

EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY
PARENT EDUCATION PROFILE



FULL SCALES
DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION

October 2003
Version 2

The PEP should not be used without training in the research base for parent education and best practices in parent education for children's literacy.

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FULL SCALES

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION

Preface

The Parent Education Profile (PEP) has been a collaborative effort from the beginning when Diane D'Angelo, Lila Gibbs, Sue Henry, Susan Perkins, Helen Schaeffer, and I got together in July 2000 to outline the initial version. Our purpose was to organize research findings about the effects of parents on children's literacy development in a way that Even Start programs could consistently track and report on parents' progress. We were motivated by the then new requirement that state agencies develop performance indicators to measure the performance of Even Start programs. State coordinators were having a difficult time finding tools to document changes in parents' actions and attitudes—the changes that family literacy staff often assert are the most dramatic results of Even Start participation.

New York state and local staff volunteered to pilot the PEP as a new approach to measurement—not exactly knowing where the efforts would lead. Many thanks are due to those volunteers for their willingness to try out and give feedback about the early versions of the PEP. Most gratifying have been stories about how staff have used the PEP to strengthen their work with parents. Through the ongoing work of trainers and project directors and staff from many New York Even Start programs and the support of Sue Henry, New York State Even Start State Coordinator, we have reached a milestone with the publication of this administration manual.

The goal of this manual is to standardize the way that family literacy programs implement and score the PEP so that we can undertake the next stage of research about the instrument. Enthusiasm for the PEP from family literacy staff has accelerated use of the instrument but much work remains to be done before we understand patterns of change. The next step is analysis of information coming from the first full year of field implementation of the full instrument. Again, we will rely on the staff of New York State Even Start programs to collect that information, and we thank them for their continuing efforts.

Like the PEP, the manual itself is a collaborative work: it includes examples of documentation from pilot projects to illustrate levels of the PEP scales; administration and training advice that has been gleaned from field experience; and an excerpt from the research synthesis by Doug Powell and Diane D'Angelo that formed the base for the instrument's major constructs. We look forward to feedback on its usefulness.

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RMC Research
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*Contains information that is new to the October 2003 edition.

Introduction to The Parent Education Profile

“Measure what you treasure.” “If you didn’t measure it, it didn’t happen.” The clichés about the values of evaluation for signaling importance of program components are well known both to those who take meaning from them and those who are distressed by them. My general stance leans more toward the latter than the former interpretation even though I have spent considerable time working as an evaluator. In the area of family literacy, however, I have developed a new appreciation for the wisdom of the clichés as a result of my work with the Parent Education Profile (PEP), a new observational approach to assessing parental behaviors associated with children’s literacy outcomes. Because family literacy programs have not been able to gauge in a standard and meaningful way the progress of parents in their educational roles, it has been difficult to establish the value of family literacy as distinct from other services. The lack of measurement tools (and therefore of reported outcomes) for parenting education has increased the risk that policymakers will not see value in comprehensive family literacy programs.

One component that distinguishes family literacy programs from other education programs is the support provided for parents to become educators of their own children: direct parenting education for literacy development and guided practice in interactive literacy activities with children. Without this component, family literacy programming is not different from services that combine high

quality adult education and early childhood services. The value added by the parenting education and interactive literacy components of family literacy programs has been difficult to capture for potential collaborators, funders, and policymakers. Not surprisingly, the value of these programs is often expressed only in terms of adult outcomes in literacy and employment and children’s growth in readiness for reading. Yet family literacy program staff often credit the changes made in families’ abilities to become educational advocates for their children as the long-lasting benefits of the program (New York State Even Start Family Literacy Partnership, 2000). Family workers and home instructors are understandably frustrated that the achievements of their work with parents do not show up in formal evaluations. Parenting outcomes do not even show up in the list of participant expectations that state agencies are required to measure in the Even Start law. Even Start is a federal program that funds comprehensive family literacy programs for low-income families with high literacy needs.

The problem for family literacy evaluators is locating valid instrumentation for measuring parents’ progress. Many instruments in the field are paper-and-pencil questionnaires that attempt to measure parent attitude change; they tend to pose both reliability and validity issues for family literacy programs. Underlying constructs rarely address the multiple dimensions of the parent’s role in literacy development in any way other than on the most

elementary level, e.g., number of reading materials in the home. Existing measures typically have been developed and used with families who are different in income level, language, and ethnicity from the low-income, often non-English speaking participants of family literacy programs; the approaches employed and the interpretations of results may not be as relevant to low-income parents from a range of cultural experiences (Powell & D'Angelo, 2000). In some cases, staff from family literacy programs have objected to even the most well-known parenting instruments as assuming living conditions, opportunities, and use of terminology that are not characteristic of the families in their programs.

Taking all the above problems as appropriate challenges at a time when states were beginning to develop performance indicators in July 2000, staff from RMC Research and New York State Even Start state and local programs embarked together to remedy the situation. We initiated the development of an approach

Some program coordinators credit the PEP as providing the first opportunity that paraprofessional staff who conduct home instructional visits have had to “give words” to what they have been trying to do with parents. Other programs immediately began to use the PEP as a framework for brainstorming the kinds of interventions that would be helpful to guide parents’ development. One program’s evaluator used the experience with PEP to raise the issue of the staff’s limited observation and interaction time with parents.

to measure the growth of parents in their roles as their children’s educators and advocates. The goal was to develop a measurement approach with the following characteristics:

- the content would focus on the parent’s role in children’s literacy development rather than other aspects of parent support;
- the content would be research-based as the focus would be on family contributions to children’s literacy development and school-related outcomes that have been established through research;
- the approach would focus on parents’ patterns of demonstrated behaviors for making judgments;
- the approach would be sensitive to changes in parents’ behaviors over time but the suggested measurement approach and use would recognize that meaningful changes in behaviors take a considerable amount of time;
- the framework would accommodate a wide range of parent development, including behaviors that could be expressed to infants as well as school-age children, and behaviors that would

be appropriate in a range of cultures as well as income levels;
and

- because behavioral change is complex and demonstrations of behaviors take place in many settings, the instrument would be based on authentic behaviors and encourage multiple perspectives on parents' development, including the viewpoint of the parent.

The team that created the PEP recognized that the development task would be iterative, evolving through field piloting over time, and we acknowledged that reliability challenges were inherent in the approach. But we were inspired by the usability and success of the Child Observation Record (High Scope Educational Foundation, 1992), which is a framework for capturing authentic demonstrations of child development in different areas. RMC Research recently had used the Child Observation Record successfully in a large-scale policy evaluation and we were convinced that a similar format might work for parenting education. To ensure validity of the instrument, the development team drew for content upon Even Start's parent education framework, which is based on an analysis of the research literature relating characteristics of parent education to literacy outcomes for children (Powell & D'Angelo, 2000), the Equipped for the Future frameworks related to parenting (Stein, 2000), and the stages of parent development synthesized from New York's longitudinal

evaluations of family progress in Even Start (Boser & Hodges, 1998).

The Parent Education Profile consists of four scales that are based on research about the parental behaviors associated with learning outcomes for children:

- 1. Parent's Support for Children's Learning in the Home Environment**
- 2. Parent's Role in Interactive Literacy Activities**
- 3. Parent's Role in Supporting Child's Learning in Formal Educational Settings**
- 4. Taking on the Parent Role**

Each scale has three or more subscales that further define constructs. For example, Scale 1 includes three subscales: Use of Literacy Materials, Use of TV/Video, Learning Opportunities, and Family Priority on Learning. Scale 2 also includes three subscales: Expressive and Receptive Language, Reading with Children, and Supporting Book/Print Concepts. Descriptions of different developmental levels of parent behaviors are arranged hierarchically to form each subscale. So, for example, the lowest point on the Expressive and Receptive Language subscale (Level 1) is described as: *Parent's verbal interactions with child are predominately commands or discouragements. Parent responds inconsistently to child's verbal or behavioral cues.* The highest level (Level 5) of that

same subscale is: *Parent actively engages the child in discussion, using strategies such as paying attention to the interests of the child, using open-ended questions providing verbal encouragement, or giving the child an opportunity to process information.*

The full instrument includes seventy-five descriptions of behaviors in fifteen different subscales. The descriptions are used to help summarize the status of parent progress. The intent is to identify the highest level of typical behaviors within each area of development, that is the level of behaviors that represents patterns that are consistently observable. Using the developmental levels on the subscales as a guide to understand progress, those who are most familiar with the parent make assessments at six to twelve month intervals. As with any observation framework, the key in meaningful use of the PEP is full discussion and documentation of the patterns of behavior. To increase reliability of judgments, users are encouraged to include in the discussion all staff members who have knowledge of a parent's literacy-related behaviors, including family workers, home visitors, classroom teachers, and program evaluators, and to reach consensus among the team members on ratings.

Documentation notes provided by the initial field users have been used to determine reliability of judgments across programs and make changes in training for the use of the instrument. Work

continues on formally determining inter-rater reliability with full-scale use of the instrument by expert re-scoring of documentation notes collected from programs.

The initial version of the instrument was piloted by fifteen Even Start programs in New York State during the 2000-2001 program year. Minor improvements were made based on those experiences, formal guidance for instrument use was drawn up, and training on parenting education for literacy and the PEP instrument was provided to staff from all New York State Even Start programs during the fall of 2001. A cadre of trainers from the New York pilot programs who had a year's experience using the PEP provided onsite training to staff from other family literacy programs. The trainers had received additional training in the research base related to parent education, strategies for engaging staff with the structure and intent of the instrument, and practice in scoring, including "real time" scoring based on in-depth discussions among staff about several parents.

The field notes collected by initial users to document their discussions about parents' progress were transcribed and categorized by subscale and scoring level. The notes formed the basis of a documentation guide that provides multiple descriptions of actual parent behaviors that correspond to scores at each subscale level. The documentation guide and other materials have

been used as the core of subsequent training for PEP users. Experience to date suggests that it is important to provide users with training in the research base for parenting education, information about parents' actions that promote children's development of language and literacy, an orientation to the structure of the PEP, an opportunity to discuss applications to different ages and cultures, and guided practice in observing and determining levels on subscales.

Reactions from coordinators of the fifteen programs that were initial users of the PEP has been generally enthusiastic — with the exception of the amount of time it takes for a team to consider thoughtfully and discuss thoroughly individual parent's progress. Program staff report that an in-depth discussion takes approximately forty-five minutes to one hour per parent; as currently implemented, programs plan to discuss and formally record each parent's progress once per year. Program staff are pleased that the instrument attempts to capture the goals they are working towards with parents and, in fact, provides guidance to help shape their interactions with parents. Program directors are pleased that the instrument communicates the intention of parent education for literacy purposes, clarifying an arena that has been confusing for many family literacy programs.

Some program coordinators credit the PEP as providing the first opportunity that paraprofessional staff who conduct home

instructional visits have had to “give words” to what they have been trying to do with parents. Other programs immediately began to use the PEP as a framework for brainstorming the kinds of interventions that would be helpful to guide parents' development. One program's evaluator used the experience with PEP to raise the issue of the staff's limited observation and interaction time with parents.

The PEP seems to provide a way for staff to discuss concepts that are at the core of family literacy programming, and which previously may not have received adequate attention. Once additional technical work has been completed, the developers intend to make the PEP widely available for use by family literacy programs. We are hopeful that the PEP is on its way toward becoming a tool that gives “measurement voice” to the value of family literacy.





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Author's Note

A small group of us, including Diane D'Angelo of RMC Research staff and New York State Even Start state and program staff (Susan Henry, Lila Gibbs, Helen Schaeffer and Susan Perkins) developed the initial framework for the Parenting Education Profile in July 2000.

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Note: This section appeared in the Fall 2002 issue of the *Family Literacy Forum*.

II.

PARENT EDUCATION PROFILE STRUCTURE

This PEP is designed to help summarize the status of parent progress in family literacy programs by organizing observations of behaviors related to literacy and learning made by parents themselves and those who know them well.

The record is designed to trace the progress of development of parents and to capture the highest level of typical behaviors within each area of development, that is, the level of behaviors that represent patterns that are consistently observable. In each area, statements of behavior are arranged from one to five in approximate order of development; the statements are arranged hierarchically.

Ratings should be made by a team that knows the parent well and based on evidence of behaviors from logs, portfolios, interactions, and interviews or discussions with the parent over a several month period. Observations shall come from everyday activities and routine program opportunities rather than specially constructed demonstrations and should represent multiple observations in a variety of settings. Thus, the focus of attention is on behavior initiated by the parent and parent's responses in national situations. In most cases, staff will need to have multiple interactions with the parent over at least a three month period before making an initial rating.

LEVELS

RATINGS ARE BASED ON
PROGRESSION OF
PARENT'S DEVELOPMENT

LEVEL 1 —

*(LEAST SUPPORTIVE OF
LITERACY OUTCOMES)*

LEVEL 1 —

little or no evidence of desired behaviors; limited awareness; limited acceptance; frustrated; not comfortable

LEVEL 2 —

beginning awareness and some interest in ways to improve but may be inconsistent; may need lots of support; low comfort level

LEVEL 3 —

some encouragement and comfort in use of desired behaviors; seeks out information and support; attends to child

LEVEL 4 —

routine and frequent use of desired behaviors; initiation of activities; comfortable in role

LEVEL 5 —

ability to work desired behaviors into daily life; adaptability to child's interests and abilities; extends learning; makes connections for child

LEVEL 5 —

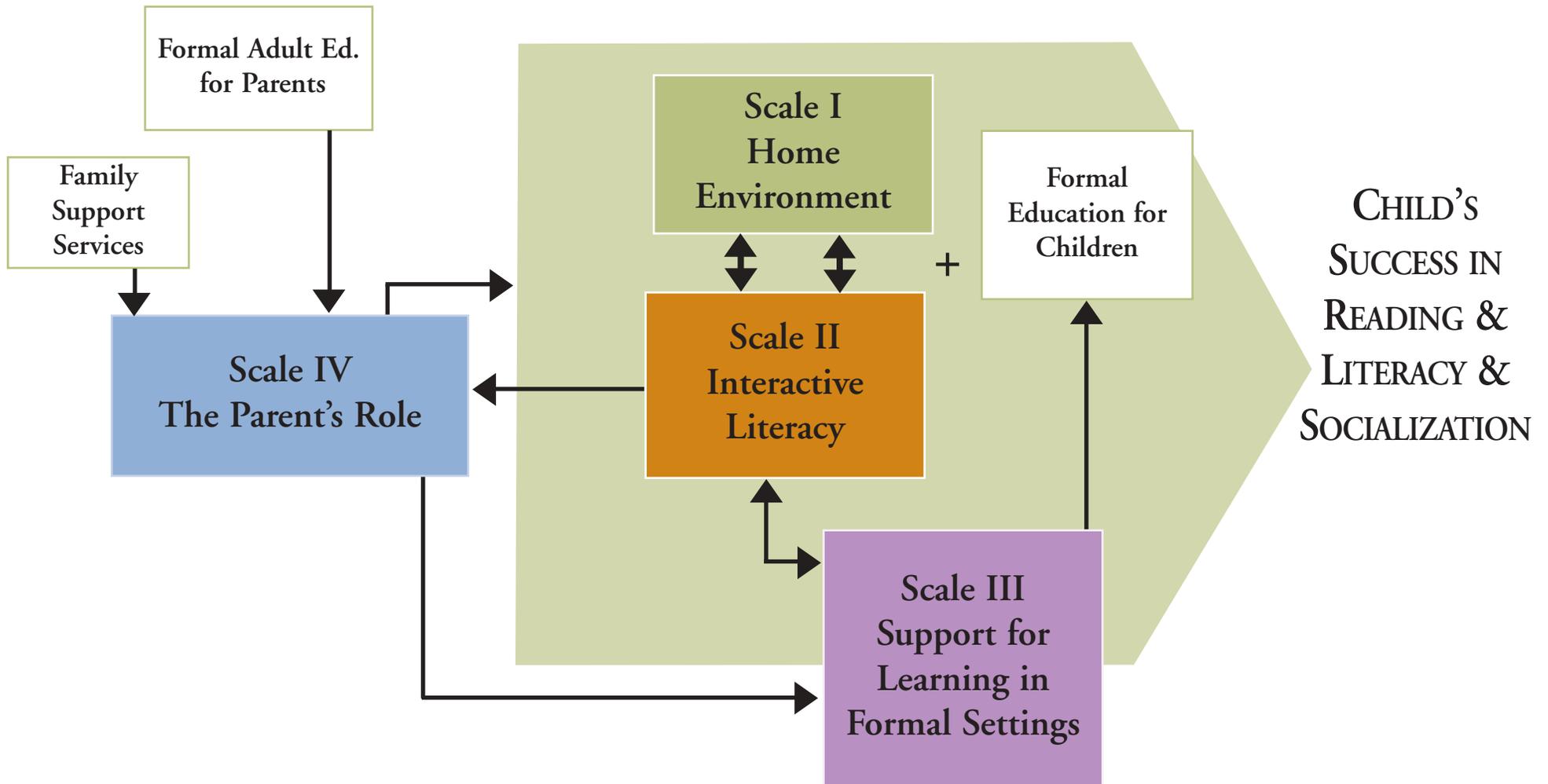
*(MOST SUPPORTIVE OF
LITERACY OUTCOMES)*

**SCORING: EACH PART IS RATED
IN TERMS OF HIGHEST CONSISTENT
LEVEL ATTAINED BY THE PARENT**

Home Environment:	4 ratings
Interactive Literacy:	3 ratings
Support for Children in Formal Settings:	5 ratings
The Parent's Role:	3 ratings
Total:	15 ratings



RELATIONSHIP OF FOUR PEP SCALES



III.

PEP SCALES AND DOCUMENTATION FORMS

PARENT’S SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN’S LEARNING IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

USE OF LITERACY MATERIALS	USE OF TV/VIDEO	HOME LANGUAGE AND LEARNING	PRIORITY ON LEARNING TOGETHER
<p>1. Home has few books or writing/drawing materials; little or nothing is age appropriate.</p>	<p>1. There is no monitoring of TV; children watch whatever and whenever they choose.</p>	<p>1. Parent does not recognize role of home routines and play in literacy learning. Parent limits child’s opportunities for play, doesn’t join in child’s play, doesn’t set up opportunities for learning.</p>	<p>1. Family does not have experience of devoting time to family activities and learning together. Family doesn’t yet place value on learning together.</p>
<p>2. Home has some books and/or writing/drawing materials but they are not appropriate nor accessible to child. Parent does not yet seek out materials for the child.</p>	<p>2. Parent is aware that it is his/her role to limit television but has not successfully done so.</p>	<p>2. Parent is interested in doing more to build child’s literacy learning but parent’s choices for child often do not match child’s age or ability. Parent and child experience frustration.</p>	<p>2. Family relies on support from outside the immediate family to participate occasionally in family learning opportunities.</p>
<p>3. The home has some examples of appropriate reading, writing, & drawing materials. Parent seeks books and writing materials for child. Parent will read and/or write/draw with child several times a week.</p>	<p>3. Parent encourages some watching of age-appropriate programming.</p>	<p>3. Parent seeks information about age-appropriate learning opportunities and is able to use information to set up appropriate learning activities and/or occasionally join in child’s play to extend learning.</p>	<p>3. Parent is aware of the importance of family learning activities and expresses desire to initiate them. Parent occasionally plans family learning opportunities.</p>
<p>4. Home includes books and materials that parent has chosen because parent believes child will like them. Parent uses literacy materials every day with child in engaging ways.</p>	<p>4. Parent tries to set some viewing limits on the type and times for viewing. Parent consistently reinforces viewing rules.</p>	<p>4. Parent often bases his/her choice of activities on observations of child’s skills and interests. Parent facilitates learning opportunities for child several times per week and regularly joins play to extend language.</p>	<p>4. Family members routinely make an effort to initiate family opportunities that foster learning, e.g., attending field trip.</p>
<p>5. Home has a variety of materials for reading, writing, & drawing that are accessible to child. Materials are used daily. Parent and child select books based frequently on child’s interest and skill levels.</p>	<p>5. Parent uses television as a learning tool; parent watches with child and moderates messages from TV.</p>	<p>5. Parent regularly uses “teachable moments” with child. Parent takes cues from child and allows child to guide choices of learning activities. Parent frequently participates in play and takes proactive role in expanding language.</p>	<p>5. Family members take pleasure in family learning opportunities. Parent is able to make learning opportunities from everyday activities.</p>

SCALE I: PARENT'S SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

Summarize the evidence that led to placement of the parent at a specific level (see section IV for examples).

Scale I A. Use of Literacy Materials

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale I B. Use of Use of TV/Video

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale I C. Home Language & Learning

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale I D. Priority on Learning Together

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

PARENT'S ROLE IN INTERACTIVE LITERACY ACTIVITIES

EXPRESSIVE AND RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE	READING WITH CHILDREN	SUPPORTING BOOK/PRINT CONCEPTS
<p>1. Parent's verbal interactions with child are predominately commands or discouragements. Parent responds inconsistently to child's verbal or behavioral cues.</p>	<p>1. Parent tells stories, sings or reads infrequently to or with child. Shared reading or storytelling is a frustrating experience for parent and child.</p>	<p>1. Parent is not yet aware of their own role in modeling reading and writing with child.</p>
<p>2. Parent has limited verbal interaction with child, but the tone is more positive than negative. Language is characterized by simple sentences and questions that can be answered yes/no.</p>	<p>2. Parent sometimes tells stories, sings, or reads to child but does not attempt to engage child in the story or in the process of reading or telling the story. Parent has low comfort level.</p>	<p>2. Parent occasionally demonstrates awareness of child's development of book and print understanding, e.g., points out words, shows book pictures to young children.</p>
<p>3. Parent is aware of the impact of their own speaking/language and listening to child on the child's language and behavior. Parent sometimes tries out strategies to support child's development of language.</p>	<p>3. Parent is interested in learning how to tell stories or read to child and tries out suggested strategies for engagement. Parent becomes comfortable with at least 1-2 strategies to support/reinforce reading and oral language, including, rhymes, songs, word play with younger children.</p>	<p>3. Parent begins to help child understand how print works, e.g., letter names connected to sounds, left to right progression, book handling.</p>
<p>4. Parent regularly adjusts own language or uses strategies to support child, e.g., choice of vocabulary, variation in words, asking questions, and listening to the child.</p>	<p>4. Parent regularly uses a variety of different strategies for engaging the child in reading books, storytelling, or singing.</p>	<p>4. Parent uses strategies with child to develop meaning for print, e.g., writing letters and words, playing games with sounds and words, child dictating stories to parent.</p>
<p>5. Parent actively engages the child in discussion, using strategies such as paying attention to the interests of the child, using open-ended questions, providing verbal encouragement, or giving the child an opportunity to process information.</p>	<p>5. Parent matches reading or storytelling strategy to situation, e.g., child's developmental level, child's mood, setting. Parent verbalizes connections between stories and the child's experiences, and encourages child to make similar connections.</p>	<p>5. Parent takes advantage of every day activities to frequently make the connection between sounds, oral language, and print.</p>

SCALE II: PARENT'S ROLE IN INTERACTIVE LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Summarize the evidence that led to placement of the parent at a specific level (see section IV for examples).

Scale II E. Expressive and Receptive Language

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale II F. Reading with Children

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale II G. Supporting Book/Print Concepts

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

PARENT’S ROLE IN SUPPORTING CHILD’S LEARNING IN FORMAL EDUCATION SETTINGS

Note: Depending on the age of the child, formal educational settings may be school, preschool, and/or child care settings. Educational settings vary widely in the degree to which they actively promote interaction with parents; thus, the ratings here will need to take into account the context in which parents’ initiatives and responses to school’s initiatives are taking place.

PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS	EXPECTATIONS OF CHILD AND FAMILY	MONITORING PROGRESS/REINFORCING LEARNING	AS A PARTNER WITH EDUCATIONAL SETTING	EXPECTATIONS OF CHILD’S SUCCESS IN LEARNING
<p>1. Communication between parent and child’s teacher is infrequent.</p>	<p>1. Parent is not aware of school’s expectations for child.</p>	<p>1. Parent does not know about nor question child’s progress in educational setting.</p>	<p>1. Parent takes no role or has no understanding of parent role connected to educational setting.</p>	<p>1. Parent has not formed expectations of child’s success or has low expectations. Parent gives negative or mixed messages to child about child’s ability.</p>
<p>2. Parent attends some school or center functions, e.g., open house, meetings—probably with outside support.</p>	<p>2. Parent knows that school has expectations but has not taken actions to learn specifics.</p>	<p>2. Parent acknowledges that he/she has responsibility and begins to monitor child’s progress, at least in formal ways, e.g., review report card/progress report.</p>	<p>2. Parent would like to be connected to school but does not feel ready or is not in a position to do so. Parent may reluctantly agree to participate in school-connected activity—perhaps with support for doing so.</p>	<p>2. Parent sometimes verbalizes concerns about the effects of negative expectations, e.g., verbal messages or actions, on child. Parent often demands more of child than is realistic for developmental level.</p>
<p>3. Parent verbalizes awareness of the importance of own role in communication with teachers. Parent usually responds positively to requests on own, e.g., for attending parent-teacher conference.</p>	<p>3. Parent finds out information about school’s specific expectations of child.</p>	<p>3. Parent questions child and/or teacher about how child is doing.</p>	<p>3. Parent occasionally participates in school-connected activities.</p>	<p>3. Parent tries to use positive and consistent messages with child. Parent asks for information about child development. Parent takes active role in helping the child reach appropriate expectations.</p>
<p>4. Parent initiates contact with child’s teacher and others in school/center setting in relationship to child’s needs and interests.</p>	<p>4. Parent assesses expectations and the school’s approach to helping children meet them. Parent begins to supplement school initiatives with actions of his/her own.</p>	<p>4. Parent inquires about ways to help child make more progress and works with child to reinforce what the child is learning.</p>	<p>4. Parent sees that he/she could be involved with school in a variety of ways. Parent tries more than one type of involvement, e.g., going on field trip, making game for class.</p>	<p>4. Parent uses lots of different ways to encourage high but achievable expectations, including creating experiences that build the child’s success.</p>
<p>5. There is ongoing exchange of information between parent and child’s teacher; each is comfortable initiating contact with the other.</p>	<p>5. Parent finds out information to place the school’s expectations in context, e.g., what others are asking of children of the same age. Parent works with others to promote system improvements for quality education for all children.</p>	<p>5. Parent takes an interest in what and how their child is learning and finds ways to extend child’s learning beyond what is required by educational setting.</p>	<p>5. Parent participates in a variety of different ways on a consistent basis, i.e., 4-6 times a year.</p>	<p>5. Parent sets benchmarks to help child achieve longer term expectations. Parent creates opportunities that are challenging for child.</p>

SCALE III: PARENT'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING CHILD'S LEARNING IN FORMAL EDUCATION SETTINGS

Summarize the evidence that led to placement of the parent at a specific level (see section IV for examples).

Scale III H. Parent-School Communication

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale III I. Expectations of Child and Family

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale III J. Monitoring Progress/Reinforcing Learning

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale III K. As a Partner with Educational Setting

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale III L. Expectation of Child's Success in Learning

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

TAKING ON THE PARENT ROLE

CHOICES, RULES, AND LIMITS	MANAGING STRESSES ON CHILDREN	SAFETY AND HEALTH OF CHILDREN
<p>1. Parent operates from an extreme position or moves between extremes, sometimes setting no limits and other times rigid rules. Parent does not provide choices for the child.</p>	<p>1. Parent is absorbed in own needs or needs of one member of the family. Parent does not acknowledge responsibility for managing stresses of the family on children.</p>	<p>1. Parent is not yet aware that issues in the home settings/environment have a negative effect on child's learning and development, e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse, nutrition, smoking.</p>
<p>2. Parent observes the behavior of other adults with children and sees the connection between parenting strategies and child behaviors. Parent acknowledges need for strategies.</p>	<p>2. Parent is able to identify family problems, issues, or needs and expresses a desire for change.</p>	<p>2. Parent is aware that he/she has a role and responsibility to create a safe and healthy environment for child.</p>
<p>3. Parent seeks out information about strategies to develop child's skills to make choices, solve problems, and stay within limits.</p>	<p>3. Parent recognizes the various demands of different family members and also the strengths of the family. Parent sees his/her own part in family system and takes action to buffer children from stress.</p>	<p>3. Parent seeks out information and help to create an environment that protects and nurtures children. Parent takes actions to improve environment for children.</p>
<p>4. Parent applies range of strategies in appropriate situations. Parent helps children discriminate among strategies appropriate for particular situations.</p>	<p>4. Parent tries out various strategies to strengthen family. Parent engages other family members or friends or program supports in strengthening family.</p>	<p>4. Parent engages other family members in ensuring a safe and healthy environment for children.</p>
<p>5. Parent consistently provides opportunities for child to make choices within limits, e.g., age, safety. Parent is comfortable with and able to apply a range of strategies that match the situation.</p>	<p>5. Parent thinks about the family as a whole and balances the needs of different individuals and the whole family. Parent accepts that role of parent is to take responsibility for the well-being of the family as a whole.</p>	<p>5. Parent makes informed decisions to improve the health and safety of the environment.</p>

SCALE IV: TAKING ON THE PARENT ROLE

Summarize the evidence that led to placement of the parent at a specific level (see section IV for examples).

Scale IV M. Choices, Rules, and Limits

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale IV N. Managing Stresses on Children

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

Scale IV O. Safety and Health of Children

Date: _____ Level: _____

Rationale:

PARENT EDUCATION PROFILE ASSESSMENT RECORD

Parent Name or Code _____

Assessment Date #1 _____

Scoring Team (names or roles):

Which ages of children are considered in determining scoring?

Assessment Date #2 _____

Scoring Team (names or roles):

Which ages of children are considered in determining scoring?

Assessment Date #3 _____

Scoring Team (names or roles):

Which ages of children are considered in determining scoring?

Assessment Date #4 _____

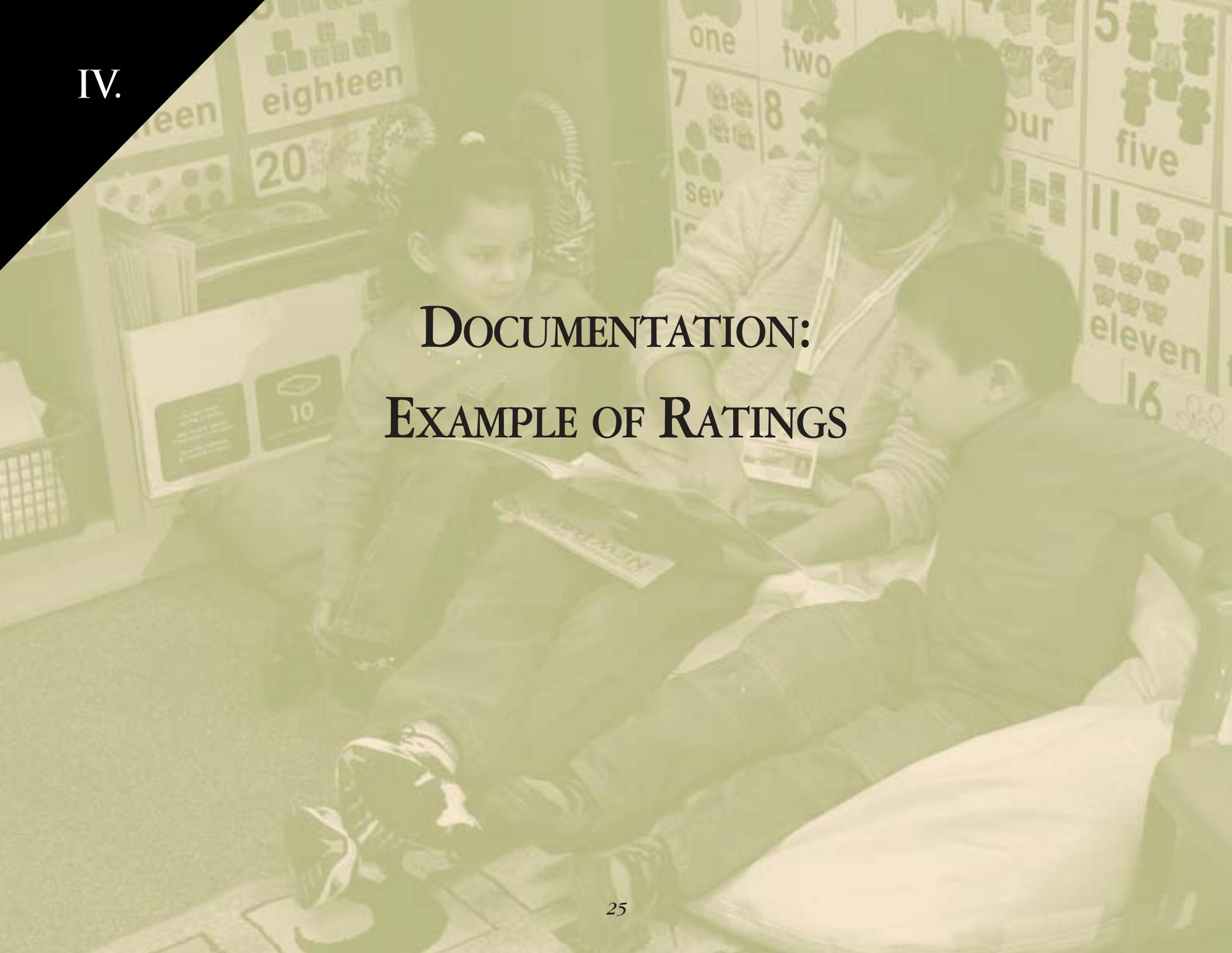
Scoring Team (names or roles):

Which ages of children are considered in determining scoring?

SUMMARY OF PARENT EDUCATION PROFILE LEVEL SCORES

		Level			
		Time 1	Time 2	Time 3	Time 4
I. PARENT'S SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT					
A.	Use of Literacy Materials	_____	_____	_____	_____
B.	Use of TV/Video	_____	_____	_____	_____
C.	Home Language & Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
D.	Priority on Learning Together	_____	_____	_____	_____
Avg. (Add A-D; divide by 4)		_____	_____	_____	_____
II. PARENT'S ROLE IN INTERACTIVE LITERACY ACTIVITIES					
E.	Expressive and Receptive Language	_____	_____	_____	_____
F.	Reading with Children	_____	_____	_____	_____
G.	Supporting Book/Print Concepts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Avg. (Add E-G; divide by 3)		_____	_____	_____	_____
III. PARENT'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING CHILD'S LEARNING IN FORMAL EDUCATION SETTINGS					
H.	Parent-School Communication	_____	_____	_____	_____
I.	Expectations of Child and Family	_____	_____	_____	_____
J.	Monitoring Progress/Reinforcing Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
K.	As a Partner with Educational Setting	_____	_____	_____	_____
L.	Expectations of Child's Success in Learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Avg. (Add H-L; divide by 5)		_____	_____	_____	_____
IV. TAKING ON THE PARENT ROLE					
M.	Choices, Rules, and Limits	_____	_____	_____	_____
N.	Managing Stresses on Children	_____	_____	_____	_____
O.	Safety and Health of Children	_____	_____	_____	_____
Avg. (Add M-O; divide by 3)		_____	_____	_____	_____

IV.



**DOCUMENTATION:
EXAMPLE OF RATINGS**

I. Parent's Support for Children's Learning in the Home Environment

USE OF LITERACY MATERIALS

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Home has few books or writing/drawing materials; little or nothing is age appropriate.

I don't observe any books in the household on my visits.

Level 2— Home has some books and/or writing/drawing materials but they are not appropriate nor accessible to child. Parent does not yet seek out materials for the child.

Family has some books and writing materials but they are inaccessible to the child "because he doesn't take care of them" or he "writes where he's not supposed to."

Children have a few books; most writing materials are strictly for education purposes like homework. Parent has accepted books and writing materials, crayons, markers for children to use.

Level 3— The home has some examples of appropriate reading, writing, & drawing materials. Parent seeks books and writing materials for child. Parent will read and/or write/draw with child several times a week.

Mom buys books, goes to the library, and has her girls in book clubs. She is a poor reader and wants more for them.

L has lots of books and materials for M that are age-appropriate that she has purchased. She takes him to the library to select books. She is aware that many times he chooses books that are below his reading level, but she knows that it is important for him to experience success. L reads books and magazines and enjoys them. While she is at a low reading

level, she manages to do appropriate things for her son. She's not afraid to ask questions and seek out help if she doesn't know something.

I have seen age-appropriate books, and parent states she reads every day. Child sits and points and jabbars when parent reads on visit. Child knows routine—gets book, sits and child holds book by himself.

Level 4— Home includes books and materials that parent has chosen because parent believes child will like them. Parent uses literacy materials every day with child in engaging ways.

Children have an excellent assortment of books. Mom uses on a regular basis. Child has crayons, paints, and paper for writing, creativity. Mom visits library weekly with child.

K reads and exposes K to books daily. She seeks out books that K is interested in, i.e. kittens. She recently got K a library card and has gotten books out of the library for her.

Level 5— Home has a variety of materials for reading, writing, & drawing that are accessible to child. Materials are used daily. Parent and child select books based frequently on child's interest and skill levels.

The family has a bookshelf just for the children's books. The family also has a basket of coloring books, crayons and markers that are accessible to the children. The mother selects books from Project Read and from the library in subjects the children enjoy.

I. Parent's Support for Children's Learning in the Home Environment

USE OF TV/VIDEO

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— There is no monitoring of TV; children watch whatever and whenever they choose.

J is only three months old, but K sits him in front of TV often. She has been given Parents As Teachers information showing how TV won't help J in language development but it has not changed her behavior.

The TV is on in the family's home all day everyday. The home visitor has resorted to using the kitchen for visits because the TV sometimes doesn't get turned off when asked. When the home visitor discussed this with the mother, she reports that it is only on for background noise.

Level 2— Parent is aware that it is his/her role to limit television but has not successfully done so.

Whenever I go for a visit, the TV is on and the girls are usually watching cartoons. Mom let the girls watch TV after the 9/11 attack. Favorite videos are used as rewards for the school efforts of children.

K does have children's videos for her children and they watch them frequently. She is aware that some violent films or horror films give her boys nightmares so she does limit them viewing such fare. However, if she and her boyfriend are watching a more mature-type movie and the boys are up, she does not turn it off.

K has a TV that barely works most of the time and it's not on most of the time. The children are allowed to watch TV and Mom sometimes watches Jerry Springer and other inappropriate programs with them around, but she also tries to find Sesame Street and Teletubbies. Recently she purchased a video of Harry Potter for her older children and commented that it's very good for children to watch.

Level 3— Parent encourages some watching of age appropriate programming.

T will suggest educational programming for the children when they want to watch television. She has acquired some videos of fairy tales and children's movies that she wants them to watch instead of cartoons.

Level 4— Parent tries to set some viewing limits on the type and times for viewing. Parent consistently reinforces viewing rules.

Parents encourage watching of age appropriate programming. Television time is limited to children's programs and movies such as Sesame Street and Blues Clues.

K and T encourage K to watch appropriate shows and videos. They are constantly monitoring TV as there are older children in the home watching TV.

Level 5— Parent uses television as a learning tool; parent watches with child and moderates messages from TV.

M watches "Bob the Builder" and "Blues Clues" with H. She watches how much H is exposed to the TV and then talks about the shows with H.

I. Parent's Support for Children's Learning in the Home Environment

HOME LANGUAGE AND LEARNING

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Parent does not recognize role of home routines and play in literacy learning. Parent limits child's opportunities for play; doesn't join in child's play, doesn't set up opportunities for learning.

Mom limits baby's opportunities for play. Baby has not experienced tummy time, except when family educator or grandmother places baby on floor.

Level 2— Parent is interested in doing more to build child's literacy learning but parent's choices for child often do not match child's age or ability. Parent and child experience frustration.

S is interested in opportunities for X to extend his development but her choices for him do not match his age.

Mom is very interested in opportunities to further the development of the children but often expects more than children are capable of. She expects child "to color inside the lines."

When visitors play with the children, Mom does see that the girls are learning through playing, but most often, mom does not offer enough opportunities for the children to play. Many times, they sit in front of the television and watch videos. Mom encourages this because then she knows where they are and that they are safe. And Mom feels that the house must be clean all the time under pressure from her husband so she is doing this pretty much all day.

Level 3— Parent seeks information about age appropriate learning opportunities and is able to use information to set up appropriate learning activities and/or occasionally join in child’s play to extend learning.

Mom is great at taking her girls to different places to have them learn new skills such as skating, swimming, and painting. The girls are allowed to finish their play or project and not asked to pick up toys right away.

M takes any and all opportunities to use teachable moments for H. Example: He got some balls out of a large container and was throwing them. M used the situation to teach him to roll them into the container, and then to throw them in.

Mother and father have asked the home visitor for ideas to help their oldest child with homework. The mother has used activities modeled by the home visitor with the youngest child. For example: singing, book reading, playing rhymes and song games.

Level 4— Parent often bases his/her choice of activities on observations of child’s skills and interests. Parent facilitates learning opportunities for child several times per week and regularly joins play to extend language.

L is always interested in learning new opportunities for J’s development but she always adds to the opportunity making it above J’s age. For example, when working with basic shapes, she goes beyond square, circle, and rectangle to talk about cylinder and trapezoid.

Level 5— Parent regularly uses “teachable moments” with child. Parent takes cues from child and allows child to guide choices of learning activities. Parent frequently participates in play and takes proactive role in expanding language.

No example available.

I. Parent's Support for Children's Learning in the Home Environment

PRIORITY ON LEARNING TOGETHER

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Family does not have experience of devoting time to family activities and learning together. Family doesn't yet place value on learning together.

Mom is currently dealing with many stressors that prevent her from devoting time to family activities. Mom stated: "I don't want to" when invited to participate with children in family activities.

S is shy and unsure how to initiate activities with her children.

Parent is a teen, very focused on herself, so does not allow time to be with her child. She does not plan activities or follow through on activities that others plan.

Level 2— Family relies on support from outside the immediate family to participate occasionally in family learning opportunities.

K has a lot of stress related to her keeping her job, no transportation, and difficulty in handling her older children. She is aware of the importance of family learning activities and expresses the desire for them to happen, but something usually goes wrong so that they can't do them. She told the visitor recently that she had planned for the whole family to go fishing for a Mother's Day activity, but at the next visit, she said that it didn't happen because her boyfriend didn't want to go and the boys gave her a hard time.

A has a large, close extended family. However, although A's immediate family is together very often, they don't necessarily engage in learning activities with the children. A has expressed frustration that her husband often goes off by himself to fish or visit with friends instead of taking the children to the park or to swim. When they are together, the children are typically on the couch watching videos while A cleans and C works on the car. A has expressed a desire to do more family-type activities with children, but has not yet been able to make these things happen.

Level 3— Parent is aware of the importance of family learning activities and expresses desire to initiate them. Parent occasionally plans family learning opportunities.

Parent talks about activities she has done with child during week to help child learn, i.e., hide toy under blanket. Parents will talk about the activity and how they did it and where they did it.

The mother will attend toddler time when her cousin does with their children. The mother will attend field trips if a friend or relative is going also. She discontinued attending My Child and Me sessions for no particular reason.

B sometimes will ask her home visitor to do some type of activity such as finger painting or building with blocks. She expresses that she wants her children to participate in fun learning activities, but she finds it very hard to find time to do any of this with her children on her own.

Level 4— Family members routinely make an effort to initiate family opportunities that foster learning, e.g., attending field trip.

There is daily parent/child interaction, working with colors and numbers, and the alphabet. Mom has board games to play with children. They take trips to library and museums.

Parents provide much exposure to books, computer, outdoor play, and exploration. The family takes frequent trips to the library and park.

Level 5— Family members take pleasure in family learning opportunities. Parent is able to make learning opportunities from everyday activities.

M uses experiences everyday with H to make them learning experiences. Just a walk to the library is full of jumping, noticing colors all around, talking about cars, etc.

II. Parent's Role in Interactive Literacy

EXPRESSIVE AND RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Parent's verbal interactions with child are predominately commands or discouragements. Parent responds inconsistently to child's verbal or behavioral cues.

S raised her voice to Q when he did not respond correctly to what color the marker was and when he did not answer at all. When Q correctly named a color, S moved on to the next color without praise or encouragement.

Much of V's interaction with P is negative. She resorts, much of the time, to yelling. V is generally inconsistent with her verbal communication as well as physical communication.

As Mom sits on the couch, she yells at her son, "Leave your sister alone, and stop being a brat." "I don't understand why my kids have to be so bad and they won't listen."

Level 2— Parent has limited verbal interaction with child, but the tone is more positive than negative. Language is characterized by simple sentences and questions that can be answered yes/no.

Parent-child communication consists of simple yes or no questions most of the time. Are you hungry? Do you want to do this? Parent does not hold conversations with child on a higher level. Accepts child's answer and goes on. At other times, gives excessive commands such as "Go do this, didn't I say go do this?"

We have been working hard at positive reinforcement. Positive language has been used more freely. Since P has limited verbal skills, V uses yes/no questions much of the time. P is abler to use more complex answers.

Level 3— Parent is aware of the impact of their own speaking/language and listening to child on the child's language and behavior. Parent sometimes tries out strategies to support child's development of language.

J is patient and calm when correcting M. She helps him find letter /M/ to find his name. She allows him to do the craft activities with support, but she doesn't take over.

Dad knows his way of speaking is copied by A. Dad tried different thing but is very low functioning.

Parent speaks to F about everything he is doing. A waits for F to respond (babble); she also changes her voice to get F's attention when reading a book or speaking to him.

Level 4— Parent regularly adjusts own language or uses strategies to support child, e.g., choice of vocabulary, variation in words, asking question, and listening to child.

Parents are aware of their own language in and out of the home. Parent has tried to use some of the strategies that the home education liaison and day care coordinator have suggested. Parent has also used her own strategies and ideas.

Level 5— Parent actively engages the child in discussion, using strategies such as paying attention to the interests of the child, using open-ended questions, providing verbal encouragement, or giving the child an opportunity to process information.

Mom often talks to the child. She asks questions, repeats what child says, and gives encouragement when child talks.

II. Parent's Role in Interactive Literacy

READING WITH CHILDREN

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1—Parent tells stories, sings or reads infrequently to or with child. Shared reading or storytelling is a frustrating experience for parent and child.

J doesn't follow through on the program's encouragement to read the books we leave with her.

Mom is uncomfortable reading to the children. She gets frustrated when the children run around and don't pay attention to her. Her reading skills are poor and don't hold the children's interests.

Level 2—Parent sometimes tells stories, sings, or reads to child but does not attempt to engage child in the story or in the process of reading or telling the story. Parent has low comfort level.

S will read to her child on occasion but just reads the words and doesn't make too much effort to engage the child. She seems not quite comfortable reading to her daughter and often comments that T won't listen. I believe that Mom doesn't often read to her child at home.

Y participates during the reading part of the home visit but she is very busy with three children and work. She doesn't read much outside the home visit time even though the school recommended extra reading for B.

Level 3— Parent is interested in learning how to tell stories or read to child and tries out suggested strategies for engagement. Parent becomes comfortable with at least 1-2 strategies to support/reinforce reading and oral language, including rhymes, songs, word play with younger children.

Parent is very comfortable reading to her child. She does read to her before nap and bedtime. When parent is in daycare setting, she will pull a book from the shelf and her child will sit him her lap. Parent will point out pictures and ask the child what they are. Parent is very open to new strategies.

When A can be persuaded to read with her children at home visits, she does try to mimic what I do. She'll point to the pictures, make animal sounds, and use different voices. I believe she is showing interesting in using different strategies with her children.

Level 4— Parent regularly uses a variety of different strategies for engaging the child in reading books, storytelling, or singing.

Mom sits and listens to her children as they read to her. Mom asks her kids different types of questions after she or they read books. She asked them about other endings for stories.

Parent guides children in learning to read. She reads with them nightly, visits the library, asks question and stimulates their thinking and problem solving.

Level 5— Parent matches reading or storytelling strategy to situation, e.g., child's developmental level, child's mood, setting. Parent verbalizes connections between stories and the child's experiences, and encourages child to make similar connections.

No example available.

II. Parent's Role in Interactive Literacy

SUPPORTING BOOK/PRINT CONCEPTS

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Parent is not yet aware of their own role in modeling reading and writing with children.

Mom believes that three year old is too young for books.

Despite modeling and information given to the Mom, she doesn't seem to understand the connection between child's language and book reading. If coaxed during PACT time, she will use some strategies and sometimes she mimics what she sees others do but usually doesn't put any energy into PACT activities.

Level 2— Parent occasionally demonstrates awareness of child's development of book and print understanding, e.g., points out words, shows book pictures to young children.

I observed parent using a placemat with a child's name on it. She pointed to the name and said the child's name. The child did not repeat and Mom did not pursue.

Parent has a low comfort level with some of the activities that have been suggested to her. Rhymes and finger plays are some of the activities. She is aware of the connection between oral language and reading but feels her child is too young for this skill.

Level 3— Parent begins to help child understand how print works, e.g., letter names connected to sounds, left to right progression, book handling.

Mom sat with R and did a letter puzzle. She helped him sound out the names of the pictures and connect the letters to the sounds. She began with the monkey picture and matching the /m/sound and ones that he knows and then moved on to letters he was not familiar with. She joked with him and said the wrong name for ones that he knows to get him to correct her and say the right letter name.

With the help of the family work and speech pathologist, parent uses simple print books, flash cards and magnetic letters to help child connect sounds to words. Parent has used these strategies daily.

Level 4— Parent uses strategies with child to develop meaning for print, e.g., writing letters and words, playing games with sounds and words, child dictating stories to parent.

Parent purchases literacy games for children, creates homemade books, makes word/picture flashcards, and has children design their own cards. Parent uses Internet for literacy learning and looks for web sites that children will enjoy.

Level 5— Parent takes advantage of every day activities to frequently make the connection between sounds, oral language, and print.

Mom makes up games to play with the kids as they wait for the bus. The example she gave recently: “I’m thinking of something yellow with wheels that starts with the letter /b/.” When she reads to children, she stops and points out words.

III. Parent's Role in Supporting Child's Learning in Education Settings

PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Communication between parent and child's teacher is infrequent.

M tries but her relationship with the school is adversarial. She is always talking about suing for this or that.

J is in the preschool and is often absent. Mom does not always communicate with teacher about absence. Parent has not yet attended any PACT times. Parent does not comply with paperwork necessary for J's pre-school attendance.

Level 2— Parent attends some school or center functions, e.g., open house, meetings—probably with outside support.

A and her husband will attend some school functions with the older children, and sometimes they request transportation. They will attend meetings regarding the older nephew, but the meetings don't always go well. Sometimes they are absent for very important meetings. They tend to place more responsibility on the school than on themselves.

F has followed up with parent teacher conferences but likes me to accompany her. I will try to encourage her to feel more confident to go to conferences on her own.

Level 3— Parent verbalizes awareness of the importance of own role in communication with teachers. Parent usually responds positively to requests on own, e.g., for attending parent-teacher conference.

Parent attends all teacher-parent conferences with lots of questions to ask the teacher. Talks to teacher daily.

Parent does attend school functions, parent-teacher conferences, and voluntarily goes to school to talk with teacher. Because of a negative experience, her responses have been negative to the school, but she has worked to respond positively. She has been sending her child to school consistently and seeks information from service provider, as noted by teacher.

Level 4— Parent initiates contact with child’s teacher and others in school/center setting in relationship to child’s needs and interests.

Parent has verbalized that her child will attend pre-school when she becomes of age. Parent is aware of the preschools that are in the area. Currently her child is attending a private day care setting. Parent frequently asks questions to the day care provider.

Parent and child’s teacher communicate on a daily basis. Parent makes sure to ask about son’s behavior and reactions to class work. Parent informs teacher on son’s attitude and feelings in the morning before class.

Level 5— There is ongoing exchange of information between parent and child’s teacher; each is comfortable initiating contact with the others.

Mom volunteers a lot in the Head Start classroom. Mom is very helpful when in the classroom working with all the children not only D. D’s Head Start teacher left and the new teacher came, and Mom has continued to volunteer. She is comfortable with the new teacher even through she did have a relationship with the old teacher.

She has good communication with school. She goes to her youngest son’s classroom to observe. If she gets any letter from her oldest son’s school, she asks family advocate to explain and asks to call school to know about her son.

III. Parent's Role in Supporting Child's Learning in Education Settings

EXPECTATIONS OF CHILD AND FAMILY

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Parent is not aware of school's expectations for child.

K says that she knows she must send the children to Head Start and day care. Sometimes the children attend consistently, but for a month M has missed school with no specific reason.

Parent does not yet show interest in learning about school system in this country. Seldom asks about how the child is doing.

Level 2— Parent knows that school has expectations but has not taken actions to learn specifics.

J mentioned that M comes home singing songs he learned at the school. She is surprised to see him learning because she thinks he is so young. She is not at all concerned about him being ready for kindergarten.

She knows what to look for developmentally and is aware of some expectations. She does not seek out specific information and mostly goes by what her family believes is good practice.

Level 3— Parent finds out information about school specific expectations of child.

H. speaks to A's teacher. H. always reads notes sent home from school. Dad will relate progress reports about how children are doing in school. J's teacher reports weekly on behaviors and progress. Dad will ask both children about what they did in school during the day and then tell me about school happenings.

Level 4— Parent assesses expectations and the school's approach to helping children meet them. Parent begins to supplement school initiatives with action of his/her own.

Although Mom likes working with D, she encourages rather than pushes her. When on a home visit and D has two older cousins that live in the household, Mom often reminds that D is younger and does not have the same skill level yet. Mom often asks D to try new skills and give them a chance before refusing. When D is successful, Mom claps or tells D what a good job she has done.

Level 5— Parent finds out information to place the school's expectations in context, e.g., what others are asking of children of the same age. Parent works with others to promote system improvements of quality education for all children.

No example available.

III. Parent's Role in Supporting Child's Learning in Education Settings

MONITORING PROGRESS/REINFORCING LEARNING

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Parent does not know about nor question child's progress in educational setting.

During a home visit, J will show me his stars (indicators of classroom behavior); Mom does not acknowledge the stars by saying anything. On one visit, J took his stars and threw them away outside. Mom offers no reinforcement of concepts during projects on home visits and makes no references to behavior or learnings in preschool.

She just is not concerned about child's readiness for kindergarten. B received speech service at Head Start, but is being dropped due to poor attendance.

Level 2— Parent acknowledges that he/she has responsibility and begins to monitor child's progress, at least in formal ways, e.g., review report card/progress report.

If the teacher asks for something specific, J does follow through. J asks me how the child is doing in school and makes sporadic attempts to follow through at home on suggestions.

H asks child if he has any homework to show her. H is concerned that teacher says that A talks all day.

Level 3— Parent questions child and/or teacher about how child is doing in school.

A had questions for me about floor time for the baby. She has started to notice some changes. She also had questions for me about the baby's asthma and the baby's beginning speech. I urged her to ask the doctor about the baby's tongue affecting his speech and she did follow up. She spoke with a classmate about the importance of learning the baby needed floor time.

Mom often checks in with the teachers to see how the boys are doing in school. She then followed up B contacting me about ways to help them with areas they need work on, but she did not always follow through with the methods of helping them.

Level 4— Parent inquires about ways to help child make more progress and works with child to reinforce what the child is learning in school.

M reschedules the parent-teacher conference for today. She was on time and stayed for 45 minutes. M brought her mom as well as T and two other children with her to the center. We talked about what T has been doing in school. M was very excited that T is starting to write his name. I gave her ideas to use at home to help T with his name. She said that she would work with T at home over the next few months to continue working on his name. She also asked for ideas to improve letter recognition. M was holding T at time during our conference. When I showed her a sampling of his writing, she said to T, "You do that?" He smiled as said "yes" and she gave him a hug.

S has inquired about F's progress during home visits, through notes, and over the phone. She has asked the teacher for feedback on how she can help F at home.

Level 5— Parent takes an interest in what and how the child is learn and finds ways to extend child's learning beyond what is required in school.

No example available.

III. Parent's Role in Supporting Child's Learning in Education Settings AS A PARTNER WITH EDUCATIONAL SETTING

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1—Parent takes no role or has no understanding of parent role connected to educational setting.

M does not want to see the teacher or go to the school even for conferences. She wanted the home visitor to represent her when asked directly by the teacher for a visit.

Parent expects school to teach alphabet to child but does not see that it is “her job” to work with the child.

Level 2—Parent would like to be connected to school but does not feel ready or is not in a position to do so. Parent may reluctantly agree to participate in school-connected activity—perhaps with support for doing so.

She must be drawn in to sit with others and help to participate. For one class party, she helped to prepare bird feeders when asked during PACT. She did offer once to share her cake decorating but then did not show up.

Mom comes to some functions but lack of transportation prevents her from most activities.

Level 3—Parent occasionally participates in school-connected activities.

T went to the open house held by the school this year. He will attend parent-teacher conferences. He is looking forward to going to this year's end-of-school ceremony.

Level 4—Parent sees that he/she could be involved with school in a variety of ways. Parent tries more than one type of involvement, e.g., going on field trip, making game for class.

J comes to the classroom regularly. She comes to as many extra activities as possible. She brought in treats for Valentine's and Easter parties. When one child moved, she made a card for everyone to sign.

Level 5—Parent participates in a variety of different ways on a consistent basis, i.e., 4-6 times a year.

No example available.

III. Parent's Role in Supporting Child's Learning in Education Settings

EXPECTATIONS OF CHILD'S SUCCESS IN LEARNING

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Parent has not formed expectations of child's success or has low expectations. Parent gives negative or mixed messages to child about child's ability.

When child does not do as parent wants, there are only negative verbal comments. Parent tries to engage child briefly but then within minutes allows child to run around the house.

Have not seen parent reinforce any learning. Parent has no involvement with preschool at this time.

Level 2—Parent sometimes verbalizes concerns about the effects of negative expectations, e.g., verbal messages or actions, on child. Parent often demands more of child than is realistic for developmental level.

K tries to let children do activities, but she becomes frustrated and takes over. She says "no" to both children when they try to do activities. She gets overwhelmed and frustrated with children. But she wants the day care staff to meet her expectations of how to get the children to perform.

Mom is aware that the school has expectations but she does not have a realistic view of the expectations. She decided for herself that M won't make it to kindergarten because he can't write his name. She is convinced that R will fail kindergarten this year despite his teacher telling her she is over reacting.

Parent compares son to other kids in classroom and family. Wants child to top or go over other children. Worries child is not "smart enough." When parent wants child to do something, she goads him with comparison with classmates or bribes him with toys.

Level 3—Parent tries to use positive and consistent messages with child. Parent asks for information about child development. Parent takes active role in helping the child reach appropriate expectations.

J encourages B without expecting too much. She helped him write his name on a card. She helps him with crafts, but allow him to do the activity on his own. She hangs up at home what he makes in school.

Parent uses positive encouragements with child. She asked me for information about toilet training, when the child should try to use the potty. She has updated me on the child's progress on toilet training.

Level 4—Parent uses lots of different ways to encourage high but achievable expectations, including creating experiences that build the child's success.

Parent show encouragement to the child in every thing the child does, including simple achievements.

She firmly believes that school is the place that will help her children achieve their hopes and dreams. She stresses the importance of education and language learning.

Level 5—Parent sets benchmarks to help child achieve longer term expectations. Parent creates opportunities that are challenging for child.

No example available.

IV. Taking on the Parent Role

CHOICES, RULES AND LIMITS

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Parent operates from an extreme position or moves between extremes, sometimes setting no limits and other times rigid rules. Parent does not provide choices for the child.

The children eat candy and pop any time of the day when they please. When the mother tells the children “no,” they continue the behavior and she does not enforce rules.

K has a problem setting limits and making them stick. She will make token efforts to set limits, but then gives up and lets the children do whatever they want. The children have been out unsupervised at late hours, which was one reason why Child Protective Services removed the children to foster home several years ago.

T often goes back and forth between extremes with B, sometimes letting her do anything she wants, and then yelling at her for doing it. She is beginning to make better use of time-outs, and is trying not to spank as much, but many times reverts back to what she was doing with her. B often yells at her dolls and slaps them. And she has struck other children when she gets mad. This has been an ongoing issue with T for several years now, and she doesn’t seem to get the idea of using consistent limits and offering choices.

Level 2— Parent observes the behavior of other adults with children and sees the connection between parenting strategies and child behaviors. Parent acknowledges need for strategies.

Mom still gives in to her boys. She will give into whatever they want to eat instead of insisting on meals. The girls have fewer choices and she stays more consistent with them. She let her youngest son take a large screwdriver to school.

K observes other parents and their children in the daycare situation. She sees the benefits of parenting strategies and child behavior. Her very good friend has 2 year old. K has talked to me about the Mom and her child and the benefits she sees.

M does give the girls choices sometimes, and does make an effort to have rules and limitations with them. And she has observed from workers coming to her house that there are ways to employ discipline that don’t have to involve yelling and spanking. However, M still sometimes gives up in frustration and allows the girls to do whatever they want, and then after she can’t take it any more, starts in yelling at them. She has stopped yanking their arms up, and spanking them severely, but needs to not yell as much.

Level 3— Parent seeks out information about strategies to develop child’s skills to make choices, solve problems, and stay within limits.

The parent asks the family educator questions about what the child’s abilities are and what to expect developmentally—“How long before she can come up and down stairs on her own?” The family educator leaves next steps and the family follows through.

D relies on others and indicates he sees how other friends discipline their children. He lets his wife take over setting N’s limits because he is not good at telling him “no.”

L has been asking for information on how to parent better and set limits without yelling. She has said that she will attempt to set limits with M, but then if he defies her enough, she gives in and lets him do what he wants. However, as many problems as she says that she has, M does seem to respect her and listen to her for the most part. She is close to M and obviously loves him a great deal and he is responding to that.

Level 4— Parent applies range of strategies in appropriate situations. Parent helps children discriminate among strategies appropriate for particular situations.

S has worked on teaching children what they can and cannot do when they visit her parents’ house, including what they can play with and what is off limits. Her persistence has changed how her own Mother welcomes the children to stay with her overnight. When she needs to take the children somewhere where they will need to wait, e.g., doctor’s office, S has learned to bring books and toys with her to keep them busy.

Level 5— Parent consistently provides opportunities for child to make choices within limits, e.g., age, safety. Parent is comfortable with and able to apply a range of strategies that match the situation.

No example available.

IV. Taking on the Parent Role

MANAGING STRESSES ON CHILDREN

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1— Parent is absorbed in own needs or needs of one member of the family. Parent does not acknowledge responsibility for managing stresses of the family on children.

Mom sleeps in in the morning. Her six year old gets himself ready and off to school by himself.

Level 2— Parent is able to identify family problems, issues, or needs and expresses a desire for change.

Mom sees that some changes need to be made. She should let Dad handle more at home but she can't let go of the control. She still doesn't really see a need for change. She protects her children but does not do much nurturing. She minimizes her husband and daughter's roles in the family.

K is able to identify that there are problems and she does want things to change—she has the desire for change, but she doesn't see the part she has played in creating some of the problems. K is stressed out most days of the week and there will be one crisis after another.

T can express that she's frustrated with the fights she has with her boyfriend and his drinking. And she doesn't like to be called names in front of B. T also doesn't have a very high opinion of herself. But she seems to do the same things over and over again, rather than trying something different. She talks about leaving A—this comes up often.

Level 3— Parent recognizes the various demands of different family members and also the strengths of the family. Parent sees his/her own part in family system and takes action to buffer children from stress.

Mom makes times to engage in activities with family daily. She shares parenting responsibilities. The family is independent, close and caring.

Level 4— Parent tries out various strategies to strengthen family. Parent engages other family members or friends or program supports in strengthening family.

V and B have both worked very hard to change their living situation for the better. They moved to a different apartment so that the children could have a place to play. They have become friendly with another Even Start family and will sometimes arrange outdoor activities so the children can play together. Dad has cut back his weekend working hours so that he can do something with the boys most weekends.

Level 5— Parent thinks about the family as a whole and balances the needs of different individuals and the whole family. Parent accepts that role of parent is to take responsibility for the well-being of the family as a whole.

M recently started making permanent changes, seeking a divorce and moving on. She has tended to her husband's mental problem while raising H in security.

IV. Taking on the Parent Role

SAFETY AND HEALTH OF CHILDREN

This section contains examples of documentation for ratings provided by staff who participated in the pilots for the scales of the Parent Education Profile. While the documentation is often not extensive, it provides an idea of the thinking of staff when making ratings at different levels.

Level 1—Parent is not yet aware that issues in the home settings/ environment have a negative effect on child's learning and development, e.g., domestic violence, substance abuse, nutrition, smoking.

The parents leave the door open always so the dog can come and go. Both parents smoke in the children's presence. The parents allow the children to help themselves to whatever they please. For example, the four year old takes knives and climbs the cupboards to get them.

Level 2—Parent is aware that he/she has a role and responsibility to create a safe and healthy environment for child.

Mom worries a lot about her son's allergy problems and has read books and articles to help him. She has tried different recipes also but allows lots of candy and pop in the house.

B and R are much more aware this year of the need to create a safe and healthy environment for themselves and their children, and workers have been helping them with this for several years. At this point, they are learning to keep the apartment cleaner than in the past, and how to keep things off the floor that the children might put in their mouths, and have moved from a dangerous upstairs apartment to a ground level one. They are taking children to the doctors when needed now.

Parent attempts to keep screen in open window on second floor, and keeps door closed to second floor landing. Parent smokes in front of child, but is aware it is not good for her child to be exposed to second-hand smoke.

Level 3— Parent seeks out information and help to create an environment that protects and nurtures children. Parent takes actions to improve environment for children.

Parent has done a safety check of the home and put in place changes, e.g., gates, to help the child be safe.

Level 4— Parent engages other family members in ensuring a safe and healthy environment for children.

M makes sure that H is safe. She doesn't want to leave H with his Dad who is having mental problems. She makes sure he is with responsible adults and caretakers.

She has outlet covers on outlets, dangerous household items are out of reach. She provides nutritious meals in family style manner at scheduled times.

A has followed through on early intervention involvement of B and pediatric ophthalmologist appointments. She has insisted that there be no smoking when B visits his Dad.

Level 5— Parent makes informed decisions to improve the health and safety of the environment.

L not only keeps an attractive and clean home, and has plenty of food in the house, but she reads articles on keeping the family safe and watches the news. She can tell you all the latest news on what is good for you and what is not. M. is asked to let her know where he'll be at all times, she screens any babysitters, and she is aware of where he is at all times. M is taken to the doctor whenever he is ill. Now that M is on medication, she is concerned about the dosage he takes and what the side effects might be.

V.

SUPPORT MATERIALS

TIPS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF PEP

Explaining the PEP to parents.

Discussion with parents about PEP can begin when parents are ready to learn about the expectations that a family literacy program holds for them. Explain to parents that the program staff keep track of the progress of family members so they can see how well the program is doing in helping families achieve important goals. To keep track of progress, the program staff use several tools—tests such as the TABE, observations of children’s progress, and checklists of achievements. The PEP, another tool, describes the skills that parents use to help their children succeed in school. The PEP shows parents how what they say and do can have an effect on children’s reading success. The staff keep track of parents’ progress on the PEP so they will know what type of extra support each parent needs.

Assessment schedule.

The initial use of the PEP as a baseline should occur approximately three months after a family has enrolled in a family literacy program, giving the staff enough time to get to know the family and see the parent’s typical interactions and behaviors. The PEP is designed to capture patterns of important behaviors—most of which take a good deal of practice to change. Therefore, it makes sense to formally assess changes in a parent’s behavior only after he or she has had enough time to learn and practice new skills—certainly no sooner than six months from the previous assessment. Because the PEP is based on staff perspectives formed during ongoing interactions with parents, the assessment can be completed even after a parent has exited the

program. One scheduling option (which is used in New York state) is to assess every six months for the purposes of program planning, but only formally record levels achieved every twelve months.

Constituting the assessment team.

All staff who have substantive contact with the parent should work together to determine the level that a parent has attained on each subscale. The assessment team might include the home visitor, adult educator, program coordinator, teachers of the parent’s children, and special services staff who have contact with the family, e.g., speech therapist, family counselor. All core staff should have some training on the PEP and its related research base (see Tips for Training).

Including the parent perspective.

A parent’s perspective on his or her progress is a valuable addition to the discussion of achievements. An individual staff member might gather information from discussion with a parent in advance of an assessment meeting and bring that information into the assessment discussion. If the staff disagree with the parent’s assessment of progress, it is important to explain to the parent where the differences are—use this opportunity to discuss what a parent might do differently with their children to improve their skills.

The evidence base.

To determine the level a parent has achieved on each subscale, the assessment team considers the parent’s actions, interactions, and

statements during the preceding three months. Sources of information that staff bring to the assessment discussion could include: observations during interactive literacy activities; interactions during home visits; listening to parents talk with children during class time; discussion with parents about their children; formal interviews with parents; informal exchanges that occur during field trips or family activities; and the results of any other types of instruments that the program uses to assess parent progress. The program staff may want to develop a list of discussion questions that elicit parents' thinking on key topics. Examples of questions that are related to Scale I:

Who reads in your household? How often do you read with your children? Where do you obtain books to read to your children? What TV programs do your children watch? What messages are they getting from the programs they watch? What makes them laugh? What scares them? What do they watch that isn't appropriate for them? What keeps your child interested during play? How much does your child play alone? What are her favorite toys? What do you talk about at mealtimes? When you have time together as a family, what do you like to do? When do you have a good time together as a family?

The rating dialogue.

In making the assessments for each subscale, the intent is to determine the typical behavior patterns that are reflective of a "solid" level, that is, what the parent has consistently demonstrated over time. During a dialogue (perhaps facilitated by the program coordinator or the local evaluator), individual team members share information about what they have seen the parent do and say. The most important

part of the dialogue is the interpretation that observers make about parents' actions and behaviors: What sense are they making of what they see every day? On what basis do they say the parent has reached a certain level that is stable? The team should reach consensus on a level for each subscale to represent the parent's current development. Allow adequate time for a thorough discussion, including time to plan next steps in instruction. The discussion sometimes focuses on the "gray areas" between levels—those are clues to the areas to work on to move the parent forward.

Documentation.

Someone on the team (often the program coordinator or primary family worker) must take responsibility for preparing a written summary of the rationale for the consensus level for each subscale. Be as thorough as possible in the reasons for each level determination, including examples of the evidence on which the judgment was based. Prepare documentation for all subscales as well as the summary score sheet and file in the parent's folder. Example of what summary documentation might look like for a level 3 on the Subscale "Reading with Children":

Lately during free play time, we have seen Sheila try to engage Rodney in looking at or reading a book that she picks out from the books at the center. She usually asks him to tell her the names of objects in pictures when they stop on a page; sometimes she asks him what will happen next. He doesn't always stay interested enough for her to finish the story which is frustrating to her but she no longer gets angry when that happens. In the last few home visits, Sheila has asked the family worker to bring books that will be

interesting to Rodney. Sheila complimented the family worker on how “nicely” she reads. The family educator noticed Sheila reading the same book to Rodney that she had read aloud to the four-year-old group. Sheila asked some of the same questions of Rodney that the family worker had used. At the end, Sheila asked Rodney to show his favorite part of the book (just as the family worker had done).

Scale appropriateness.

Sometimes an individual subscale topic may not apply to a particular family situation, i.e., a case where no one speaks the language of the parent and cannot judge the quality of the verbal interaction on Scale II or a case in which there are no outside service providers that serve the children in the family (Scale III). In such a case, consider the subscale “not applicable;” record the reason why; and divide the total for the scale only by the number of subscales scored to obtain the average score for the scale. For example, if the rater cannot score two of the five subscales on Scale III, three rather than five would be the divisor of the total.

Multiple children.

Parents’ interactions with all their children should be used in determining levels. If a parent’s behavior toward one child is different than a parent’s behavior toward another child in the family, that may be evidence of inconsistency, i.e., a pattern has not yet developed, and does not warrant rating at the higher performance level. For example, if the parent communicates with one child’s teacher but not another, the behavior is inconsistent—another clue for working with the parent.

Multiple adults.

If more than one adult in the family participates in the family literacy program, each should receive a PEP rating. Parents vary on their attitudes about literacy, skill levels, and readiness to use the skills with children so their scores are likely to differ.

Cultural context.

The expectations of the parent role embedded in the PEP are related to children’s success in American schools and so are important for parents from all backgrounds to understand. Of course, a parent’s cultural or family background may make it difficult for her to readily embrace some behaviors. For example, some parents do not feel comfortable engaging young children in conversation or helping children with work from school. In those cases, staff may need to work extra hard to help parents understand the desired behaviors and reasons for their importance.

Phasing in.

A program may phase-in the use of PEP by beginning only with families that are new to the program or alternatively might use one or two scales on all families to begin to familiarize staff with the process of PEP administration.

TIPS FOR TRAINING

Four types of training.

Effective use of the PEP requires at least four types of training:

- Training in the research base associated with parent's support of children's literacy development;
- Training in working with parents to build their skills to work with their children;
- Training in interviewing, observation, record keeping, and documentation practices; and
- Training in the administration and scoring of the PEP instrument.

Research base first.

Staff need to understand the basic premises of parent education for literacy development before they are ready to hear about the PEP. They need to know and believe in the rationale for parent education, the research base that links parent skills to children's long term literacy development, and the specific practices of language and literacy that research recommends as they apply to children of different ages. Through familiarity with the research, staff will become familiar with the key themes, concepts, and vocabulary that are the basis for the PEP.

It is important to give staff time to work out on their own the implications of research for family literacy programs, including discussing ways that their program supports and could better support parents' skill development. Most important is time to observe (perhaps through video) and discuss what desired parental behaviors look like in real situations. It will also take time for staff to adjust to new curricular expectations.

Strategies to build skills.

Staff members need time to hear about strategies that develop parents' skills, share their experiences with particular strategies, and exchange ideas with peers. They need to assess their own skills and comfort level with use of strategies that move parents ahead, including the opportunity to brainstorm ideas for troubleshooting difficult areas of development. The goal is to develop a sense of efficacy, that is, the belief on the part of staff that they can affect parents' skill development. Case studies can be particularly helpful for engaging staff with the profiles of real parents. Use real cases to diagnose the strengths of parents in terms of support for their children's literacy development and elicit ideas for how to further develop those skills. Of course, it is also essential to conduct a self-assessment of the degree to which the family literacy program facilitates parent development in terms of curriculum, staff expertise, amount of time schedule, role up collaborating agencies, etc.

Interviewing, observing, keeping records, and developing documentation.

The reliability of judgments about PEP levels depends to a large degree on the quality and objectivity of the information that team members bring to the discussion and the degree to which they are able to develop written records of their formal and informal observations and interactions. Staff may require some practice in doing so if these skills are not already part of program routines. Observational and recording skills are optimally incorporated into program routines, i.e., weekly discussion of observation notes, one-to-one mentoring for improvement, and critique of interpretation of information gleaned from observations.

PEP basics.

Assuming that staff have been introduced to the research base for parent education, the essential PEP training is demonstration of the links between the research base and the PEP scales. Staff also need to understand the purpose of the PEP in instructional planning, the point of scoring the highest level of consistent behavior, the organizational structure of the scales and subscales, the terminology of the subscales, the progression of levels, and documentation and rating procedures. Take time to discuss the phrasing of each of the levels and clarify interpretations.

Once those basic concepts are understood, staff members need lots of practice rating examples and checking their reasoning with peers. This guide includes a section with many examples of documentation from actual program experiences that can be used for practice ratings. Ideally, prior to conducting their first assessments, participants will engage in several “fishbowl” discussions in which they listen to team members from other programs discussing and rating actual parents (protecting privacy by not using family names). It is helpful to spread training over several sessions, allowing time to practice using the first two scales before the next two are introduced.

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS ABOUT PEP

You have a big job to do in helping your child be successful in school.

You make a difference by:

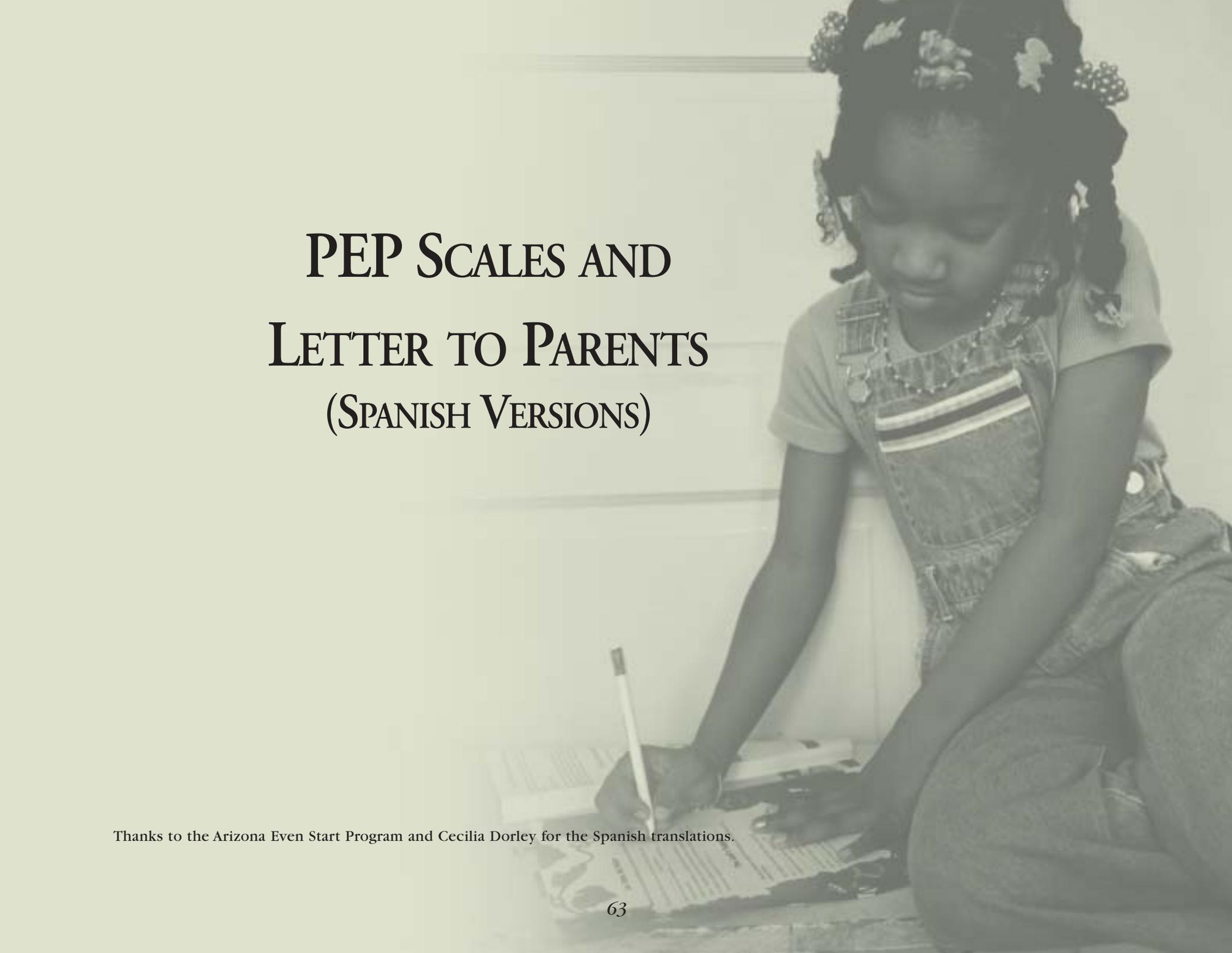
- how you talk with your child
 - how you set and use rules
 - how you play with your child
 - how you use reading and writing
- . . .and in many other ways!

The Even Start staff want to help you with the education part of being a parent. The staff know about research that links the actions of parents to the success of children in school. They will share that information with you.

Changing how you talk and work with your child takes time and effort. To keep track of your progress and know what to do next, the Even Start staff will use the Parent Education Profile—PEP, for short. The PEP show steps to success in four areas of parent activity.

The staff will figure out what step you are on now. They will discuss goals with you, see you work with your child, and watch you try out new ways of talking and reading with your child.

The higher levels you reach on PEP, the more likely your child will do well in school.



PEP SCALES AND LETTER TO PARENTS (SPANISH VERSIONS)

Thanks to the Arizona Even Start Program and Cecilia Dorley for the Spanish translations.

APOYO DE LOS PADRES EN EL APRENDIZAJE DE SUS HIJOS EN UN AMBIENTE HOGAREÑO

EL USO DE MATERIAES DE APRENDIZAJE	EL USO DE TV/VIDEO	IDIOMA QUE SE HABLA EN CASA Y APRENDIZAJE	PRIORIDAD EN APRENDER JUNTOS
1. Tienen en casa pocos libros o material de escritura/dibujo; o nada para la edad apropiada.	1. No hay control de la televisión; los niños pueden ver lo que ellos quieren y a la hora que ellos deciden.	1. Los padres no reconocen el papel de las rutinas ni del juego casero en el aprendizaje. Los padres limitan las oportunidades de juego de sus niños, no comparten sus juegos, ni planean oportunidades de aprendizaje.	1. La Familia no tiene experiencia en dedicar tiempo a las actividades familiares, ni de aprender juntos. La familia aún no valora la importancia de aprender juntos.
2. Tienen en casa algunos libros y/o material de escritura/dibujo que no son apropiados ni accesibles para el niño. Los padres aún no han buscado material apropiado para el niño.	2. Los padres están consientes de que son responsables en poner limites en cuanto TV pueden ver, pero aún no han tenido éxito.	2. Los padres están interesados en hacer más para que los niños aprendan más, pero las opciones de los padres hacia el niño no emparejan a menudo la edad o la capacidad del niño. Padre e hijo experimentan frustración.	2. La familia se apoya en la ayuda de personas fuera de la familia para participar de vez en cuando en las oportunidades de aprendizaje en familia.
3. En casa hay algunas muestras de material apropiado de lectura, escritura y de dibujo. Los padres han buscado material de escritura y lectura para su hijo. Los padres leen y/o escribieran/dibujaran con su hijo varias veces a la semana.	3. Los padres fomentan alguna programación apropiada que los niños puedan ver, según la edad.	3. Los padres buscan información sobre las oportunidades de aprendizaje apropiadas a la edad y pueden utilizar la información en actividades apropiadas y ocasionalmente juegan con el niño para ampliar así, su aprendizaje.	3. El padre sabe de la importancia del aprendizaje en las actividades familiares y expresa el deseo de iniciarlas. El padre ocasionalmente planea oportunidades de aprendizaje en familia.
4. En casa hay materiales y libros que los padres han escogido, porque creen que les gustara a los hijos. Los padres usan material de aprendizaje todo los días con su hijo en diferentes maneras.	4. Los padres tratan de poner algunos limites en el tipo y hora de ver TV. Los padres constantemente refuerzan sus reglas.	4. Los padres basan a menudo su opción de actividades al observar las habilidades e intereses del niño. Los padres facilitan oportunidades de aprendizaje varias veces por semana y regularmente juegan con él, para extender su lenguaje.	4. Los miembros de la familia hacen un esfuerzo para iniciar las oportunidades en familia que fomenten el aprendizaje, ej. acompañando en los paseos.
5. En casa, hay una gran variedad de materiales de lectura, escritura, dibujo que son accesibles a los niños. Los materiales se usan diariamente. Padre e hijo seleccionan los libros basados frecuentemente en el nivel de interés del hijo.	5. Los padres usan la televisión como una herramienta de aprendizaje; los padres ven con el niño y moderan los mensajes en TV.	5. Los padres regularmente hacen uso de “momentos de enseñanza” con el niño. Toman ideas del niño y le permiten dirigir las actividades de aprendizaje. Los padres frecuentemente participan en los juegos y toman su papel para ampliar su idioma.	5. Los miembros de la familia sienten placer en las oportunidades de aprender en familia. El padre esta dispuesto a crear actividades diariamente.

EL PAPEL DE LOS PADRES EN ACTIVIDADES DE APRENDIZAJE INTERACTIVAS

LENGUAJE EXPRESIVO Y RECEPTIVO	LEYENDO CON LOS NIÑOS	APOYANDO LOS CONCEPTOS EN LIBROS
1. Las interacciones verbales de los padres con los niños son predominantemente de mando o regaño. El padre responde inconsistentemente a las señales verbales o de comportamiento del niño.	1. El padre cuenta historias, canta, o lee infrecuentemente con o para el niño. La lectura compartida, es una experiencia frustrante para el padre y el niño.	1. El padre no se da cuenta del ejemplo que él puede dar al niño para crear hábitos de lectura y escritura.
2. El padre tiene una limitada interacción verbal con el niño pero el tono es más positivo que negativo. El lenguaje es caracterizado por oraciones y preguntas simples que pueden responderse si o no.	2. El padre algunas veces cuenta historias, canta, o lee al niño pero no intenta que el niño participe en el proceso de lectura, o contando la historia. El padre se siente incómodo.	2. El padre ocasionalmente demuestra conocimiento del progreso del niño en la lectura y comprensión del texto, ej. le muestra palabras e ilustraciones en los libros a los niños pequeños.
3. El padre está consciente del impacto de su propia manera de hablar/lenguaje y de escuchar al niño en su lenguaje y conducta. Los padres algunas veces prueban estrategias para apoyar el desarrollo del lenguaje del niño.	3. El padre se interesa en aprender como contar le historias o leer le un libro al niño e intenta estrategias sugeridas. El padre se siente más comodo con 1-2 estrategias para apoyar/ reforzar la lectura oral, incluyendo rimas, canciones, juegos de palabras con los niños pequeños.	3. El padre empieza a ayudar al niño a entender la escritura, ej. los nombres de las letras conectadas con su sonido, progresión de izquierda a derecha, manejo del libro.
4. El padre regularmente ajusta su propio lenguaje o usa estrategias para apoyar al niño, ej. escoje el vocabulario, varia las palabras, hace preguntas y escucha al niño.	4. El padre regularmente hace uso de una variedad de estrategias para que el niño participe en la lectura de libros, cuentos, o canciones.	4. El padre utiliza estrategias con el niño para desarrollar el significado de la escritura, ej. escribiendo letras y palabras, haciendo juegos con los sonidos y palabras, historias dictadas por el niño al padre.
5. El padre invita al niño a participar activamente en la discusión y toma en cuenta los temas que le interesan al niño, le hace preguntas para evaluar la información que el niño tiene, lo alienta verbalmente o le dá oportunidad para que el niño procese la información.	5. El padre ajusta estrategias de lectura o de cuentos a la situación, ej. Nivel del desarrollo del niño, el estado de ánimo del niño, el lugar de aprendizaje. El padre verbaliza las conexiones entre las historias y las experiencias del niño, y lo motiva a hacer conexiones similares.	5. El padre aprovecha de las actividades diarias para hacer conexiones frecuentes entre la escritura, los sonidos del lenguaje oral, y escrito.

EL PAPEL DE LOS PADRES APOYANDO A SUS HIJOS EN UNA EDUCACION FORMAL

Nota: Dependiendo de la edad del niño, la educación formal puede ser escuela, pre-escolar, y/o guarderías infantiles. La forma educativa varía ampliamente dependiendo del grado en que ellos activamente promuevan la interacción con los padres; así, la valoración aquí necesita llevarse dentro de un contexto en donde la iniciativa de los padres y las respuestas a la iniciativa de la escuela se tomen en cuenta.

COMUNICACION ENTRE PADRE/ESCUELA	EXPECTATIVAS DEL NIÑO Y FAMILIA	SUPERVISANDO PROGRESO Y REFORZANDO EL APRENDIZAJE	COMO SOCIOS CON LA ESCUELA	EXPECTATIVAS DEL EXITO DEL NIÑO EN SU APRENDIZAJE
1. La comunicación entre los padres y maestros del niño no es muy frecuente.	1. El padre no está consciente de las expectativas de la escuela para el niño.	1. El padre no sabe, ni pregunta por el progreso del niño en la educación en el ambiente escolar.	1. El padre no asume su papel con relación a la escuela y no comprende cuál es su conexión.	1. El padre tiene poca o ninguna esperanza en el éxito del niño. El padre le da al niño mensajes negativos o mixtos sobre su aptitud.
2. El padre asiste a algunas actividades de la escuela; ej. aperturas, juntas—probablemente con un poco de apoyo.	2. El padre sabe las expectativas de la escuela, pero no toma acción para saber más.	2. El padre reconoce que él/ella tiene responsabilidad y empieza a supervisar el progreso del niño, por lo menos de manera formal; ej. revisando la boleta de calificaciones y el reporte de progreso.	2. Al padre le gustaría estar vinculado con la escuela pero piensa que no está listo o en posición de hacerlo. El padre acepta de mala gana a participar en actividades de la escuela, tal vez lo hace cuando recibe un poco de apoyo.	2. El padre a veces expresa preocupación acerca del efecto que sus expectativas negativas pueden afectar al niño. El padre a menudo pide más de lo que el desarrollo del niño lo permite.
3. El padre reconoce la importancia de su papel en la comunicación con los maestros. El padre responde positivamente a las peticiones para asistir a conferencias de padre-maestro.	3. El padre encuentra información sobre expectativas específicas de la escuela del niño.	3. El padre pregunta al niño y/o al profesor sobre el progreso del niño.	3. El padre ocasionalmente participa en actividades de la escuela.	3. El padre prueba constantemente dar al niño mensajes consistentes y positivos. El padre pide información acerca del desarrollo del niño. El padre ayuda activamente al niño para que este alcance sus propias expectativas.
4. El padre inicia el contacto con los maestros en relación a las necesidades e intereses del niño.	4. El padre evalúa las expectativas y el enfoque de la escuela con respecto a los niños y queda satisfecho. El padre empieza a suplementar las iniciativas de la escuela con las suyas propias.	4. El padre investiga distintas maneras de poder ayudar al niño a mejorar y trabaja con él para reforzar lo que está aprendiendo.	4. El padre se da cuenta de que él/ella podría estar involucrado con la escuela en diferentes maneras. El padre intenta más de una vez involucrarse; ej. acompañando a un paseo, preparando juegos para la clase.	4. El padre usa distintas maneras de animar al niño con expectativas realizables, incluyendo y creando experiencias que lo lleven al éxito.
5. Hay intercambio de información regularmente, entre el padre y el maestro del niño, se sienten cómodos iniciando el contacto entre ellos.	5. El padre encuentra información para poner las expectativas de la escuela en el contexto; ej. lo que otros están pidiendo de los niños de la misma edad. El padre trabaja con otros para promover las mejoras del sistema, para una educación de calidad para todos los niños.	5. El padre se interesa en lo que su hijo está aprendiendo y busca diferentes maneras de mejorar el aprendizaje del niño más allá de lo requerido por la escuela.	5. El padre participa de diferentes maneras de forma regular; ej. de 4 a 6 veces al año.	5. El padre pone patrones para que el niño logre sus expectativas a un largo plazo. El padre crea oportunidades que son desafiantes para el niño.

TOMANDO EL PAPEL COMO PADRE

OPCIONES, REGLAS Y LIMITES	MANEJANDO EL ESTRES EN LOS NIÑOS	SALUD Y SEGURIDAD DE LOS NIÑOS
<p>1. El padre funciona desde una posición extrema o se mueve entre los extremos, no fijando a veces ningún límite y otras veces reglas muy rígidas. El padre no le da opciones al niño.</p>	<p>1. Al padre lo absorben sus propias necesidades o las necesidades de un miembro de la familia. El padre no reconoce la responsabilidad por manejar el estrés de la familia en los niños.</p>	<p>1. El padre aún no se ha dado cuenta de que el ambiente de la casa tiene un efecto negativo para la educación y desarrollo del niño, ej. la violencia doméstica, el abuso de sustancias, el fumar, la nutrición.</p>
<p>2. El padre observa el comportamiento de otros adultos con sus niños y considera la conexión entre las estrategias como padres y la conducta del niño. El padre reconoce la necesidad de estrategias.</p>	<p>2. El padre puede identificar los problemas familiares, asuntos, o necesidades y expresa el deseo por cambiar.</p>	<p>2. El padre se ha dado cuenta de su papel y responsabilidad para crear un ambiente seguro y saludable para el niño.</p>
<p>3. El padre busca la información sobre estrategias para desarrollar las habilidades del niño para hacer opciones, para solucionar problemas, y para permanecer dentro de los límites.</p>	<p>3. El padre reconoce las diversas demandas de diferentes miembros de la familia y también de los valores de la familia. El padre él/ella reconoce su parte en el sistema familiar y toma acción para disminuir la tensión del estrés en los niños.</p>	<p>3. El padre busca información y ayuda para crear un ambiente que proteja y nutra a los niños. El padre toma acción para mejorar el ambiente para los niños.</p>
<p>4. El padre aplica una cantidad de estrategias en situaciones apropiadas. El padre ayuda al niño a diferenciar entre las estrategias apropiadas en situaciones ciertas.</p>	<p>4. El padre intenta diversas estrategias para fortalecer a la familia. El padre trata con otros miembros de la familia, amigos, y programas de ayuda para fortalecer a la familia.</p>	<p>4. El padre junto con otros miembros de la familia se asegura de crear un ambiente seguro y saludable para los niños.</p>
<p>5. El padre proporciona constantemente las oportunidades para que el niño tome opciones dentro de los límites, ej. edad, seguridad. El padre se siente cómodo y dispuesto a aplicar una variedad de estrategias que puedan emparejar la situación.</p>	<p>5. El padre piensa sobre la familia en su totalidad y balancea las necesidades de diferentes individuos y de la familia entera. El padre acepta su papel de padre en tomar responsabilidad por el bienestar de toda la familia.</p>	<p>5. El padre toma decisiones informadas para mejorar la salud y seguridad del medio ambiente.</p>

UN MENSAJE A LOS PADRES ACERCA DE “PEP”

Uds. los padres, juegan un papel muy importante en la ayuda que brinden a sus hijos para tener éxito en la escuela.

Uds. observaran la diferencia en la educación de su hijos, cuando Uds. pongan en practica y usen lo siguiente:

- Comunicarse con su hijos.
- Establecer y seguir reglas.
- Jugar con sus hijos.
- Leer con ellos y fomentar la escritura y el tiempo que les dedique a ellos

El personal de “Even Start”, desea ayudarle en su papel como padre en la educación de sus hijos. El personal tiene conocimientos acerca de las investigaciones que conectan las acciones de los padres al éxito de los niños en la escuela. Ellos compartirán esa información con Uds.

Cambiar la forma en que Uds. hablan y trabajan con sus hijos requiere tiempo y esfuerzo. Para seguir su progreso y saber cual es su siguiente paso el personal de “Even Start” usará “Perfil de Educación del Padre “PEP” (para abreviar) “PEP” tiene cuatro niveles de actividad para los padres para que los padres tengan éxito.

El personal determinará en que nivel está Usted ahora. Ellos discutirán metas con Usted. Le observarán trabajando con su hijo, estarán pendientes cuando Ud.pruebe nuevas tácticas para hablar y leer con su hijo.

Mientras más altos sean los niveles que Ud. adquiera en “PEP” más incrementará el rendimiento escolar de su hijo.

VI.

CONTENT FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTING EDUCATION IN EVEN START

CONTENT FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTING EDUCATION IN EVEN START

Many dimensions of parenting contribute to young children's learning and literacy development. There are a range of parenting practices and styles that include the quality of parents' verbal exchanges with their child, level of involvement in their child's learning, and approach to discipline, among other factors. Parents also hold knowledge and beliefs about child development in general, their own children, and appropriate parental roles in supporting children's literacy development and learning. In addition, parents serve as managers of environments for their children when they make decisions about their family's daily routines and the types of settings and experiences they help make available to their children.

Factors in each of these areas are positively associated with children's literacy development and early school-related outcomes. For example, research indicates that children's success in school is related to their active involvement in shared book reading at home (a parenting practice with child), parents' expectations of their child's educational performance (a parent belief), and the predictability and routines of the home setting such as a time set aside for shared book reading (parent as manager of environment). These and other parenting dimensions associated with children's literacy development and early school success are organized into five areas of parenting goals for Even Start.

GOALS OF PARENTING EDUCATION

The overall goal of parenting education in Even Start Family Literacy programs is to strengthen parents' support of their young children's literacy development and early school success.

Specific goals for parents fall into five areas:

- Engage in language-rich parent-child interactions;
- Provide supports for literacy in the family;
- Hold appropriate expectations of the child's learning and development;
- Actively embrace the parenting role; and
- Form and maintain connections with community and other resources for meeting individual and family needs.

Exhibit 1 summarizes the goals and objectives for parents in Even Start.

This section is an updated excerpt (2003) based on *Guide to Improving Parenting Education in Even Start Family Literacy Programs* by Douglas R. Powell and Diane D'Angelo, September 2000. This update includes new research.

EXHIBIT 1

GOALS FOR PARENTS IN EVEN START

GOAL AREA	Parents strengthen their children’s literacy development and school-related competence when they:
Engage in Language-Rich Parent-Child Interactions	<hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ engage in frequent and increasingly complex verbal interactions with their child ■ actively participate in joint book reading ■ ask questions that strengthen their child’s problem-solving abilities ■ engage in attentive, warm, flexible interactions with the child ■ develop and maintain a secure attachment relationship with their child ■ maintain a predictable environment through routines and responsive structure <hr/>
Provide Supports for Literacy in the Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ provide easy access to reading and writing materials ■ read frequently themselves and use reading and writing to get things done and solve problems in everyday life ■ demonstrate an enthusiastic view of reading as fun <hr/>
Hold Appropriate Expectations of the Child’s Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ view their child as an active contributor to his/her own development through challenging yet achievable interactions with the everyday environment ■ know their child’s interests and abilities ■ maintain appropriate expectations of their child’s achievements <hr/>
Actively Embrace the Parenting Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ maintain a positive sense of personal efficacy in the parenting role and in managing relations with their environment ■ take proactive steps to establish and maintain positive relations with community resources, including schools ■ advocate for high-quality child and family resources in the community (for example, schools and child care) <hr/>
Form and Maintain Connections with Community and Other Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ use effective coping strategies for adapting to changes in family and community environments ■ work toward good physical and mental health

The first goal area—language-rich parent-child interactions—represents the essential core of parenting contributions to children’s literacy development and learning. The other goals are in support of this central goal.

A CLOSER LOOK AT EACH GOAL AREA: WHAT WE KNOW FROM RESEARCH

ENGAGE IN LANGUAGE-RICH PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

Parents strengthen their child’s literacy development and school-related competence when they:

- engage in frequent and increasingly complex verbal interactions with their child;
- actively participate in shared book reading;
- ask questions that strengthen their child’s problem-solving abilities;
- engage in attentive, warm, flexible interactions with their child;
- maintain a predictable environment through routines and responsive structure; and
- develop and maintain a secure attachment relationship with their child.

Especially valuable are parent interactions with young children that support knowledge and skills that are strongly predictive of children’s later reading ability: vocabulary knowledge, alphabet knowledge, and phonemic awareness.¹ The quality of adult-child interactions within families has long been linked to children’s early literacy and school

outcomes. Recent research findings extend our understanding of the types of adult-child interactions that promote children’s literacy development and school outcomes.

A recent longitudinal study² found that children’s everyday family experiences with language and interaction in the first 3 years of life accounted for 60 percent of the variance in measures of accomplishment (vocabulary growth, vocabulary use, Stanford-Binet IQ score) at age 3, and in receptive vocabulary (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test) and language development at age 9-10 (third grade). The following were predictive of child accomplishment at age 3 and in third grade:

- language diversity (number of different nouns and different modifiers used by parent);
- feedback tone (amount of parent’s encouragement of child to participate in language learning through parent’s use of repetitions, extensions, expansions of child’s utterances, confirmations, praise and approval);
- symbolic emphasis (amount of parent’s emphasis on helping child notice, name, recall, and relate language to things and events, as exemplified through number of nouns, modifiers, and past-tense verbs heard by child);
- guidance style (how often the child is asked rather than told what to do); and
- responsiveness (amount of a child’s experience with controlling the course of interaction with parent not initiated by parent).

Other research has shown that the homes of successful literacy learners provide a range of opportunities to use language and literacy-related practices.

Mealtime conversations are an everyday setting where children can learn a lot about language. A longitudinal study of mealtime conversations in lower-income families when children were 3 and 4 years of age identified two types of talk that were positively related to children's language and literacy-related skills at age 5 years. Higher amounts of narrative talk—telling about an event that has happened or will happen—were associated with higher scores on a story comprehension task. Because much of children's first exposure to print in school is in the form of narratives or stories, oral narratives during mealtimes can help children learn what kind of information goes into a good story. Narrative talk also helps young children learn how to organize a set of events in a sequence that gets the narrative told clearly. Higher levels of explanatory talk—discussion of explanations such as cause-and-effect relations (“Don’t eat too fast. You’ll choke yourself.”) and connections between ideas, events, and actions—when children were 4 and 5 years old were associated with children's ability to connect a word to the correct picture in the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test at 5 years. These results indicate it is valuable for parents and other adult caregivers to take time each day for extended discussions with children, and to encourage children to tell about their day or experiences.³

It is especially helpful to children when adults use a conversation-eliciting style of interaction. Open questions (“What happened at school today?”) are generally more beneficial than closed questions (“Did you have a good day at school?”) because they encourage the

child to use more language in the response and, importantly, they support the use of complex thinking or problem-solving skills in formulating a response. To answer the question “What happened at school today?” a child needs to recall what happened, decide what information is useful or important to share, put ideas together, and put words together to form a narrative or story. Research has found these types of parental interactional strategies with children—what researchers often call distancing strategies—to be positively associated with children's school-related competence.⁴

Parents involve their child in increasingly complex language and literacy experiences when they use scaffolding strategies that extend a child's current skills and knowledge to a higher level of competence. For example, in one research-based literacy learning program developed for adolescent mothers and their preschool children, home visitors teach scaffolding strategies by coaching mothers on how to use open questions to stimulate their child's interest (for example, “Who should we invite to our party?”), how to demonstrate literacy-related tasks (for example, writing addresses on envelopes for the party invitation), and how to support the child's initial attempts at more complex tasks or language.⁵

Parent-child book reading is another important verbal exchange that contributes to children's literacy skills. Experts consistently recommend that parents and family members read frequently with their children.⁶ Reviews of research on effects of the quantity and quality of shared parent-child book reading indicate that book reading between parent and preschooler is positively correlated with children's development of language and literacy skills, including later reading achievement.^{7,8,9}

Children gain more from reading with adults when they are active rather than passive participants in the reading exchange. For example, four-year-old children who actively participated during book reading have been found to both comprehend and produce more words than children who passively listen to the story. Active participation in this study meant pointing to the illustrations of novel words or labeling novel words. Both forms of participation helped children to recognize new words, but answering questions helped children to produce more new words than pointing did.¹⁰

Yet a higher level of active participation in shared book reading is for children to participate in conversations about the text. The ways in which the parent manages the book reading interactions, especially asking and responding to questions about text,¹¹ have been identified as predictors of children's literacy outcomes. For example, children of lower-income mothers who engaged their preschool-age child in a high percentage of talk that went beyond the here and now during shared book-reading—that is, discussion of past experiences, predictions, and inferences—scored higher on language and literacy measures in kindergarten than children whose mothers used a lower percentage of talk that went beyond the here and now.¹² This type of discussion, what the researcher called nonimmediate talk, typically involves longer utterances and more complex language than simple labeling and yes/no questions.

Repeated readings of a book have been found to be beneficial for children, especially when children are actively involved in the reading process. One study found that three- and four-year-old children could comprehend and produce more novel words when they labeled the

words during three readings of a book compared to one reading.¹³ Moreover, repeated readings of a book allow for more discussion of speculation and interpretation, and thus more complex and elaborate language that moves beyond the here and now. Initial readings of a book generally focus on basic understandings of the text and illustrations, and therefore are conducive to here-and-now talk and “fill-in-the-blank” questions.¹⁴

Research indicates that parents can learn how to actively involve their child in shared book reading, and that children benefit from this type of parental support. In the Dialogic Reading program, an adult-child reading intervention that has demonstrated positive effects on children's language competence, the adult is encouraged to use questions and other prompts to help the child become the teller of the story.¹⁵ Open questions are among the skills taught to adults in this program to encourage the child to describe a story (“I told you about the last page, now it's your turn. You tell me about this page.”).

Research also suggests that parents have potential not often available in typical early childhood classrooms for actively engaging a child in shared book reading. A study of the relative effectiveness of the Dialogic Reading program when used with parents and with child care teachers found that program effects on children's expressive language skills were strongest when parents were involved in the program. The program was less effective when used with teachers alone. One-on-one reading exchanges in the home provide more opportunity than large group reading settings in classrooms for adults to scaffold their interactions with an individual child.¹⁶

Research shows that children at risk of reading difficulty, including children from low-income backgrounds, benefit from instruction that supports the development of phonemic awareness.¹⁷ To this end, experts recommend frequent adult-child shared book reading that directs young children's attention to the phonological structure of spoken words and highlights the relations between print and speech.¹⁸ It is beneficial for adults to talk with children about how print works. For example, they can talk about letters by name, shapes and sounds; show what is told in print; demonstrate how the string of letters between the spaces are words, and point to individual letters or words during reading. In addition, it is helpful for parents and other adult caregivers to practice the sounds of letters, help children take spoken words apart and put them together, and practice the alphabet by pointing out letters and reading alphabet books with children who are beginning to learn to read. For children beginning to read, it is helpful for parents and other adults to point out letter-sound relationships on labels, boxes, magazines and signs, and to listen to the child read words and books from school.

Shared book reading and other conversations such those at mealtime are valuable opportunities for parents and other caregivers to introduce novel or rare words to young children. As noted earlier, children's vocabulary knowledge is one of the strongest preschool predictors of later reading ability. Children with greater language knowledge and ability benefit more from their experiences and more readily learn new words than children whose language knowledge is less well developed.¹⁹ Research with lower-income families has found positive relationships between the density of rare words used in shared book reading, mealtime conversations and toy-play situations

and children's scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test in kindergarten. Also positively correlated with children's kindergarten vocabulary skills was informative uses of rare words such as providing explanations or meaningful information about word meanings.²⁰

Shared book reading and conversations with children occur in the context of a larger parent-child relationship that entails interactions across a range of settings and situations. The level of emotional warmth and level of restrictive versus permissive behavior with a child are predictive of children's school-related competence. Attentive, warm, and flexible behaviors during infancy and preschool years have been found to be associated with children's school readiness at ages 5 and 6 and with school achievement at age 12.²¹ Mother-child attachment security has been found to be related to the quality of mother-child interactions (i.e., level of paying attention, distraction) during activities related to written language.²² Further, mothers' uses of direct control tactics in teaching and disciplinary situations with 4-year-old children have been found to be negatively related to children's school-related abilities at 4-6 and 12 years of age.²²

The ease of children's adjustments to school also has been associated with the quality of affect and control in the parent-child relationship. Parent-child interactions characterized by a controlling parent and a resisting child, or by a directing child, have been found to be negatively associated with a child's social adjustment to school.²³

Parent-child interactions occur within a home and family environment that experts recommend should be predictable and orderly so children can learn the meaning and function of things. Researchers have identified a number of features of the environment that are

supportive of children's development, including regular locations for things, established times for meals and other routine activities, appropriate numbers of toys accessible to the child at any given time, and limits on background noise and crowding in the home.²⁴

PROVIDE SUPPORTS FOR LITERACY IN THE FAMILY

Parents strengthen their child's literacy development and school-related competence when they:

- provide easy access to reading and writing materials;
- read frequently themselves and use reading and writing to get things done and solve problems in everyday life; and
- demonstrate an enthusiastic view of reading as fun.

Everyday exchanges in families are embedded in a context that supports or limits the development of children's language and literacy competence. Literacy provisions in the home include children's access to reading and writing materials²⁵ as well as structured time for reading and a place for reading and literacy materials.

Parents' own reading habits and uses of literacy for problem solving (e.g., using a phone directory to look for help) are models for children.²⁶ Children of parents who view reading as a source of entertainment have been found to have a more positive view of reading than children of parents who emphasize the skills aspect of reading development.²⁷

Enthusiasm about literacy activities, including a view of reading as fun, has been identified as a contributor to children's reading skills and attitudes.²⁸ Also, mothers' positive beliefs about reading have been found to be predictive of mothers exposing their children to joint book reading and to the quality of mothers' book reading interactions with their child.²⁹

HOLD APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHILD'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Parents strengthen their child's literacy development and school-related competence when they:

- view their child as an active contributor to his/her own development through challenging yet achievable interactions with the everyday environment;
- know their child's interests and abilities; and
- maintain appropriate expectations of their child's achievements.

Parents' expectations of their child's abilities are correlated with children's school-related outcomes. For example, mothers' expectations of their children's levels of educational attainment have been found to be associated with children's vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing production four years later.³⁰

What parents think about the processes of children's development in general and their child's development in particular, including understandings of parental roles in fostering children's development and learning, seems to be an important contributor to children's

literacy and school-related outcomes. Parents' views of their child as an active contributor to his/her own development have been positively associated with children's cognitive abilities at 3-4 years³¹ and with children's reading and arithmetic test scores at 5-6 years.³²

ACTIVELY EMBRACE THE PARENTING ROLE

Parents contribute positively to their child's literacy development and school-related competence when they:

- maintain a positive sense of personal efficacy in the parenting role and in managing relations with their environment;
- take proactive steps to establish and maintain positive relations with community resources, including schools; and
- advocate for high quality in child and family resources in the community (for example, schools and child care).

Parents' sense of self-efficacy in having a positive influence on their child—that is, expectations about the degree to which they are able to perform competently and effectively as parents—have been found to be associated with parents' satisfaction in the parent role, strong advocacy for their child in interactions with schools and other institutions that have an important impact on their child, and the child's academic aspirations and competence and social development.^{33,34} A key influence on parents' decisions to become involved in their child's education is a sense of efficacy for helping their child succeed in school (i.e., Can I exert a positive influence on my child's education outcomes?).³⁵

FORM AND MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS WITH COMMUNITY AND OTHER RESOURCES

Parents' capacities to strengthen their child's literacy development and school-related competence are improved when they:

- use effective coping strategies for adapting to changes in family and community environments; and
- work toward good physical and mental health.

The growth, health, and functioning of the parents affect the quality of children's family environments. Good personal resources (for example, coping strategies) and social support systems enable parents to provide children with physical and social environments that are responsive, predictable, and orderly. The responsiveness and predictability of the home environment, in turn, has been found to be associated with a number of children's outcomes, including academic competence. Effective coping strategies enable parents to buffer children from debilitating stress factors in the environment. When coping strategies are weak, a parent's capacity to be active and goal-directed in managing his or her environment is compromised.³⁶ Moreover, when parental coping fails, the parent may develop more pervasive feelings of helplessness and a generalized tendency to give up in the face of obstacles.³⁷

Good physical and mental health are key enabling factors. When parents do not feel well, they have difficulty proactively structuring and monitoring their children's environments.

Psychological functioning in terms of adjustment and well-being contribute to the amount of psychological resources available for child-rearing tasks. As personal psychological resources increase, so does a parent's ability to provide responsive environments for children.³⁸

SUMMARY

As stated at the beginning of this section, there is no “magic bullet” or particular practice that has more influence on children’s literacy outcomes than other aspects of parenting. It is a constellation of parents’ beliefs and behaviors that set the stage for children’s long-term success. The challenge for Even Start programs is to find a balance in providing services to parents that extend across the goals and objectives of the five domains illustrated in the content framework, while at the same time keeping a clear focus on literacy.

Knowing the content of parenting education is but one part of the equation program administrators and planners need to know. It illustrates what parenting education needs to address.

Endnotes

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VII.

BENCHMARKS OF FAMILY PROGRESS

Between 1997 and 2001, the New York State Even Start Longitudinal Evaluation Project documented the progress of Even Start families from seven local projects. Local evaluators wrote multi-year case studies about family experiences. Two evaluators analyzed the case studies for behaviors and themes related to parent development. This graphic represents benchmarks in the stages they observed. The evaluators intended the benchmarks to “mark the path” of families as they persist in Even Start. Across the case studies, it became apparent that parents who stay in Even Start gain confidence in their abilities to affect their children’s futures. They move from focusing on their own needs to engaging in literacy-enhancing activities; some begin to contribute to changes in schools and communities on behalf of all children. The case studies are included in Portraits of Families published in 2001 by The New York State Even Start Family Literacy Partnership.

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

- Uses community resources
- Socializes with other parents
- Attends center-based activities

MANAGES FEELINGS

- Expresses anger appropriately
- Increases self-esteem

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Expresses self
- Initiates verbal communication
- Reads/writes notes

CREATES STABLE, SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- Adequate utilities
- Adequate space
- Appropriate child care



FROM SEVEN EVEN START CASE STUDIES

AWARENESS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Knows own child's developmental steps and needs
- Provides age appropriate toys
- Understands child's learning progress

ADVOCACY FOR CHILD

- Meets with teachers
- Accesses community resources for child
- Holds expectations for future education

SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURE

- Sets healthy limits
- Maintains routines
- Uses appropriate behavior modification techniques

ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILD

- Reads with child
- Plays with child
- Aware of child's feelings and interests
- Participates in school functions

RECIPROCITY WITH PROGRAM

- Provides service to program
- Makes effort to improve program

LEADERSHIP

- Engages others to participate in activities

SYSTEMS CHANGE

- Advocates for change
- Advocacy through letter writing



