

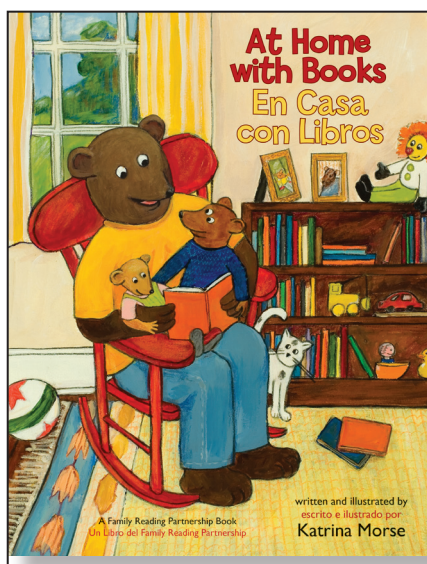
At Home with Books

En casa con libros

a Family Reading Partnership program



Staff Resource Guide



"At Home with Books/En casa con libros" is a children's book published by Family Reading Partnership, in which the main characters model all the ways read-aloud can happen at home.

It's a story for children and a teaching tool for adults.

At Home with Books/En casa con libros is also the name of a comprehensive program which encourages and supports read-aloud at home so that children grow up with the joy and love of books.

The *At Home with Books/En casa con libros* program is a way to assess current literacy values and practices in the home and develop goals to improve and create a culture of literacy for a family.



***At Home with Books/En casa con libros* Staff Resource Guide**

2016

Text by Elizabeth Stilwell

Illustrations, layout, and design by Katrina Morse



**Family Reading
Partnership**
www.familyreading.org

Family Reading Partnership is a coalition based in Ithaca, NY that has brought together virtually every sector of its community to promote family reading.

Our mission: to create a culture of literacy in which all children experience the joy of books and being read to, as part of everyday family life, right from the start.



Dear Family Educators and Advocates,

Your ongoing relationship with families puts you in a unique and powerful position to increase awareness about the essential role that reading aloud at home has for children's later success in school. You can help ensure that reading aloud begins for all children in infancy and continues through the child's school age years.

Here are some of the most important reasons why reading aloud at home provides children with the strong foundation they need for future learning:

READING ALOUD SUPPORTS:

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Children's language skills including vocabulary, storytelling and comprehension are improved through shared book reading.
- Children learn the meaning of new words in the context of the story because children's books contain 60% more rare and unusual words than they hear in everyday speech.
- Shared book reading sparks questions and lively conversations that continue to extend a child's vocabulary and comprehension.

EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS

- During 1:1 read-aloud, children learn to recognize letters and understand that print represents the spoken word.
- Children begin to understand the structure of stories, or that stories have a beginning, middle and ending; an essential concept related to comprehension

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND ALPHABET KNOWLEDGE

- Listening to stories helps children manipulate the sounds of spoken language; a basic prerequisite for learning to read.
- To read words, children need to know the rules for translating print into meaningful sounds.
- The language in children's books naturally promotes awareness of sound patterns with lots of rhyming, alliteration, and repetition.

SO MUCH MORE THAN LEARNING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

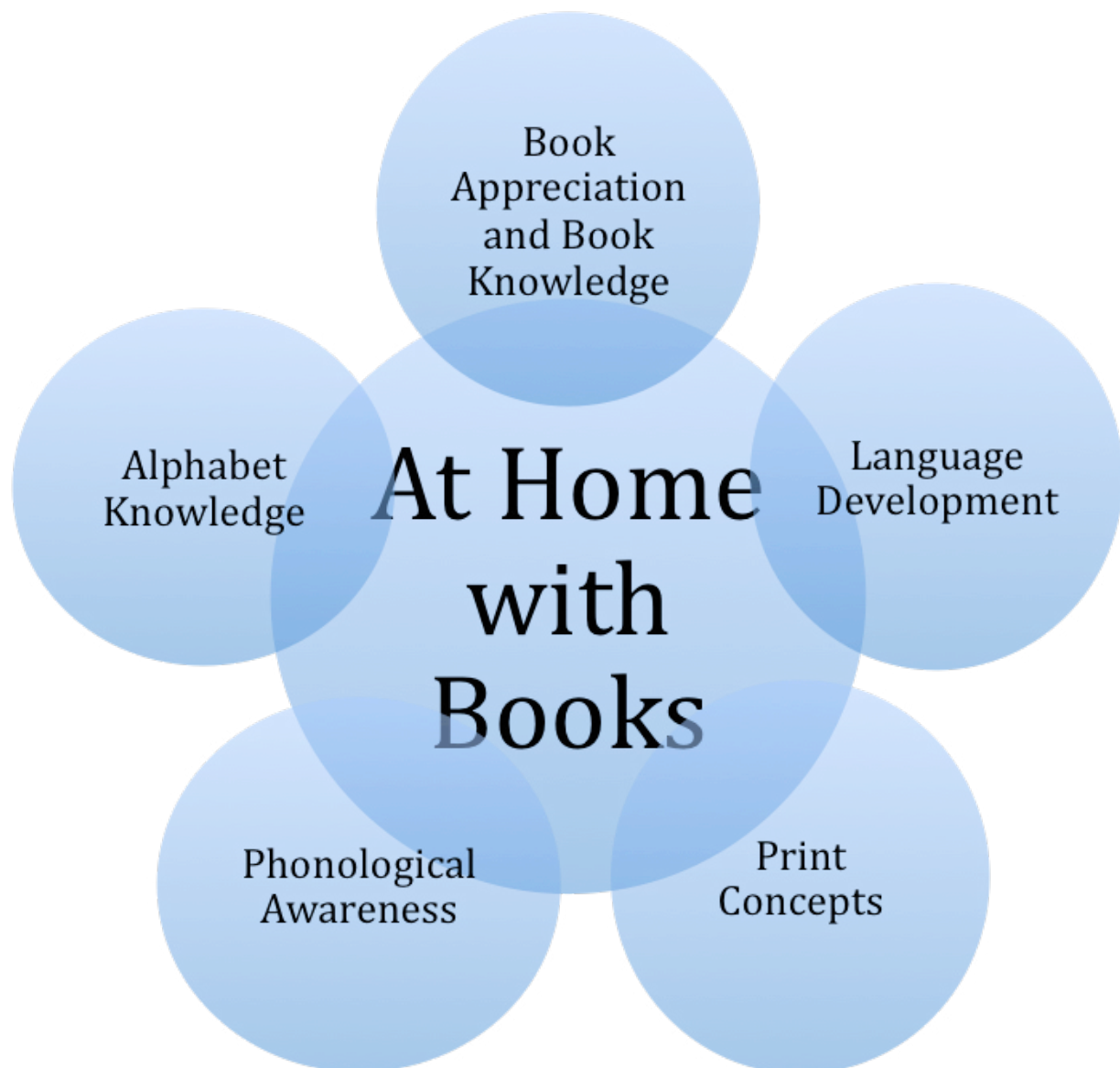
- Adult language that is warm, responsive and supportive has a positive influence on how children continue to engage with books.
- When children's experiences with books and language are enjoyable, they are more likely to develop positive feelings towards books and later toward reading.

With encouragement, support and access to books, families can learn to make reading aloud a warm, engaging part of everyday life. Daily reading at home gives children the advantage of early, frequent and pleasurable experiences with words and stories right from the start.

You are in the ideal position to model this engagement and relationship building through books!

DOMAIN

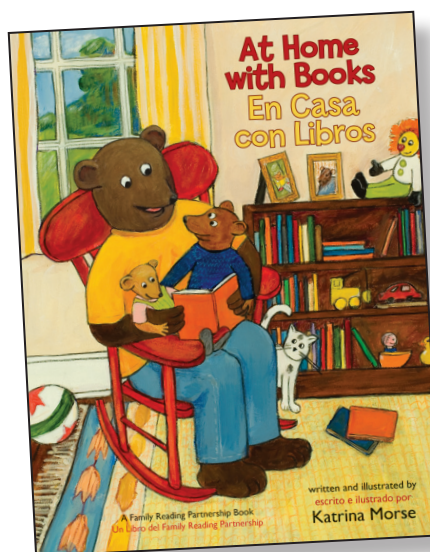
Language Development and Literacy Knowledge and Skills



The At Home with Books/En casa con libros Program Approach

How to Use the “At Home with Books/En casa con libros” Book and Family Self-Assessment

Making personal connections with families and developing a trusting relationship is the first step in making a difference for a child. Presenting a book as a gift, helping families identify literacy strengths and goals, and giving them resources and support, all help the children in your program have the best possible start at growing up loving books and reading, so eventually each child will look forward to reading independently.



Suggestions:

1. Before meeting with the family, read “At Home with Books/En casa con libros” by Katrina Morse, to familiarize yourself with the story.
2. Give the book “At Home with Books/En casa con libros” as a gift from your program on a home visit early in the school year.
3. Read the book aloud to the child with a family member present to model good read-aloud practices. For read-aloud strategies and suggestions, read the list on the back page of “At Home with Books.”
4. On another visit early in the school year, give the family the Family Self-Assessment and use check boxes in the “A” column to identify areas where the family is already providing a rich home literacy experience for their child, and then the areas that are goals. Ideally the self-assessment is a conversation with the family so goals can be made intentionally and thoughtfully.
5. Use the following ideas in this staff guide and your own ideas as you go through the self-assessment with the family to help them make words, books, and read-aloud an enjoyable part of everyday family life.
6. Encourage the family to keep their self-assessment so they can refer to it during the year. Keep a copy of the completed self-assessment in the family’s file and revisit the goals 4-6 months after the initial assessment. Go through the checklist with the family again, this time checking boxes in the “B” column and see if there have been any changes.
7. The resources mentioned in the following pages of this staff guide are all available to download and copy at: www.familyreading.org. Find additional resources listed on the back cover of this guide.

As families complete the **At Home with Books/En casa con libros Family Self-Assessment**, use these strategies and resources to help them achieve their goals.



1. Make Reading and Talking Part of Everyday Family Life

When you read to your child every day, it becomes a routine that your child will remember as special and comforting and you will create happy memories that last a lifetime.

Goal: I find time every day to share words and books with children.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Review the family's daily routine and agree on a time that might work to have 10 minutes of reading. Mark that time on a home calendar or on a piece of paper stuck to the fridge and plan to check in at the next visit to see if that time worked. Remind the family that if it doesn't work they can try another time.
- Create special reading times that can happen each day such as:
 - Books for Breakfast—read a short book while your children eat breakfast.
 - Back Home Book—share a book together when your child comes home from school.

Resource: The "Words of Love" card gives the family ideas for loving words to say to a child. "10 Great Reasons to Read Aloud to Children" (English and Spanish).

Goal: I tell stories—stories from books, or made up stories.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Help families understand that children need to hear an abundance of words. Listening to stories, without a book, helps children learn to "make pictures in their mind" as they think about the words they're hearing.
- Help families feel more comfortable with this by modeling story-telling with a retelling of a familiar tale like "The Three Little Pigs" or "Goldilocks and the Three Bears."

Goal: I talk about books that I read to my children. I ask “why,” “how,” and “what do you think” questions.

Talking Points / Strategies

This goal focuses on helping families understand that books can be used as tools to engage children in meaningful conversation. Model the following four-step strategy for families when they are sharing a new book with their child.

1. Look at the book cover and ask “I wonder what this story will be about? Do you have any ideas?”
2. Take a “picture walk” through the book. Look at the pictures together and think about what might be happening without reading the words.
3. Read the story all the way through so your child can enjoy the uninterrupted flow of the story
4. When you finish reading, ask a few “why,” “how,” or “what do you think?” questions. This gives your child practice in thinking and in using words to share ideas.

Resource: “Tips for Sharing Books” gives families ideas for reading to children at different ages.

Goal: I play with words and language.

Talking Points / Strategies

Playing with words by making up rhymes is a way to help your child sharpen her listening skills. When books have a rhyming text, model ways for families to have fun rhyming.

- Try leaving out the last word so your child can fill it in. Then try filling it in with a silly rhyming word (like pear for bear) and let your child correct you.
- Check out some children’s poetry books or books for nursery rhymes from the library.
- When your child knows a story, try changing the ending and invite your child to say what would happen next.

Resource: “Playing with Poetry” gives ideas for having fun with words and sounds.

Goal: I ask children to retell stories from books or from our day together.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Everything you and your child do together is a story. Remembering and telling all the details of a trip to the grocery store, or a bus ride downtown, is a great way for your child to understand and remember the beginning, middle, and end of a story, and the order in which things happened.
- You can help by asking “What did we do first? Then what happened next...”
- When your child pretends by playing house or restaurant they are telling a story and becoming a character in it. Join your child in this important play.

Resource: “Word Play” shares many ideas for fun ways to use words throughout the day.

2. Have a House Full of Books and Reading

Just as children's growing bodies need food, their growing minds need books. The books that children own become their first and their very own, treasured library.

Goal: Have many books at home where my children can reach them.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Instead of just one big box or shelf of books, look for baskets or bins at yard sales and have small collections of books throughout your home. If you don't have baskets you can ask your grocery store for some sturdy cardboard boxes. Decorate these "book boxes" with your children and invite them to sort books into collections.

Goal: Find books to keep—at yard sales, trading with friends, at book stores.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Many libraries have yearly book sales and on the last day offer children's books for pennies.
- Although it might seem like your child wants the same few books read over and over again, having a variety of books, and some new and different books is a way to keep your child interested in reading.

Goal: I let children see me read—books, newspapers, cookbooks or magazines.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Children learn by watching you. When they see you reading they understand that reading is important and enjoyable. Read anything you'd like to! Encourage the habit of "quiet reading time" when you read silently for 5 or 10 minutes and your child looks at books.

Goal: I visit the library for books to borrow and for story time.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Libraries have an abundance of beautiful books just waiting for you and your child to come and borrow. Check with your library to see how old your child needs to be to receive his/her own library card. Choosing and caring for library books is a wonderful way to encourage independence and responsibility. It will help to have a special Library Book Box in your house to keep track of the library books. Invite your child to help you write a note with the day the books are due back and put it on your refrigerator.

Goal: I pass along outgrown books to friends or family if children are ready to let them go, and ask friends and family to do the same for my children.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Just as young children outgrow clothes, they sometimes outgrow books. Have your child help you sort through books they are willing to share with others and host a “book swap” at your house. Invite families to bring books for adults as well as children’s books

Goal: I read aloud often, even after my children can read by themselves.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Continue the pleasure of reading with children even after they begin reading on their own. A young child who has mastered the skill of sounding out and reading words continues to benefit from the joy of sharing books with you.
- Children have a “listening level” higher than their reading level. A child who can read beginner books will become a better reader when he continues to be read to, because he is hearing new words and a more complicated story than he could read on his own.
- Children who grow up being read to, continue to feel pleasure and a connection with you when you share books together.

3. Help Children Fall in Love with Books

When children love to do something, they do it over and over again. Loving books is a habit that is never too early to start and one that will bring a lifetime of joy.

Goal: I make special cozy places to snuggle and read together, and for my children to look at books alone.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Make a reading cave by putting a blanket over your kitchen table, then crawl under there with your little bear and read some books! Chances are your little bear will want to continue to read in the cave.
- Find a tree in your yard or in a park and make it your “reading tree” to lean against and share some books outside.

Goal: I read children’s favorite books over and over if they ask.

Talking Points / Strategies

- For children, hearing the same book over and over again is like visiting with an old friend.
- By reading the same, beloved book again and again, a child builds self-confidence through mastery of the story.

Goal: I use books to explore the world and learn new things together.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Books are a way for you and your child to go on new adventures together to places you have never been, or to learn about wild animals that you will never see. Children are learning new things all the time; this is a chance for you to learn new things together.

Goal: I let children choose books that interest them.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Sometimes children want to read books about insects or snakes. Sometimes a child will only want books about trucks, and sometimes these subjects are not very interesting to you. It's amazing to watch your child become an expert on construction vehicles or dinosaurs. This knowledge makes a child feel confident. It's OK for you to also choose topics that you enjoy reading aloud!

Goal: I pack books to take along in the car, on the bus or to appointments in case there is a wait.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Having a book or two in your bag is an easy way to keep your child quiet and busy while waiting.
- Make it a habit to never leave the house without a few books just as you wouldn't leave your house without a snack, shoes, or jacket for your child.

Goal: I find good times to read throughout the day in addition to bedtime.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Try books at the breakfast table, or enjoy a few books when your child comes home from school to reconnect after a busy day.
- Books at bedtime are always a wonderful way to wind down, but try to find at least one other time each day that you and your child can enjoy a book together.

4. Start Family Reading and Book Traditions

Traditions are activities that a family has enjoyed together in the past and is likely to continue in the future because they value it. When sharing books becomes part of your family's tradition, books will become part of your child's future.

Goal: I show my children that books are special by including books as gifts for birthdays, holidays and special occasions –for adults as well as children.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Imagine if on every birthday or holiday your family celebrates your child awoke to find a wrapped book at the end of her bed! These books, given and received as gifts would become a very special collection for your child.

Goal: I always welcome new babies with a book. I write a “Welcome Baby” message in the book.

Talking Points / Strategies

- A board book for a baby often costs about the same as a greeting card, but has so much more meaning. You can write a message to the baby and share the joy of reading aloud—beginning at birth—with the baby's parents, so this little child will also grow up, “at home with books!”
- Invite your child to pass along a favorite board book to the new baby

Goal: We make our own books from pictures that my child draws or cuts from magazines and words that we add together.

Talking Points / Strategies

- Making books is an activity that children never tire of. Staple paper together, invite your child to make some illustrations and write some words on the pages.
- Help your child to tear or cut photos from magazines and glue them to paper to make a book. Add her words and you have a story to enjoy together.
- Making books helps children see themselves as writers as well as readers.

Goal: We have special *At Home with Books* nights when screens are turned off and everyone reads and tells stories together!

Talking Points / Strategies

- It's a noisy and busy world for you and your children. Turning off the TV, and not looking at your phone or other screens for even 10 minutes while reading together will help both you and your child concentrate on the words and pictures in the book and enjoy the quiet time together.

Resource: “Screen Time and Young Children” gives talking points about limiting screen time.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following is a list of video clips that model read-aloud techniques and provide research-backed information and opportunities for family home visit professionals to use for talking with families about the many ways to communicate with babies and children.

** Denotes those especially good as teaching tools for families and family-workers/ home visitors.*

1. Read to Me (Susan Straub, NY)

www.bklynlibrary.org/first5years/readtome/

A series of clips with families modeling attachment and talking, reading, and singing to infants and toddlers.

2. Read To Your Baby (Caroline Blakemore, Barbara Ramirez)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2Hk8jmF-D4

An expectant mom reading to her toddler. Warm family engagement with a book, modeling attachment and family reading.

3. Parenting Counts / Talaris Institute

www.parentingcounts.org/information/timeline/reading-to-babies

www.parentingcounts.org/information/timeline/talking-with-infants/

Reading to Babies, Parentese: Why it's Never too Early to Start a Conversation; Talking to Infants Families communicating with their babies and toddlers, with research-based descriptions from Talaris professionals provide the "How and Why" of talking with babies and children.*

4. Too Small to Fail

<http://talkingisteaching.org/tagged/video-postnav>

Read to Your Child from the Beginning; Build Your Baby's Vocabulary; Play Fun Games With Your Baby–Who's That Baby in the Mirror; Sing Songs Together–with Sesame Street Families are woven in with the muppets throughout the videos modeling the benefits of playing, singing, talking, and reading to infants and toddlers. Highly identifiable characters, warm and loving examples of closeness, and memorable songs that parents can sing to their children.*

5. Zero to Three

www.zerotothree.org/parenting-resources/MOEM/

Magic of Everyday Moments; Literacy with Love, Loving Literacy A blend of research-based information about brain development with warm family engagement with words, books, and playing that is woven into a video that provides the whole picture for families and professionals to talk more in depth about why early attachment and providing words to babies is essential. Includes tips to parents.*

6. Raising a Reader

www.youtube.com/watch?v=95vUoHTl85Q

*Storytime: How to Share Books with Your Child * Families reading with toddlers and infants, moms, and dads. Includes diversity; setting is at home. Research-to-practice modeling with voice-over and information about brain development and attachment. Includes tips to parents and demonstrates warm family engagement.*

7. Reading Rockets

www.readingrockets.org

Reading Aloud; Bringing Up Baby; 10 Things You Can Do to Raise a Reader; Top Tips for Engaging Dads

For more resources, visit our website: www.familyreading.org