine, 1987; Shonkoff, 2011; Hamre & Pianta, 2004). This study will train children’s librarians in early literacy and language development to be able to offer modelling and mediated learning opportunities to parents. In this way the skill and knowledge gap for professionals and subsequently, the identified parent and child dyad cohorts, will be addressed by the design of the research project.

The research is further aimed at a resulting outcome of changing the behaviours of parents, through an implementation program of modelling and mediated learning delivered by the newly trained librarians. It will incorporate modelled
early literacy learning experiences utilising the Conversational Reading Abecedarian Approach techniques newly learned by children’s librarian professionals through training in the research design, who will implement their learnings with selected parent groups with 9 month to 2½ year old children. This approach of embedding the practice within public library programs to foster early literacy and language development with disadvantaged families remains at the core of the design of the study, whilst the examination of the change in behaviours will occur through the lens of the professional children’s librarians involved.

The outcomes of the professional development and parent program implementation are ultimately to ignite the quality of parent’s interactions with their very young child to foster language development, reading behaviours and book knowledge. The study aims to focus the children’s librarians’ practice on intentional teaching, equipping parents as ‘first’ teachers, in placing rich oral language development and reading behaviours at the core of their work with families of very young children. Utilising the unique (for the target group) and powerful ‘prop’ of the book, Sparling’s Abecedarian Approach ‘Conversational Reading’ (Ramey, Sparling & Ramey, 2012) techniques will be employed to encourage language development and book handling competencies alongside language priority. This will harness the opportunities of bidirectional language learning enhanced by the Abecedarian Conversational Reading “See, Show, Say” scaffolded technique. The training will also capitalise on the rhyme, rhythm and repetition that ‘book language and literature’ in the form of picture books provide. Selected picture books will be provided for the children’s librarians to make available to the parents in the programs delivered, to utilise in situ, and to take home. Picture books have been included for their rich and complex vocabulary that is unique to the genre (Hill, 2006; Hart & Risley 2003). This ‘prop’ provides for many opportunities for language priority and vocabulary development.

Language priority which fosters the acquisition of receptive and expressive competencies underpins the Abecedarian Approach. The critical importance of joint attention (Tomasello, 1986) in the parent-child interplay and attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988; Vygotsky, 1962) well established in several studies as the building blocks of literacy development (Bronfenbrenner, 2004; Bergin, 2001; Bus, 1995; Butler, 1998; Deforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Trebon Clingenpeel, 2001; Trivette, Dunst & Gorman, 2010) are also harnessed in this approach. The Approach conflates significant best practice in the area of early childhood development and language acquisition, hence its importance as a preferred model for new practice.

**Significance of the Study?**

The role and impact of the children’s librarian in the area of supporting parents as first teacher is an under-researched area. The research applies aspects of the 3A Abecedarian Approach, the Australian version of the Abecedarian Approach, (Sparling, 2011a) in a new context with a specific focus on Conversational Reading techniques. This provides new opportunities for a new professional cohort to legitimately focus its attentions and priorities for resourcing in the area of disadvantage, early literacy and language development and direct support for parents. The study highlights the link between literacy and successful living (Pink, 2012), participation in society, as well as the resulting empowerment of individuals (Douglass – 1818-
1895; Kassam, 1994). It draws attention to the fact that 50% of language is learned by the age of three (Hamer, 2011) and harnesses the ‘window of opportunity’ for language development between 3 months & 3 years peaking at 9 months (Nelson, 2000; Mendelson, 2009). The research leans on extensive studies that show language modelling and development is compromised in disadvantaged/vulnerable communities (Hart & Risley 1995).

The outcomes of the study hope to highlight the importance of the role of children’s librarians, who are well placed to outreach to vulnerable families who are not in formal childcare or under direct contact with formal child health care. The study aims to provide evidence for children’s librarians to enable and foster early literacy practices, through the modelling of Abecedarian Approach Conversational Reading techniques, for parents and their very young children experiencing vulnerable circumstances in the geographical area of Western Metropolitan Melbourne, and hence make a difference in cycles of disadvantage.
CHAPTER 2:  
A Background to the Study 
A focus on literacy 

Melbourne was designated as a UNESCO City of Literature in 2008, in recognition of its focus on literature as an art form; its high prevalence of bookshops, well-resourced libraries, and its investment in public programming promoting reading and engagement with literature (UNESCO, nd). One way in which this engagement has manifest is through the National Year of Reading campaign (2012), which has grown into a proactive movement across Australia in public libraries, schools and workplaces to promote the inherent ‘goodness’ of reading as well as the power of literacy to change lives. Public libraries provide access to reading materials for people of all ages. As a freely available service open to all, the library plays a crucial role in developing readers in its provision of resources (Ross, McKechnie & Rothbauer, 2006), but also in its delivery of reading promotion and literacy programs.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Yearbook 2012 in its feature article on the National Year of Reading (Kelly & McKerracher, 2012) refers to the Adult Life Skills Survey (ALSS) conducted in 2006 which prompted libraries to act on this issue, highlighting literacy as “a basic prerequisite for full participation in Australian society.” (Pink, 2012, p.1). The ALSS (2006) drew attention to the extent of the issue finding that 46% of Australians did not meet Level 3 literacy standards, which includes functional literacy tasks such as the ability to read newspapers and a novel for pleasure, decipher medicine bottle information and read a recipe. The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (2012) cites “Overall, 44% (3.7 million) of men and 45% (3.7 million) of women had literacy skills at Level 2 or below”. There are significant issues associated with almost half the population of our country not meeting literacy levels required for everyday functioning in today’s society. As a state, Victoria was the second lowest to Tasmania in its literacy levels as identified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in this same survey (ALSS, 2006). Victoria has moved ahead slightly in its adult literacy scores compared to other states over the past decade, in examining the data presented in the 2006 ALSS survey and the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies, Australia, 2011-2012 (PIAAC), and now Victoria is performing as well as its national peers in the literacy stakes.

However despite the clear extent of the issues around literacy, Australia has shown few signs of improvement during this period, at a time when rapid improvements are evidenced in the top performing nations of the world, (Literacy for All, 2015). Early learning participation in Australia is among the lowest in the developed world, and only 18 per cent of three-year-old Australians participate in early childhood education, compared with an OECD average of 70 per cent participation. Alarmingly Australia ranks 34th of 36 OECD countries in literacy outcomes, (Reading and Literacy for All, 2015:5). Furthermore, data shows a significant proportion of Victorian children are developmentally ‘vulnerable’ or ‘at risk’ before commencing school in language and cognitive skills (AEDI, 2012) These children will most likely not catch up, and typically poor readers at school commencement remain so (Reading and Literacy for All, 2015). Further to this data the PIAAC (2013) Australian data shows the link between literacy levels and a variety of social outcomes, including trust in others, volunteering and community activities, citizenship and better health, is stronger than in most other OECD countries. Lowest literacy scoring adults indicate three times the chance of reporting non-participation in society than proficiently literate adults (PIAAC, 2013), so the impact of low literacy is significant.

In Australia, federal and state governments have made some commitments to the significance of learning to read, and ‘keeping on’ reading. These include Initiatives such as the Get Reading Campaign (Australia Council 2013), the Centre for Youth Literature (2013), South Australia’s Little Big Books Club’s ‘It’s Rhyme
Time’ Booklet & DVD (2006), the Victorian Government’s Young Readers Program (2011), Western Australia’s Better Beginnings Family Literacy Program (2015), as well as federal government support for the National Year of Reading 2012 (Kelly & McKerracher, 2012) and National Literacy and Numeracy Week (2015). However, there are no national universal early years targeted literacy interventions currently funded. Australia does not have a national early reading or literacy strategy. Public libraries are starting to recognize their role in his space however through the development of literacy strategies to support both the growing awareness and skill level of library professionals in their role to promote and support reading for all ages. Both the State Library of Queensland and the State Library of Victoria have both developed literacy strategies outlining the role of public libraries in recent years, (Literacy for All, 2015; Libraries for Literacy: everyday, everyday 2011-2014). Internationally the trend is also evident and captured by the New York Public Library President in his statement “The library is playing an increasingly important role in strengthening early literacy in this city, expanding efforts to bring reading to children and their families through quality, free story times, curated literacy programs, after-school programs and more,” (Marx, 2015).
CHAPTER 3:  
A Focus on the Early Years and Vulnerabilities

Researchers agree that the greatest economic return on investment in human capital is in the area of early intervention (Heckman, 2008; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Grunewald & Rolnick, 2010). The University of Melbourne’s E4Kids program focused on this area, where the development of positive life trajectories and the aversion of subsequent more costly remediation can occur (Tayler, 2009). Other research demonstrates that programs like the Abecedarian Approach will impact positively on the lives of disadvantaged mothers as well as their children, directly leading to greater educational and academic success (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002; Masse & Barnett, 2002; Ramey, Dorvall, & Baker-Ward, 1983).

Over the last decade, increased brain science research is fuelling this early years focus. It is now recognized that 50% of language is learned by three years of age (Hamer, 2011). The young brain is most receptive to early experiences between three months and three years, and peaking at about nine months of age for language development (Mendellson, 2009 & Nelson, 2000). It is logical then, that the intent and focus of this study should rest at this critical period in time in a child’s developmental journey. The focus on early literacy development has considerable importance for policy makers as the division and disadvantage in our society are mirrored in school readiness, school achievement and reading ability over time throughout schooling. It is in these windows of opportunity the focus of this program is nestled. Human brain development IS dependent on early experiences, and whilst the plasticity of the brain is accepted, and the accompanying ongoing growth in terms of the brain’s capacity for learning, there is clear evidence of the importance of acting in windows of opportunity (Ting-Fang, 2007).

The fact that a child from a middle class background will have heard 32 million more words by the age of five, than a child from a disadvantaged background (B. Hart & Risley, 2003) is compelling and fuels a desire for children’s librarians to play an active role in this space. Given the quality of the home learning environment is a defining factor and that it matters what parents do to raise their children’s language skills (Sylva, 2012), equipping people in the community who can affect parenting practices through modelling is important. Further to this, it is evident that the developmental differences between children of different advantage/disadvantage backgrounds, and their associated impacts, widen and deepen over time (Brooks-Gunn & Furstenberg, 1986). The brain development opportunities offered in the window between the ages of six months and two years of age, which focus on language and literacy development, offer a time critical focus to reduce the developmental disadvantages experienced by many children of disadvantaged parents. Use dependent brain development, as well as the indications that stimulus for brain development are thought to have the greatest impact in early childhood, offer critical implications for the focus of this study (Halfon, Shulman, & Hochstein, 2001).

Approximately 20% of students will have some significant difficulty in learning to read (Good et al 1998), and the toll on society for this is marked. Given that reading skill by the middle years of primary school can predict secondary...
school graduation success (Snow et al, 1998), then the role of early literacy experiences and the caregiver in promoting early literacy development cannot be underestimated (Hannan, 1995). Hart and Risley (1995) have demonstrated extensively how important this role is as a predetermining factor in emergent literacy learning periods. They also found that specifically the first two and a half years are crucial and the effect on babies from families that talk to them was enormous (B Hart & Risley, 1995). Children of parents who, due to their experience of a broad range of disadvantage factors, are at risk in terms of multi-generational disadvantage and failure in readiness for school and subsequent lack of success in education. Generally lower education attainment, unemployment, health and social outcomes and higher rates of teenage parenting and social welfare dependence are correlated with poor literacy (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). It is in the space that this project seeks to make a difference by interrupting the implied cycle of disadvantage that low literacy fuels.
CHAPTER 4: Role of Public Librarians in Early Literacy and Language Development

Whilst current practices in Australian public libraries, are grounded in a significant body of historical practice that articulates the role of public libraries in promoting reading and assisting with the development of language and literacy skills for young children, these don’t seem to be changing the large scale population measures for the better, as indicated in the OECD literacy rankings, (Literacy for All, 2015). In Library Services for Birth to Five, Brock and Rankin (2015) make the case that professional intervention provided by the librarian in supporting the development of communication, language and literacy is much more than just the ‘telling of stories’, as access is provided to resources that encourage emergent literacy and parents and carers are encouraged to play an active part in the learning process. However there are few examples in public library research to indicate the actual role of the practitioner beyond that of ‘program deliverer’, in teaching parents ‘how’ to share books with very young children.

It is noted that library services are beginning to turn their attention to the significant role they can play in increasing parent-child interactions. Many librarians in America now have a goal to be viewed in a different light. “We want people to see librarians as ‘educational experts,’ …we want them to see libraries as ‘educational institutions.’” (Celano & Neuman, 2015). For this to occur, librarians will need to refocus their professional development to be able to act as learning coaches, as mentors and teachers, modelling behaviours for parents rather than just providing direct delivery services through programs like traditional preschool story times, which they have done in the delivery of children’s programs in the main. This notion reflects the broader changes in the librarian profession, as librarians move towards this role sitting beside their patrons in their learning journeys. Rather than merely delivering materials or information to their library members in a transactional relationship, the new role is one in conversation with the library user. This relationship mirrors the rich learning experience the best learning environments provide, rested on scaffolded learning experiences, and bidirectional interactions.

Despite the fact that more than 50% of the nation are public library members (NSLA, 2012) and an ever burgeoning offer of experiences can be enjoyed by families with young children in public libraries, the fundamental skills of teaching book sharing are not evidenced in professional learning for librarians, nor practiced in their daily offer of story-times which are primarily a delivery of a read aloud story or baby rhyme time activities. These sessions are very lively and enjoyable but not tackling the question of book knowledge, and book sharing based in the evidence of the vital importance of contingent responding and following the child’s lead and gaze. Nor are the practices witnessed in public libraries grounded in current learning theory, scaffolded learning or a deep understanding of cognitive development and the evidence of brain science that has emerged in the last ten years in particular, in that they are still largely reflecting a ‘deliver to’ model of programming.

This method of delivery does not take into account current learning theory in which for example, the cognitive principles of the ‘Science of Learning’ (Deans for Impact, 2015) are applied. The evidence-based cognitive principles that underpin the understanding of new ideas are not generally attributed in this method of large group program delivery that is very commonplace in story-time and preschool programs in public libraries. These critical principles include the provision of:

• Mapping from what parents already know
• Step by step modelling
• Scaffolded steps based on mastering of the previous component
• Simple ‘rules’ to guide interaction and activity
• Practise over time of the learned techniques
• Opportunities for the application of existing knowledge
• Effective and specific feedback
• Background of knowledge and context for the learning
• Exercises to remember underlying structure (Deans for Impact, 2015).

It is proposed to offer methods of supporting parents to the professional cohort throughout the supported training program which captures these cognitive principles which underpin learning. The ‘ORIM frame’ tool developed by Hannan (1998) allows for identifying a variety of existing practices and those yet to be developed by parents. Opportunities, Recognition, Interaction and Modelling activities that can be useful in determining individually relevant programs that start where the parent is already active in the support of language development takes an approach which aims to boost, rather than undermine the parent’s current actions and understandings of support for their child’s development (Hannan, 1998). This frame supports the application of learning theory and capitalizes on the opportunities outlined in the Deans for Impact (2015) principles of learning. This frame will be shared with professionals to draw on with their parent groups. This tool supports an empowerment approach where a strengths approach is employed, leaning on a ‘developmental’ rather than ‘deficit’ model, which reflects best practice in both learning and capacity building frameworks.

This approach supports the well-understood notion that libraries build on social capital, by providing a safe place to meet, connect and recreate, and also support family learning and encourage cross-cultural and cross-generational interaction. The role of the public library in helping families to feel a sense of belonging in an environment of diversity cannot be underestimated, and this alone is reason enough to be excited about what public libraries are achieving in this space of strengthening communities (Rankin & Brock, 2015). However so much more could be achieved through this avenue if librarians were better equipped as early educators, especially in regard to book sharing, early literacy and language development grounded in current learning theory and a ‘strengths based’ approach.

Many trained early educators have their first chance to influence the development of language acquisition and book knowledge (the fundamental building blocks of reading) well after the ‘window of opportunity’ (between nine months and two and a half years of age) has already closed. When a child commences kindergarten this opportune moment has fleetingly passed and many parents, particularly from non-book households, will miss the chance to capitalize on this chance for natural developmental escalation for their child, without the understanding or skills about how best to leverage it.

Increasingly public libraries are being recognized as places of non-threatening welcome in the community; places for family socialization and interaction; places for developing a sense of belonging for diverse communities; and more over are working hard on access and inclusion principles to deliberately welcome the ‘hard to reach’ into their four walls as well as offering outreach activities beyond them. Further to this libraries are now taking a significant interest in the role they can play in equipping parents to be their child’s first teacher. Programming developed over the past ten years by the State Library of Victoria in the delivery of reading promotion initiatives for all ages including weekly story times and the Children’s Book Festival, as well as a focus on the development of a World Class Children’s Library in their master plan for redevelopment underway attest to this same focus (State Library of Victoria, 2014). However, the only systematic and framed training that has occurred for children’s librarians in Victoria on how to offer early literacy activities in this same decade occurred during the roll out of the Victorian Government’s Young Readers Program, (2011). This training was designed in partnership between the State Library of Victoria and the University of South Australia’s Dr Susan Hill, and focused on the approach adopted by the Little Big Book Club (Hill, 2006) in supporting parents and librarians with understandings the importance of language acquisition and early literacy activities. It did not cover or encourage professionals to develop programs that focused on equipping parents with contingent responding techniques during book sharing or on ways in which parents could focus on their child’s attention to develop book handling, reading and scaffolded language development skills.
Children’s Librarians in Victoria generally offer entertaining and enjoyable children and family activities that are designed to engage children in the joy of books and reading, stretch their imaginations about what libraries can offer to support their child’s learning and also provide a range of resources for children and parents alike to borrow for free both in physical and online formats. However, through lack of specific knowledge in early literacy best practice and learning principles, children’s librarians may be missing a golden opportunity to position themselves to make a significant difference to the literacy levels in their own communities. As the research has indicated working with specific early childhood interventions in disadvantaged communities is most likely to deliver a return investment (Ramey et al 2012). Nobel prize-winning Economist James Heckman’s famous ‘return on investment’ graph (Heckman, 2008) clearly indicates the need and the outcomes proposition for this investment, despite being largely ignored by governments and funding bodies for significant investment in early intervention. With a change of government and accompanying policy the Victorian Government’s Young Readers Program (2011) did not receive continued funding, nor was it replaced with any other universal early childhood literacy support program.

Brock and Rankin (2015) acknowledge; “this new knowledge about child development and emergent literacy has highlighted the needs of babies and toddlers and this can be incorporated into providing appropriate services for young children and their families.” However whilst practical guidance is provided for early reading skill development for the librarian in their book (the only recent publication of its kind), the topic of actually ‘how’ to do this other than at a program delivery level is largely unexplored. Nowhere in this exhaustive range of chapters or in the literature more broadly, is there a focus on equipping librarians as coaches of parents with the skills and knowledge for sharing books in a way that encourages contingent learning or bi-directional interaction utilising the book as a ‘prop’ for early learning and literacy for very young children. If indeed ‘babies need books’ (Butler, 1998), then parents need some modelling on how to follow baby’s gaze, how to prompt their little learners in order to then follow their lead and be involved in the language and reading behaviours that foster language acquisition, literacy development and book knowledge, all precursors to success in reading. Butler proposes “…no agent seems to be as effective with the very young human being as one loving adult” (Butler 1998:x1), in this endeavour.

Significantly as Maryanne Wolf (2008) attests in her ground breaking Proust and the Squid, this is all critical business, given that she argues learning to read actually teaches the brain how to learn. This statement may be profound when examining the trajectory of successful learners, their success at school, ongoing learning, and in social and employment outcomes. The role of reading in these success indicators is well documented, the as noted recently by the President of the New York Public Library, Anthony W Marx (2015) in a recent public statement, “It is clear that reading and being exposed to books early in life are critical factors in student success.” Wolf (2008) adds to this noting, “learning to read begins the first time an infant is held and read a story. How often this happens, or fails to happen, in the first five years of childhood turns out to be one of the best predictors of later reading” (Wolf, 2008, p.20).

Snow et al (1991) also support the notion that it matters where programs are delivered. He attests that public libraries provide the kind of community settings that have ‘open’ membership; they are not bound by specific entry requirements and are non-secular. These are ideal places that support the strengthening of communities and the connection of people (Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hempell, 1991). They are also places accessed by a broad spectrum of individuals and groups. Libraries are places that actively work to close the literacy divide alongside the technological

one (Neuman, 2004). It is evident that in the USA at least that:

“Libraries are now making much deeper resource investments in early literacy training. Indeed, for many communities they are the lead agencies for early literacy services and training for young children. In the survey conducted by Urban Libraries Council (USA) members, over 90% of responding libraries identified their library as providing special programming in the area of early literacy. Of these, 92% had enhanced their collections with materials specifically related to early literacy promotion” (Urban Libraries Council, 2007).
CHAPTER 5:
A Focus on Professionals and Parents

Activities that make a difference
Whilst it is the professional that will be trained and measured in the effect on their practice through the study, both the development of professional and parents early literacy skills and behaviours as the outcome of the research remains. Placing the capacity building with the professional and changing their practice will seek to increase conversation and interaction in language and literacy programming to support parents in this area is the focus - since this is the risk area identified by Hart & Risley (1995) and Heath (1983). The negative effects of the reduced volume of conversation and social interaction children experience from birth in low SES families is evident, and there is a prime opportunity to impact the development of language for children in these disadvantaged families (Heath 1983). It is proposed that this occur through the expert development of child-centred practice in library programming framed by the Abecedarian Approach to ‘Conversational Reading’ and Rhyming and Rhythm activities and the affordances they provide. This evidence based interventionist approach promotes learning and positive educational and social outcomes for children who begin life ‘at risk’. The intervention is simple but deep and is built on an approach of core components that all encourage caregiver–child interaction. The Abecedarian Project, which began in 1971, has been followed by a steady body of research and implementation over the past 40 years demonstrating significant outcomes for children and their families – particularly those who are disadvantaged (Ramey, et al., 2012). It is framed by language priority and the approach focuses on three areas: Conversational Reading, Enriched Caregiving and Learning Games.

Parents are the mediators for infants and young children to the large world outside, and are the primary influence on the development of their young children (Musick, 1987). It seems logical to provide a parent education model to equip parents with better modelling strategies. But first it is the practice of the professionals that needs to change, as they have consistently taken an instructional direct delivery approach of literacy experiences in public library programming.


The role of the parent however, as first teacher, is highlighted as the most influential relationship, hence the focus on improving their skills, through improving those of the proposed mediator. The effect of the parent’s interaction with the child from a very young age is the predominant defining indicator of later vocabulary development, reading and subsequent school success (Fleer & Raban, 2005), and yet for many this high quality intentional interaction that fosters oral language development and reading skill is left until the child starts formal education. Studies have indicated the critical nature of the home learning environment, and reading support behaviours, including providing books in the home as well as regular read aloud activities, are identified as having a significant impact on later reading competence and resulting school readiness (Wagner & Spratt, 1988). Recent studies have focused on the importance of not only the parent initiated oral language but the importance of turn taking and of the bidirectional influences of the parent responding to the child’s initiated language interchanges (Watson, 2001; Raban & Coates 2004). Focusing on the child and the interactions between the parent and child first enable a natural fit with the ecological model of development identified by Bronfenbrenner (2004) which begins with the family situated at the innermost influence on the child. Vygotskian learning theory also comes into play in this relationship, into what is known as the ‘zone of proximal development’. The zone provides for the gap in which the learner can be ‘coached’ and scaffolded in their activities by a more experienced, older ‘mentor’ (Vygotsky, 1962). This study is informed by Vygotsky’s work, as it emphasises the importance of social learning and the role the parent takes as tutor, nudging their child along an axis of development.
that intentionally, and playfully, develops their language prowess and engagement. The role of the librarian is also mirrored in the proposed role development as coach to the parent.

Since we acquire the skills of language in order to communicate, the proposed implementation puts communication at the heart of its endeavours. Language and communication is at the core of this theoretical framework developed in an environment that emphasises the capacity to learn with help (Wood, 1998). This also speaks to the significance of Bowlby’s attachment theory, which focuses on the quality of the mother-child relationship (Bowlby, 1988). Maternal sensitivity demonstrated in securely attached relationships between mothers and infants, results in communicative openness (Grossman & Grossman, 1993) as well as higher cognitive functioning (Estrada, Arsenio, Hess, & Holloway, 1987). In emergent/early literacy the amount of time and the process by which literacy activities are shared are important but Bus attests that it is the mother – child interactions that matter most (Bus, 1993). Further studies demonstrate more reading supportive behaviour occurs between more securely attached mothers and children (Bus & van IJzendoorn, 1995). Making joint reading a pleasurable experience is most important rather than just more frequent joint reading (Bergin, Dec 2001). This is further supported by Tomasello’s work highlighting joint attention and the way in which children learn language better when the child and adult are contingent in their focus (Tomasello, 1986). It could be argued that we now can focus on the child-parent or primary carer relationships given this is becoming more prevalent in practice.

This focus furthers the notions espoused by Nan Bernstein Ratner. In her lecture ‘Babytalk 101’, given in early 2012 at the University of Melbourne, Bernstein Ratner provides a focus on developing the oral language of the baby in relationship to the main caregivers role (Bernstein Ratner, 2012). Her research identifies the importance of using the language of ‘parentese’ or ‘motherese’ in everyday ‘conversation’ with baby, and to enhance and enrich caregiving routines. This style of talking to baby is most evident in securely attached parents and babies in most cultures, but it is noted not all cultural paradigms utilize ‘babytalk’ which is characterised by high pitched, sing song intonation and turn taking.

Meal times (Beals, 2001) present opportunities alongside other specific daily caregiving for these interactions to occur where supporting bidirectional ‘babytalk’ happens. Sparling’s Abecedarian Approach (2011) also speaks to this interactional opportunity, fostering a culture of interactive ‘dialogue’. Rhymes and songs accompanying these activities make these seemingly ordinary daily tasks have a sense of joy and enrichment and are actually moments of opportunity for language enrichment. The program that forms part of this research project will equip parents to be able to draw on resources and prompts, delivered in the modelled sessions with the library professionals.

Native language mastery is also an important part of the approach to supporting parental connections with young babies, and also provides the richest likelihood of vocabulary development, informed by expression and comfort in language expression. In turn the use of this expressive language when sharing and reading stories will provide the most advantageous environment. For this reason books will be provided in a range of languages appropriate to the home language of the families involved in the program where possible. Parents were also encouraged to share
books with their babies in their home language to encourage the playful aspects of books sharing and rich vocabulary, which is known to be of value in language development for families for whom English is not their first language.

Book reading is well established as a universally useful activity to improve language development and literacy (Wells, 1986). The ‘how to do it’ focus included in the Abecedarian Approach of ‘Conversational Reading’ is respectful and acknowledging of the use of home language in the ‘conversation’, as well as the need for an understanding of book knowledge to be developed as part of the journey to literacy. The ‘See, Show, Say’ technique outlined in the Abecedarian Approach opens up a dialogical approach to book reading. The effects of this method of shared book reading has been found to facilitate early expressive language and to foster children’s active participation in book reading opportunities from a young age. Trivette examined 21 studies which demonstrated that the more adults encouraged sustained active participation by the child by interacting in an open ended way, or expanding on the child’s utterances, the more the child’s language development was enhanced during book reading (Trivette, 2010). This is an opportunity missed in the traditional ways book reading has been shared in public library settings in storytime sessions.

Further to this, both the earlier onset of beginning to share books as well as frequency of doing so was found to make a positive difference in children’s literacy and language outcomes in assessing a range of intervention and non-intervention studies (Dunst, Simkus, & Hamby, 2012). Other reading experts emphasise all of the practices that include “reading with enthusiasm, responsiveness to children’s attempts to engage in looking at and playing with books, reading stories that include rhythms and rhymes, following children’s interests, reading children’s favourite stories and rhymes over and over, and engaging children in reading episodes just long enough to maintain engagement” (Dunst et al 2012:5). Nursery rhymes are often used to build young children’s language development and ability (Morris & Leavey, 2006). A direct and indirect relationship between later literacy and language abilities and the ability for young children to recite familiar rhymes has been well established in a number of studies (Bradley, Maclean, & Crossland (1989); Sadlier-Oxford (2000); Zuralski (2005); Bryant, Maclean, & Bradley (1990); and Maclean, Bryant, & Bradley (1987) cited in Dunst, Meter, & Hamby, 2011). Further to these outcomes in terms of reading modelling and behaviours, shared reading supports the social and emotional connection between parent and child (Peifer & Perez, 2011).

It is the social interaction and communication provided by adults identified by Vygotsky (1962) that points to the way forward in this program implementation. Vygotsky’s work emphasises the importance of social learning and the role the parent takes as tutor, ‘nudging’ their child along in their development intentionally, and playfully, developing their language prowess and engagement. It is this very focus that places the development of the parent, through expert coaching, at the heart of this program in terms of building capacity.

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Interventions designed to improve language and reading engagement, will be more likely to have a lasting impact if they “include parents own literacy habits and beliefs about their role in fostering literacy and language development” (Weigel et al. 2006:375). For this reason the proposed intervention focuses on the professionals and parents as individuals and takes an assets based approach to what is already known about and valued culturally in the individual’s background and current practice. The developed program will be implemented where parents may also already be accessing support structures and learning opportunities offered in community/educational settings, namely the supported playgroups, with existing parent programs, delivered in community hubs which have libraries as their anchor points. A number of supported parenting groups already congregate in these settings where parents are supported in their general wellbeing, and other ‘adult’ educational opportunities through this avenue. Collaboration with other community-based organisations is flagged as being critically important when working with at-risk families (Soriano et al., 2008), and for this reason the collaborative approach is being taken to support the work of the library professionals.

With residues of erratic nurturing in their own lives, parents experiencing disadvantages are often at a point of heightened vulnerability, which may further limit their capacities to positively affect their children (Musick, 1987). Hence the need for intentional capacity building in parents skills – proposed here now through the enhancement of skills of the librarians as mentors in this process, as the first point of intervention and capacity building. Parents need modelling for child centred practice, and many parent education programs offered to disadvantaged parents do not pay attention to the interaction between parent characteristics and program design (Iglesias in Lewis, 1992). These parents also need support in developing secure attachments that will help them interact with their children; more bidirectional dialogue and enhanced language development opportunities; and the foundations of reading skill (Trebon Clingenpeel, 2001).

Librarians in the main are not trained literacy educators and have offered a steady diet of fun and informative story-times often aimed at families who already understand and appreciate the value of shared book reading experiences. These sessions are often delivered in an instructor centric way, and have not focused on teaching the skills of language interaction… the foundation of improving language competence. ‘Playing to Learn’ is a new mantra in public libraries and equipping librarians with the skills to assist and guide parents in this approach to literacy and language development is a critical new developmental need. "If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in."(Carson, 2011). Children need this support, scaffolding and guiding their knowledge development – which takes them beyond just imitating or modelling (Vygotsky, 1962; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). The simple but deep stretch that the “See Show Say” scaffolded techniques provide guide young children and parents to notice, narrate and nudge language development, with the parent as the mediator in the language learning opportunities presented through the sharing of books.

The Abecedarian Approach supports Vygotsky’s notion that “cooperatively achieved success lies at the foundations of learning and development,” (Wood, 1998:27). Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs attempt to replicate this approach, but given that the “involvement of parents has been identified as a crucial success factor for ECD programs (Grunewald & Rolnick, 2010), parents need training and support in the implementation and understandings about why and how to best support their child’s development at home. Further studies (A.G. Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pelligrini, 1995; Heath, 1990) also indicate that the activities of parents in reading aloud to their children, providing print rich homes, taking their children on library visits, singing rhymes and retelling stories together as well as drawing and supporting play with other children, results in stronger interest in reading and greater print knowledge in preschool children. It is also noted that these gains in development with disadvantaged children were maintained over time. Parental beliefs in the importance of these activities had a significant effect on the children’s outcomes in the area of language and literacy...
In the study “Contributions of the home literacy environment to preschool–aged children’s emerging literacy and language skills”, it is demonstrated that children’s early reading skills are strongly related to the home environment, but that the child’s early language skills are more closely related to the parents’ socioeconomic status (Weigel, 2006). Hence a continued focus on families experiencing disadvantage in the study, and the professional behaviours of children’s librarians in supporting parents’ literacy and language behaviours with their children as first teachers.

The professional development program needs to focus on the ‘how to’ of the development of early language skills and early reading skills with parents for whom their own goals, educational and literacy needs, job training and family money management are also being addressed through other support programs. Interventions designed to improve language and reading engagement, will be more likely to have a lasting impact if they “include parents’ own literacy habits and beliefs about their role in fostering literacy and language development,” (Weigel et al 2006:375). For this reason the proposed intervention focuses on equipping professionals to support parents in understanding and promoting this role as well as providing the ‘tools’ for how to increase bidirectional and child centred language exchange and development.

The success of many smaller studies as well as larger population size reports support the importance of rich parent-child interactions from birth, and sensory sensitivities with the parent or caregiver. Trends have emerged where “…the impact of social class, early years inequalities… and of the home learning and communication environment” become evident (Hamer, 2012:17).
CHAPTER 6:
Methods, Data collection,
Methodology and Data Analysis

Methods, Data collection

In order to meet the objectives of this study, a mixed methods qualitative study approach will be taken including the following components:

1. Professional based studies including interviews and conversation, observations and focus groups reflecting on the implementation of the approach, qualifying professional behaviours. This assisted with assessing the validity of the implemented approach to affect children’s librarian roles in the provision of best practice high quality early literacy experiences for families with very young children in the programs delivered in the public library context.

2. Quantitative assessment of the volume of interactions as well as the type of professionally supported parent-child interactions occurring as a result of implementing a mediated learning approach.

3. A case study approach to each professional participant including parent program implemented, evidencing the change in practice in the research participant’s approach to program delivery in the context of this study and the new knowledge and behaviours learned through the implemented 3A Conversational Reading Training program.

4. An analysis and synthesis of the data collected in order to provide recommendations for policy and practice for library staff and recommended training and implementation approach for best early literacy practices, specifically Conversational Reading, for parents experiencing vulnerabilities in geographical areas of disadvantaged in Western Metropolitan Melbourne.

This approach is an interwoven research activity saturated in its “positionality” about the importance and significance of early intervention, (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012). It seeks to be critical in its “design attitude”, to provide solid and well-substantiated, well-articulated recommendations. It is intended that these recommendations can be applied to informed policy and practice decision-making in regard to the implementation of support for professionals in impacting and supporting vulnerable parents in their role as first teacher of their very young children - for book sharing and development of early literacy and language outcomes.

Selection of professional participants

A minimum of four Children’s Librarians from across the Western Metropolitan region of Melbourne, Victoria were recruited into the study, with the incentives of training being provided under the umbrella of the study as well as program implementation support and mentoring. There is a strong desire on the part of public libraries to make an impact in this area of concern evidenced by the development of an Early Literacy Framework for Public Libraries as one of the priority projects undertaken by the State Library of Victoria and the Public Library Network of Victoria in the new triennium of projects (Literacy for All, 2015).

The participants were selected for their interest in pre focus work with families and their particular interest in early childhood literacy development. Approximately 1700 librarians work in Public Libraries across Victoria. At least 200 of these are practicing children’s librarians. It is a reasonable sample of professional librarians to both work with directly, but also to gain insights into common issues and implementation difficulties to be able to support the group through the implementation framework of the study.

There are significant pockets of disadvantage across the State of Victoria, and the library professionals nominating to be involved with the study did so with the purpose in mind of working closely with a cohort of disadvantaged parents to specifically outreach to, and develop an implementation program to be delivered in their local community. The professional librarian participants effectively formed a focus group for the implementation study and come together to support and share their learnings.

This focus group method has been identified by Clough & Nutbrown (2012) as a validating strategy as the focused conversation has advantages of providing an environment that fosters synergistic responses, has snowballing effects, and provides stimulation, security and spontaneity. The approach helps create new knowledge through its ability to add variety and versatility to the collection of data, its compatibility with qualitative research, and also its provision of opportunities for direct contact with and between...
Implementation – the Intervention

The program intervention is focused on the development of appropriate techniques and activities that are embed in the Abecedarian Approach to Conversational Reading with vulnerable parents in the nominated disadvantaged areas (see Figure 1 for overview). These activities are underpinned by individual interviews with librarians whereby the inclusion of Abecedarian principles within an assets based approach are utilised as a frame for the discussion and tracking of the implementation of Abecedarian techniques to increase interaction and language development.

These interviews were in-situ referenced to stimulate further discussion to aid in transparent learning for the librarians in the larger focus group setting that was immediate and tangible. The Abecedarian Conversational Reading programs implemented with parents as a result of the training, offered opportunities for response. In addition these sessions were observed and recorded by the researcher as a record of children’s librarians participant learnings and implementation, and were analysed as part of the data collection for the research.

Figure 1: Overview- The Intervention
Data collection

Observational analysis and tracking of professional behaviours in supporting parent-child interactions, as well as the resultant development of early literacy practices, underpinned the evaluation of the interventions implemented. Observational notes were taken in both group and individual contexts as a means of stimulation for shared reflection, discussion and tracking of progress amongst the professional cohort.

Participation in the delivery of Abecedarian Conversational Reading programs was tracked quantitatively to ensure the prescribed weekly quantum of intervention has been delivered by the librarians. This project recommends a six week program intervention.

Interview questions

Semi-structured interviews with each professional were based on the questions below. These questions were asked prior to implementation of the training, and eight weeks later at the end of the completion of the program implementation and data collection period. These questions were asked via a pre and post program written survey. During the course of the six week programs, two opportunities for questioning were realised. Interviews lead to understanding the meanings of reflected practice, providing insights to the quality and outcomes of the learning experience/intervention (Amedeo, 1985), however informal reflection and discussion opportunities rather than formal structured ‘interviews’ were offered.

Interviews

Data was conducted in the form of these informal interviews with the librarians prior to the commencement of the implementation period, as well as at the end of the data collection period. This method provides a significant source of data for the study alongside the observational analysis (Yin, 2009). We cannot observe thoughts and feelings or intentions, and so we must ask participants about their perceptions of what they have learnt, the difficulties they experience in applying that learning and the integration of this knowledge into their everyday practice (Patton, 2002). This informed the evaluation of impact of the training on delivery of programs as well as the recommendations in terms of best practice in children’s librarian activities in supporting parents in early literacy development of their very young children.

These conversational semi-structured in-depth interviews were intended to give the interviewee some degree of control in the situation and allow for acknowledging their understandings and practices to date in terms of their own professional early literacy practices. The perceived weaknesses of this method, was overcome to some degree by corroborating the data collected with other methods as outlined (Yin, 2009). These interviews, whilst providing rich data, were succinct so that they do not unduly impinge on the professionals’ time.

Observation

Observation of the professional behaviours and the librarians’ and other partnering professional observation of parenting behaviours is another primary data source in this study. Professionals were individually observed and their professional practice noted with the parent cohort before and after the training occurs.

Each observation lasted approximately 20 mins twice during the delivery of the project.

Methodological Approach & Data Analysis

Assessment of the changes in professional behaviour are framed within a qualitative approach Phenomenological Approach – taking a Dialogical entry point. Dialogical Phenomenology involves interviewing of the ‘co-researcher’ (in this case the librarian), and also in the ‘thematizing’ of the content of the interview (van Manen, 1990). In collecting and transcribing the dialogue in the ‘interviews’ and observations, it was possible to identify themes of activity that point to the experience of the professional on the topic of their interaction with parents and their children.

This approach matches the mediated learning experience, since it is most closely linked as a methodological approach to that of the role of mentor. In this approach the researcher’s own views and reactions are bracketed, and after the interview the librarian and researcher together identify themes that speak to the experience of the librarian participant. Further, a survey administered Pre and Post training captured these reflections. In this case, it is the librarian regarding her own professional behaviours with specific focus to interaction and language opportunities and outcomes for the parents and their children in the activities offered is the subject of the study. Reflection and questioning was used...
by the researcher to prompt the professional to describe experiences in leading and coaching parents interacting with their children.

Since phenomenology requires us to understand another’s experience, this is seen as the most important way of both respecting the position that the professional is already in, in regard to their interactions and ‘literacy’ practice, as well as to track their experience of the implementation of the mediated learning activities. In this way the behavioural changes in professional children’s librarians sought in this study can be measured alongside the envisaged positive outcomes for disadvantaged children. Van Manen (1990) points out this approach requires the production of lived in experience. He says the co-researcher needs to be able to: Describe their experiences as they live them (in this case professionals will be prompted to talk about their interaction with parents and children; and to try not to use specific ‘terminology’ – rather plain speak in the interviews (van Manen, 1990) and observations. These experiences are captured in the reviewed results.

It is recognised that monitoring early literacy achievements in the early childhood area has only been given weight in the last few decades (Tayler, 2000). It is important that learning be monitored and that appropriate tools be utilised that sensitively acknowledge the progress made by professionals during the implementation study and as an outcome, the parent-child interactions and rich language experiences that will be fostered. Changes in the professional interactional relationship utilising the Abecedarian Conversational Reading techniques have been analysed and assessed.
CHAPTER 7:  
3A Abecedarian Approach – The Pilot Program

The pilot program for the 3A Abecedarian Approach project was trialled by the Hobsons Bay Libraries in the municipality of Hobsons Bay, under the program banner “Books for Baby and Me”. Hobsons Bay City Council covers some of the lowest socio-economic areas in the State, according to the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA, 2011). Families from low socio-demographic neighbourhoods have much to gain potentially from such a program as their children have significantly higher vulnerabilities regarding language development and indicators for strong school readiness indicators (AEDI – Community Profiles, 2012). Utilising the well-established Hobsons Bay City Council Supported Play Group network gave the project direct access to families experiencing a degree of vulnerability within their daily lives – vulnerabilities which can negatively influence the outcome of children’s lives from a very early age (Foundations for School Readiness, n.d.) - outcomes which the 3A Abecedarian Approach seeks to positively influence. These families often have low education levels, with at least a degree of inter-generational disadvantage and/or trauma or significant factors that can impact their children's future success educationally, socially and economically. They may be experiencing socio-economic hardship, psychological distress, domestic violence/abuse, be refugees or asylum seekers from strife-torn lands, families with little or no English – all powerful reasons for increased social isolation and often decreased time and attention for the developmental needs of their very young children (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2016).

Within these groups there is often a general lack of awareness of the developmental imperatives and benefits of reading, talking and interacting with their very young children. Research has shown that the brain produces more neural pathways in the first three years of a child's life than at any other time in their lives (Hill, S. 2009; Kulkarni, C. 2012). Equipping each child with the capacity to absorb the extraordinary amount of knowledge and skills that need to be acquired to function successfully in society (Mendellson, 2009) making interventions such as the “Books for Baby and Me” project (focused on parents with very young children) so vital. The learning of language has also been shown to be an essential step in brain development generally - in learning to learn (Ting-Fang, 2007). The work of Wolf (2007) attests to this in her pivotal work ‘Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain’, taking the importance of not only language learning but ‘learning to read’ to another level /stating that the process of learning to read actually teaches the brain how to learn (Wolf, 2007).

Research shows that if this cascade of neural pathways is not used, then they will close, making learning much more difficult in future years, potentially setting up future disengagement with school and a general failure to thrive - socially, academically and in employment opportunities, thus again reinforcing intergenerational dysfunction (Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2016).

One of the most potent ways to utilize, and thus preserve, these neural pathways as a conduit to school success and life-long learning is through reading and exposure to words (Foundations for School Readiness, n.d.). Herein lies the demonstrated strength of the Abecedarian Approach (3A) - it gives parents and carers a simple, child-centred technique for sharing books and conversation with very young children that is easily-acquired and family-friendly - a simple technique with powerful life-changing potential (Ramey et al, 2012). Data has been collected on the number of words children from different socio-economic groups are exposed
to in the critical pre-school years. Children from educated, middle class backgrounds will begin school having heard around 42 million words. By contrast, children from welfare backgrounds will have heard just 13 million (Hart & Risley, 2003). It becomes an extraordinary five year advantage for a child from a more educated background, due simply to the sheer number of words they hear in a more conversational family. This gap, this difference in exposure, is often very difficult and expensive for society and educational institutions to try to overcome during the school years, further entrenching disadvantage (Brooks-Gunn & Furstenberg, 1986).

Training Workshops

A workshop program was devised for all the relevant Children’s Services staff at Hobsons Bay City Council. This included all five of the Children’s Librarians, casual library staff, the multi-cultural (children’s) librarian, plus all staff members involved in any way with Library Children’s programs. It also included the playgroup coordinators from the relevant Supported Playgroups and their Program Manager – 16 participants in total.

Two training sessions were offered of three hours each. The first was devised and conducted by Paula Kelly Paull, Barrett Reid Scholarship grant recipient, instigator and developer of this pilot program. This workshop began with the introduction of the Abecedarian Approach, grounding it both in current neurological and early childhood development theory and practice and thereby underlining the importance of working with young children and their families at such an early age/stage of their development. This was then followed with an extended introduction to the essentials of the Abecedarian Approach, incorporating supporting evidence from some of the projects that have been conducted to date, including an ongoing project devised in cooperation with the University of Melbourne 3A specifically for indigenous communities in the Northern Territory (Tayler, C. 2014). Indigenous cultures are rooted in oral communication, making the 3A Conversational Reading approach particularly suitable, given their cultural heritage. It was a very informative and intensive presentation that gave all participants a solid evidence base to inform their work in the project. From this, the Children’s Librarians, who would be running the programs, could begin to devise their own approaches and understanding incorporating Abecedarian Approach understandings.

The second 3 hour workshop revolved around the practicalities of presenting a program using the 3A methodology in Library/Supported Play Group settings. The elements of the Abecedarian Approach: Language Priority, Conversational Reading, Learning Games and Enriched Caregiving were discussed again, in more practical detail, and the selected books were introduced, modelled and experimented with - within the Abecedarian context of shared reading. This workshop was presented by Christine Andell, a children’s literature consultant and assistant to the pilot program. Questions, discussion and small group work with the books helped deepen participants’ knowledge and understanding of the adaptive nature of the 3A program and the rich potential of the inherent Conversational Reading techniques. Due to the relative brevity of both the training and the “Books for Baby and Me” programs – six weekly sessions of 45 minutes, Conversational Reading was emphasised as the most important share-able technique and the most achievable outcome for the participating librarians to impart across the six short weeks of the Supported Play Group program.

The aims of the Abecedarian Approach revolve around using simple but deep techniques to help individuals, families and whole communities gain exposure to the benefits of this approach. In some US communities, where this approach originated some 40 years ago, parents who dropped out of high school have returned to education after participating with their children in the program, with its emphasis on 1:1 mentoring and modelling with families in the program (Sparling, J. n.d.). This is of course a huge benefit for whole communities, helping to break patterns...
of intergenerational unemployment, increasing social wellbeing and economic benefit (Sparling, J. 2014). The Abecedarian Approach always begins from a point of positivity - the asset base of a parent’s own practice, building on the things a parent or carer is already doing. This positive, supportive beginning point allows a parent to embark on this new learning journey with more confidence, thus giving the whole program a greater chance of success. The Abecedarian Approach works to educate the child by educating the parent in new techniques that let the child lead – educating the parent to become the child’s first teacher, and strongly enhancing the bonding between parent & child. All librarian participants were given comprehensive handouts, including all relevant Abecedarian Approach material, PowerPoint slides used in the training and reference material relating to the underpinning neurological research (See Appendices 1-6). They were invited to contact the workshop presenters for assistance with understanding and interpreting the material for planning at any time. Ongoing mentoring for all participants was assured, to support for their journey through the pilot program.

Free Book Provision for participating families in supported playgroup Abecedarian Approach Sessions

In preparing for the Abecedarian Approach pilot project “Books for Baby & Me” in June 2016 a comprehensive review of available children’s literature in Melbourne bookshops was undertaken. In searching for a range of books that would fulfil the requirements of our program, a select number of titles were nominated to become part of the free books component of the program, to be provided to the participating families. (Special thanks to The Little Bookroom for their advice and support and to Raising Australia, formerly the Little Big Book Club, for the provision of their It’s Rhymetime booklets).

Books selected for such an experimental Abecedarian project must meet certain criteria and involve a number of important considerations. Firstly, the age of the children who were to be involved - 9 to 2½ years ideally; secondly, the wide range of families who would be participating in the program; thirdly, research has shown that the number of books in the home equates to the number of years a child stays in school past the compulsory attendance years (Evans, Kelley, Sikorac & Treimand, 2010), so as a major tenet of the program, every participating family would be given a copy of each shared book to keep, eight books in all. It was imperative that all the books would be appealing enough, with the right sort of content, to encourage as many families as possible to want to use these books – and the Abecedarian Approach - at home with their children on a regular basis, both during and after the project.

Another important aspect influencing book choice was the first, or native, language of the participant parents/carers. All Supported Play Groups were made up of participants from richly multicultural backgrounds, but three groups also had a particular native language cohort. One group had a large contingent of Chinese speakers, the second people of Indonesian background and the third was wholly made up of Arabic-speaking families, mostly of Lebanese background. The 3A program, like most early literacy programs, encourages families to interact with their children in their own first language, and this has been strongly recommended to parents during the training. We are all more fluent and more comfortable when speaking in our first language, which gives the child the best opportunity to benefit from language use around their care and in general household conversation. It doesn’t matter which language is used to stimulate neural development, it is the use of language per se that counts – both the volume and richness of words and language opportunities. These opportunities will naturally be more enhanced in a parent’s native language. With such rich language exposure, the child will learn the dominant language of the area – English in this case - quickly and well at day care or school (Clarke, P. 2009). There is of course the bonus of the parent being more relaxed, more ‘themselves’ in their own first language which is of vital benefit in strengthening the bonding process between parent and child (Bowlby, 1988), which is in turn vital to the whole learning process. To strengthen this recommendation, an extra gifted book was provided in the three aforementioned dominant languages and read in the sessions, modelling how the techniques can work in any language. To further emphasize the values of multi-lingualism in such diverse groups, an attempt was made to supply an appropriate book in the home language of every other child in these groups, at the same time, for example in Thai, Maori, Karen and Vietnamese.
A parent/carer does not need to be able to read the words to share 3A book discovery with their young children in their care. This was modelled when the librarians ‘read’ the books provided in the dominant languages to their whole group. For example, not speaking Arabic forced a reading of the book that focused on ‘reading’ the visual narrative and the conversational opportunities afforded in this way. Following the child’s gaze and talking about what they are looking at is the basis of the Conversational Reading technique at the heart of the 3A approach in this program. This idea is reinforced by research from The Center on the Developing Child (2016) which states that brain architecture builds on the notion/experience of communicative exchange. By talking to the child’s interest, through scaffolded questions and commentary using the See, Show, Say Abecedarian Approach Conversational reading techniques, a response could be gained which was then used as a catalyst for more conversation – all the time increasing the child’s exposure to, and eventual use of, sounds and words. This, in a nutshell, is the basis of effective communication - of helping a child, in time, to learn to articulate emotions, difficulties, joys and frustrations, thus empowering that child with the twin abilities of self-control and the capacity to learn. It is also the foundation of bi-directional language learning – being able to express and be receptive, where a parent participates in the play and exchange of language by being present and attentive (Vygotsky, 1962). This in turn helps form the deeper bonds (Bowlby, 1988) that studies have shown are essential for literacy development to occur (Bronfenbrenner, 2004; Trivette, Dunst & Gorman, 2010).

In summary, books needed to be visually appealing, and attractive to a variety of cultures, and able to be ‘read’ from the illustrations alone – important as non-readers and those who cannot read in English will be afforded the same benefits of conversational reading as other, more literate families. They also need to have an appropriate amount of content – not enough to overwhelm the child’s visual acuity, but providing enough content to draw the child’s (and parent/carers’) attention and encourage conversation between the parent/carer and child – Conversational Reading in a nutshell!

**Selected Books**

**Baby Days**
written and illustrated by Alison Lester. Allen & Unwin

**Baby Touch: Noisy Day**
Ladybird Books

**It’s a Little Baby**
written J. Donaldson; illustrated R. Cobb. Pan Macmillan

**Let’s Go Visiting**
written Sue Williams; illustrated Julie Vivas. Working Title Press

**Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes**
written Mem Fox; illustrated Helen Oxenbury. Penguin Books

**Nibbler**
written and illustrated by Jeanette Rowe. Bright Books

**Hello Little Babies**
written and illustrated by Alison Lester, Allen & Unwin

**It’s Rhymetime**
Little Big Books Club; Raising Literacy Australia

**Ada Berapa**
Indonesian text, Nusantara Bookshop, Croydon

**How Many?**
Bi-lingual English/Modern Chinese, InText Book Company, Kew

**Khatawat Boby Al Oula**
Arabic translation of Spot Went Walking, Intext Book Company, Kew

**The Sessions**

The participating librarians were placed in the driver’s seat in this pilot program. The Abecedarian Approach has not been documented in a library-type setting before, so after our training sessions there were no guidelines, no safety nets constructed from the experience of others to help them frame and design their programs, hence the importance of
the reflective practice model used in the training, and mentoring support as needed.

All these techniques, with strong emphasis on Conversational Reading, were to be deployed in five supported play groups, with one children’s librarian attending the same supported play group, and the same group of families, weekly over a six-week period. Supported play group programs are usually run by a specialised Supported Playgroup Officers for two hours a week, with a tightly scheduled and predictable routine of activities and events each week. The children’s librarian would come for a 45-minute session with the families and then leave. Everyone would resume their normal duties and programs. Each librarian was encouraged to approach the programs and the families in their supported play group setting in the way that seemed most appropriate to them - within the parameters of the Abecedarian Approach, focusing on language priority and Conversational Reading. The aim was to engage the parents by introducing and reinforcing elements of the Abecedarian Approach each week - modelling Conversational Reading techniques by reading one of the new books with the group, sharing some Learning Games to help focus the message, interspersed with songs (further modelling of Rhyme, Rhythm and Repetition best practice) and information about the program, then rounding out the session by working with each individual family group where possible. This 1:1 work would allow better modelling and strengthen parents’ techniques by building trust and confidence in their understanding and their ability to try this at home, and to want to do so. There was no prescribed program, order or manner of approach. However, an emphasis on Librarian as coach rather than the program deliverer was consistent.

Each children’s librarian was observed in a session twice during the process by the program manager or the research assistant, towards the beginning and the end of the program, enabling direct experience of the different ways the librarians were approaching their playgroup, to engage and then to observe what results these individual approaches delivered - essential information for reporting and evaluation purposes. It also became an important mentoring role for the children’s librarians as they were essentially working outside their normal Storytime support structures and were having to adapt very fast - learning new techniques and ways of dealing with families, in quite a public way. Supported play groups are, by their very nature, complex places to work and introducing new programs, especially with a degree of external supervision involved, can create distrust and suspicion amongst participants. This meant that the first meeting and program introduction was quite critical in easing the whole group into an unfamiliar program. People from these vulnerable groups are offered many new programs and directives, which can make them quite sensitive to any sense of bureaucracy and being told what to do, and how to do it, at every turn. It became evident that enthusing parents and carers from the outset was very important, informing them warmly and accurately about the intention and hoped-for benefits for their children as the outcome of the project. Also, introducing their research supervisor/mentor and making it clear that it is the librarian’s program choices and practice being observed, as a learning experience for those practitioners, not the families as subjects of research was very important. By actively participating in the session the research assistant or supervisor helped reduce barriers/resistance and add extra support as needed.

Each librarian had a different approach, and it was informative to observe each of them change and develop over the six weeks of the program. The variety of approaches went from sitting quietly in a particularly fractious group on the first meeting, chatting to individual families until the group settled enough to begin the introductions and reasons for the visit, and a program outline. Morning tea and birthday celebrations intervened, and a procedural lesson were learned – due to the very routine nature of Supported Play Group programs, sessions programmed before or during morning tea time were very unlikely to be successful as the children, in particular, would not be able to pay attention until that activity was over. In this case they assembled in a circle after morning tea for a gentle Storytime where the book of the day was distributed to the families and the story was read modelling Conversational Reading techniques. The It’s Rhymetime booklet was introduced and a number of songs were sung from it, each family also receiving a copy of the booklet to keep. There was a second, low-key introduction to the program and the main techniques of Conversational Reading/Language Priority: See, Show, Say and Notice, Nudge, Narrate. Native language use was discussed and encouraged, with a reminder to practise it all at home. One of the other librarians used blown-up slides from the training session PowerPoint
content, taking the parents and children through the entire program, interspersed with story and song for the full 45 minutes! Surprisingly, everyone was quite engaged. Yet another tried to cover the program introduction very much in instructional, performative mode - by reading out whole sections of the 3A Approach to the group, many of whom did not have a good command of English, giving print-outs to the families, and then sharing the book and some songs. This did not work so well, and not in the following sessions either, until a gentler and more inclusive approach was found. Shifting from presenters to coach was a difficult transition for most of the librarians despite the training experience and modelling practiced in those introductory sessions.

Over the six week project, a new book was read and given to the families each week, learning games that related to the books were developed by and shared amongst the librarians, highly appreciated bookmarks were made with the Abecedarian 3Ns and 3Ss and handed out, enriched care-giving aspects were introduced to encourage play and break contact barriers and slowly time was made to talk to families individually, or in small groups – perhaps the most difficult task for all of the participant librarians. However, the more trust was established through continued sessions, the easier it became, in most cases, to approach people for small group, or more individual work – in fact, often parents would approach the librarian asking for advice, and a small group would quickly congregate to listen and discuss. Many of the families were hungry for such accessible knowledge and once some trust had been established, between themselves as well as with the librarian, they were eager – especially if it would improve the lives of their children and family interactions.

Some groups only had seven or eight families and even then it was sometimes difficult to speak to families individually, but in the largest group with up to 35 families it was only possible to speak to small groups, and even then it was never possible to cover everyone in the time allocated. Involving the supported play group coordinators in the sessions has also been a very important aspect. It helped to maintain their position of respect within their groups, provided continuity and some certainty to participants facing something new yet again, but also provided insider knowledge for the librarians about individual families and group dynamics. Since it was hoped the coordinators would continue Conversational Reading practice and activities once this pilot program was finished, keeping them involved and not feeling sidelined was critical. They are all very passionate about early childhood education and are well-placed to be mentors and coaches for their group participants.

Program Research Results

At the first training session all participants were provided with a Plain Language Statement about the project (Appendix 7) and asked to fill in a consent form and purpose-designed questionnaire (Appendix 8) to provide structured responses to support the scholarship research and impact of the training program. The same questionnaire was offered to all participants again at a debrief meeting at the end of the program.

One of the most significant responses in terms of research outcomes for this project might be in answer to Q1.6: ‘Do you feel adequately equipped to provide outreach programs specifically to parents and young children experiencing vulnerabilities in regard to early literacy practices’? There was a statistically significant increase in participants who responded: ‘Very Well’, post training and mentoring. This implies a strong valuing of the usefulness of the Abecedarian Approach and training as a professional development tool to assist and deepen the work of Children’s and Youth librarians for greater impact in the community. Other improvements noted were around understanding of the focus of Conversational Reading techniques (Q.2.2), its use in regular programming (Q.2.3) and the improvements in attention and in language use amongst parents and their families (Q.2.5). The questions that elicited the most responses related to Early Literacy training, and the need for more of it. This came up many times during our training and was strongly reflected in the responses. A comment was made by a respondent regarding "the general lack of training for Children’s and Youth staff available within the library industry. That unless staff had a background in education – it was difficult for them to access substantial training about early literacy". It appears from the answers that not all Children’s Librarian and Children’s Services staff were aware of the seminal importance of early childhood literacy, for example one person commented that "understanding the importance of early literacy has given me more motivation to pass on the knowledge and techniques I have".
learned". Another research participant stated in response to Q.3.4 that: "I've never had specialist children's literacy training but will feel well-resourced with the training information provided. It's obviously crucial to get it right for 0-3's". Another impactful response to Q.3.4 was: "I think it’s fabulous that we are now running targeted programs, as I have often felt that our open programs are perhaps intimidating and unwelcoming to families experiencing disadvantage. This is creating a safe environment for them to engage with and take advantage of our specialist knowledge and services".

Responses to Q.3.2 also demonstrated an increase in awareness of the importance of the Abecedarian Approach knowledge and skills they had acquired: "Importance of embedding modelling into program delivery & not solely performative engagement" and "Pointing out to vulnerable families it's important to read to their child every day & the whole experience of sitting together with a book, not just the reading. Pointing out also to talk/sing/rhyme with their child from birth". And further, “The simple models in the Abecedarian Approach are BRILLIANT! They condense broad concepts and diverse practices into simple, easy-to-remember and apply maxims” and "(We can) engage better with families using techniques they can do at home & at the library visit”.

**Further Survey Data and General Feedback**

The most important developmental need for the children’s librarians in the pilot Abecedarian Approach supported playgroup program was to be able to gain the trust of parents and carers, in order to help them understand the necessity (and the joy) of embedding Abecedarian practices into their everyday lives – not just at library programs. Trust is a difficult commodity to develop with some of these groups/participants due to the ongoing vulnerabilities they are experiencing. It was frustrating for all to see a first glimmer of openness and/or understanding with a parent - and the program was over! This was universally experienced by all librarians on a weekly basis, and across the total length of the pilot program, so the first action for the second iteration of the program has been to recommend that the librarians are present at the playgroup for the full two hours each week. The 3A aspect of the session would still take about the same amount of time each week, but the librarians would be more available, with more time to start to build up relationships of trust to enhance everyone’s experience. It was also recommended that the program run for ten weeks instead of six. This will be implemented in the next program delivery, which has already commenced at Hobsons Bay City Council.

The single-most difficult aspect of the program for all the librarians was the 1:1 mentoring. Not only because there was never enough time, but as one of the librarians stated: "It also seemed awkward/pressuring to single out parents for one-on-one, which made it even harder". This is also the single-most important reason for extending the length of both aspects of the program – without that opportunity for more relaxed exchanges and for developing trust, this most important element will not be able to happen.

Given the nature of our programs, in a library-type style, and on a relatively occasional basis, it would seem a sensible adaptation to encourage coaching work with small groups, as well as with individual families, to further enable modelling and to allow parents to ask questions and practise the Abecedarian techniques. This hopefully with a child on their knee, so they can have a bi-directional exchange, see where their child’s gaze is landing and experience the process of child-led interaction – unfortunately not always possible in these settings, as there are many distractions for small children. Parents often need these quiet moments to be able to ask questions about their children and/or their reading and it would be a significant omission if Children’s Librarians did not work on facilitating these interactions. Questions were regularly asked in smaller groups or privately about issues like: “Many mums were asking about behavioural issues, screen time, children not interested in reading” . An associated aspect is that the children’s librarians were not consistent in modelling child-led reading techniques in their sessions, and these are two areas of training that will need some more attention in future.

It is interesting in this context to reflect on a presentation given by one of the participating children’s librarians in post project training to broader public library cohorts, Sarah Wiesner, on adult learners and learning. Sarah postulated that there was one universal motivating factor for all people - to be happy. In this scenario, the parents wish for themselves to be happy first, often not realising that better communication - the ability to use language to help solve problems - can help deliver this happiness. She discussed three key factors at play in adult learning: self-concept and the motivation to learn, that adults need to be
responsible for decisions on their education, it’s planning and evaluation, and that adults respond more to internal rather than external motivators. For this she used the example of a newborn baby and the parents’ motivation to get that baby to sleep at night. Happy baby = happy parent. It was noted that talking about things that will affect baby twenty years hence would not easily motivate that parent when they are struggling to cope with their present circumstances.

Some respondents submitted weekly reports written during the program as feedback. Others submitted feedback from their participants and play group coordinators at the end of the program for consideration with the survey results.

“When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down ‘happy’. They told me I didn’t understand the assignment, and I told them they didn’t understand life.”

John Lennon

Source 20: Pinterest

An example of relevance to this 1:1 coaching/mentoring aspect from a librarian: “During the 6 weeks there was no real opportunity to coach parent with child one-on-one in the reading techniques, and given the number of often well-educated parents who did not read to their children this may have been an unfortunate omission”. She continued: “It was indeed very surprising how few people read regularly with their children. In week 5 I observed that this lack of reading/talking/singing reinforced the notion that the simple steps of the 3A approach is missing in many families, and introducing it will be of great benefit”. This comment underlines both the importance of 1:1 or small group coaching/mentoring and of the Abecedarian Approach in general. It also reveals how much children’s librarians recognise and value the training they have received and its’ usefulness as a tool for working with vulnerable families, training parents and carers through affirmative, conversational bi-directional approaches to be their child’s first teacher. At the librarians’ request, there will be two librarians assigned to each Supported Play Group for the next iteration of the program, hopefully making it easier to work with families on a reasonably individual basis, and as stated, they will be present for each two hour session over a ten week period.

Conversation of any sort, let alone Conversational Reading is very new territory for some parents, as evidenced in parental feedback and librarian comment: “In week 5 one mother said she had begun speaking to her child. She said she had thought there was no point talking much as “he was too young to understand” her. She was clearly happy to be doing this and the strengthening of the mother/child bond was clearly rewarding for them both. What a success story!! How wonderful!!” This was not an uncommon story, and it was very gratifying for all concerned to experience such life-changing moments as a result of this program. The work of Bowlby around parent/child attachment and bonding is unequivocal about its importance for future educational and social outcomes (Bowlby 1988).

All early literacy programs run in or by public libraries cast children’s librarians in the role of educator, as they share new techniques and ideas with participating families to help their children develop the skills needed for a rich, engaging and fulfilling life. These programs will necessarily be pitched primarily at parents, due to the short amount of time spent with families on a regular basis. It is also because parents/carers are the facilitators of everything that occurs in a small child’s life and as such are essential to developing that child’s wellbeing, on every front (Vygostsky 1962). Leading by example, a children’s librarian in an Abecedarian program can help parents assume this role of being their child’s first teacher, in part by letting them see how positively their children respond to the techniques. By sharing these techniques with parents and encouraging them to continue doing them at home they build the parent’s capacity – the basis of the coaching element. In her presentation Wiesner stated that the question was not ‘How do we reach our vulnerable families’, but firstly, ‘How do we reach our children’s librarians (with this 3A knowledge to share), so they can reach our vulnerable families, so they can reach their children – to become their child’s first teacher?’ As one of our librarians stated: “public libraries have a unique opportunity to promote school readiness through parental involvement by training the trainer” (Maclean 2008, p.5), that often “librarians consider caregivers to be the primary audience for … programs” (Cerny, Markey & Williams 2006, p. 53); and more controversially that the target audience is parents because … sessions are neither long enough, nor frequent enough to have any significant impact on children’s literacy. (Ghotiney & Martin-Diaz, 2006). As stated by a librarian: “Parents RAVE when you value-add for them, and the evidence-based strategies increase the children’s level of engagement”. As emphasised in the training, it is essential, from every point of view, to approach all teaching, sharing, coaching from an affirmative viewpoint – letting the parents know you are simply building on all the great things they are doing already for their children. A strengths-based approach is critical.

Responses to Q.2.2 further demonstrate the awareness and appreciation of the possible avenues and outcomes that have been afforded children’s librarians through this Abecedarian Approach training: “Opening up language/literacy engagement for stronger outcomes. Working with parents to explore a conversational way of reading to their child – which equates to not prescriptively reading a book from start to finish but instead using engagement techniques (Abecedarian Approach 3S’s) to make strong connections between words and life. To help children direct the course of the book reading”. Another interesting observation from a librarian was about the possibility of applying
Conversational Reading in a more conventional Storytime setting, to expose more families to the benefits of this technique: (Q.2.3) “Usually (use conversational reading in Storytimes) – large groups not ideal for conversational reading, but a modified version can be used”. Modification techniques were discussed at a second de-brief meeting, such as enlarging the book on a screen for bigger numbers, but the ideas need further discussion and development before any implementation can be considered. In Wiesner’s presentation (Slides Appendix 1 – Part 3) she stated that Storytimes are a dialogue too – a bi-directional exchange, and as such, a good opportunity to demonstrate the See, Show, Say elements of Conversational Reading in these settings too. This could be done by asking the children to respond during the story to what they could see and building on that in a conversational context, rather than simply following a story though to its end. She felt it was important to build emotional literacy by asking children to describe what they thought the book characters might be feeling, and how they themselves were feeling, strengthening their developing ability to express their own feelings, beginning the empowering journey of gaining emotional control over their own lives. This modelling of 3A techniques can give parents the tools and the confidence to begin to practise this at home, and also some insight into the role of language as the key to the connection and relationship already noted. Another very positive sign of the success of the program was that all the participating supported play group coordinators were very keen, and uniformly remarked on the benefits of the program to their families and how much positive feedback they have received. For example: “I think the most important element for our non-English speaking playgroup members was in helping shift the way families respond and react to reading with their children” - a very positive development in a group described by their supported play group coordinator as “entrenched in their lack of awareness of the benefits of playing with or reading to their children”! The supported play group coordinators were so enthusiastic about the program they requested more involvement in the roll-out of a second round of this pilot program. It was such an inclusive, and constructive idea to include them in the training initially, and as they will be the ones to continue moving forward with these families, it is in everyone’s best interests to keep them as informed and involved as possible. This will ensure they will be well-equipped and keen to continue working on the Abecedarian Approach long after the completion of this pilot project. They have been very engaged, supportive and encouraging of both librarians and families throughout the program.

Feedback from parents was generally positive. For example: “this has been a great program; they are all ideas I try to do every day – especially singing - I sing every day now; I love all the books we have received; I love learning; we’ll miss you; thankyou”. In Q.3.4 the statement was made: “Project has been valuable – feedback from parents has been positive”. Many parents commented that their children were asking for stories more often, especially the ones from Playgroup. Participating children read stories to their toys, siblings read them to the young ones and were excited too. A number of parents acknowledged that they did not read to their children, or very rarely, but that they had started talking and playing with them more. Anecdotally, mothers were encouraging fathers to read to, and play with, their small children. The books went into prams and cars on outings and were often used. A few even enquired about their local library programs!

All small but important steps on the road to a more literate life

Referring back to public library use, in the highly multi-cultural context of Victorian community life - all the librarians recommended supported playgroup participants come along to their local library branch to look for appropriate programs, to borrow books, to meet people and to experience what a library is like. It would be very beneficial if CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) picture books, in common local languages, were prominently displayed with the other picture books – to make it more welcoming and inclusive, and to emphasise the current preference for native language learning. This may require some variation to Collection Development policy but would be a very positive step. Further, Community Publishing projects could be featured in a focus on first language materials development for
specific communities. Taking the Abecedarian training and running the programs prompted many survey respondents to state the need they felt for more cross-cultural training for themselves, and more multi-cultural programs to better represent the Hobsons Bay City Council demographic. For example, librarians stated the need for: “Communication training with bilingual families”, “Cross-cultural engagement training” and further, “The fact that we live in a multi-cultural society should ensure we plan and prepare events & activities within our libraries which cater to a vast selection of different cultures and religions where possible”. It is an area of positive potential that perhaps could be further discussed as part of the training.

It was surprising how many parents did not interact regularly with their children in a playful manner, which was also commented upon as a trend by the supported play group coordinators in their sessions. This, combined with the number of parents who did not really speak to their children in a playful or a conversational manner, led to the introduction of age-appropriate Learning Games and some Enriched Caregiving elements into each program. These could be combined in songs like 'Round & Round the Garden' with its combination of rhythmic, rhyming text, plenty of baby/parent contact - in a playful way, ending with laughter. Some of the book-related Learning Games that the librarians introduced helped focus attention, introduce vocal responses and learning through play. Both these Abecedarian elements help to break down physical barriers to communication between parent and child and can go a long way to strengthening these most important of bonds. These elements could be worked into the programs in future training programs, with more time and a broader focus.

Challenges

This program has been challenging for the librarians involved on a number of levels. Children's librarians in general are not trained in early childhood literacy in their Librarianship degrees or required to have any early literacy or education training (ALIA, 2009). This means that effective and appropriate programming for early literacy development remains ad hoc at best (Rankin & Brock, 2015). Most program delivery is taught in-house or by peers in PD sessions, as corroborated in our survey. Storytime sessions tend to be uniformly entertaining and presented in an instructional manner, which gives the presenter authority (and distance) with the material, the techniques and the families involved. Relinquishing this (perhaps unconscious) authority and engaging closely with families seems to have presented the greatest difficulty for the librarians in this pilot program. Sessions in a supported playgroup are small, and sometimes complex, and require a gentler, less didactic approach to working with the group as a whole, and particularly with individual families and small groups. It is also possibly part of the reluctance to engage in 1:1 coaching, as the usual professional reserve between librarian and family must necessarily be dissolved to some extent to allow the exchange to be successful. Sharing, not instructing is the model. Coach, not presenter. Mentor, not performer. This statement goes to the heart of why this training is so important!

Wiesner suggested in her reflections and presentation that one way to begin to bridge the gap between presenter mode and the more confronting nature of 1:1 work might be to present a scaffolded learning experience by giving parents the opportunity to practice the techniques as the book is read in the sessions – that asking each parent to do the ‘See’ part during the group reading (e.g. banana – it’s a yellow banana) might be less confronting if everyone is doing it, therefore giving them more confidence to try the techniques at home with their children. Another technique might be encouraging parents to use everyday experiences as a tool for demonstrating the 3S’s - in the supermarket perhaps. ‘See’ is then noticing what the child is looking at, ‘Show’ is pointing that out and talking about it, ‘Say’ is then the child responding – a good example of intentional, bi-directional communication that can occur in any facet of daily life. This is also an applicable activity in larger Storytime sessions, as are some of the Learning Games. Using game repetition can reinforce to parents that any activity is a good opportunity for bi-directional conversation – even sorting the socks! The need for librarians to practice Conversational Reading techniques with each book before the sessions was also emphasized, as a deeper reading will better model the techniques for parents. Added to this was a further suggestion that librarians develop their own conversational skills by developing stories from their own lives, their own imaginations, to help them bring more emotional literacy to their readings and conversations with parents, further empowering parents and equipping them with the tools and confidence to try these techniques at home.
All librarians stated in their surveys that they were hungry for more training and more expertise in the field of early childhood literacy and that after participating in the 3A Abecedarian Approach training they felt they had something of value to impart to the vulnerable families they were going to be working with. Such training, offered by an umbrella public library body, would go a long way towards equipping children’s librarians as early literacy educators, with a different recognition for Children’s programs as a possible secondary outcome across the public library landscape – not just entertainment with good KPI’s (Key Performance Indicators), but well-planned educative programs aimed in increasing opportunities for social betterment.

In the words of one of our librarians: “All the work that is done in the Children & Youth (CY) team is underpinned by the mission to support families in their children’s language, literacy and digital literacy development. The Position Description (PD) outlines the main regular activities, without outlining WHY we do what we do. This is something that most people outside the CY team do not realise. There is a misconception that the programs run by the CY team are just about meeting community demands and getting numbers in the door. The public often sees what we do as simply free, engaging and fun entertainment. Putting in the position description the expectation of specialist knowledge and regular professional development and the reason behind the programs would be a big step in placing importance on the ‘why’”. It would explain the rationale for a focus on early literacy expertise. Librarians becoming educators would also bring great benefit to the wider public library community, creating new and diverse roles, interacting in new ways with the community, thus adding more strength and certainty to the continuing presence and increasing importance of public libraries across our communities.

To quote from one of our children’s librarian respondents: “It is very hard to find any early literacy or general story time training for new staff. I think this (program) would be beneficial to be regularly available for professional development e.g. 2 to 4 times a year through SLV (sic)".
CHAPTER 8: Conclusion

In conclusion, the pilot training program and research implementation within Hobsons Bay has had a significant impact on the understandings and practice of children’s librarians in their work with families experiencing vulnerabilities as well as embedding better practices within standard early literacy programming in our libraries. The key performance indicators have all been met for the project which included:

• training a minimum of four children’s librarians as specialists in early childhood parenting support focused on language development and shared book reading
• a summary of quantifiable and qualitative evidence that demonstrates attitudinal change and knowledge base increase in the professionals in the program
• providing a model of training that is repeatable and grounded in research on how public libraries can best support early literacy outcomes for highly disadvantaged sectors of the community
• a written report that is evidence based and underpinned by research that makes the substantive case for working in this space of critical importance, articulates the approach to training and implementation and measures success.

The Key outcomes of the project include:

• Increased understanding of best practice of children’s librarians in the early literacy space adding to the educational outcomes of the very young children in our community
• Increased participation of communities at risk in early literacy practices
• Increased resourcing of families who may not have had a book culture in the home and those who are identified as being at risk in educational outcomes takes
• The development of an evidence base from which sponsorship opportunities can be sought for further Victorian Public library local government or state wide initiatives in early literacy supported practice.

Hobsons Bay City Council has benefitted by participating in this research project. Council now has a tried and tested best practice model of training and implementation that has proven to have significant impact for the practice of its children’s librarians and the families within its boundaries, specifically those for whom school readiness and early literacy competencies have been challenging.

It puts the Council at the forefront of best practice in supporting parents as first teachers and turning around the wave of increased disadvantage indicators that are currently evident at a local level. Our children’s librarians have now been trained to implement an innovative best practice evidence–based model, supporting Hobsons Bay City Council to achieve its goals in supporting families and children to learn and grow – focused on those who need it most. This project has affected systemic change in developing a lasting and deep connection to the supported playgroup facilitation area of Council’s Family and Children’s Services, which targets families who are experiencing multiple vulnerabilities. The work continues and program implementation has now been embedded in targeted outreach programs jointly funded by both the Hobsons Bay Libraries and Council’s Children’s Services Supported Playgroup area. The specific techniques appropriated for this project under the framework of the Abecedarian Approach are also being embedded in ‘business as usual practice’ for our other library based children’s early literacy programs hence taking both a universal and a place based approach to ongoing intervention.

The Victorian Public Library sector has benefitted already through the delivery of initial training and findings of this research and development project, delivering two training sessions. The training was well received and participants are asking for more. The sector is gaining leadership recognition in providing mentoring support and expertise to colleagues who wish to embark on such a mission as well. Other library services are seeking to utilize the research to develop and deliver localized programs and the sector is drawing on the initial findings to seek sponsorship support for either State wide or local interventions. More in depth training is required however to develop the expertise of children’s librarians as not only early literacy educators, and in the tested and tried Abecedarian Approach techniques, but as coaches well equipped to be mentors of parents, especially those who are experiencing vulnerabilities.

We look forward to the further development of this work being seen in development of the role of children’s librarians supporting parents as first early literacy teachers, and in longitudinal outcomes over time. We will watch with keen interest for evidenced impact particularly in our municipality through a systematic change of practice in engaging our most vulnerable in their greatest window of language and early literacy development opportunity – the early years.


Little Big Book Club (S.A.) & Arts SA et al. (2006). It’s rhyme time. The Big Book Club Inc for the Little Big Book Club, Norwood, South Australia

Making cities stronger: public library contributions to local economic development (2007), Urban Libraries Council, Chicago, USA.


McQuillan 1997; Gottfried, Fleming & Gottfried, 1998; Pack 2000; Allington 2002; Krashen 2002 in Ross, C.S.,


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Appendix 1

Training Presentation Slides
Books for baby and me…

an early literacy development program

Making a difference in cycles of disadvantage:
Enabling and fostering early literacy practices, for parents and their very young children experiencing vulnerable circumstances in the geographical area of Western Metropolitan Melbourne.

Paula Kelly Paull, 2016

Program of activity

• September PD session 1 Focus on the research and introduction to the Abecedarian Approach, introductory survey
• October PD session 2 Focus on the Approach, program planning and practice
• Books to be provided to families including It’s Rhyme Time booklet
• Parent group sessions to be delivered throughout October and November – observations and diary dates confirmation (6 weeks)
• December & Jan 2017 – Survey and reflections/data analysis
• Early 2017 programs
• Research findings collated and recommendations for future

A pathway of opportunity

• Literacy and communication skills are vital
• Literacy is a human right
• Early childhood is the most important window
• Early introduction to literacy through songs, rhymes and stories and rich language supports these skills
• Reading to babies and sharing books is one of the most effective ways of enhancing language development in the young child

Critical Links

The links between literacy, the ability to read and write the printed word, school performance, self esteem and adult life chances have been widely documented… poor literacy skills are associated with generally lower education, employment, health and social outcomes as well as being linked to high rates of welfare dependence and teenage parenting.

Centre for Community Child Health – Let’s Read Program Literature review

Why are we working on this?

• National Year of Reading - 46% Australians not at Level 3 Literacy standards (ABS Yearbook Australia, 2012)
• Hobsons Bay AECD rankings
• More than ¼ parents not aware of the importance of sharing books and reading with young children (Hill, 2011)
Heckman (2008) Nobel Prize winning economist: 
Return on Investment in the first three years

Heckman (2013) equation “…investment in, and development of, and sustaining of early childhood nurturing interventions from birth to five …(=) more capable productive and valuable workforce that pays dividends to society for years to come.”
(Heckman in Let’s Read Literature Review, 2013)

The power of literacy…

To be literate is to gain self-confidence. To be literate is to become self-assertive. To be literate is to become politically conscious and critically aware, and to demystify social reality.

Literacy enables people to read their own world and to write their own history.

Image: The Letter, Elise Hurst, 2010

Literacy as a human right

• Basic education recognised as a basic right in 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
• United Nation Convention Rights of the Child (1989) included key rights to
  – Education
  – Literacy and
  – Play
• Convention offers support in library policies and practice (Koren, 2003:1)

International Research has shown that brain development and receptivity is greater in the first three years of life than at any other time in human development.

Window of opportunity 0-3years

• 50% language learned by three (Hamer, 2011)
• Window focus of 3 months to 3 years peaking at 9 months (Nelson, 2000 and Mendelson, 2009)
• Language modeling and development compromised in communities experiencing vulnerabilities (Hart & Risley, 1995)

Critical phases of brain development

Synapse Formation in the Development Brain

Bookstart Early Years Info Pack Oct 2005, UK.
Infant brain development

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEYXo0f6d&feature=player_detailpage

The importance of the early years: research

- Children who began school with low achievement in literacy (concepts about print, phonemic awareness) --- often living in high poverty areas
- Children with low levels of literacy prior to school had difficulty catching up without extensive parental/adult support
- Learning in the preschool years impacts on later learning
- The influence of the years before school for literacy development is clearly documented

- Unequal access to rich preschool learning opportunities exacerbates wider social and educational inequalities
- Early years education makes a difference to children’s cognitive attainment and subsequent social outcomes
- Brain-based research articulates the importance of the early years of learning on brain development and later academic achievement
- Providing early years education is a better investment than paying for remediation programs later in life for problems rooted in poor early development.

AEDI

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<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>Suburbs</th>
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<th>Communication% Vuln</th>
<th>One or more domains% Vuln</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Books for Baby and Me... a research and development project

Sharing a love of reading, rhyming, singing and talking with your baby is one of the best things you can do to give your baby a head start in life.

Research into early brain development shows that a child’s ability to learn and to develop pre-literacy skills is greater if they are read to from birth.

www.betterbeginnings.com.au
Family at centre of development

- Bronfenbrenner’s social ecological perspective... Headstart USA (1979, 1989 in Brock & Rankin, 2016:3)

- Child at the centre of concentric circles of influence with the family in the immediate micro system surrounding the child, with a pathway of opportunity provided by interactions with professionals, community services, and early childhood services. https://au.pinterest.com/pin/367184175846100931/

Building social capital

- Attentive and responsive adults build the child’s social interactions and reinforce and echo the child’s own interactions (Halpern 2004: 295).

- US Head Start and UK Sure Start intended to help parents to support their children (Brock & Rankin, 2016: 8)

Young Readers Centre, Library of Congress

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.

Rachel Carson

Parents involvement with Early Literacy and home environment

- Children with active involvement of parents in early literacy experiences positively impact future literacy achievement and educational success (Hannon and Nutbrown, 2001)

- Number of books available, frequency of visits to library, availability of toys, parents teaching a range of activities – important indicators of vocabulary at two years of age (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010)

- Family literacy programs that focus on both parents and children increase literate environments at home (European Commission, 2012)

- Earlier the onset of beginning to share books – positive effect (Dunst, Simkus & Handby, 2012)

- Shared reading also supports critical emotional connection between parent and child (Peifer and Perez, 2011, Bowby, 1988).

Language acquisition relies on relationships

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WO_CB2rsq7T&feature=related
**Relationships at the centre**

- Victorian Early Years Learning and development Framework:
  - Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
  - Partnerships

(Reading and Literacy for All Early Years Professional Development for Victorian Public Libraries, 2016: 7-8)

---

**Role of the Library**

- IFLA – providing range of materials and activities to families, (Guidelines for Library Services to Babies and Toddlers, 2007)
- State of Victoria’s Literacy for All Framework (2015) has a focus on early literacy and the role of librarians in fostering early literacy practices that support the development of vulnerable children.
- Shared space, shared resources, celebrating diversity (Maynard, 2011).
- Librarians encourage parents to bring their children to the library and experience multimodal scaffolded learning experiences.

---

**Early Language acquisition**

- Quality language development is the key to literacy (Brock & Rankin, 2016: 34)
- Young children and carers interactions are critical
- Parents facilitate language acquisition, and scaffold children’s learning accommodating their language use to promote attentive listening, understanding and reproduction of sounds, words and sentences (Bruner, 1983)

---

**Ability to develop language**

- Immersion in rich environments - word, sounds, rhythm, verbal and non-verbal expression from birth.
- Children can usually:
  0-3 months - turn head to speaker, smile
  4-6 months - interested in sounds and responsive to changes in tone of voice
  7-12 months - live peek a boo, follow commands, understand questions, recognize labels- mummy, dog, milk, shop.
  12 months - point to pictures, follow commands, understand questions and utter single words
  18 months - children have a vocab of approx 5 – 20 words mainly nouns
  Language development starts to explode from here until 6 years – 6000 words and comprehend 14,000 words.
Creating readers

TWO essential conditions:
1/ Print filled environments and adults reading these materials
2/ Caring adult to introduce child to the joy of reading and books (Brock and Rankin, 2016: 17)

BOOKS IN the home matter! Better language development, more enjoyment of reading (Kelly & McKerracher, ABS Yearbook Australia, 2012:26)

Developing skills for reading

• Shared closeness
• Modeling apprentices children into reading
• Talk about the text and pictures…
• Parentese and home language
• Providing a framework for action to support parents as first teacher…

Dear Zoo

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awPCJQ5zOCw&sns=em

Rhyme, Rhythm, Sound and Song!

• Children need to hear as much language as possible
• Rich language through use of picture books, poems, rhymes and songs (rare words and rhythm and repetition)
• Training children’s hearing and listening skills shown by how the brain encodes speech through brain imagining (Goswami, 2012)

Literacy value of baby bounce activities and rhyme, rhythm and repetition

• Love of books, spoken language, interaction
• Phonemic awareness: rhyme, alliteration words, syllable or beat.
• Vocabulary, more rare words than in everyday conversations
• The printed word has a message
• Babies are intellectually engaged

Free books

• Book choice
• Book handling
• Model turn taking
• Bookstart, Victorian Young Readers Program, Better Beginnings program
• Bookstart families 6 times more likely to be library members and parents felt more confident sharing books with their children (Wade & Moore, 1998)
• Better beginnings research – free books in the home, literacy support materials for parents positively affects reading habits (Barratt Pugh, 2010)
• Access to library materials and program provides a little bookshelf of selected titles and rhyme time booklet.

Research Design – overview diagram
Books for Baby and Me... An early literacy development program

Making a difference in cycles of disadvantage.
Enabling and fostering early literacy practices, for parents and their very young children experiencing vulnerable circumstances in the geographical areas of Western Metropolitan Melbourne

The Learning Game

On Early Brain Stimulation

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSbX-dJjmM

The Abecedarian Approach

In Australia, it is called…

3a Component 1

Language Priority

Elements of Language Priority

Language Priority: 3N Strategy
Component 2

Conversational Reading

- It goes back-and-forth, like a conversation
- It goes up steps

Conversational Reading

* SAY
* SHOW
* SEE

Books for Baby and Me ... a research and development project
And both of these babies,
as everyone knows,

and ten little toes,
Enriched Caregiving

Each routine or activity has a CARE component, an EMOTIONAL component, and an EDUCATIONAL component.
Component 4

LearningGames®

What the adult might say (the “Talk”)

One sentence explaining the activity

Picture showing appropriate position for adult and child

1 sentence telling why it is

Fuller, bullet-point description of what the teacher or parent does

A book that relates to the game

Example of a variation or more advanced version of the game
session plan #1

- welcome and introduction to program
  - including conversational reading, the 3S's and 3N's and why it's so important for their babies
- introduce it's Rhymetime
  first song — Hello
  second song — Open Shut Them
- introduce book — Ten Little Fingers & Ten Little Toes
  and read, demonstrating 3A techniques. Remind them about the 3S's and 3N's.
- sing This Little Piggy and Round and Round the Garden
  (change the word Piggy for another animal, if you have a predominately Muslim or Jewish audience)

session plan #1 (cont.)

- work with individual families if possible to coach them in techniques
- play Learning Game Kissing with Noses
  - Learning through play. More opportunities for bonding and the 3N's too!
- sing Goodbye song. See you next week!
- give parents both books.
  Remind them to practice conversational reading and enriched caregiving with their little ones at home
Session Plan #2

- Welcome and recap of program and technique
- First Song Hello, Second song Open shut them
- Introduce book It's a Little Baby
read, modelling 3A techniques. Remind parents about the 3S’s and 3N’s
- Sing If you’re happy and you know it
- Work with individual families/small groups
to coach them in techniques
- Sing Hey diddle diddle

Session Plan #2 (cont.)

- Play Learning Game Peek-a-Boo
Learning through play. More opportunities for bonding and the 3N’s too!
- Sing Goodbye song
- Give parents book.
Remind them to practice conversational reading and enriched caregiving with their little ones at home
Farewell. See you next time
- https://www.panmacmillan.com/it-s-a-little-baby-song

Session Plan #3

- Welcome and recap of program and techniques
- First Song: Hello, Second song Open shut them
- Introduce book Let’s Go Visiting
read, modelling 3A techniques. Remind parents re 3S’s & 3N’s
- Sing Five Little Ducks
- Work with individual families
to coach them in techniques
- Sing Hickory Dickory Dock or Old MacDonald

Session Plan #3 (cont.)

- Play learning game of Ride the Horsie (to This is the Way the Farmer Rides)
Learning through play. More opportunities for bonding and for the 3N’s too!
- Goodbye song
- Give parents book.
Remind them to practice conversational reading with their little ones at home
Session Plan #4
- Welcome and recap of program and techniques
- First Song: Hello, Second song Open shut them
- Introduce book Baby Days and read, modelling 3A techniques. Remind parents re 3S’s & 3N’s
- Sing Ride a Cock Horse
- Work with individual families to coach them
- Sing Head Shoulders Knees and Toes

Session Plan #4 (cont.)
- Play learning game of Faces
- Learning through play. More opportunities for bonding and for the 3N’s and the 3R’s
- Goodbye song
- Give parents book. Remind them to practice conversational reading and enriched caregiving with their little ones at home

Session Plan #5
- Welcome and recap of program and techniques
- First Song: Hello, Second song Open shut them
- Introduce book Nibbler and read, modelling 3A techniques. Remind parents re 3S’s & 3N’s
- Sing Incy Wincy Spider
- Work with individual families to coach them

Session Plan #5 (cont.)
- Sing 1,2,345, Once I caught a fish alive
- Play learning game of Sit, Turn and Reach. Learning through play. More opportunities for bonding and for the 3N’s
- Goodbye song
- Give parents the book. Remind them to practice conversational reading and enriched caregiving with their little ones at home
Session Plan #6

- Welcome and recap of program and techniques
- First Song: Hello, Second song: Open shut them
- Introduce book Noisy Day and read, modelling 3A techniques. Remind parents about the 3S’s & 3N’s
- Sing The Wheels on the Bus
- Work with individual families to coach them in techniques
- Sing Row Row Row Your Boat

Session Plan #6 (cont.)

- Play learning game of Looking for Sounds. Learning through play. More opportunities for bonding and for the 3N’s and the 3R’s
- Goodbye song
- Give parents book. Remind them to practice conversational reading and enriched caregiving with their little ones at home
- Farewell. Tell them that next time will be with the family support staff and all the usual thanks and praise

3S Strategy: Abecedarian Approach Australia

See
“Wombat. See, here’s a wombat.”

Show
“Show me the wombat.”

Say
“What’s this animal called?

3N Strategy: Abecedarian Approach Australia

Notice: “I notice you have picked up two green blocks.”

Nudge: “Can you see any other green blocks?”

Narrate: “You have found three other green blocks. Now you are lining them up in a row. It looks like a road.”
3R Strategy: Abecedarian Approach Australia

Read and talk about a Learning Games activity. Try it out with a co-worker or a child. Think about and discuss what happened.

Read
Role play
(or play)
Reflect

Our Goals: Abecedarian Approach Australia

Language Priority
each time we interact
Enriched Caregiving
in all routines of the day
Conversational Reading
every day, for every child
LearningGames
every day, for every child

Books for Baby and Me...
An early literacy development program

https://3a.education.unimelb.edu.au/3a-resources

https://3a.education.unimelb.edu.au/
**“Serve and Return”**

- Shapes brain architecture
- Infant or young child babbles, gestures, or cries
- Adult responds appropriately with eye contact, words, hugs
- Builds neural connections for communication/social skills
- Like tennis, volleyball or Ping-Pong

http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/serve-and-return/

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**FIND: Filming Interactions to Nurture Development**

- Video coaching program
- Strengthens positive interactions between carers and kids
- Uses select clips of adults engaging with children
- Reinforces developmentally supportive interactions
- Emphasises caregivers’ strengths and capabilities

https://youtu.be/4C9klZgnM04

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**Why read to our babies?**

Put language at the top of your list of things to do with your child.

Language Priority can turn an ordinary event into a chance for learning.

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**Human Brain Development**

Age 0 – 3 is crucial to development of intelligence

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Books for Baby and Me ... a research and development project

Open, Shut Them

[ ] Open, [E7] shut them
[ ] Open, [E7] shut them
[ ] Give a little clap
[ ] Open, [E7] shut them
[ ] Lay them in your [A] lap

Repeat chord pattern for verses two & three

Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes

[D] Head, shoulders, knees and toes
Knees and toes
[ ] Head, shoulders, knees and [A] toes
Knees and toes and

[D] Eyes and ears and [G] mouth and nose
[ ] Head, shoulders, knees and [D] toes
Knees and toes

If You’re Happy and You Know It

If you’re [A] happy and you know it
Clap your [E] hands
If you’re happy and you know it
Clap your [A] hands
If you’re [D] happy and you know it
And you [A] really want to show it
If you’re [E] happy and you know it
Clap your [A] hands

The core of early learning

The A becedarian A pproach places a priority on children’s language acquisition, because language is a proven core of early learning and school readiness. Language allows children to organise their thoughts and explain their ideas; it gives them the means to express their feelings; and it gives them the tools they need to interact with peers and adults. Language also allows the child to use private speech, talking aloud to themselves to work through a problem or regulate their emotions. As a child gets older they internalise this speech so that it is no longer out loud but still a means of guiding their behaviour.

If you’re happy and you know it
Clap your [A] hands
If You’re Happy and You Know It

If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands
If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands
If you’re happy and you know it then you really ought to show it
If you’re happy and you know it stamp your feet…

Building Vocabulary

Knowing meanings of words, including words for things, concepts, feelings and ideas

Conversational Reading

Conversational reading goes back-and-forth
Use the 3S strategy. Ask your child to respond on 3 levels.

Learning Games

Let your child match shapes and sizes.
Let your child match colours.

Books for Baby and Me ... a research and development project
Balls: One Ball, Two Balls, Red Balls, Blue Balls

- Up ball / Down ball / High ball / Low ball
- Front ball / Back ball
- Top ball / Bottom ball
- Left ball / Right ball (do mirror image to crowd’s left and right if facing them)
- Body parts (“chin ball”, “nose ball”, “knee ball”—touch ball to part)
- COLOURS (“up BLUE ball”)
- Extension: two ball, three ball, etc. Touch balls together in groups of two, three, etc

Learning Games—Balls: One Ball, Two Balls, Red Balls, Blue Balls

Listen to the librarian, and lift your ball in that direction!
(Up, down, top, bottom, front, back, left, right, high, low, colours…)

Litarcy: develops simple vocabulary like ‘up’ and ‘down’ through repetition and linking to meaningfull action

Rolling All Around

[A] Rolling all around in a boat on the sea
[E7] Roll, roll, roll, roll, [A] roll along with me
I’m rolling all around in a boat on the sea

[E7] Rolly polly, rolly polly, [A] roll

Learning Games—Rolling All Around

Rolling all around in a boat on the sea
Roll, roll, roll, roll along with me
I’m rolling all around in a boat on the sea
Rolly polly, rolly polly, roll

I’m bobbing up and down in a boat on the sea...

Tubes: ‘Posting’ Activity


- “Babies love posting objects down a tube.
- For a baby who can sit, hold the tube ready for them to post the ball. This is a fun way to learn placement skills and understand cause and effect.
- For babies who are learning to crawl, chasing the ball as it pops out the end of the tube is great motivation.
- Repeat simple words that match your baby’s actions e.g. “put in”. Repetition helps baby learn words and focus their attention.
- Watching the ball disappear down the tube then reappear helps baby to learn that the ball still exists even when they can’t see it (this is known as object permanence).
- Choose balls large enough to not be a choking hazard.”

Learning Games—Tubes: “Post” Objects in Cardboard Tubes

- Use balls, pom poms or toys.
- Hold the tube for baby, or fix it with tape.
- Chase the ball at the other end.
- Repeat simple action words to build vocabulary and focus.
- Helps baby to understand cause and effect.
- Helps baby understand “object permanence” (the idea that out-of-view objects still exist).
Activity: Cardboard Tubes

• Look through tubes at each other
• Whisper/talk gently in baby’s ear – alternate ears
• Make funny noises through tube
• Talk or blow raspberries onto tummy so baby can feel the vibrations
• Hide scarf in tube then pull it out – magic!
• Hide scarf in tube and let baby pull it out
• “Cardboard tubes (from lunch wrap) make a safe bat for hitting balloons whilst toddlers are still learning to aim.
• Cardboard rolls also make perfect drum sticks to go with the saucepan ‘drum kit’. Being light, they are easy and safe for toddlers to control (and slightly easier on the ears than spoons!!!). They also make great didgeridoo!”


Tubes: Peek-A-Boo

Peek-a-boo
I see you
I see you
I see your button nose
I see your tiny toes
[A] I [E] see [A] you
[A] Peek- [E] a- [A] boo

Peek-A-Boo!

(Tune: Frere Jacques)

Peek-a-boo, peek-a-boo
I see you! I see you!
I see your button nose
I see your tiny toes
I see you! Peek-a-boo!

Cover face with hands two times
Paint to self and then child
Paint to nose
Paint to toes
Cover face with hands two times

Tubes: A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea
To [D] see what [E7] he could [A] see, see, see
And all that he could see, see, see
Was the [D] bottom of the [E] deep blue [A] sea, sea, sea

A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea
To see what he could see, see, see
And all that he could see, see, see
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea
Tubes: Everybody Do This

YouTube: https://youtu.be/Ee_S-HzvBew

- SING THROUGH TUBES
- Mention KAZOOS, didgeridoos, drumsticks

[A] Everybody do this, do this, do this
Everybody do this [D] just [E7] like [A] me

Repeat chord pattern throughout

- Everybody singing...
- Everybody drumming...
- Toot-toot-toot-toot toot-toot...
- Rolling, tapping, passing, peeping, etc, etc

Tubes: I Went to Visit a Farm One Day

MAKE ANIMAL SOUNDS INTO TUBE

[A] I went to visit a farm one day
I [A7] saw a cow across the way

Tubes: Zoom, Zoom, Zoom

- “You can paint the end of tubes and use them as stamps for a fun painting activity. Or, let the kids imagination run wild as they turn old tubes into didgeridoos, binoculars or rockets!”


EverydayDo This

Everybody do this, do this, do this
Everybody do this just like me
Everybody singing...
Everybody drumming...
Toot-toot-toot-toot toot-toot...

I Went to Visit a Farm One Day

I went to visit a farm one day
I saw a cow across the way
And what do you think I heard it say?
Moo, moo, moo

(Repeat with different animals)

Zoom Zoom Zoom

Zoom zoom zoom
We’re going to the moon
Zoom zoom zoom
We’re going very soon
5, 4, 3, 2, 1
BLAST OFF!!!!
Tubes: Did you Ever See a Fishy?

Did you [A] ever see a fishy, a [E7] fishy, a [A] fishy
Did you ever see a fishy swim [E7] this way and [A] that?
Swim [E7] this way and [A] that way
And [E7] this way and [A] that way?
Did you ever see a fishy swim [E7] this way and [A] that?

• After singing the song, pretend the tube is a fishing rod.
  Cast your line way out in to the water, feel a tug from a fishy, and reel it in!

Tubes: Build It Up...

• At home: Paint tubes, cut slits, and use for building
[D] Build it up, build it up, build it [A7] high
[A7] Build it up, up, up into the [D] sky
Build it [D7] up, build it up, build it [G] higher
Build it [D] up, up, up, up, [A7] up into the [D] sky

Tubes: Oh, We Can Play on the Big Bass Drum

• Use tube as drumstick, baton for triangle, baton for xylophone, etc

Did You Ever See a Fishy?

(Tune: Did You Ever See a Lassie?)

Did you ever see a fishy, a fishy, a fishy
Did you ever see a fishy swim this way and that?
Swim this way and that way
And this way and that way?
Did you ever see a fishy swim this way and that?
Yes I’ve seen a fishy, a fishy, a fishy...

Build It Up, Build It Up, Build It High

Build it up, build it up, build it high
Build it up, up, up into the sky
Build it up, build it up, build it higher
Build it up, up, up, up into the sky

Oh, We Can Play on the Big Bass Drum

Oh, we can play on the big bass drum
And this is the way we do it
Boom, boom, boom goes the big bass drum
And that’s the way we do it
Add more instruments:
• Triangle (ting, ting, ting)
• Xylophone (dong, dong, dong)
**Books for Baby and Me … a research and development project**

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**Tubes: Take You Riding in My Car**
- Use the tube as a car and “drive it around” on its side.
- Hold it towards you, low, like a microphone, and beep the end circle like a car horn.
- Swish it back and forth like windscreen wipers.

**Tubes: My Hands Are Passing**

**Tune: My Hands Are Clapping**

**BENEFIT:** helps children to reinforce hand-eye coordination.

**VARIATIONS:** pass in front of body, behind back, under legs/knees, over top of head, etc. [loop song]

**[D]** My hands are passing, **[A7]** passing, **[D]** passing
My hands are passing **[A7]** just like **[D]** this (repeat)

My hands are clapping...

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**Cardboard Tube Projects for Home**

- Stamps
- Pom Pom Drop
- Pom Pom Colour Sorter
- Giant Beads

Suggest to parents to search for ideas on the Net with:
- www.google.com/images
- www.pinterest.com
Enriched Caregiving

Each routine or activity of the day can include care, emotion, and learning.

Getting up in the morning
Getting dressed or undressed
Dressing and undressing
Washing hands and face
Eating and insomnious
Going to the bathroom
Taking a bath
Doing the laundry
Cleaning up the house
Taking a bath
Going to bed at night

You can help your child learn during all these times.

Enriched Caregiving—Emotion, Care, Learning: These Are Baby’s Fingers

These are baby’s fingers
(touch feather to fingers)

These are baby’s toes
(touch feather to toes)

This is baby’s belly button
(touch feather to tummy)

Round and round it goes!
(circle tummy with feather)

Enriched Caregiving—Emotion, Care, Learning: Round and Round the Garden

Round and round the garden
(Trace a circle on your arm with a feather)

Like a teddy bear
One step, two step
(Walk the feather up your arm)

Tickle you under there
(Gently tickle your child under arm or chin with feather)

Round and round the haystack
(Circle opposite hand)

Goes the little mouse
One step, two step
Into his little house

Enriched Caregiving—Emotion, Care, Learning: This Little Piggy

This little piggy went to market
This little piggy stayed home
This little piggy had roast beef
This little piggy had none

And this little piggy went
“Wee wee wee” all the way home
(Starting with the big toe, tickle each toe/finger with the feather in turn. On the last line, tickle all over with the feather.)

Language Priority

Use the 3T Strategy

[ A ] You put your left arm in
You put your left arm out
You put your [ A7 ] left arm in
And you [ E7 ] shake it all about!
You do the hokey pokey
And you turn around
And that’s what it’s all [ A ] about!
Oh, the hokey pokey!
Whoa, the hokey [ E7 ] pokey!
[ A ] Oh the hokey [ D ] pokey
And [ E7 ] that’s what it’s all [ A ] about!
Hokey Pokey

You put your baby in
You put your baby out
You rock/wriggle them all about!
You do the hokey pokey
And you turn around
And that’s what it’s all about!

Oh, the hokey pokey!
Whoa, the hokey pokey!
Oh the hokey pokey, And that’s what it’s all about!

We’re Going Up

We’re going up
We’re going up
As [A] high as we can go
We’re [D] going down
We’re [E] going down
We’re [D] going [E] way down [A] low
[E] Up up up up up up up

A Smooth Road

We’re going down a smooth road
A smooth road, a smooth road (x2)
We’re going down a rough road
A rough road, a rough road
We’ve going down a bumpy road
A bumpy road, a bumpy road…
A Pothole!

Active Literacy

Egg Shakers

Egg Shakers: Shake Your Egg and Follow Me

- http://www.nancymusic.com/SOM/2012/shake-your-egg.htm
- VARIATION:
  You can do this song sitting with the children following you around the room, or in a circle (you could replace the words “follow me,” with “along with me”).
- Use the Rhymetime tub egg shakers
Shake Your Egg and Follow Me
By Nancy Stewart
(Tune: London Bridge is Falling Down)
Shake your egg and follow me, follow me, follow me
Shake your egg and follow me
Now put your egg on your head
Repeat, putting egg on:
- toes
- tummy
- nose
- chin
- a friend

Visit www.nancymusic.com to download this FREE children’s song at home!

Everybody Do This
Everybody do this, do this, do this
Everybody do this just like me
Everybody play loud, play loud, play loud
Everybody play loud just like this
Everybody play soft...
Everybody play fast...
Everybody play slow...

Visit www.nancymusic.com for more FREE children’s song ideas!

Why Use Puppets?
- Listening to puppets chatter to you will help your child learn the art of conversation – that is: first one person talks, then the other responds.
- It’s also great tactile stimulation and lots of fun!

Puppets: Little Creature in a Can
- https://youtu.be/LL2WpC8dDRc
- Variations: little bunny in a hat; little bear in a tent; etc.
- I have changed “he” to “it” for gender neutrality.
- INSTRUCTIONS: hide puppet inside fist (“can”) and pop out on “yes it will!”, then look left, right, etc.
**Little Creature in a Can**

Little creature in a can
Sitting so still
Will it come out?
Yes it will
It looks to the left
It looks to the right
It looks straight ahead
And pops out of sight!

**Puppets: Peek-A-Boo**

Tune: *Frere Jacques*

**TIP:**

[A] Peek-a-boo
Peek-a-boo
I see you
I see you
I see your button nose
I see your tiny toes
[A] I [E] see [A] you
[A] Peek- [E] a - [A] boo

Peek-a-boo “provides a simple play mechanism that aids [the child] in the journey to become a separate, autonomous little person that is emotionally secure and ready to take on the next major steps in exploring the world.” It “assist[s] young children in negotiating [two] major developmental tasks that are of primary importance during the first three years of life”: object constancy and separation-individuation. See notes for more.

**Scarf in Storytime**

Scarf can be a fun and versatile prop in storytime and at home. Here are some ways I like to use scarves in storytime:

- Play peekaboo. It is truly amazing how much children, even preschoolers, love playing peekaboo. Tuck a scarf behind your back, lower the ends of the scarf, and then sit still. Children will inevitably try to look for you. When you pop your head up or down, they will lay their hands out flat to feel for you. You can even ask them if they think you are hiding behind a big blanket.

*Tip:* To make it easier for children, you can ask them if they think you are hiding behind a big blanket.

- Play with scarves. Scarves can be used to create various shapes, such as circles or triangles. You can ask children to help you make these shapes and then use them to create different stories.

*Tip:* You can ask children to help you make these shapes and then use them to create different stories.

- Use scarves as a prop for storytelling. You can use scarves to represent different characters in a story. For example, you can use one scarf to represent a cat and another scarf to represent a dog.

*Tip:* You can use scarves to represent different characters in a story. For example, you can use one scarf to represent a cat and another scarf to represent a dog.

**Scarf in Storytime**

**Separation-Individuation:** “the process by which an infant begins to differentiate himself from his mother (or the primary caretaker).”

**Object Constancy:** “the toddler’s ability to maintain a sense of mommy even when she is not there […] in both a literal, physical sense, and then later in a more psychic, emotional way.”

**Scarves: Everybody Do This**


**BENEFIT TO MENTION:** helps children...

[A] Everybody do this, do this, do this

Everybody do this [D] just [E7] like [A] me

*Repeat chord pattern throughout*
**Everybody Do This**

Everybody waving, waving, waving  
Everybody waving just like this  
Everybody shaking, shaking, shaking  
Everybody shaking just like this  
Everybody twirling, twirling, twirling  
Everybody twirling just like this  
Everybody peeking, peeking, peeking  
Everybody peeking just like this

**Scarves: Put a Spot Over Here**

- Imagination...

[E7] Put a [A] spot over here  
And a [E7] spot over there  
Put a [A] spot on your ear  
And a [E7] spot on your hair  
There’s a [A] lot of little spots in the [D] air everywhere  

**Put a Spot Over Here**

Put a spot over here,  
And a spot over there,  
Put a spot on your ear  
And a spot on your hair,  
There’s a lot of little spots in the air everywhere  
It’s a spotty kind of day!  

Put a stripe, put a swirl etc.

**Scarves: Scarves Are Falling Down**

[D] Scarves are [A] falling [D] down  
[D] Scarves are [A] falling [D] down  
[D] Scarves are [A] falling [D] down

**Scarves Are Falling Down**

Scarves are falling down  
Scarves are falling down  
Flitter, flutter, flitter, flutter  
Scarves are falling down

**Scarves: Wave Your Scarves**

Tune: Clap Your Hands (Clap Them So)

**BENEFIT TO MENTION:** helps children to...

[D] Wave your scarves  
[A] Wave them so  
[G] Wave them fast  
[D] And wave them slow  
[D7] Wave up high  
[G] And wave down low  
[D] Wave your scarves [A] with [D] me
Wave Your Scarves (Tune: Clap Your Hands)
Wave your scarves
Wave them so
Wave them fast
And wave them slow
Wave up high
And wave down low
Wave your scarves with me
Appendix 2

Abecedarian Approach Slides
Abecedarian Approach: Giving children a head start

Professor Joseph Sparling

What does it mean?

abecedarian (əˈbɛsədərēən) noun, adjective

one learning the rudiments of something (as the alphabet) Etymology: Middle English abecedary, from Medieval Latin abecedarium, alphabet, from Late Latin, neuter of abecedarius of the alphabet, from the letters a + b + c + d
• **Learning Games:** Educators daily engage every child in at least 1 interactive game (individually for every child under age 3, and individually or in pairs of children age 3 and 4).

• **Conversational Reading:** Educators use the 3S strategy to interactively read at least 1 book every day to every child (individually to every child under age 3, and with pairs of children age 3 and 4).

• **Enriched Caregiving:** Educators use the 3N strategy. They encourage children to practice skills (e.g., cooperating, listening, counting, colour recognition) during care routines.

All 3 elements of the Abecedarian Approach Australia are shared with parents.
## Abecedarian research studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Randomized Samples</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Duration of Program</th>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Oldest age of follow-up</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abecedarian 1</td>
<td>Chapel Hill, NC</td>
<td>111 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 5 years</td>
<td>Center + social work + home visits + health care</td>
<td>age 30</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 2</td>
<td>Chapel Hill, NC</td>
<td>64 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 5 years</td>
<td>Center + social work + educational home visits + health care</td>
<td>age 21</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 3</td>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>138 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 4</td>
<td>New Haven, CT</td>
<td>112 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 5</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 6</td>
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<td>100 children</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 8</td>
<td>Little Rock, AK</td>
<td>128 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 9</td>
<td>Dallas, TX</td>
<td>137 children</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 10</td>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>131 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 11 (Cerebral Palsy Study)</td>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>48 children</td>
<td>Age 1 to 2 years</td>
<td>Parent training for home intervention</td>
<td>age 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abecedarian 12 (Orphanage Study 1)</td>
<td>Iasi, Romania</td>
<td>65 children</td>
<td>Age 1 to 2 years</td>
<td>Home (small group in orphanage)</td>
<td>age 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abecedarian 13 (Orphanage Study 2)</td>
<td>Iasi, Romania</td>
<td>104 children</td>
<td>Age 2 to 3 years</td>
<td>Home (small group in orphanage)</td>
<td>age 3</td>
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<td>USA, national</td>
<td>2,430 parents</td>
<td>Age 3 to 4 years</td>
<td>Preschool + daily parent education groups</td>
<td>age 5</td>
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<td>Abecedarian 15 (Massachusetts Family Child Care Study)</td>
<td>Massachusetts, statewide</td>
<td>150 family childcare educators</td>
<td>2 years (between Birth to 5 yrs)</td>
<td>Family day care homes</td>
<td>educator data only</td>
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### Infant Health and Development Program (IHDP)

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<th>Location</th>
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<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>138 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Haven, CT</td>
<td>112 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx, NY</td>
<td>138 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>101 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami, FL</td>
<td>100 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Rock, AK</td>
<td>128 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas, TX</td>
<td>137 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>131 children</td>
<td>Birth to age 3 years</td>
<td>Center + educational home visits</td>
<td>age 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### National Geographic Broadcast Video

A 2007 National Geographic program on brain development featured the Abecedarian Approach

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSbX-dJMjmM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSbX-dJMjmM)
3A gives the child experiences in the *basic rules* of learning

**Remember the yellow blocks in the video?**

- 2 the same and 1 different
- Does this contain a basic rule of learning?
- Why is it an easy way to begin matching?

---

**Post-high school education for teen mothers whose children were in the Abecedarian Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Group</th>
<th>Abecedarian Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Years Later</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Years Later</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Years Later</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Important and rapid cognitive growth happens very early in life.

If we wait until age 3 or 4 to enroll the most vulnerable children, they will enter far behind.

“Children who depend most on good schooling for academic growth are the least likely to receive it. If school improvement begins early in life and if sustained, the most disadvantaged children stand to benefit the most.”


Ramey et al., (1992), *Pediatrics*
• Lift to 40 per cent the proportion of people aged between 25 and 34 who hold a bachelor degree by 2025; and

• Increase to 20 per cent the proportion of students from low SES backgrounds enrolled in higher education by 2020.

Educational attainment:
percent university attendance

At age 21, almost three times as many individuals in the treated group (39.5%) compared to the control group (13.7%) had attended, or were still attending, a 4-year university.

\[ \chi^2(1, N = 104) = 6.78, p < .01 \]

• Fewer symptoms of depression (p<.03) at age 21

• Healthier life styles. The odds of reporting an active lifestyle in young adulthood were 3.92 times greater compared to the control groups

• A significant treatment-related reduction in reports of recently using marijuana (18% vs. 39% for the controls, p<.05)

• A significant reduction in teen parenthood (26% compared with 45% of controls, p<.05)

• Fewer risky behaviors (on the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System) at 18 years of age (p<.05)

## Early Years Learning Development Outcomes: Children are confident and involved learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is evident, for example, when children:</td>
<td>Sustains attention: 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 21, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 53, 61, 73, 76, 84, 94</td>
<td>Observes objects and events with curiosity: 101, 108, 109, 123, 132, 145, 146, 151, 153, 164, 170, 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• express wonder and interest in their environments;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shows persistence in approaching tasks: 108, 117, 133, 135, 152, 153, 154, 157, 187, 188, 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• are curious and enthusiastic participants in their learning;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• follow and extend their own interests with enthusiasm, energy and concentration;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• participate in a variety of rich and meaningful inquiry-based experiences;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• perseveres and experiences the satisfaction of achievement;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• persists even when they find a task difficult.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>This is evident, for example, when children:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• create and use representation to organise, record and communicate mathematical ideas and concepts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• make predictions and generalisations about their daily activities, aspects of the natural world and environments, using patterns they generate or identify, and communicate these using mathematical language and symbols.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• explore their environment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• manipulate objects and experiment with cause and effect, trial and error, and motion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• contribute constructively to mathematical discussions and arguments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learnt from these experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understands how objects can be used: 19, 25, 28, 38, 45, 52, 62, 63, 66, 73, 78, 82, 87, 89, 96, 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shows a beginning understanding of cause and effects: 9, 11, 16, 23, 41, 45, 51, 73, 86, 94, 97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shows a beginning understanding that things can be grouped: 25, 33, 34, 36, 39, 44, 51, 62, 63, 66, 73, 76, 77, 82, 83, 87, 93, 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses problem-solving strategies: 21, 30, 33, 34, 41, 48, 50, 52, 66, 68, 70, 91, 96, 98, 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Approaches problems flexibly: 104, 111, 116, 126, 129, 131, 140, 168, 172, 180, 190, 196</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explores cause and effect: 108, 129, 142, 146, 174, 190</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Classifies objects: 105, 116, 122, 124, 130, 137, 152, 154, 157, 163, 172, 180, 194</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Compares/ measures: 111, 122, 124, 127, 154, 190, 195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arranges objects in a series: 107, 124, 167, 172</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognises patterns and can repeat them: 112, 127, 167, 171, 187, 200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shows awareness of time concepts and sequence: 135, 142, 159, 161, 167, 187, 191</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shows awareness of position in space: 112, 117, 135, 146, 159, 161, 163</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses one-to-one correspondence: 115, 140, 160, 195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses numbers and counting: 115, 160, 188, 196</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A sample LearningGames activity

**Game 94. What’s Gone?**

**Age 30 mos.**

*Is this child learning the basic rules of learning?*
A sample Conversational Reading activity

Reading and using 3S with a 1 year old

Conversational Reading

A sample Enriched Caregiving activity

Meal time
Does this educator draw out child language through her questions?

Enriched Caregiving: Mealtime
Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)

A remote town, NT

Trip 1 Sponsored & funded by DEECD
Trip 2 Sponsored by SNAICC, funded by DEEWR
Play group at Gunbalanya

Regional visits in Victoria

October 24 – 28, 2011

- Lake Tyres MACS, Lake Tyres, VIC
- Gippsland & Eastern Gippsland Aboriginal Corporation, Bairnsdale, VIC

Multifunctional Aboriginal Children’s Services (MACS)
On an opt-in basis, train leaders within MACS and Family Day Care Schemes so that they can incorporate 3A to the locally desired degree

Visit MACS to follow up on training

Integrate 3A into the Masters of Teaching degree in Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE)

Establish a cadre of 3A trainers at MGSE to respond to 3A in-service training requests in Victoria and beyond

Prepare an ARC Linkage Grant application (for May 2012 submission) Department of Education and Training, NT is a committed partner

For future updates on 3A, visit:


Or send email to:

Joseph.Sparling@unimelb.edu.au
Appendix 3

Library services from birth to five
(Rankin & Brock, 2016) Chapter 3
Introduction

Paula Kelly

Abecedarian Approach

ABC! The City of Melbourne and the City of Literacy... It all starts with

Chapter 3
disadvantage in order to achieve better early literacy outcomes for the City's young children. This work will see the development of the City of Melbourne's Early Literacy Strategy and will incorporate many of the learning outcomes being realized by the E4Kids project in Australia. E4Kids follows a large cohort of three- to four-year-old children in Victorian and Queensland early education programmes, as well as examining outcomes for children who do not attend childcare, kindergarten and preschool. The programme goes to the heart of the home and intentionally looks at developing the parenting practices of parents as their child's first teachers. It aims to improve parent-child interactions and subsequent early language development and is framed by the Abecedarian Approach, as proposed by Professor Joseph Sparling (Sparling, 2011a).

The Abecedarian project
The Abecedarian project was a carefully controlled scientific study of the potential benefits of early childhood education for poor children, developed in the Abecedarian studies conducted in the University of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. These studies were a series of scientific investigations to test the power of a high-quality early childhood educational programme to improve the later school achievement of children from at-risk and under-resourced families. The intervention involved intensive learning and social-emotional support, starting in infancy and continuing until at least kindergarten entry, for children and their families. The long-term positive results of the first three of these randomized controlled trials are now known throughout the world and form a major part of the evidence that supports our current advocacy to ensure all young children receive high-quality learning opportunities in their homes and their early childhood programmes (Ramey, Sparling and Ramey, 2012).

The Abecedarian Approach
The Abecedarian Approach is a combination of teaching and learning enrichment strategies, demonstrating positive outcomes for disadvantaged families throughout 40 years of international research. There are additional and practical reasons for using the Abecedarian Approach:

- Many professionals and parents recognize that, even before training, they have been doing 'their version' of some of these strategies.
- Adults with substantially different educational backgrounds can successfully use the simple attractive printed materials, especially if they receive scaffolding and good training.
The role of technology in the design of new toys: A research and development project...

...and computer connection between parent and child (Peck and Perry, 2012). ... The window of opportunity: Early experiences.

This is complemented by other early head start programs already delivered in the community, such as Head Start, Early Head Start and Early Learning Centers.

The City Of Melbourne: A case study at the heart...

Melbourne's road to reading... parents and caregivers in the heart.

The information transmission-based development is understood by the early childhood education.

It is inspired by the process of stimulus resonance and continuous feedback on the progress of the child.

The child is influenced by the repeated exposure to the same information, which is then processed and remembered through the development of the brain.

In 1998, the City of Melbourne launched the program 'Read...'

The program focuses on the development of reading and writing skills through...
• It is fun, and makes the caregiving process enjoyable for both the adult and the child.

(Ramey, Sparling and Ramey, 2012)

The Abecedarian Approach focuses on an interventionist approach that promotes learning and positive educational and social outcomes for children who begin life 'at risk'. The intervention is simple but deep and is built on a tripod approach of three core components that all encourage caregiver-child interaction and language priority. This approach focuses on joint-attention activity between the enabling adult (parent or carer) and child. It is intentional, individual and focused in the way learning is facilitated. Inherently it aims to best position the child for later literacy development and a successful start to formal education.

Melbourne’s road to reading ... parents and carers at the heart

The City aims to implement support for parents to achieve best outcomes for their very young children. The proposal substantiates the development of early literacy competencies on the positive outcomes for children in their education, life choices and success. The programme focuses attention on early years education and disadvantaged parents as areas of potential for significant return on investment. It is supported by best practice in mediated learning and in methods of support and parenting education.

The implementation framework being developed is underpinned by the Abecedarian Approach, and its three core elements.

• Learning Games
• Conversational Reading
• Enriched Caringgiving

This is complemented by other early literacy programme strategies delivered in community settings. These include Baby Bounce and Rhyme Time sessions, as well as community publishing projects supported by the City’s Library Service in childcare, supported parent programmes, and maternal and child health environments.

The window of opportunity: early experiences

It is now recognized that 50% of language is learned by three years of age (Hamer, 2011). The young brain is most receptive to early experiences between three months and three years, peaking at about nine months of age for language development (Nelson, 2000; Mendelison, 2009). It is logical then, that the intent and focus of this programme should focus on this critical period of time in a child’s developmental journey. The focus on early literacy development has considerable importance for policy makers, as division and disadvantage in our society are mirrored in school readiness, school achievement and reading ability throughout a child’s schooling. It is in such windows of opportunity that the focus of this programme is nested. Human brain development is dependent on early experiences, and whilst the plasticity of the brain is accepted and there is ongoing growth in terms of the brain’s capacity for learning, there is dear evidence of the importance of acting in windows of opportunity (Ting-Fang, 2007).

A focus on oral language, nursery rhymes and reading behaviours

Book reading is well established as a universally useful activity to improve language development and literacy (Wells, 1986). The 'how to do it' focus included in the Abecedarian Approach of Conversational Reading is respectful and acknowledging of the use of home language in the ‘conversation’, as well as the need for an understanding of book knowledge to be developed as part of the journey to literacy. The ‘SEE, SHOW, SAY’ technique adopted in the Abecedarian Approach opens up a 'back and forth' approach to book reading. The effect of this method of shared book reading facilitates early expressive language and fosters children’s active participation in book-reading opportunities from a young age. Studies demonstrate that the more adults encourage sustained active participation by the child by interacting in an open-ended way, or expanding on the child’s utterances, the more the child’s language development is enhanced during book reading (Trivette, Dunst and Gorman, 2010).

Other reading experts emphasize all of the practices that include ‘reading with enthusiasm, responsiveness to children’s attempts to engage in looking at and playing with books, reading stories that include rhythms and rhymes, following children’s interests, reading children’s favorite stories and rhymes over and over, and engaging children in reading episodes just long enough to maintain engagement’ (Dunst, Simkus and Hamby, 2012, 5). Further to these outcomes in terms of reading modelling and behaviours, shared reading supports the social and emotional connection between parent and child (Pfeifer and Perez, 2011).

The role of technology as motivator/facilitator/access point

There are conflicting views about the use of technology in learning, with many educators claiming problems with shortened attention spans and distracted attention (Richel, 2012). Despite this, in this case the disruption that technology
Books for Baby and Me — a research and development project

The City of Philadelphia and the Abecedarian Approach

Community Initiatives

An Intervention Study Approach

The intervention approach provides the notion that care and education hand in hand experience, participants, or outcomes in the areas of the book are shared in the context of this project. An intervention study, looking at the outcomes and impacts on children's development and learning, is a research approach that seeks to understand the effects of specific interventions on children's development and learning. This approach allows researchers to control for variables and to isolate the effects of the intervention itself. The study design typically involves a control group and an intervention group, where the intervention group receives the intervention and the control group does not. The outcomes are then compared between the two groups to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. This approach is widely used in early childhood education research to evaluate the impact of programs on child outcomes such as language, socio-emotional development, and school readiness. The intervention study approach provides a rigorous method for assessing the effectiveness of early childhood programs and policies, allowing policymakers and practitioners to make evidence-based decisions.
comprehension are all communicated in a joyful and highly engaging way through the sharing of nursery rhymes and finger plays. Enriched Caregiving can be enhanced by the inclusion of nursery rhymes in everyday care alongside the turn-taking talk that accompanies the child's daily activities and nuanced interests. Musical play encourages the exploration of the environment of sound. From the first days, infants can discriminate sounds and initiate preferences. As infants do not understand words, sound is the basis of communication - consisting of intensity, pitch, rhythm and timbre. For the newborn and infant 'language is music', and experiences that foster this development of language through the medium of music and its rhyme, rhythm and repetition are important (Hart, Burt and Charlesworth, 1997). Nursery rhymes and interactive language games develop the underpinning skills required for reading, including vocabulary development, letter identification and phonological awareness (Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998).

Alongside this, the use of 'parenese' or babtalk will be encouraged in Enriched Caregiving situations, as this is the language through which babies learn best (Berstien Rainer, 2012). Culturally, this is relevant for most Westernized societies where it is accepted practice to directly interact with babies and small children. However, in some cultural contexts children are cared for, and spoken to, by other older siblings, or parents do not directly interact with them as a means of language socialization. Encouragement of this direct interaction between parent and baby is a design feature of the programme.

Quality Implementation Framework

Based on the work of Fixsen et al. (2005), a Quality Implementation Framework will be utilized in the selection of the host settings, creating the 'team's involved in the programme including the City of Melbourne's Maternal and Child Health nurses, Supported Parent Group leaders, Child Care workers, the Melbourne Library Service's Children's Librarians and the City's Neighbourhood Development Officers), establishing structure to keep the momentum of the programme going and also communicating the evaluation strategies to all involved.

Phase 1 - Initial considerations: host setting
1. Needs and resources assessment (target group identification and delivery setting)
2. Fitness assessment - current policy and practices in the setting
3. Capacity and readiness for change in the host setting
4. Possibility for adaptation of the primary proposed implementation
5. Obtaining explicit commitment from the critical stakeholders and fostering a supportive climate

6. Building general/organizational capacity
7. Staff recruitment to promote and advocate for the project
8. Effective induction and pre-implementation. City of Melbourne staff training utilizing the resources and expertise developed by the Children's Librarians from the Melbourne Library Service.

Phase 2 - Creating structure for the implementation
9. Creating a team - active within the host setting
10. Developing a plan of how to measure fidelity and dosage.

Phase 3 - Ongoing structure once implementation begins
11. Technical assistance
12. Process evaluation
13. Supportive feedback mechanisms.

Phase 4 - Evaluation

It is proposed that this Quality Implementation Framework (Fixsen et al., 2005) underpins the approach to the programme, and that a qualitative assessment paradigm as outlined be applied to the evaluation of the implementation.

Implementation overview

The programme outlined is currently in development, and proposed as a three-year programme. It is due for commencement in 2013 in the City of Melbourne.

Figure 3.2 provides a summary of the theoretical background framing and underpinning research, as well as the proposed implementation. The programme delivery and its impact will be measured and outcomes communicated in a report on the programme at its culmination in 2017.

Measuring impact

Given the nature of the programme, which is based on the implementation of a three-pronged approach to helping parents develop their skills to enhance their children's language development, the importance of fidelity measures cannot be underestimated in measuring the impact of such a programme (Durlak, 2010; Knoche et al., 2010). Scrutinizing the implementation as well as the outcomes is critical here to show clear indications of the efficacy of the proposed intervention, its time-frames, the effects of the actual, rather than just reported, adherence to
Conclusions

The City of Melbourne’s Fostering Emotional Competence Program aims to foster emotional resilience and healthy attachment among children. The program involves the integration of various strategies, including education, support, and intervention services, to enhance children's emotional well-being. The research indicates positive outcomes in various domains, such as reduced behavior problems, increased empathy, and improved social skills. The program's effectiveness underscores the importance of early intervention and the role of educators and caregivers in supporting children's emotional development. Further research is needed to explore long-term impacts and to refine the program's implementation strategies for optimal outcomes.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the participating families and educators for their cooperation and support. Special thanks to the program coordinators for their dedication and hard work. The insights and contributions from the112

References

[References]


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Appendix 4

ABS Year Book National Year of Reading 2012 (Kelly & McKerracher)
Books for Baby and Me … a research and development project
National Year of Reading

THE NATIONAL YEAR OF READING: LIBRARIES HELPING TO MAKE AUSTRALIA A NATION OF READERS

"It's easy to be blasé about reading and books – easy to take them for granted. Yet when I think about it, reading to me is the key to so much. The key to a wider reach of information, a path to learning, the joy of entertainment and the exciting of the imagination. It's just so much fun. [Footnote 1] William Moloney, Australian actor and author and patron of the National Year of Reading.

For the nearly half of Australia's adult population who lack minimum literacy skills, reading for pleasure may not be possible. This not only prevents them from partaking of one of life's great joys – a 'good read' – but means that they are unable to access sources of knowledge and learning through reading. The National Year of Reading is highlighting the joy of reading and the benefits of fostering a love of books. It is also bringing into focus the role of Australian libraries in working with communities to encourage reading and to promote literacy.

This article explores the aims of the 2012 National Year of Reading and how, through its activities, it is contributing to making Australia a nation of readers. The article also considers more generally how libraries contribute to this aim by fostering a reading culture, including among disadvantaged populations.

WHY READING AND WRITING MATTER

TVs in the 1960s, PCs in the 1980s, Internet in the 1990s, laptops, tablets and smartphones in the new centuries – work, study and leisure have become screen-based, online and virtual. Some may question the need for high levels of literacy in a digital age. However, the ability to read and write has never been so important. When you are communicating online, more than ever you need the ability to use words, the power of description, and the gift of storytelling. Whether it is a Facebook post, a text message or a daily blog, good use of words is an essential element of communication.

Literacy used to be just about prose, but it has developed new meanings for the 21st century. People now need document literacy for everyday, but vital, tasks such as reading and understanding occupational health and safety instructions in the workplace, or being able to fill out forms. Increasingly, they also need to be proficient in the use of information technology for communicating with others.

At its core, literacy is about the ability to use words, make meaning and access information in the written form. From a personal and societal perspective, it has come to mean the ability to function well in our increasingly complex lives. Nationally, a literate population is essential if Australia is to prosper in the global knowledge economy. Literacy also provides the gift of reading for pleasure – an engaging, rewarding, mind expanding and emotionally enriching activity. Those who are struggling with basic literacy will find that reading is a chore, a task, a complex system of symbols to be decoded. The black marks on the page will barely have meaning, so reading will not be a pastime of choice for these Australians – let alone a vehicle for success in life.
above the OECD average for every category), nevertheless, 14% of Australian students aged 15 had failed to reach the baseline level of reading proficiency considered essential for future development in a number of areas of knowledge acquisition. Another 20% were functioning at the minimum baseline proficiency level (OECD, 2011). More information on the PISA study can be found in International comparisons in chapter 12.

The final report on the IALS noted that "...literacy skills are maintained and strengthened through regular use. While schooling provides an essential foundation, the evidence suggests that only through informal learning and the active use of literacy skills in daily activities – both at home and at work – will higher levels of proficiency be attained. The creation of literacy-rich environments, in the workplace and more generally, can have lasting, intergenerational effects." (OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000). This finding emphasises the importance of activities, such as those being undertaken under the umbrella of the National Year of Reading, in building and maintaining critical literacy skills.

The alarming 2006 ABS statistic that just under half (46%) of adult Australians cannot confidently read newspapers, follow a recipe, make sense of timetables, or understand the instructions on a medicine bottle, was a motivator for Australian libraries to found the National Year of Reading. The idea was based on the success of the United Kingdom National Year of Reading in 2008, a year-long celebration of reading that aimed to build a greater national passion for reading in the United Kingdom. Critically, here in Australia, the initiative began with libraries and has subsequently been well supported by government as a key strategy contributing to the goal of a "Literate Nation." The campaign in Australia is based on three goals and four strategies.

Three goals ...

1. For all Australians to understand the benefits of reading as a life skill and a catalyst for wellbeing.
2. To promote a reading culture in every home.
3. To establish an aspirational goal for families, of parents and caregivers sharing books with their children every day.

Four strategies ...

1. Belief in the positive power of reading. The NYR aims to spread the message to the wider community of the benefits of reading, to help change behaviours and to encourage a reading culture in all homes.
2. Accessibility and inspiration for struggling and reluctant readers. The NYR will give people a taste of what is out there, in an easily digestible form – not weighty tomes, but novellas, magazine articles, audio books, e-zines and short stories, across many different genres, covering diverse cultural perspectives, and in some cases in languages other than English. The NYR will also appeal to book lovers. It is an opportunity for readers to try new things and to become advocates for reading with their peers. The year’s activities focus on all readers – avid, emergent, reluctant, developing and those struggling to learn to read, or to become better, or more proficient readers.
3. Good government policy and practice. The NYR will give all three levels of government – local, state/territory and federal – the opportunity to showcase best practice from family literacy initiatives through to reading therapy for people in aged care facilities. This campaign provides the opportunity to create a new level of cross-government, cross-council involvement in literacy, which it is hoped will continue far beyond the end of 2012.
4. A joined up approach, linking all the government agencies, organisations and programs engaged in reading and literacy. The NYR will link the good things that are already happening in promoting reading and add a catalytic effect to action into the mix. For example, the Australian Children’s Literature Alliance’s (ACLA) first Australian Children’s Laureate (note 3) will promote engagement with children and reading, and appreciation of Australian children’s and young adult literature.

THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES

The National Year of Reading is also highlighting the changing role of libraries in the community. Libraries were once seen as simply repositories of reading materials, but in recent years they have taken on a more active approach to their core business. They have become community hubs providing services to a broad range of community members, with a focus on the most disadvantaged. In addition to being key key knowledge access points, they also provide a range of reading and learning activities across local areas for collaborative and co-operative projects. A broader range of materials is now available through partnerships – both online and in print. This diversity means that libraries are a first contact point for people seeking all kinds of information, from all walks of life and for all sorts of reasons.

There are many types of libraries: school libraries, state and territory libraries, government libraries, business libraries, prison libraries, special libraries, mobile libraries, university libraries, health libraries, TAFE libraries and, of course, public libraries. Public libraries alone represent a network of more than 1,500 sites, most of them located in the heart of towns and cities, forming an essential part of a community hub. Add 9,000 school libraries, plus university and TAFE, health, government, business, prison and other special libraries, and there are more than 10,000 high profile centres in metropolitan, rural and remote Australia, all with the shared goal of Australia, a nation of readers.

Reader development is a relatively recent focus for public libraries, although books and reading have always been at the heart of what a library has to offer its users. Reader development librarians are trained to support reading for pleasure and literacy initiatives - from new ways of displaying books and magazines to attract keen readers, through to programs and events for people with low and developing literacy levels.
School and public libraries play an important role in keeping young people reading. Putting the right book, in the right hand, at the right time is a critical task, as young people’s reading advocate Agnes Nieuwenhuizen points out in her book Right Book, Right Time – 500 great reads for teenagers (Nieuwenhuizen, 2007). Developing knowledge and skills for both school and public librarians so they can play an active role in the development of readers is vitally important. Libraries also offer spaces for study and homework clubs outside of school hours.

Children’s book creator and co-winner of the Prime Minister’s Literary Award for children’s fiction, Boori Monty Pryor, and award winning children’s book illustrator and author, Alison Lester, have been jointly named as the nation’s first Children’s Laureates.

Image: Winners of the 2011 Prime Minister’s Literary Awards (children’s fiction) – Shake a Leg – Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod [endnote 9]

Image: Alison Lester, from Are We There Yet? (Lester, 2004).
and Torres Strait Islander people within a community networking framework. The Our Story project has developed a database that allows for the collection, holding and display of ‘... both repatriated and contemporary, including born-digital, cultural material relevant to local communities’ (Gibson et al. 2011). Access to information, oral histories and the documentation of local stories in this way is an important and significant way to bridge oral and print (ink and online) cultures.

The Walk to School is “An Indigenous Early Years Literacy Strategy for Northern Territory Public Libraries and Knowledge Centres” (Northern Territory Library, 2008). The Strategy supports caregivers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged from birth to five years in creating rich literacy environments through behaviours and practices. It also facilitates access to age-appropriate literacy oriented activities and resources in library settings. This program is funded by a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award that the Northern Territory Library received in 2007, in recognition of its innovative approach to the delivery of appropriate library services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Outreach

Outreach activities are vital to bridge the literacy gap for certain groups, for example, people who live in remote areas of Australia or people with non-English speaking backgrounds. Such activities may decrease the likelihood of non-completion of secondary school, which in turn, should help improve employment outcomes and reduce long-term economic disadvantage (State Library of Victoria and Library Board of Victoria, 2008).

Libraries are increasingly active in providing services beyond their walls, reaching out to those most in need – those who cannot or may not otherwise access the resources available to them. In the National Year of Reading, libraries are showcasing their efforts in this area, with activities and programs that foster a sense of community. For example, there are programs that support volunteers delivering books to people who are housebound, the home library service encourages parents to read to their children by providing storytimes in English and other languages. Many library services conduct local needs analysis studies to develop appropriate community programs. Outreach programs are often delivered in partnership with maternal and child health services or community-based outreach programs like the Smith Family’s Communities for Children[Endnote 27] programs.

Reaching the hard-to-reach

Community publishing projects offered through libraries provide an opportunity for storytelling and cultural exchange. These projects ‘join the dots’ between oral and print culture, creating high quality picture books that are relevant to culture and language for disadvantaged or marginalised groups. This approach has been developed by Kids Own Publishing [Endnote 28] a not-for-profit arts organisation, and has been implemented in partnership with the State Library of Victoria as the Making Books Making Readers program in Victoria. This program is also delivered in Western Australia. It involves a community artist working with a local community group, usually bringing together children and parents and significant community members and elders, to tell their stories in words and pictures and produce the result as a high quality picture book.

Other outreach programs providing library services and literacy resources and activities for marginalised and disadvantaged sections of the community include Book Well (McLaine, 2010). The program partners public libraries in Victoria with community-based organisations and uses read aloud sessions as therapy for people experiencing mental health issues, hospital patients, prison inmates and residents in aged care facilities. In Tasmania, libraries are supporting the Reading Together[Endnote 29] initiative at Risdon Prison, whereby male inmates are able to record themselves reading stories that can then be sent home to their children. This has many benefits, including restoring a form of family connection, introducing the role model of a father reading, and improving the literacy skills of those prisoners who struggle with reading.

The Vision Australia Library service [Endnote 30] is designed for Australians with a print handicap. It not only provides audio books for subscribers, but also Feelu kits for children to help vision impaired children enjoy picture books. These kits include Braille overlays and hand created physical artefacts related to the story that can be played with. The service also creates DAISY (Digital Accessible Information Systems) versions of all audio materials. Vision Australia has produced a Braille version of Are We There Yet? – the featured children’s book for the National Year of Reading.

Both the Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne and Westmead Hospital in Sydney offer reading programs, supported by Scholastic Australia. The newly-opened Royal Children’s Hospital will encourage reading in 2012 with programming created by the Education Institute. [Endnote 31] The program enables children who have a long-term illness, and who may miss out on lengthy periods of schooling, to access books, information and reading activities through a Book Bunker. [Endnote 32]

Outreach in the general community

During the National Year of Reading in 2012, travelling exhibitions like Look! The Art of Australian Picture Books Today and Alison Lester’s book, Are We There Yet? will provide families with a heart-warming experience, enjoying original picture book art at close range, thus encouraging connections with the featured books and stories. These exhibitions are visiting libraries and community centres in capital cities, regional centres and towns right around Australia.
124 Books for Baby and Me - a research and development project.
INTRODUCTION

READING: THE HOME AND FAMILY CONTEXT

National Year of Reading

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Page 1 of 15
MEASURING CHILDREN'S READING

There are different ways to measure children's engagement in reading. Some studies ask children to report the frequency of reading using predetermined categories such as 'reads every day', 'a few times per week', 'per month', 'per year', or 'not at all' (e.g. Clark and Foster, 2005). A second option is to ask children whether they read during a specified time period. For example, the ABS publication Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities (4901.0) reports on whether children read at all in the two weeks prior to interview. A third source of information on children's reading is time-diaries, where individuals report all their activities on a specified day or days (Egerston and Gershuny, 2004).

These measurement options vary in the extent to which they place restrictions on the time period over which children are asked to recall information on their engagement in reading. The first option tends to place few or no restrictions on the time period, while the second and third options are increasingly restrictive (two weeks and specified days respectively). As the time period narrows, there is an increasing likelihood of capturing the most frequent readers only (Mullan, 2010). This article uses information about children's reading for leisure gleaned from children's time-diaries in LSAC. As this measure tends to capture relatively more frequent readers, it is compiled with information in LSAC about whether or not children enjoy reading. The results provide a comprehensive insight into children's reading in Australia.

Measures of children's reading in LSAC

Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) is conducted in partnership between the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA); the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS); and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). However, the findings and views reported in this paper are those of the authors and should not be attributed to FaHCSIA, AIFS or the ABS.

LSAC is a major study that follows the development of children and families from all parts of Australia. The study commenced in 2004 with two cohorts - 5,107 families with children aged 0-1 year and 4,883 families with children aged 4-5 years. By following children over time, the study is able to examine the individual, family, and broader social and environmental factors that influence a child's development. Growing Up in Australia is investigating the contribution of children's social, economic and cultural environments to their adjustment and wellbeing. A major aim is to identify policy opportunities for improving support for children and their families and for early intervention and prevention strategies.

The older cohort of children, aged 4-5 years at the commencement of the study and 10-11 years by the time of the collection wave in 2010, is the focus of this article. LSAC collected responses from the 10-11 age group using time-diaries completed by children. This was the first time that time-diaries had been collected from children in an Australian context. They have been used previously in other countries including the United States of America and the United Kingdom. A time-diary is a record of the sequence of all activities the child engaged in during the day prior to interview, and represents one of the most reliable methods of collecting information about children's engagement in different activities (Robinson, 1999). In addition to collecting information on children's engagement in reading for leisure on the diary day, LSAC asked the children whether they enjoyed reading. Enjoyment of reading is a natural precursor to engagement in reading and in particular reading for pleasure, which has been highlighted as an important aspect in the promotion of children's reading (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). Results from the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that, in Australia, more than a quarter of the differences in reading performance are associated with students' reading enjoyment.

To maximise the information about children's reading available in LSAC, data about children's self-reported enjoyment of reading and children's engagement in non-school reading for leisure (recorded in the time-diary) have been combined, creating a four-point indicator of children's reading, namely:

1. children who enjoy reading and who read for leisure on the diary day,
2. children who enjoy reading but who did not read for leisure on the diary day,
3. children who do not enjoy reading but read for leisure on the diary day, and
4. children who do not enjoy reading and did not read for leisure on the diary day.

The first part of the analysis is cross-sectional. Children's reading habits are examined in terms of their current characteristics, for example their mother's employment status. The second part of the analysis looks at the children's current reading habits, at age 10-11 years, in light of the family reading context when the child was aged 4-5 years, for instance, the numbers of days they were read to each week. The data here are particularly useful because LSAC is a longitudinal study. This means that the necessary data were collected at the time and hence are much more accurate than retrospective data collected at a later time, which may be affected by recall bias (i.e. when people's recollection may overstate or understate past behaviours). LSAC therefore has the potential to identify early childhood influences on reading accurately.

LSAC sample description

In 2010, the older cohort comprised 4,164 children; of these, 3,981 completed a time-diary and reported whether they enjoyed reading or not, yielding a response rate of 95%. Although the sample is restricted to children aged 10-11 years, it encompasses the period of middle childhood, which is critical for later adolescent development (McHale, Crouter and Tucker, 2001), and in which the influence of the family context is particularly important (Hoffman, 2010).

The sample is split almost equally between boys and girls. Just over two-fifths (43%) of children live in families where at least one parent has a university degree. For 77% of children, the mother is employed either full-time (35%) or part-time (41%). In 13% of families, the mother speaks a language other than English at home. Most children (86%) live with two parents (including step-parents). The sample is split fairly equally between those who did and those who did not visit a library (any type of library, in the month prior to the parent interview) when they were aged 4-5 years. The majority of children (69%) had more than 30 books in their home when they were aged 4-5 years, and 97% of children were read to at least one day per week (78% being read to at least three days per week) when aged 4-5 years (table 1).

those in low education households (80% compared with 85%). However, parental education has a stronger association with children’s engagement in reading on the diary day. Almost twice as many children in high education households enjoy reading and read on the diary day (41%) as children in low education households (23%). Moreover, twice as many children in low education households (14%) do not enjoy reading and did not read on the diary day as those in high education households (7%). The overall association between children’s reading and parental education is clear (graph 3).

Mother’s employment status

Many studies on the impact of maternal employment on children’s cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes have failed to find significant differences between children with a mother in employment and those without (Russell and Bowman, 2000; Pieck, 1985; Yunos and Taib, 2009). Similar results from LSAC suggest that the reading behaviour of children aged 10–11 years does not vary according to mother’s employment status (graph 4).

Irrespective of whether the mother was employed full-time, part-time or not employed at the time of the survey, around 87% of children reported that they enjoy reading, with around 30% reading on the diary day. Among children who enjoy reading, those who live in a household with mothers employed part-time are slightly more likely to report reading on the diary day (32%) than are children living in a household with mothers employed full-time (28%) or not employed (28%).

Results from LSAC show that, in Australia, children’s reading may well benefit from having a mother who speaks a language other than English at home. Overall, children aged 10–11 years in households where the mother speaks a language other than English at home are more likely to enjoy reading (91%) than are children in households with a mother who only speaks English at home (87%) (graph 5).

Mothers speaking a language other than English at home also had a strong positive effect on whether a child read on the diary day. The proportion of children who enjoy reading and who read the diary day was 38% for those living in a household with a mother speaking a language other than English, compared to 28% of children in households with a mother who spoke English only.
Library visit at age 4–5 years

A 'library visit' refers to a visit to any type of library in the month prior to interview. Results show that visiting a library when aged 4–5 years is positively associated with children's engagement in reading at age 10–11 years. Children who had visited a library when aged 4–5 years were more likely to read on the diary day and enjoy reading (34%) than those who had not (26%). Children who did not visit a library when aged 4–5 years are more likely to not read on the diary day and not enjoy reading (14%) than children who visited a library (9%) (graph 8).

Reading to a child at age 4–5 years

Graph 9 shows that children aged 10–11 years who were read to when aged 4–5 years were more likely to enjoy reading and to have read on the diary day than were children who were not read to.

A relatively high proportion (37%) of children who were read to six to seven days per week (in the week prior to interview) when aged 4–5 years enjoy reading and read on the diary day. By contrast, only one-fifth (21%) of children who were not read to when aged 4–5 years or read to only one to two days per week enjoy reading and reported reading on the diary day. Children who were read to three to five times by a carer in the week prior to interview lie between these two extremes (27%).
CONCLUSION

Table 12.3

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The research on the effectiveness of reading programs and family involvement in early literacy development is extensive. The evidence suggests that programs that focus on reading and early literacy skills can have a positive impact on children's reading abilities and overall academic performance. These programs can also help to reduce the achievement gap between children from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

However, it is important to consider the potential limitations of these findings. The research is often conducted in controlled settings, which may not fully reflect the real-world challenges faced by children and their families. Additionally, the results may vary depending on the specific program and the population being studied.

Despite these limitations, the findings from this research are promising and suggest that family involvement and early literacy programs can be effective in improving children's reading abilities. Further research is needed to identify the most effective strategies and to evaluate the long-term impact of these programs.

In conclusion, the results of this research suggest that family involvement and early literacy programs can have a positive impact on children's reading abilities. These programs can help to close the achievement gap between children from different socioeconomic backgrounds and can contribute to the overall success of individuals in society.
It highlights the importance of the family context in promoting children's reading, in particular in more active involvement such as organizing visits to the library or by reading to children. In this National Year of Reading, it is important to note that while the majority of children enjoy reading, only a minority are frequent readers. Furthermore, the data from LSAC show that overall about one in ten children do not enjoy reading and did not read on the diary day, ranging from 7%–18% depending on family context. Efforts to increase children’s engagement in reading will likely be enhanced if the full range of children’s attitudes towards, and engagement in, reading are taken into consideration in the design of specific programs.

ENDNOTES

1. National Year of Reading 2012-
2. National Year of Reading 2012-
3. All differences presented in the text are statistically significant at the 5% level or higher, unless stated otherwise.

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References

Appendix 5

3a Conversational Reading Slides
Abecedarian Approach Australia

We use the 3N Strategy:

Notice: "I notice you have picked up two green blocks."

Nudge: "Can you see any other green blocks?"

Narrate: "You have found three other green blocks. Now you are lining them up in a row. It looks like a road."

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Abecedarian Approach Australia

We use the 3S Strategy:

See: "Wombat. See, here’s a wombat."

Show: "Show me the wombat."

Say: "What's this animal called?"
Appendix 6

Abecedarian Approach Article
The Abecedarian Approach is one of the few evidence-based programs that integrates basic principles of human learning and development into a fun, affordable, and effective approach to early childhood education.

The Abecedarian Project

The Abecedarian Approach was first implemented in a landmark study conducted in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with 111 children born into extremely disadvantaged life circumstances - The Abecedarian Project.

The project was led by Craig Ramey and Joseph Sparling and centred on an intervention that involved intensive learning and social-emotional supports – starting in infancy and continuing until at least kindergarten entry – for children and their families.

The project sought to determine whether the provision of theory-based, active learning experiences could produce significant benefits in language and learning for children from highly impoverished, multi-risk families (who were known to be at risk for poor school achievement).

The intervention goals were:
1. to support families,
2. to improve children's early development and their school achievement.

The broad program included playful interactions, enriched care, and stable relationships among children and adults. Rich language interactions were individualised, frequent and intentional throughout the day, and took place through all the common events of living and caregiving. The intention was to have a broad-spectrum educational approach, because much of the day for children under two years of age included eating, dressing, exploration, play, and dynamic interactions with adults. The Approach emphasised the role of young children as active learners and the value of response-contingent feedback from the environment, and was devised into four key elements:

- Language Priority (Download PDF)
- Learning Games® (Download PDF)
- Conversational Reading (Download PDF)
- Enriched Caregiving (Download PDF)

Since the original study, the Abecedarian Approach has been used successfully in centre-based care, home-visiting programs, family-day-care homes, and long-day-care settings.

Language as the core of early learning

The Abecedarian Approach places a priority on children's language acquisition, because language is a proven core of early learning and school readiness. Language allows children to organise their thoughts and explain their ideas; it gives them the means to express their feelings; and it gives them the tools they need to interact with peers and adults. Language also allows the child to use private speech, talking aloud to themselves to work through a problem or regulate their emotions. As a child gets older they internalise this speech so that it is no longer out loud but still a means of guiding their behaviour.

The Abecedarian Approach Australia – 3a

The focus of the 3a approach is providing specific evidence-based techniques that advance the personal, social and academic achievements of very young children who, through local...
circumstances, may require additional attention and support to ensure success as they grow and learn.

The Abecedarian Approach Australia —3a— was developed after an international literature review of the findings of model early childhood programs and approaches, including the Abecedarian studies, and selected as the approach most relevant to supporting very young children living in disadvantaged circumstances, including poverty and social marginalisation.

Because it is vitally important to understand local context when seeking to implement any model program successfully, the core components of the Abecedarian Approach were reviewed and customised through sequential projects and activities that explored and adjusted content details to suit local conditions.

For example, the LearningGames® were redeveloped in consultation with Aboriginal communities through an adaptation and trialling process led by the Northern Territory Department of Education in collaboration with Professor Sparling and the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. The redeveloped games were published for use within remote and regional Aboriginal communities by Northern Territory Department, and are available under licence to early educators working with Aboriginal families.

Each of the elements of 3a has been aligned with contemporary Australian Early Childhood policy, including The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Quality Standard (NQS).

3a is now used in a range of metropolitan, urban and regional settings in different parts of Australia, including within playgroups, long-day-care settings and kindergarten programs.
Appendix 7

Plain Language Statement for Research Participants
PLAIN language statement for Research Participants

This study examines the role of Children’s librarians as enablers, fostering early literacy practices of parents and their very young children experiencing vulnerable circumstances in the geographical area of Western Metropolitan Melbourne.

The University of Melbourne’s Graduate School of Education has been involved in setting up this research project. The principle researchers who have provided advise to date are Professor Collette Taylor and Dr. Jane Page, both from the University of Melbourne. The study forms the basis of new research in the field, and is supported by the Barrett Reid scholarship. The Barrett Reid scholarship provided $15,000 toward the project and supports the provision of free books for parents, the cost of the provision of training to research participants, and some of the researcher’s back fill of time in her usual place of work for the project to be conducted.

Participation in the project is voluntary and includes attending a full day of training in the Abecedarian Approach with a focus on Conversational Reading Techniques. The research project requires the delivery of a parent and child program for 6 weeks to families with very young children, under three years, with a focus on implementing the techniques learned in the training. As enablers, children’s librarians will translate learnings, with support from the researcher, into practice and activities that foster early literacy practices of parents in developing rich oral language and pre-reading behaviours.

Specifically selected books will be provided to the families recruited to participate in the programs, to be conducted in either Term 4, 2016 or Term 1, 2017. Families will receive one specially selected free book per week, building a small library of books through their participation in the program by the end of the 8 week period.

The focus of the project is on supporting children’s librarians’ ability to assist vulnerable families in early literacy practices. The neighbourhoods in Western Metropolitan

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municipalities identified via lower than state average AEDC scores indicating high relevance for this project include those in Hobsons Bay, Melton, Mooney Valley, Maribyrnong, Wyndham and Moreland.

Parents will be recruited to the parent support programs through relationships with other areas of Council, namely Family and Children’s services and the educators who work with supported parent groups. The researcher will assist in communicating the project outline to those officers as well as providing consent forms and plain language statements about the project to those families proposed to be involved. Parents and children will not be actual participants in the study, but still need to give consent as ‘non participants’, as the project would involve the researcher providing support and observation of professional learnings in practice, at least once during the program delivery. As a research participant you will be required to answer two questionnaires, be observed once in the delivery of your parent sessions, and complete informal notes on your growing knowledge and practice as a result of the training. Finally a semi-formal interview is to be conducted by the researcher, and a case study of the changes evidenced in your practice will be documented. Any data published will be de-identified, and hence your privacy will be protected in the results of the research. Data collected during the research will be stored securely and will be kept under the secure archives for no more than 5 years after the completion of the project. It will then be destroyed. The data is not able to nor legally permitted to be reused by other researchers.

This research project has been designed by Paula Kelly, Manager Learning Communities, Hobsons Bay City Council. All queries or complaints about the research will be treated confidentially.

Any research participants will not be adversely affected by participating in the program in any way, even if they decline or withdraw from the project at any stage.

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Appendix 8

Research Participant Consent Forms and Questionnaire
CONSENT FORM – RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

This research project is being conducted by Paula Kelly, Manager Learning Communities, Hobsons Bay City Council.

The Project is examining the role of Children’s librarians as enablers, fostering early literacy practices of parents and their very young children experiencing vulnerable circumstances in the geographical area of Western Metropolitan Melbourne.

I acknowledge I have received notification of, and understand:

- The Plain Language Statement
- Any risks, effects, inconvenience and commitment to the project.
- There is a minor risk that I may be able to be identified in the research project, given the small sample size, although the data collected and reported on will be de-identified.
- My participation in the project is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time, and I may withdraw data that I have supplied (up to the point of analysis/publication).
- I may be audio – taped.
- I will not be identified in any publication arising from the research.
- I have the express permission and support of my organization to participate in the research project within my current role.
- I can contact the researcher, or my HR manager, at any time if I am uncomfortable with the project content or activities.

Signature of participant

Name

Signature of Investigator

Name

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QUESTIONNAIRES

PARTICIPANT

Pre Training and Post program implementation

1. What is the role of the children’s librarian in assisting parents in engagement in the early literacy development of their very young children?

1.1 Describe your role in assisting parents’ engagement in the early literacy development of their very young children as described in your Position Description.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

1.2 Does this capture the reality of the duties you carry out in regard to early literacy engagement in your assistance of parents in the early literacy development of their very young children?  
YES/ NO  
Explain

________________________________________________________________________

1.3 What specific early literacy activities do you conduct in this role: (tick relevant ones)
   o Rhyme time sessions
   o Baby bounce sessions
   o Parent education talks/presentations
   o Other – Please describe

________________________________________________________________________

1.4 How many attendees usually attend your group sessions?  
   o Rhyme time sessions
   o Baby bounce sessions
   o Parent education talks/presentations
   o Other

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1.5 List the early literacy activities have you been trained in and indicate whether trained by
   a/ peers at a PD session
   b/ as part of a higher education course
   c/ specific professional development delivered by a qualified specialist early
      literacy trainer/practitioner.

1.6 Do you feel adequately equipped to provide outreach programs specifically to parents
   and young children experiencing vulnerabilities, in regard to early literacy practices?
   Not at all
   Somewhat
   Moderately
   Very well
   Extremely well

1.7 Do you feel you would like to expand your knowledge and understanding of evidence-
   based practice in the provision of early literacy programs for parents with very young
   children experiencing vulnerable circumstances?
   Don’t agree
   Somewhat agree
   Moderately agree
   Very much agree
   Extremely agree

1.8 What sort of knowledge do you feel you need in order to expand your role in outreaching
   to vulnerable families in assisting them with early literacy practices? Check those relevant.
   o Techniques to build oral language
   o Techniques to increase book sharing and pre reading behaviours
   o Understandings about early literacy and brain development
   o Understandings about adult education and principles of learning
   o Understandings about asset based (rather than deficit based) programming
   o Understandings about appropriate books to share with very young children (9-18
     months old)
   o Other

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2/ How do children’s librarians utilize the affordances of the Abecedarian Approach ‘Conversational Reading’ techniques to assist parents as first teachers and catalysts for early literacy development?

2.1 Have you heard of the Abecedarian Approach research?
YES / NO (Circle appropriate answer)

2.2 Do you know what the Abecedarian Approach Conversational Reading techniques focus on?
YES / NO (Circle appropriate answer)
Describe if YES

2.3 Do you use conversational reading techniques when demonstrating sharing books with children? YES/NO (Circle appropriate answer)
How often? Never, Rarely, Usually, Always (Circle appropriate answer)

2.4 If yes did parents and children interact/react to the conversational reading activities Positively, Negatively, Indifferently? (Circle appropriate answer)

2.5 Have you observed parent and child language and engagement improvement/increase since using these techniques?
Yes, No, Indifferent/don’t know (Circle appropriate answer)

2.6 How engaged did the parents appear to be?
Not at all, At times, Most of the time (Circle appropriate answer)

2.7 How engaged did the very young children appear to be?
Not at all, At times, Most of the time (Circle appropriate answer)

2.8 Were the parents responsive to your intentional engagement?
Very positive, Indifferent, Negative (Circle appropriate answer)

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3/ How does new training and pedagogical knowledge for supporting new parents of very young children experiencing vulnerabilities in development of early literacy competencies, affect professional practice of children’s librarian?

3.1 Has the professional training you’ve received to date affected your professional practice in regard to early literacy activities and supporting parents of very young children experiencing vulnerabilities?
   Not at all
   Somewhat
   Moderately
   Very much so
   Extremely so

3.2 In what ways? Describe


3.3 Have your perceptions of its impact in your program delivery changed your knowledge about and delivery of early childhood literacy and language programming? YES / NO

3.3 Do you have any other comments or recommendations with regard to your role, (or that of children’s librarians in general) training and/or practice in regard to your support of parents of young children experiencing vulnerabilities in development of early literacy competencies?


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Appendix 9

Research Data
Executive Summary #1 Statistics

Baby & Me Survey Data #2
Total survey Respondents: 12
8 Respondents filled in the pre-training questionnaire and 10 people filled in the post-training questionnaire.

Q1.1 - Describe your role in assisting parents’ engagement in the early literacy development of their very young children as described in your position description.

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1.2 - Does this capture the reality of the duties you carry out in regard to early literacy development in your assistance of parents in the early literacy development of their very young children

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comments to this question indicates that most Respondents were qualified in their yes/no answer. The above result should be interpreted in context.

Q1.3 – What specific early literacy activities do you conduct in this role?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhyme time sessions</td>
<td>Rhyme time sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby bounce sessions</td>
<td>Baby bounce sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent education talks/ presentations</td>
<td>Parent education talks/ presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other. Please describe:</td>
<td>Other. Please describe:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q1.4 – How many attendees usually attend your group sessions?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhyme time sessions</td>
<td>Baby bounce sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1.5 - List the early literacy activities you have been trained in and indicate whether trained by

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peers in a PD session</td>
<td>As part of a higher education course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1.6 - Do you feel adequately equipped to provide outreach programs specifically to parents and young children experiencing vulnerabilities in regard to early literacy practices?

All respondents who filled in the survey(s) answered this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q1.7 – Do you feel you would like to expand your knowledge and understanding of evidence-based practice in the provision of early literacy programs for parents with very young children experiencing vulnerable circumstances?

All respondents who filled in the survey(s) answered this question.

|          | Pre-training (agree) | Post-training (agree) |
Q1.8 - What sort of knowledge do you feel you need in order to expand your role in outreaching to vulnerable families in assisting them with early literacy practices?

Don’t agree

All respondents who filled in the survey(s) answered this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Techniques to build oral language</td>
<td>Techniques to increase book sharing and pre-reading behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques to increase book sharing and pre-reading behaviours</td>
<td>Techniques to increase book sharing and pre-reading behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about literacy and brain development</td>
<td>Understandings about adult education and principles of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about adult education and principles of learning</td>
<td>Understandings about adult education and principles of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about asset-based (rather than deficit-based) programming</td>
<td>Understandings about asset-based (rather than deficit-based) programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about appropriate books to share with very young children</td>
<td>Understandings about appropriate books to share with very young children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2.1 - Have you heard of the Abecedarian Approach research?

All respondents who filled in the survey(s) answered this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2.2 - Do you know what the Abecedarian Approach Conversational Reading techniques focus on?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2.3 - Do you use conversational reading techniques when demonstrating sharing books with children? How often?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2.4 - If yes, did parents and children interact/react to the conversational reading activities

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positively</td>
<td>Negatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2.5 - Have you observed parent and child language and engagement improvement/increase since using these techniques?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2.6 - How engaged did the parents appear to be?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>At times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Q2.7 - How engaged did the very young children appear to be?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At times</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q2.8 - Were the parents responsive to your intentional engagement?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very positive</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q3.1 - Has the professional training you have received to date affected your professional practice in regard to early literacy activities and supporting parents of very young children experiencing vulnerabilities?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much so</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely so</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Q3.2 - In what ways? Describe

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3.3 - Have your perceptions of its impact in your program delivery changed your knowledge about and delivery of early childhood literacy and language programming?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3.4 - Do you have any other comments or recommendations with regard to your role, (or that of childrens librarians in general) training and/or practices in regard to your support of parents with young children experiencing vulnerabilities in development of early literacy competencies?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Baby & Me Survey Data #2
Total survey Respondents: 12

8 Respondents filled in the pre-training questionnaire and 10 people filled in the post-training questionnaire.

Q1.1 - Describe your role in assisting parents’ engagement in the early literacy development of their very young children as described in your position description.

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers given (in no particular order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsere. Need to refer back 3 years ago</td>
<td>Engage in Rhymetime &amp; Storytime sessions, babies love Books talks, school holiday programs, kinder visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure! Can’t remember.</td>
<td>Only 2 references in PD I have on file that promoted engagement: 1. Programs &amp; Activities: “Implement projects and assist with the development of online strategies to engage children, young people, parents and carers, including new technologies, social media &amp; the website” 2. Collections: “Assist parents and other caregivers to make informed choices about their children’s reading by one-to-one reader assistance, talks to groups and special promotional activities.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver story time; outline to parents what I might be doing that enhances child’s early literacy &amp; learning “eg, this song … gross motor skills through swinging on an elephant trunk”; assist parents with book choices, TIPS for parents on early literacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoping, proposing &amp; coordinating implementation of programs and services that build literacy skills for children &amp; for caregivers. At times running sessions &amp; on circ assisting parents &amp; children in accessing services</td>
<td>Part of team shaping early years engagement policies &amp; direction; Parent engagement as part of program delivery &amp; as rostered branch duty hours; Shaping &amp; guiding program &amp; service delivery (inc. collections) for Learning Communities dept as it pertains to CY engagement; Guiding &amp; supporting CY team in their early literacy development &amp; knowledge attainment so as to assist HBL families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a CY librarian my role is to deliver programs and model to parents and guardians ways to support their children in their development, particularly in early literacy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting library programs &amp; resources that are relevant to child/parent, assisting with needs as requested, engaging child &amp; parent to feel welcome/involved/supported/entertained/informed</td>
<td>Inform and re-enforce the importance of early literacy and provide modelling, tips, and resources to equip parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting and modelling strategies and best practice in sharing language with children through means such as stories, song, dance, rhymes, games and activities to encourage pre-literacy development</td>
<td>Plan, prepare &amp; conduct programs for pre-school &amp; school-aged children in the library &amp; external venues as required, including childcare centres, kindergartens and schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have changed positions since this program started. I have worked as a CY librarian, children & youth team leader and branch team leader. My responsibilities as a branch team leader are not very explicitly stated in regard to children & youth – however as one of the major user groups of the branch I have a responsibility of how the library services and engages young people and families.

Q1.2 - Does this capture the reality of the duties you carry out in regard to early literacy development in your assistance of parents in the early literacy development of their very young children

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comments to this question indicates that most Respondents were qualified in their yes/no answer. The above result should be interpreted in context.

Comments given (in no particular order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes/No Yes running above sessions, but at times families would like more time for advice; some sessions not suitable for pre-schoolers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| No. See back page: From an email I wrote to the team in April 2016. When I wrote my research paper for the Library Grad Dip on Literacy Strategies in Pre-school (P5), my Lit Review noted papers covering the gamut of opinions, from ‘it’s not our job as librarians – we’re
not teachers’ to ‘If literacy education is not our job, as purveyors of books and reading, then what the heck is?’ A viewpoint that I encountered a number of times was that parents really are just as much our target audience as children – perhaps even more so. For example, “public libraries have a unique opportunity to promote school readiness through parental involvement by training the trainer” (Maclean 2008, p. 5); that often “librarians consider caregivers to be the primary audience for (PS) programs” (Cerny, Markey & Williams 2006, p. 53); and more controversially that the target audience is parents because PS sessions are neither long enough, nor frequent enough to have any significant impact on children’s literacy. (Ghotiney & Martin-Diaz, 2006)

Our PD does not really reflect our responsibilities in this area. And in my experience, librarians push back against it, as though we’re being too didactic and taking the ‘fun’ out of it. But it’s not true!! Parents RAVE when you value-add for them, and the evidence-based strategies increase the children’s level of engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1.3 – What specific early literacy activities do you conduct in this role?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents answering this question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Comments given (in no particular order)

#### Pre-training
- Kindergarten visits
- (Babies Love Books) (BLB), Storytime “Wriggle & read”, Kindergarten visits
- Story Time (ST) sessions and one-off ST sessions eg. Rainbow Families (LGBTIQ) Story Time
- At times I provide session replacement but largely activities are coordinated rather than run by me.
- Kinder visits, Storytimes, Play group visits
- Currently none. I am training to back-up Children’s Team in case of illness.

#### Post-training
- Storytime visits
- (Babies Love Books) Storytime, Wriggle & Read (Toddler time), Kinder visits
- Rhyme time sessions at times; Other: Kinder engagement, both programs for children & kinder teacher liaising; early literacy training/development for staff; plus Abecedarian program delivery
- Storytime, kinder visits, school visits, summer reading Club, promotional displays, reader’s advisory, illustration & writing competitions, collection maintenance
- I have conducted all these in the past and now assist as needed

### Q1.4 – How many attendees usually attend your group sessions?

#### Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhyme time sessions</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby bounce sessions</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent education</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talks/presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhyme time sessions</td>
<td>Baby bounce sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Max</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Comments given (in no particular order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>
### Kinder visits:
- 25

### Rhyme time
- Wriggle & Read – 30 adults & 30 kids (Baby bounce & Parent Education: 5-15 mums (and their bubs); Storytime – up to 60 kids & 40/50 adults)
- Rhyme time: 30 adults, 35 children; Parent education talks 10 adults, 10 babies; Storytime 20 adults, 20 children

### Other: Story time
- 15 kids, 10 adults

### Rhyme time:
- Wriggle & Read – 30 adults & 30 kids
- Baby bounce & Parent Education: 5-15 mums (and their bubs); Storytime – up to 60 kids & 40/50 adults

### Parent Education talks
- 10 adults, 10 babies

### Storytime
- 20 adults, 20 children

### Other:
- Variable
- Storytime 15 kids, 10 adults
- Variable

### Rhyme time:
- Wriggle & Read – 30 adults & 30 kids
- Baby bounce & Parent Education: 5-15 mums (and their bubs); Storytime – up to 60 kids & 40/50 adults

### Parent Education talks
- 10 adults, 10 babies

### Storytime
- 20 adults, 20 children

### Other:
- Variable
- Storytime 15 kids, 10 adults
- Variable

### Rhyme time:
- Wriggle & Read – 30 adults & 30 kids
- Baby bounce & Parent Education: 5-15 mums (and their bubs); Storytime – up to 60 kids & 40/50 adults

### Parent Education talks
- 10 adults, 10 babies

### Storytime
- 20 adults, 20 children

### Other:
- Variable
- Storytime 15 kids, 10 adults
- Variable

### Rhyme time:
- Wriggle & Read – 30 adults & 30 kids
- Baby bounce & Parent Education: 5-15 mums (and their bubs); Storytime – up to 60 kids & 40/50 adults

### Parent Education talks
- 10 adults, 10 babies

### Storytime
- 20 adults, 20 children

### Other:
- Variable
- Storytime 15 kids, 10 adults
- Variable

### Rhyme time:
- Wriggle & Read – 30 adults & 30 kids
- Baby bounce & Parent Education: 5-15 mums (and their bubs); Storytime – up to 60 kids & 40/50 adults

### Parent Education talks
- 10 adults, 10 babies

### Storytime
- 20 adults, 20 children

### Other:
- Variable
- Storytime 15 kids, 10 adults
- Variable

### Rhyme time:
- Wriggle & Read – 30 adults & 30 kids
- Baby bounce & Parent Education: 5-15 mums (and their bubs); Storytime – up to 60 kids & 40/50 adults

### Parent Education talks
- 10 adults, 10 babies

### Storytime
- 20 adults, 20 children

### Other:
- Variable
- Storytime 15 kids, 10 adults
- Variable

---

**Q1.5** List the early literacy activities you have been trained in and indicate whether trained by

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peers in a PD session</th>
<th>As part of a higher education course</th>
<th>Specific professional development</th>
<th>Peers in a PD session</th>
<th>As part of a higher education course</th>
<th>Specific professional development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given *(in no particular order)*

**Pre-training**
- Young Readers Program – peers (Paula & Christine); PLVN PD days 0 peers & facilitators
- Fitzroy method, Speech Sound Pics approach, THRASS, Jolly Phonics, VELYF, and within Cert 3 Children’s Services
- Delivery of ST sessions by HBL staff; Degree in Languages (Indonesian & Auslan) so have an interest in language & CALD communities
- VELDYF training – C; Baby Bounce – C; Dynamic Storytelling – A & C; Toddler programs – A.
- Storytime & Rhyme time – peers in demonstrations - A; Some early literacy training in Masters of Information Management – B
- C – Small talk training with PRC

**Post-training**
- GRLC Early Years Training – A; Best Start info PD – C; PLVN SIG PD days – A & C; 2016 SLV Early Years Training – A 7 C; Baby Bounce – C; Abecedarian – A 7 C; Marc Armitage Play Learning PD – C.
- A; B – Diploma Children’s Services, Language & Literacy; C. Over the years I have attended training
Q1.6 - Do you feel adequately equipped to provide outreach programs specifically to parents and young children experiencing vulnerabilities in regard to early literacy practices?

All respondents who filled in the survey(s) answered this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given (in no particular order)

**Post-training**

I do, but I've sought to specialize in early literacy. Librarians come from vastly different skill sets — many are ex-teachers and therefore specialists @ school aged literacy rather than early years. Also, see ‘Teaching Reading’, 2005 government report. Literacy across the board, including in schools, needs work and a stronger evidence base.

Q1.7 – Do you feel you would like to expand your knowledge and understanding of evidence-based practice in the provision of early literacy programs for parents with very young children experiencing vulnerable circumstances?

All respondents who filled in the survey(s) answered this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training (agree)</th>
<th>Post-training (agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Question triggered no comments.
Q1.8 - What sort of knowledge do you feel you need in order to expand your role in outreach to vulnerable families in assisting them with early literacy practices?

Don't agree

All respondents who filled in the survey(s) answered this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Techniques to build oral language</td>
<td>Techniques to build oral language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques to increase book sharing and pre-reading behaviours</td>
<td>Techniques to increase book sharing and pre-reading behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about early literacy and brain development</td>
<td>Understandings about early literacy and brain development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about adult education and principles of learning</td>
<td>Understandings about asset-based (rather than deficit-based) programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings about appropriate books to share with very young children</td>
<td>Understandings about appropriate books to share with very young children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given (in no particular order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALD Community, communicating effectively with them</td>
<td>Any of the above really – there’s always more to learn!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speech pathologist-led PD</td>
<td>Speech Pathology PD session would be ideal; D; E; G – Cross-cultural engagement (adult learning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of sessions and examples of plans/content/mentoring</td>
<td>Importance of bi-lingual stories or oral traditions/stories passed on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Techniques to break down barriers with those who may view libraries/librarians negatively; Techniques to empower vulnerable parents, especially those with low literacy levels themselves

– I feel I have a solid basis from my studies but there is always more to learn. Particularly around the specifics of vulnerable families. I think there is generally a lack of training for CY staff within the library industry. Having been a team leader I found unless staff had a background in education – whether early years or school age – it was difficult for them to access substantial training about early literacy.

Q2.1 - Have you heard of the Abecedarian Approach research?

All respondents who filled in the survey(s) answered this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**Q2.2 - Do you know what the Abecedarian Approach Conversational Reading techniques focus on?**

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given *(in no particular order)*

**Post-training**

not before training

**Q2.3 - Do you use conversational reading techniques when demonstrating sharing books with children? How often?**

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given *(in no particular order)*

Pre-training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language, Literacy (See, Say, Show) & Reading Development

In my words: reading with, not reading to. Making book reading interactive

An interactive reading experience, like tennis – serve & return. Not just reading TO, but reading With the child.

Opening up language/literacy engagement for stronger outcomes. Working with parents to explore a conversational way of reading to their child – which equates to not prescriptively reading a book from start to finish but instead using engagement techniques (3S’s etc) to make strong connections between words and life. To help children direct the course of the book reading.

excluding what I learnt today

Allowing the reader the opportunity to engage & discuss their responses to what is being read to them

3N’s; 3S’s; Language Priority

3S’s, 3N’s
Pre-training | Post-training
---|---
Never | 4 | 0
Rarely | 0 | 6
Usually | 1 | 4
Always | 0 | 0

Comments given (in no particular order)

Pre-training | Post-training
---|---
Although I didn’t use that terminology! | Usually During 6 weeks at playgroup visits
Going (not readable), embedded in my literacy engagement | large groups not ideal for conversational reading, but a modified version can be
It makes reading more fun & interactive | Previously – however not involved in direct provision during this project
| Always, I had not heard of the Abecedarian Approach but was introduced to conversational reading technique at university

Q2.4 - if yes, did parents and children interact/react to the conversational reading activities

Respondents answering this question

Pre-training | Post-training
---|---
6 | 8

Pre-training | Post-training
---|---
Positively | Negatively | Indifferently | Positively | Negatively | Indifferently
6 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0

Comments given (in no particular order)

Pre-training | Post-training
---|---
Stories succeed or fail even in group story times based on whether you include the kids in the experience.

Q2.5 - Have you observed parent and child language and engagement improvement/increase since using these techniques?

Respondents answering this question

Pre-training | Post-training
---|---
6 | 9

Pre-training | Post-training
---|---
YES | NO | Indifferent/ Don’t know | YES | NO | Indifferent/ Don’t know
2 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2

Comments given (in no particular order)

Pre-training | Post-training
---|---
Enjoy reading books more
Nature of our programs – we don’t measure effect/outcome/results (just numbers!!)

**Q2.6 - How engaged did the parents appear to be?**

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>At times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>At times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Question triggered no comments.

**Q2.7 - How engaged did the very young children appear to be?**

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>9</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>At times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>At times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given *(in no particular order)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So much more engagement with conversational techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q2.8 - Were the parents responsive to your intentional engagement?**

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very positive</td>
<td>Indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very positive</td>
<td>Indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments given *(in no particular order)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mostly positive. It took a while for families to warm-up and build trust in the consultative relationship.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q3.1 - Has the professional training you have received to date affected your professional practice in regard to early literacy activities and supporting parents of very young children experiencing vulnerabilities?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>So</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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</table>

This Question triggered no comments.

Q3.2 - In what ways? Describe

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments given (in no particular order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing/time constraints lead to limited early literacy training</td>
<td>Engage better with families using techniques they can do at home &amp; at the library visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes every moment meaningful. Active not passive practice. Always educational, under the veneer of fun!</td>
<td>The simple models in the Abecedarian approach are BRILLIANT! They condense broad concepts and diverse practices into simple, easy-to-remember and apply maxims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of embedding modelling into program delivery &amp; not solely performative engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain practical elements (more from peer-based learning than professional training) are very helpful in knowing how best to deliver programs such as Rhymetime, Storytime and Kinder visits</td>
<td>Understanding the importance of early literacy has given me more motivation to pass on the knowledge &amp; techniques I’ve learnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Pointing out to vulnerable families it’s important to read to their child every day &amp; the whole experience of sitting together with a book, not just the reading. Pointing out also to talk/sing/rhyme with their child from birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of some developmental levels and appropriate resources</td>
<td>I know to incorporate the Abecedarian approach strategies, what they are, and how important they are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 In every way – can never have enough! It’s also good to have reminders and refreshers – you forget things over the years.

Every time I see a colleague present a session or attend a training session, I am inspired by new strategies and different ways of doing things. This is how I have grown & developed as a children’s librarian.

2 I do not do programs as regularly now so have not used them very much. I think they will add to my knowledge and are relevant to the community I work with

More confident

Q3.3 - Have your perceptions of its impact in your program delivery changed your knowledge about and delivery of early childhood literacy and language programming?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given (in no particular order)

Pre-training

Looking forward to practical experiences with sessions with families

Post-training

Furthered, not changed. So glad to see such active, hands-on attention to developing parents as role models. I’ve been arguing (against resistance) for it for years!

Q3.4 - Do you have any other comments or recommendations with regard to your role, (or that of childrens librarians in general) training and/or practices in regard to your support of parents with young children experiencing vulnerabilities in development of early literacy competencies?

Respondents answering this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-training</th>
<th>Post-training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given (in no particular order)

Pre-training

Yes. Communication training with bi-lingual families, outreach time off desk/circulation duties to do visits and keep up-to-date on early childhood literacy development training, another staff member to support at outreach visits.

Post-training

Totally agree with model that emphasises giving carers skills/knowledge to teach kids, rather than expecting our brief

I wonder if play groups are the right forum... Half (?) my group were Storytime regulars with high literacy
interactions with them as educators to have meaningful long term effects. If we empower parents, they can practice for the rest of the week what we do in our half hour sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengthen phonetic &amp; phonemic knowledge base; Strengthen adult engagement techniques</th>
<th>Cross-cultural engagement training; Early language speech training; Adult engagement training; Early Years Collection – work with facilitators, groups &amp; parents; peer observation/shared session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The fact that we live in a multi-cultural society should ensure we plan and prepare events &amp; activities within our libraries which cater to a vast selection of different cultures and religions where possible</td>
<td>Speak to parents in small groups, simple language, not rushed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve never had specialist children’s literacy training but will feel well-resourced with the training information provided. It’s obviously crucial to get it right for 0-3’s</td>
<td>Project has been valuable – feedback from parents has been positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think it’s fabulous that we are now running targeted programs, as I have often felt that our open programs are perhaps intimidating and unwelcoming to families experiencing disadvantage. This is creating a safe environment for them to engage with and take advantage of our specialist knowledge and services.</td>
<td>It is very hard to find any early literacy or general story time training for new staff. I think this would be beneficial to be regularly available for professional development E.g. 2 to 4 times a year through SLV.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>