



Culturally Speaking!

Volume 6, Issue 1

Fall, 2008

Wayne County Head Start (WCHS)



The mission of WCHS is to optimize the potential and diverse strengths of children, families, and communities for a better tomorrow.

Diversity-Related Materials Lead to Higher Positive Interactions Among Preschoolers

The 2008 Head Start Research Conference highlighted the efforts of a University of California—Berkeley team.

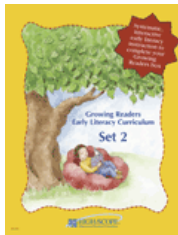
Citing previous research that confirmed very young children are capable of awareness of race and diversity, the team decided to study the influence of multicultural materials on positive peer interactions.

Using three scales of the ECERS* for analysis, the research concluded the mere presence of diversity materials did not significantly increase positive peer interactions, but positive peer interactions did increase significantly when teachers involved themselves in the use of the multicultural materials. It is crucial for teachers to use and share these materials with children.

*ECERS See Internet Resources page 3.

The school year will begin with resources and training available to all teaching staff of Wayne County Head Start (WCHS) for their implementation of Growing Readers.

Growing Readers Early Literacy Curriculum® was developed by the High/Scope Foundation.



As a research-based literacy curriculum, Growing Readers can be used in any early education program regardless of its general curriculum approach. It provides detailed activity cards, has its own assess-

ment procedure, and supports use of small group times for literacy activities which is helpful for programs that do not utilize the High/Scope approach for active participatory learning.

Since the general curriculum of WCHS is High/Scope, the adoption of Growing Readers is easy, with no need to memorize the activity cards or change the child assessment process of the Child Observation Record (COR). It offers greater opportunities to integrate language and literacy throughout the daily routine.

Growing Readers puts emphasis on supporting children's vocabulary and com-

prehension skills through dialogic reading experiences. Dialogic reading involves the interactive and conversational experience of an adult and child sharing a book - talking about the illustrations and relating the story to real life.

In addition to "comprehension", Growing Readers addresses the areas of "phonological awareness", "alphabetic principle" and "concepts of print" with a developmental approach that reflects how children learn over time.

Now, following a three-year piloting of the curriculum and resulting consistent higher COR scores, all children of WCHS will be "growing readers".

"Reading Aloud with ELLs"

Reading aloud and sharing a book with a child or small group of children can be an effective strategy to promote vocabulary development for English-language learners (ELLs).

Reading aloud with ELL children should encourage

their active participation and promote connections between the home language and English.

With the help of family members, translate key words into home languages; provide opportunities for children to point to book il-

lustrations of words; use and encourage physical gestures associated with the English words; ask "either/or" questions; or provide props and manipulatives related to new words that identify objects or actions.

(Continued on page 2.)

“Signing and Letter Links”

Signing can be an effective strategy to support the literacy development of typically developing, hearing children.

Use of the manual alphabet (finger signs for each alphabet letter) and American Sign Language (ASL) can enhance children’s vocabulary, alphabet awareness, self-esteem, and comfort in expressing feelings.

A fun way of introducing the manual alphabet is by relating the signs to the letters that appear on children’s letter links. A small picture

of a hand forming a signed alphabet can be placed on a child’s letter link replacing one of the alphabet letters in the corners of the letter link.

Adding an alphabet sign on the letter link will provide an ongoing opportunity for children to see a sign that they can imitate, identify the sign with an alphabet letter, and identify the sound represented by the letter and the sign.

Associating the manual alphabet signs to letter links is an easy bilingual approach that activates chil-

dren’s cognitive growth through movement, vision, meaning, memory, play, and hand/finger manipulation.



“Language Development of Chinese-Speaking Children”

The more teachers understand about the language and speech of young children in their home language, more effective support teachers can offer.

Chinese is a monosyllabic language in which each written character has one syllable. Many of the sounds of the characters begin with a consonant and end with a vowel. Each character is pronounced clearly, unlike the flow of

sounds in the English language.

Children raised in Chinese-speaking households may have a tendency to add a vowel sound after some consonants, regardless of where they occur in a word.

In Chinese, there are no sounds of /v/ or /th/, as well as blends such as /tr/, /dr/, /st/, or /pl/. Children need practice

to blend two sounds into one.

In Chinese, the verb “to be” is omitted before an adjective. The literal translation of “She is young” in Chinese is “She young”.

With increased awareness of language differences, teachers are prepared to assess children’s progress with English, appropriately.

“Reading Aloud with ELLs” (continued)

Props, manipulatives, and flannel board figures can be helpful during the read aloud experience as well as encouraging retelling of stories.

Teachers are most successful with read aloud experiences when they prepare for them by analyzing books and stories. Teachers must consider the book’s characters, actions, setting, storyline and sequence, illustrations, text, and relevance to children’s experiences or interests.



Decisions are needed to determine the materials or props best suited to complement the book and the sequence of planned activities that can make the

vocabulary meaningful.

Decisions are needed to determine how best to engage and involve children in the read aloud experience.

Children can be encouraged to handle the book; point to illustrations; express depicted emotions with their facial expressions; predict or recall a depicted action; make sound effects; fill in omitted words; and make up rhymes or alliterations related to the book shared.

“Recognition of Dialogic Reading in Bangladesh”

The Growing Readers Early Literacy Curriculum® was developed in response to the recognized value of dialogic reading. Dialogic reading with children involves discussion of books and related personal experiences between an adult and child.

Dialogic reading has been found effective as a teaching strategy for vocabulary development. Early childhood educators in Bangladesh have been introduced to the use of this strategy to improve children’s oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Traditionally, Bangladeshi children have been rewarded for sitting and listening quietly to stories. They have not been encouraged to question or add their own comments to stories or books read. Teachers required memorization and repeating of prescriptive text from books.

Now, these strategies have been found to hamper children’s development of reading



skills.

Increasingly, Bangladeshi teachers are being encouraged to engage in dialogic reading experiences with young children. They are reading to individual children or small groups and using such strategies as:

- Posing open-ended questions
- Encouraging children to explain depicted actions in stories
- Introducing rare words
- Encouraging children to retell stories.

The use of dialogic reading is “growing readers” worldwide.

“Children’s Books to Discover Alliteration”

Often books and/or book titles can help children discover alliterative sounds in words. When introducing books or stories entitled with alliterative words, first focus on the storyline, characters, and actions.

Once children are familiar with these characteristics of the book or story, comment on the alliteration(s) featured and acknowledge similarities to

children’s names and letter links.

BABY BORN (2007). Anastasia Suen. Lee & Low Books.

DAVID’S DRAWINGS (2007). Cathryn Falwell. Lee & Low Books.

GO, GO GUMBO (2007). Adjea J. Burrewes. Lee & Low Books.

HIROMI’S HANDS (2007). Lynne Barasch. Lee & Low Books.

TODDLER TWO (2007). Anastasia Suen. Lee & Low Books.

TWISTER’S TRICKS (2007). Francis McCall. Lee & Low Books.

WILLIE WINS (2007). Almira Astudillo Gilles. Lee & Low Books.

“Internet Resources ”

The following websites will offer more information and resources that follow-up on articles in this issue.

“Diversity-Related Materials...”

Learn about the ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales) at www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/

“Reading Aloud with ELLs”

Learn how Head Start programs are supporting children’s bilingual devel-

opment in a series of articles found at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HSLIC_search

“Signing and Letter Links”

Learn about the use of signing with hearing children in the book *Dancing with Words: Signing for Hearing Children’s Literacy* by Marilyn Daniels. www.greenwood.com/catalog/H723.aspx

“Language Development of Chinese-

Speaking Children”

Learn more about the Chinese language at the bilingual website of Colorin Colorado. www.colorincolorado.org

“Recognition of Dialogic Reading in Bangladesh”

Learn of the changes in early education at the Early Childhood Development Resource Centre of BRAC University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. www.bracu.ac.bd/ied

Look for our next edition
in Winter, 2009

Send Your Contributions To:
Attn: Kimberly Crafton
Wayne County Head Start
30712 Michigan Avenue, 2nd Floor
Westland, MI 48186
Or email kcrafton@co.wayne.mi.us

Phone: 734-727-7620
Fax: 734-727-7640
Toll Free: 866-534-5437

We are on the web!

www.waynecounty.com/hcs/hstart



Robert A. Ficano
County Executive

Growing Readers Throughout the Daily Routine"

Teachers find *Growing Readers* offers many easy strategies that can be used throughout the daily routine to support early language and literacy. These simple strategies include:

- Use names of new objects related to children's current play and interests and provide sample of the objects.
- Encourage children to tell stories about personal experiences and interests.
- Included rhyming word pairs in conversations with children.
- Use new action words related to children's current play and interests and provide opportunities for children to experience/explore those actions.

Wayne County Head Start

Funded by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

"Community Resources for Families with Infants/Toddlers"

Children's language and literacy development begins from birth, as they begin to experience and interact with the world through their senses.

Parents and family members play a crucial role in facilitating growth, development, and learning for the youngest of children.

The role of parents as the first and most important teachers for their children is strengthened by parent participation in no-cost community programs designed specifically for families with infants and toddlers.

Wayne County Head Start *Healthy Marriage/Healthy Relationships*

A healthy start for children begins with healthy relationships between parents. *Have your parents signed-up for the Healthy Marriage/Healthy Relationships workshop series?*

EARLY HEAD START

Home-Based and Center-Based
Programming for Children

Birth through Three-Years

Contact: Starfish Family Services
30000 Hiveley St.
Inkster, MI 48141
734-728-3400
www.starfishonline.org

GREAT PARENTS, GREAT START

Home-Based

Programming for Children

Birth through Four-Years

Contact: Starfish Family Services
30000Hiveley St.
Inkster, MI 48141
734-727-3160
(Serving selected communities)

GREAT PARENTS, GREAT START— WAYNE

Home-Based

Parent/Child Playgroup
Programming for Children
Birth through Four-Years

Contact: Wayne RESA
33500 Van Born Rd.
Wayne, MI 48184
734-334-1533
www.resa.net/early/
(Serving Wayne County)

