



**Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy:  
Annotated Bibliography  
Research Section G:  
Culture and Context**

**Culture and Context** – This section of the annotated bibliography focuses on providing knowledge about our culturally and linguistically diverse populations that goes beyond what formal questionnaires and surveys can provide as assessment tools. The goal is that the development of observational tools will be better indicators of the types of programs that need to be put into place and more useful in determining a family’s acquisition of “social capital.”

Annotations are also cross listed as it is possible that a single document addresses several of the research strands identified in the annotated bibliography.

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**## indicates that the article is a research study**

Arzubiaga, A., Rueda, R., & Lilia, M. (2002). *Family matters related to the reading engagement of latina/o children* (Ciera Report #1-015). Retrieved August 13, 2003, from <http://www.ciera.org/library/reports/inquiry-1/1-015/1-015h.html>

This ethnographic study uses an ecological (ecology, resources, and restraints) and cultural (values, beliefs and schemata) approach to examine how families' daily routines effect children's engagement in reading. The primary research questions were:

1. What is the relationship between family ecocultural features and motivation to read?
2. Which family ecocultural features need to be closely examined?

This article reports on the relationship between ecocultural features of 18 Latina/o families and their children's motivation to read. Five ecocultural features in families' daily living (immigration, culture and language, nurturance, instrumental, and workload) were studied using extensive interviews. Ecocultural features were examined in relation to children's perceptions of themselves as readers and their appreciation of reading through an oral reading survey. Of the five features studied, the three components of nurturance, culture and language, and workload were examined further for their relationship to children's reading motivation and perceived value. Nurturance related to how much children valued reading, culture and language related to how children viewed themselves as readers, and workload was inversely related to how much children valued reading. The findings indicated that questions about how and why children read are seen with greater scope and clarity through a "sociocultural and historical" perspective, where motivation theories are broadened to encompass the children in their families' cultural context.

The authors discuss their findings in regards to future implications for teaching research, policymakers and practitioners. The report indicates the important impact that ecocultural family features can have on reading engagement, specifically on children's self-concept as readers, and on the value they place on reading.

### **Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

##Askov, E. N., Kassab, C., & Weirauch, D. (2005). Women in Pennsylvania's family literacy programs: Effects of participant characteristics on extent of participation. *Adult Basic Education*, 15(3), 131-149.

The authors, using data from the 2001- 2002 Pennsylvania statewide evaluation of family literacy (FL), used a quantitative research design to establish the correlation between participant characteristics and duration or intensity of participation. Participation is

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considered one of the leading factors in successful achievement outcomes. The study was limited to adult female participants (1,142)—male participants make up a small percentage of FL participants. Some findings were: ESL students were more likely to participate in FL programs (both in intensity and duration), employed women and single-head of households participated less in FL programs, age positively impacted intensity of participation, African American women were less likely to participate in Parent Education and PACT components. These and other findings led to an inquiry of structural, cultural, content, and availability components of FL programs which may create barriers for women not only in FL but the wider field of AE.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy Programs  
Section G: Culture & Context

Auerbach, E. (1990). *Making meaning, making change: A guide to participatory curriculum development for adult ESL and family literacy*. University of Massachusetts, Boston: Bilingual/ESL Graduate Studies. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 321 593).

This document, describing the University of Massachusetts Family Literacy Project, is intended to provide guidance for those interested in developing adult English as a Second Language (ESL) and family literacy programs for immigrants and refugees. It serves primarily as a curriculum guide, stressing important project components, the reasoning behind them, and suggestions for how others can incorporate these processes into their own program. The author, however, encourages program developers to carefully consider the specific concerns and issues of each group of participants to ensure effectiveness. Provided throughout the article is documentation of the learning process for teachers, students, and staff.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction  
Section C: Program Descriptions and Models  
Section G: Culture and Context

##Ballenger, C. (1999). Teaching other people's children: Literacy and learning in a bilingual classroom. New York, Teachers College Press.

This book focuses on Ballenger's research while working in a Haitian preschool. The author examines the literacy practices of both the children and surrounding community and how this informs her own teaching. This book, while mainly focusing on the children's literacy practices, provides insights to the manner in which children bring socially and culturally formed beliefs and constructs to their learning. She discusses the

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disconnect and misunderstandings that occurred between herself, the staff, the children and the parents due to her preconceived notions of teaching reading. This book provides excellent insight into cultural differences in learning both on the community and children's level. Ballenger also exposes her research and learning experience as a model from which any teacher can gain insight.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section D: Curriculum & Instruction

Section G: Culture & Context

Bermudez, A. (1994). *Doing our homework: How schools can engage Hispanic communities* (chap. 1). Retrieved from <http://clas.uiuc.edu/fulltext/cl00136/chapter1.html>

This chapter summarizes some of the empirical evidence that supports the idea that parental involvement in their children's schoolwork is in the best interest of the schools, students, and parents themselves. Bermudez aims to provide a rationale for why Hispanic parents should remain involved with their children's school through the upper grades (secondary education).

The research topics addressed are:

1. Student academic achievement: *Student achievement can be improved through parental involvement in the schools.*
2. Language achievement: *Parents who read and speak to their children in their native language will help their children develop the skills they need to succeed in their acquisition of English.*
3. School behavior and attendance: *When schools and parents work together to establish behavior guidelines then students will not be confused by mixed messages.*
4. Science and mathematics achievement: *Parents play a key role in their children's formations of ideas about the different possibilities for their futures.*
5. Cognitive growth: *Research demonstrates that when low-income parents participated in schools that their children's verbal concepts and other school related skills improved significantly.*

Summarizing some of the research on how parents benefit from involvement with their children's schooling Bermudez demonstrates the relationship of parental self-confidence and their becoming involved in school activities or in advocacy roles for their children. Research shows that parents want to know more about how to help their children learn.

The chapter concludes with a brief discussion regarding parental involvement in secondary education. She argues that this is the time in which parents tend to become less and less involved with their children's school work. She claims that children turn more towards their peers as role models during this time in their lives, and how this type

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of situation can be very threatening for a home where the language and culture are not that of the mainstream.

This is the introductory chapter to an on-line book which provides a historical perspective on how Hispanic parents became disengaged in their children's schooling.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section B: Parenting Education

Section G: Culture and Context

Bernal, V., Gilmore, L. A., Mellgren, L., Melandez, J., Seleme-McDermott, C., & Vazquez, L. (2000). *Hispanic fathers and family literacy: Strengthening Achievement in Hispanic Communities*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, & National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families. Retrieved August 13, 2003, from <http://www.fatherhood.hhs.gov/hispanic01/index.htm>

This is a report on a dialogue between community service providers for Hispanic fathers, national Hispanic organizations, literacy programs, and fatherhood advocates. The report has three purposes:

- To provide a record of the January 13, 2000 dialogue held with community providers of services for Hispanic fathers, national Hispanic organizations, literacy programs and advocates for fatherhood
- To provide information to practitioners that may be helpful in designing and implementing programs that promote Hispanic fathers involvement in child and adult education
- To encourage conversations within Hispanic communities and among service providers about how to strengthen the roles of Hispanic fathers in their children's lives.

This report is organized into seven sections and three appendices. The first section covers the *Purpose* for the report. The section *Educational Achievement: A Key Concern for Hispanic Communities* provides an explanation for the need for Hispanic communities to focus on improving the educational achievement of Hispanic children, youth and adults. The third section of the report, *Programs for Hispanic Fathers: Perspectives from the Research*, provides an overview of what can be learned from research about designing programs for Hispanic fathers. The fourth section of the report, *Learning From our Partners*, is a summary of the dialogue. The fifth section of the report, *Continuing the Dialogue*, identifies actions taken by HHS subsequent to the dialogue to promote

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Hispanic fathers increased involvement in educational achievement and to support programs that provide services to Hispanic fathers and families. In the sixth section, *Dialogue Participants*, lists the names and contact information for invited participants and the federal staff partners. In the last section, *Resources for Serving Hispanic Fathers*, organizations, agencies, service providers, and available materials are listed that may be helpful to communities designing and implementing programs. The three appendices provide brief government reports that contain information: on the Hispanic population from the U. S. Census Bureau, on strategies for working with Hispanic parents and children in the school and early childhood education environment from the ERIC clearinghouses, and on the importance of involving fathers in children's education from the National Center for Education Statistics, Department of Education.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section E: Collaboration Within Programs and Among Social Service Agencies

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Brown, B. L. (1998). *Family literacy: Respecting family ways*. (ERIC Digest No. 203)

In this digest, Brown challenges family literacy programs to consider further implications than solely those that are school-based. The author states that programs and curriculum should consider the whole family unit and build on cultural, gender, age, relationships, occupational, and community influences as well as those related to the school. Brown notes a number of community programs that have been able to access multiple literacy contributions of diverse families.

Brown refers to current family literacy programs that base their activities on what she considers a "deficit model" as those that only consider literacy activities in relation to school-based models. The author promotes other options that value different literacies than only those found in schools. These include literacy transmissions between adults, children and adults, siblings, and those encountered within the community, including those that are occupational.

The author advocates literacy programs that consider a variety of literacy behaviors. She feels that it is important to involve whole families, schools, communities, and occupational settings in literacy programs in order to best serve the advancement of literacy in the family. She emphasizes that such programs will foster needed mutual respect and collaboration between members of all the participating groups

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

Cairney, T. H., & Munsie, L. (1995). Parent participation in literacy learning. *The Reading Teacher*, 48(5), 392-403.

This paper describes a program whose goal is to involve parents more personally in the literacy development of their children. The influence of the home environment is very important to the language learning process of children. Therefore, school success is believed to be strongly associated with a range of factors including family and cultural backgrounds. Yet, educators seem to take this for granted and have failed to bring schools and their communities together. Schools need to become more aware and responsive to the cultural diversity in their communities and parents need to grow in the knowledge and understanding they have of schooling.

One reason for the gap between schools and parents is that parents may not feel competent enough to deal with the school work of their children. Another reason cited is that teachers have negative attitudes toward parents because they are believed to be apathetic and disinterested in their children's education. The authors caution that school officials need to question this assumption about low-income parents. Most often, parents want to help but have few ideas about how to help.

A way to reduce the barriers between schools and parents is to give teachers and parents a chance to understand the way each defines, values, and uses literacy as part of cultural practices. It is not a good practice to coerce or even persuade parents to take on the literacy definitions held by teachers. Parents must be viewed as partners, thus establishing a reciprocal relationship. This leads to each party achieving a better understanding of the other.

The Talk to a Literacy Learner (TTALL) is designed to monitor parent interactions with their children; the strategies parents use to interact with their children when they read and write. The major goals of the program are to: increase parental participation in the literacy activities of their children; change the nature of the interactions adults have with children; introduce parents to a range of literacy practices; train community resource people who could be deployed in a wide range of literacy activities; raise community expectations concerning literacy and education; and serve as a catalyst for a variety of community-based literacy activities.

Overall, the program had an impact upon the way parents interact with their children; offered parents strategies they did not have before; helped parents choose resource material, help children with book selection, and use libraries more effectively; parents gained new knowledge; parents' families were affected; parents began to share their insights outside the family; parents gained a greater understanding of schools; parents grew in confidence and self-esteem; Children's literacy performance levels, attitudes, and interests were affected; and the program had an impact on the school and preschool.

The TTALL program was highly effective in creating a greater sense of partnership in the education of children involved in the project. What still remains to be determined is

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whether the program will have long-term effects on the literacy competence of the children whose parents were involved.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section B: Parenting Education

Section G: Culture/Context

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section J: Parent Involvement

Caronia, L. (1998, September). *Between family and school: becoming readers in a children library*. Paper presented at European Conference for Educational Research, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

This paper describes Italian Reading Centers for Children, a program to promote reading motivation in children by providing children with a perspective of reading that they can use at school and at home. With this point of view, reading is not just a school task, but also a chosen social activity. The program uses the new perspective that book reading is a pleasure to improve reading competence and motivation for children. The author analyzes parent-child verbal interactions from an ethnographic study to illustrate the philosophy of education of the Centers and the strategies adopted by the Centers that give children good reasons to read books.

The author states that school teaches children how to decode and understand the meaning of text but not why reading is important and valuable. The author suggests that the reasons why are taken for granted by the school which assumes value accorded to reading was natural rather than cultural. The author argues that not all children are socialized to a school-oriented culture of books, and not all of them possess a representation of book reading that can make sense of cognitive efforts demanded by the school, hence the need for family involvement. In the Italian Reading Centers for Children, Center teachers use specific verbal strategies that engage the parents reading perceptions and that informally validate the importance of reading and encourage the use of the onsite lending library. The program works as a bridge between the school and the family's reading habits and values of books and reading.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

##Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1990). *Literacy for empowerment: The role of parents in children's education*. London: Falmer Press.

This ethnographic study describes a Mexican Spanish-speaking community in the United States and is intended for both researchers and school personnel. The main research questions address how parents assist their children in the education process, and how parents socialize each other in dealing with the school. As part of the study, the author followed 20 families with children participating in second- and third-grade. To understand how parents helped their children, the ethnography focused on the literacy practices in the classroom and the home. The author also focused on parent involvement and attended school events such as parent meetings, parent training workshops, and informal interactions between families and school personnel. The book concludes by discussing theoretical, practical and policy implications

**Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1996). *Protean literacy: Extending the discourse on empowerment*. London: Falmer Press.

This book focuses on a discussion of empowerment related to the author's earlier ethnography (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990). Emphasis is placed on the researcher's role of facilitator and advocate in helping families participate in the school community. Using critical ethnographic techniques, Delgado-Gaitan helped parents to establish COPLA (Comite de Padres Latinos), an organization to empower parents by representing their interests with the school system. Because of the concern with reading underachievement of Spanish-speaking children, one activity initiated by COPLA was the Family Literacy Project. This project intended to have children read at home with their parents and have the family report to the teacher in order to monitor literacy performance.

Delgado-Gaitan argues that families were not empowered in their children's education with the Family Literacy Project. She suggests that claiming "cultural space and political voice and utopian visions" through activities like those conducted by COPLA are not enough to counter inequalities embedded in political and economic structures, although these activities offer potential for transformation.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section G: Culture and Context

## indicates that the article is a research study

Delpit, L. (1988). The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children. *Harvard Educational Review*, 58(3), 280-290.

In this article Delpit addresses the five aspects of the culture of power and how they relate to the educational experience (culturally and academically) of minority and low-income children. The implicit and explicit “rules of power” affect the roles and relationships of parents, teachers and students and the educational experience. Therefore, these rules need to be explicitly taught so that this structure is available to all of society. Concrete examples from the parent and teacher perspectives give interesting insight to the discussion. This article is of interest to staff, curriculum developers, administrators and teachers as it provides useful considerations for parent involvement, teacher interaction with students and curricula development.

Delpit poses that there are five aspects of power displayed in the classroom. They are (1) issues of power are enacted in the classroom; (2) there is a “culture of power” (i.e. codes and rules to follow); (3) the rules of power reflect the culture of those “in power”; (4) knowing the rules or having the rules explained explicitly increases the ease with which one can acquire power; and (5) those in power are least aware of the power structure, whereas, those that have the least power are the most aware of its presence. These aspects of power are responsible for the “schism between liberal educational movements” and non-mainstream communities. (p 282)

The two aspects that are most closely examined in this article are (4) and (5). Delpit suggests “that students must be *taught* the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life.” (p 296). Delpit provides concrete examples of misunderstanding, cultural information, failure and solutions in the area of reading, writing and behavior to support her theory. Furthermore, parents and members from the cultural community must be engaged and heard in discussions about education and culture so that the educational system can be a place of teaching and learning for all children.

**Cross-Reference:**

- Section G: Culture & Context
- Section I: Professional Development
- Section D: Curriculum & Instruction
- Section J: Parent Involvement

Denny, M. K., English, J. P., Gerber, M. M., Leafstedt, J., & Ruz, M. L. (2001, April) *Family and home literacy practices: Mediating factors for preliterate English learners at risk*. University of California, Santa Barbara: Center for the Advanced Study on Individual Differences. Paper presented at the annual AERA Conference, Seattle, WA.

The results of a study of family and home literacy factors possibly influencing the development of phonological awareness skills for preliterate English learners during the early acquisition phase of reading development in a second language (L2) are presented in this paper. The findings are from the first year of a three-year longitudinal study of the effects of an early intervention of first language (L1) phonological skills training to promote cross-language transfer to L2 reading abilities. Data were collected from 247 families of kindergarten children in 13 classrooms in three public school districts in Southern California.

The authors state that proficiency of first language (L1) reading structures may significantly influence reading acquisition of second language (L2) reading structures. Phonological sensitivity to letter knowledge and rhyme are specific links associated with children's later success in learning to read. Although children who have better phonological awareness demonstrate early word decoding abilities, there is very little known about the relationships between phonological awareness and the early influences of family and home literacy factors. There is also less known about the "relationship of family and home literacy factors on L2 literacy development for English learners" (pg. 3) who enter school speaking a different first language.

An important finding from this study is that low socio-economic status (SES) and low education levels of parents did not deter families from participating in early literacy activities at home. However, studies that define/identify activities as part of the family and home literacy environment are limited. Descriptive statistics and preliminary analysis of mean differences between selected variables are reported. The selected variables include: 1) family composition and language use (family composition and SES, language use), 2) family exposure and knowledge of print and media, 3) family home literacy practices, and 4) family aspirations for their child's reading and academic achievement (language, reading, academic achievement).

Finally, the initial findings from this study suggest that families value the importance of literacy and language proficiency in Spanish and English, but the expectations that parents/caregivers have for their children's language and reading achievement in English are most important.

### **Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

Dimidjian, V.J. (2001). Helping vulnerable families give their children an even start toward school success: One rural community's efforts. *Childhood Education* 77(6). 379-385. (ERIC Journals in Education Reproduction Service No. EJ641768)

The author describes results of an ethnographic case study of a family literacy program in rural southwest Florida serving seasonal migrant workers and a growing permanent population. Although the methodology wasn't as rigorous as that employed by DeBruin-Parecki, Paris & Seidenberg (1996) in Michigan or Tice (2000) in Ohio, it continues to build a rich understanding, based on personal observations and interviews, of the reasons for success of a rural program despite added complexities of multi-cultural, transitory clients. Excellent leadership and a multi-ethnic staff with strong community bonds that "tries to help the families obtain services beyond those provided in the program ... [makes the program] a linchpin of social stability in the ever-changing Immokalee community." Many staff members were formerly program students and can empathize with new families' struggles and provide targeted and compassionate assistance. The article is highly descriptive, but because data analysis is not explained, it is difficult to readily accept the loosely reported outcome statistics cited by the author. Having said that, the program does appear to be making progress with individual families in a number of areas. Similar to Tice (2000), Dimidjian found that collaboration between organizations is possible when communities mobilize around a common goal and persevere to serve families in need of assistance.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section G: Culture and Context

Dudley-Marling, C. (2001) School trouble: A mother's burden. *Gender and Education*. 13 (2), 183-197.

Schools' emphasis on increased parental involvement assumes that the active participation of mothers and fathers in their children's education increases students' level of achievement. However, little consideration is given to the effect the required efforts may have on parents. Dudley-Marling's study of 23 parents whose children experienced academic difficulty in school focuses on the extent to which mothers bear the entirety of the material and emotional burdens of their children's struggle in school. He finds that the quality of these women's lives is greatly diminished by the amount of responsibility they must assume. While the conclusion is directed to politicians and policy-makers, program developers and teachers would also benefit from the awareness Dudley-Marling raises about the high cost involvement in the school presents for some parents.

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**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Durán, R. (1996, January). *English immigrant language learners: Cultural accommodation and family literacy*. Paper presented at the symposium for Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice, Washington, DC. Retrieved September 12, 2002, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/english.html>

The author defines literacy in the contexts of cultural practice, institutional practice and linguistic practice. Literacy is the “semiotic ability of individuals to interpret and act upon the world within cultural and social communities of practice” (p. 1). This definition implies that there is an important connection between language communication and every day cultural activity and that communicative competencies are directly linked to the socio-cultural and cultural practices of community members. The author further suggests that the acquisition and use of one or more languages cannot be separated from the acquisition of skills that allow you to be a competent participant of all activities that require the use of language. These opinions strongly support research stating that second language acquisition is enhanced when it arises from comprehensible input. In this first section, the author also introduces the idea of “cultural-linguistic capital” as the “know-how developed through social experience and familiarity with the social, cultural, and linguistic demands of everyday interactions” (p. 1). It is not enough to use formal questionnaires and surveys as assessment tools of basic reading, writing, oral comprehension, and speaking competencies of immigrant families. The author suggests we go beyond this practice and focus on how well immigrant families can perform isolated communicative functions, such as visits to the doctor or an employment office. The observation of these types of activities are better indicators of an immigrant family’s acquisition of “social capital” and are better indicators of the types of program that need to be put into place. Finally, the author suggests that we need to implement improved methods of communication that allow immigrants to participate competently in cultural and social activities of significant value requiring the use of language.

This author also cites examples of how institutions fail to meet specific literacy needs of immigrant families in regards to housing, English language learning, employment, family restructuring, health care, and parental reaction to and involvement in children’s schooling. The author closes by providing some directions for literacy intervention research especially in the areas of “cultural-linguistic capital” and “institutional capital,” bi-literacy, and electronic technologies to improve literacy.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

##Elias, G., Hay, I., Homel, R., & Freiberg, K. (2006). Enhancing parent-child book reading in a disadvantaged community. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood, 31*(1), 20–25.

This study investigates the effects of a parent-child dialogic reading program on the parents' frequency of reading with their preschool-age children, their eagerness to participate in school activities, and the preschoolers' reading abilities. Dialogic reading involves caretakers reading *with* rather than *to* their children or simply correcting their child's reading. The sample was drawn from an Australian community with high levels social and economic disadvantage (e.g., income, educational attainment, single parent families, unemployment). The study investigated the effectiveness of the parent-child dialogic reading program developed to meet the perceived needs of the parents and children in this community. Through socially and culturally relevant reading materials, the research aimed to encourage parents and children to engage in shared book experiences and to convince parents that they could contribute to their children's formal education in meaningful ways. The study presents suggestions for involving parents who feel threatened by the school's middle-class values and for drawing on students' native language.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Interactive Literacy

Section B: Parenting Education

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

##Elish-Piper, L. (1997). Literacy and their lives: Four low-income families enrolled in a summer family literacy program. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 40*, 256–268.

This article describes a qualitative study of 13 low-income families who participated in a summer family literacy program. In her examination of families, the author was guided by the sociocontextual perspective that calls for looking at strengths and intact literacy patterns in families, (see Taylor, 1983; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; and Heath, 1983). Multiple data collection methods were used to obtain information through parent interviews, dialogue journals done by parents, field notes taken by the researcher and literacy artifacts. This article highlights four family profiles thought to represent the range of situations within the families. The four profiles include families in which (a) literacy was used to handle personal issues and challenges, (b) literacy activities emerged as the source of competition between parent and child, (c) reevaluation of literacy activities took place, and (d) literacy activities were used to show nurture and support for one another. The author concludes that the families in the study all used literacy for

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meaningful purposes and these purposes differed based on the social-contextual factors within each family at that point in time. She further concludes that the activities around literacy used by families were not necessarily the school-types of literacy that dominate family literacy curriculum.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Culture and Context

Ferguson, C. (2005) "Reaching out to diverse populations: what can schools do to foster family-school connections?" *A Strategy Brief of the National Center for Family and Community Connection with Schools*.

This strategy brief highlights the need to consider the cultural differences in definitions of parent involvement, stressing that overcoming the obstacles these discrepancies create is crucial if meaningful participation is to be attained. Ferguson provides a "school snapshot" to illustrate the divergence in what schools and parents mean by parent involvement and the positive outcomes that can occur when a common understanding is reached. A list of issues to consider when reaching out to diverse populations and specific steps that schools can take to break down the barriers that exist is included. These suggestions are particularly helpful for program developers and school administrators interested in increasing parent involvement.

**Cross-reference:**

Section B: Parenting Education

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

##Fitzgerald, J., Spiegel, D. L., & Cunningham, J. W. (1991). The relationship between parental literacy level and perceptions of emergent literacy. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 23(2), 191-213.

This is a well-organized paper with detailed descriptions of the research methods used. This study examines parental perceptions of young children's literacy development and explores the relationship between parental literacy level and perceptions of the importance of literacy artifacts (such as newspapers, children's books, paper, and pencils) and events/experiences in preschoolers' literacy development. Literacy events are further divided into child-focused events such as listening to stories, watching Sesame Street, and adult-focused events such as checking the schedule in the TV Guide or using written recipes. Literacy, in this study, refers to reading and writing.

The subjects, 108 parents, were interviewed and given the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) as criterion for their reading grade level. The interview had three subsets of

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items—two open-ended, 37 Likert, and several demographic. The two open-ended questions were:

1. Why do you think some children learn to read and write well in school and others don't?
2. Do you think there is anything parents of two- to four-year-olds might do to help their children learn to read and write better when they start school? (If yes, what?)

Responses to the open-ended items were tape-recorded and later transcribed. The reliability and validity of the Likert items were further tested. Characteristics of both low- and high-literacy caretakers were compared: In this sample, race of the caretaker and literacy level were highly correlated, with whites tending to be more literate.

The results of the study may be characterized into:

- A. General parental perceptions of preschoolers' literacy development:
  - Literacy artifacts and events during the preschool years were viewed as important
  - What is done with the available literacy artifacts was seen as more important than simply having the artifacts themselves
  - Simple literacy materials (books, pencils, paper) were seen as the most important kinds of materials to have in the home for nurturing literacy
  - Natural interactions with books was viewed to be the most important kind of literacy event; skill-oriented and solitary activities were the least important
  - Though both were perceived as important, children's participation in the events was more important than seeing adults doing the literacy activity
  - Early literacy development was characterized more as learning about reading than writing.
- B. Similarities in responses to open-ended questions by parents with lower versus higher literacy levels:
  - Very little of their talk focused on literacy artifacts. -Parents tended to see events that involved the child and the child's own aptitude or disposition towards literacy learning as the most central features of early literacy learning
  - Both groups focused on reading much more than writing as part of literacy
  - The role of schools or teachers in children's literacy success was rarely mentioned in response to question 1
- C. Differences in perceptions of parents with lower versus higher literacy levels: (There was a significant negative relationship between parental literacy level and perceptions of the importance of literacy artifacts and events.)
  - For artifacts, both groups thought simple materials such as paper, pens, and magazines were most important, but it is interesting to note that among top-

ranked items for low-literacy caretakers there were also materials that might be considered instructional (alphabet blocks and flashcards)

- On the whole, compared to the high-literacy caretakers, the low-literacy caretakers tended to give more importance to special-use items, that is, items might teach something, or that might be explicitly associated with skill development
- Low-literacy caretakers generally had much less to say than high-literacy caretakers regarding the questions asked in terms of length and varieties of responses
- High-literacy caretakers tended to perceive adult-focused or role-modeling activities and child-focused activities as roughly equivalent in importance; however, low-literacy caretakers felt role-modeling was less important than child-focused activities

#### Suggestions for Future Research:

- Why do low-literacy parents seem to have a bundle-of-skills view of literacy, and why do high-literacy parents tend to see literacy as cultural transmission?
- What kinds of intergenerational or early childhood interventions would be most effective with parents with low-literacy levels?
- How are parental perceptions of emergent literacy related to what they parents actually do with their preschoolers in their homes?

#### **Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy

Section B: Parenting Education

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Gadsden, V. L. (1994). Understanding family literacy: Conceptual issues. *Teachers College Record*, 96, 58–86.

This article examines the current research in the field of family literacy. The first of the article's four sections identifies major sources of influence on current literacy research, such as cross-cultural and social issues, intergenerational literacy, and parent-child literacy, as well as the influence of practice. The second section, about the nature of families and family support, describes five assumptions as the foundation of a conceptual framework. Gadsden then discusses the recent policy impetus for family support efforts and explains how it serves to link literacy to family support. She argues that before this link can be successful, literacy research and practice must catch up in the areas of family functioning and development. She concludes by stressing that family literacy learning be conceptualized broadly and as an ongoing activity that varies alongside changing life needs.

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

**Cross-Reference:**

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Gadsden, V. L. (1996, January). *Designing and conducting family literacy programs that account for racial, ethnic, religious, and other cultural differences*. Paper presented at the symposium for Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice, Washington, DC. Retrieved September 12, 2002, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/design.html>

This paper looks at the issues of race, culture, and class and their influence on instruction and learning in family literacy programs. The author points out that the learners' racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural history cannot be dismissed especially when the history or daily experiences of learners are not the same as those of the teacher or other learners. The author recognizes that it is very difficult to design and conduct family literacy programs that account for racial, ethnic, religious, and other cultural differences. This is because family literacy programs are among the fastest growing types of intervention programs in the nation and the programs' purposes vary dramatically in addition to the varied interpretations programs have of the concept or definition of family literacy.

The author states that although there are deviations in the purpose of different programs, the conceptualization of family literacy has led programs to focus on traditional issues of "parenting, family support, and reciprocal teaching within and outside of home contexts" (p. 1) while ignoring other more complex and critical issues. Family literacy populations do share problems of reading and writing and the "often attendant problem of poverty", but they also differ greatly in "racial, cultural, and religious affiliation; socio-political histories and ethnic connectedness; socio-economic backgrounds; and life views" (p. 1).

This paper focuses on four areas: conceptualizing family literacy; cultural and social practices of families; practical concerns for programs; and differences and commonalities for teaching and learning. First, when talking about the concept of family literacy, the author outlines two different perspectives. One perspective focuses on school-based academics and the other focuses on family practices. Next, we need to investigate and learn about the cultural and social practices of families to develop programs that are successful in the long-term and have sustainability. Then, on the topic of practical concerns for programs, the author asks that we not assume that homogeneous minorities represent a "monolithic group with similar experiences" (p. 4). For example, "within a collective group, called blacks, there are many different subgroups and cultures, just as there are in other cultural and ethnic groups" (p. 4). Finally, the author states that although there are no fool-proof methods that guarantee all programs will be aware of the expectations of learners, there are methods of thinking about "difference" and

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

“commonality,” and as a first step, all programs must evaluate “the resources and the limitations of existing program structures, content, and focus” (p. 4).

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Gadsden, V. (2004). Family literacy and culture. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of Family Literacy* (pp. 401-425). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This chapter focuses on the recent rapid growth of family literacy programs and issues that need to be developed to better support the theory behind the field. Gadsden reviews components of family literacy programs, highlights four strands of research in the field, and provides an insightful discussion on the definition of culture, and how that applies to the changing field of family literacy. Two main issues surface: 1) family literacy (i.e. What is family literacy? How do we define family literacy?); and, 2) culture, (i.e. What is meant by “culture”? What are the different aspects of culture? How do culture and literacy influence each other?).

This chapter should be read by anyone whose work touches the field of family literacy. It provides an excellent overview of family literacy, concrete program examples, questions that need to be considered in program development, a discussion of the intertwining of literacy and culture, and insights into how culture affects the lives of learners and practitioners.

Gadsden writes that everyone has a literacy component to their lives. It is a more difficult matter of finding what those notions of literacy are and how they are embedded in the participants’ and the educator’s social context. Literacy extends well beyond reading and writing; it is, in fact, a series of “problem solving abilities” (pg 420) bound in cultural context. Culture has many more parts to it than just ethnicity; social class, values, gender, religion, race, history, members in the family, and intra-ethnic relations are some of the main components. There is a need for educators to take the inquiry approach to teaching; the teacher and learner engage in reciprocal teaching and learning.

Gadsden identifies four strands of research: 1) descriptions of diverse populations; 2) family literacy that develops mainstream expectations; 3) rethinking the “uniformity of approach” idea; and, 4) how family and culture create literacy learning and how that framework relates to the world. There is a call for additional well-defined research that looks at the inter-play of culture and literacy. Additionally, developing tools that measure or identify the impact a family literacy program has on children’s school performance is needed.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture & Context

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

Section B: Parenting Education  
Section C: Program Description & Models  
Section D: Curriculum & Instruction

##Griffith, A. I., & Smith, D. E. (2005). *Mothering for Schooling*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Griffith and Smith provide a concise and insightful argument regarding the role of mothers in equipping children for school and the instrumental role they play in creating successful schools. Using interviews conducted with teachers, mothers and administrators, the authors uncover a *mothering discourse*. This discourse uses an idealized middle class mother as a standard to shape maternal behavior through policy, moral and social discourse, and the ideal of a “standard North American family.” The discourse links mothers’ behavior to the success of their child and the school. This success, notably, relies on the unpaid participation of mothers (i.e. homework help, participation in the school, creating extracurricular learning experiences). The interviews demonstrate the financial and job-related constraints on poor or working class mothers to similarly participate in “school life.” This dependence on women’s “voluntary” labor, the authors find, creates an “*engine of inequality*” through which educational and social disparities are reproduced, not simply for individual children, but more importantly between schools.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture & Context  
Section J: Parent Involvement

Hannon, P. and Bird, V. (2004). Family literacy in England: Theory, practice, research, and policy. In B. Wasik (Ed.) *Handbook on Family Literacy: Research and Services*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum. 23-39

In this article Hannon and Bird recall the past 30 years of family literacy research and practice in England both its developments and challenges. They begin by discussing some of the theoretical aspects of family literacy by distinguishing two basic meanings of the term. The first being *literacy practices within families* and the second being *literacy programs involving families*. From there they go on to explain how the practice of family literacy evolved from two separate strands of education, early childhood and adult literacy.

They explain how during the 1980s “family literacy programs in the broad sense were established,” and prescriptive approaches—paired reading, shared reading, and pause, prompt and praise, and family reading groups—to literacy emerged. Hannon and Bird highlight the significance of the ALBSU, a government funded agency, when it

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“imported a model of family literacy from the United States.” They discuss how the ALBSU went about developing and implementing programs through research, and that through this research and other projects like it the idea was to establish “a national prominence for family literacy.”

In terms of program evaluations, Hannon and Bird posit that enough research has been conducted in order to conclude that early childhood forms of family literacy programs are effective. In spite of this claim they argue that not enough research has been conducted in other areas relating to parental literacy development—take-up and participation. They continue by admitting that not enough research has been conducted which examines the “synergistic benefits of the intergenerational program” as compared to stand-alone programs.

The authors then address four key policy issues—*funding, flexibility in program development, professional development, and research and evaluation*. They explain that in order for family literacy to grow it “needs to catch up with the rapidly changing policy climate and restate what it is for and where it fits” (p.34).

In conclusion they settle on the idea that up until now there seems to be the promotion of one main model of family literacy practice, and that what the field needs is more of an international exchange of ideas and experiences in order for family literacy to meet the developing and diverse needs of families around the world.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy Programs

Section G: Culture and Context

Section H: Government Policy

Harmon, H. L. & Dickens, B. H. (2004) In small communities, partnerships with parents and the public are keys to school success. *American School Board Journal*.

The federal government requires increased parent involvement, but the emphasis on testing and the lack of opportunities for involvement in rural areas may impede full implementation. Through an initiative sponsored by NSF, Harmon and Dickens address this disconnect that exists between the theory and reality of parent involvement. Although their project dealt with math and science, they believe the increase in achievement resulting from cooperation between schools and communities is possible in other areas of the curriculum. They target school board members, directing them to take ten action steps to encourage commitment between rural schools and parents. These include: assessing the current situation, creating policies and supporting practices that encourage involvement, setting expectations for teachers and superintendents, encouraging principals to support involvement, finding customized training and support,

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approving budgets that provide financing for involvement, recognizing achievement, and maintaining a positive relationship with the public.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Harry, B. (1996, January). *Family literacy programs: Creating a fit with families of children with disabilities*. Paper presented at the symposium for Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice, Washington, DC. Retrieved September 12, 2002, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/create.html>

This paper explores how family literacy program providers, or “interventionists,” can design programs that do not put additional stress on the already challenge-filled lives of families with children with special needs. However, the author clearly states that “it should not be assumed that families of children with disabilities necessarily see the challenges presented by their children as problems” (pg. 1).

First, this paper identifies factors that can help determine how stressful a child’s disability will be to a family. These factors include:

- Parental traits
- The nature of the child’s exceptionality
- Care-giving demands of the child
- Internal social supports
- External social supports
- Financial resources
- Family constellation and relationships

Recent research has also indicated that service providers and programs are a source of stress to families, regardless of the program’s good intentions. This paper then asks, “how can interventionists design programs that will not add to the challenges faced by the family, nor disrupt the adaptive process already established by the family” (pg. 2)? A greater effort needs to be made to describe these families which would then initiate more qualitative research to build a larger and better “descriptive base.” The author also suggests that we need to broaden our views about families that “do not belong to the dominant cultural groups in the society... minority groups” (pg. 2).

Second, the author discusses how to develop programs that fit with the adaptations that families have already made to the child’s disability. The author stresses that the intervention should help and not hinder the family and it should respect and build on the families’ beliefs regarding literacy. The author encourages providers and researchers to

perform a needs assessment on the family before attempting to design an intervention program. Planning should begin by “gaining a detailed picture of the family’s daily life” (pg. 2).

Third, the author points out the importance of creating programs that match the beliefs and practices of families have about literacy. Recent research suggests that parental education and socio-economic level are stronger indicators of literacy beliefs and practices than ethnicity or culture. The author proposes that we meet parents at their “zones of proximal development” and add to their skills, as appropriate. This approach challenges the current practice of training parents in the desired intervention and instead, supports adapting the programs to the skills and beliefs of the family.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section G: Culture and Context

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

This book reports on an ethnographic study of the language of children in communities in North Carolina. The two communities, "Roadville," a white working class community of textile mill workers, and "Trackton," a black working class community of older farmers and younger textile mill workers, are only a few miles apart. Heath also investigates a third group of individuals and calls them townspeople. Townspeople are middle class individuals who live in "Trackton" and "Roadville." There are deep cultural differences among the groups of people in the communities. Heath describes how these cultural differences affect language and literacy patterns (or "ways with words"). This book serves as an excellent background for people working with children from different cultures.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

##Heath, S. B. (2001). What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and School. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *Linguistic Anthropology: A reader* (pp. 318-342). MA: Blackwell Publishers.

This article reports on an ethnographic study that examines the informal and formal teaching of literacy skills to preschoolers by families in three communities. A primary focus of this study is the role of “culture” in the teaching of literacy skills. The author provides a comprehensive account of how communities instill their children with the skills to “take away” meaning from books and how this relates to the child’s participation/success in the formal school setting.

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

This article, which provides both cultural and concrete information regarding literacy, should be read by teachers of pre-school and elementary grade children, parent educators, staff developers and curriculum developers as it provides insight into the development of all children.

Heath uses three communities in her study: Maintown, a middle class neighborhood. All Maintown families had a current teacher or a recent active teacher as the mother; Roadville, a white working class community where parents have historically worked for the textile mill, and; Trackton, a black working class community that has a tradition of working on the land but has more recently moved into jobs at the textile mill.

The study asks: Is reading development “natural”, i.e. cultural, or learned? How are the different “values” of community, as regards literacy, displayed in a child’s literacy development? Is the mainstream way the only way to literacy? What kinds of interactions take place between adults and preschoolers in the course of literacy based activities?

The author looks at both the cognitive aspects of reading and the affective aspects of literacy. Heath concretely states the areas of disparity between the children’s knowledge and the requirements of formal schooling and at what point in school students may begin to fail. It is implicit in her findings what schools can do to enhance all children’s learning in the school by building on what they have learned to value in their homes. This, in turn, lessens the disjunction between home and school.

**Cross-Reference:**

- Section B: Parenting Education
- Section D: Curriculum & Instruction
- Section G: Culture & Context
- Section I Professional Development

Kamber, M. & Tan, N. (2003). Reflecting Culture in Reflective Practice: How Literacy Professionals Improve Family Outcomes by Learning across Cultures. *Family Literacy Forum*, 2(2), 5-11.

This article provides a description of the development and implementation of the Sunset Park Even Start Literacy Partnership (located at PS 314). It grew out of evidence that the ESOL program was not adequately meeting the needs of its participants **AND** the participants’ concerns over not being able to help their children be successful in school. This article is most useful to family literacy practitioners.

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**The program:** Specifics of the actual program are not given in this article.

**Goals of the program:** “To develop a comprehensive program that guides families in a cross-cultural journey by engaging them in an authentic learning partnership with program staff who reflect their linguistic and cultural background.” (p.5)

**Participants:** The program works intensively with 40 immigrant families each year. Latino and Asian families are equally represented. Families live below the federal poverty level, have low literacy levels in their native countries, all have children under the age of 5 and 25 percent generally have children with special needs.

**Innovative Features of the Program:**

- Staff and Families in an Authentic Learning Partnership
- Staff as Cultural Interpreters
- Reflective Staff Development
- Reflective Practice

**Outcomes:**

*Staff:*

- learned to collaborate with other agencies in order to provide comprehensive services
- questioned their own cultural beliefs
- explored and implemented best practices
- reported a greater sense of confidence in working with parents

*Parents:*

- high retention
- educational progress
- improved employment status
- noticeable involvement at children’s school and education
- improvement on Even Start children’s attendance and standardized scores (100% of pre-K – grade 3 reading on grade level)
- reported being more participative, able and confident as parents
- better able to seek support in the community at large

**Cross-Reference:**

Section B: Parenting Education

Section C: Program Description & Models

Section G: Culture & Context

Klingner, J. K., & Edwards, P. A. (2006). Cultural considerations with Response to Intervention models. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 41(1), 108-117.

Klingner and Edwards provide an insightful look into cultural considerations for the development of Response to Intervention (RTI) models used in special education identification. Grounded in notions of culturally responsive literacy instruction, the authors provide a framework for school personnel to consider when designing and implementing RTI models sensitive to diverse populations. The authors stress that, in cases of culturally and linguistically diverse (C&LD) students, curriculum casualties must be ruled out and not misidentified as learning disabled. Furthermore, Klingner and

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Edwards stress the importance of finding out “what works with whom, by whom, and in what contexts” (p. 110). Unfortunately, due to deficits in the literature, the authors have little insight into what these best practices might be. However, they provide suggestions for future directions in research such as examining intervention efficacy between different ethnicities, classroom instruction practices, and school contexts. The authors propose a 4-tier RTI model for C&LD students encompassing (1) culturally responsive, quality instruction for all students; (2) intensive support, evidence-based intervention, and monitoring of progress for struggling students; (3) intensive support with referrals to a Child Study Team that uses a problem-solving approach to determine other methods to help the student; and (4) special education. Klingner and Edwards provide insight into important considerations when developing a RTI model for C&LD students. Their 4-tier model provides more opportunities for remediation than those offered by typical 3-tier models.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Culture and Context

##Koomson, W. (2005) From The Margins To The Center Stage: How An African American Woman, A Single Parent, Made Her Journey From Welfare To College. The 46th Adult Education Research Conference & The 13th Annual African Diaspora Adult Education Research Pre-Conference. Conference Proceedings: Athens, Georgia June 2, 2005.

This qualitative research employed a single participant case study design using family literacy adult basic education program to explore how an African American woman, a single parent, made her transition from welfare support to enroll in a local community college. This study’s participant, a 28-year-old mother of four, had lived in the “housing project” for many years; she had been in and out of prison; and was on welfare for eight years. What really stood out about this participant was her motivation and willingness to acquire basic skills. Her participation in the family literacy program enhanced her "bonding" social capital needed to be active in her children's schooling.

Policy makers, Even Start programs, and ABE students may find this research useful in several ways. This study suggests a comprehensive approach in dealing with work and education issues of welfare leavers. Thus, the major task of adult education is to help welfare leavers obtain and keep jobs, and to promote continuous education and skills enhancement as demonstrated by the Even Start family literacy model.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section I Professional Development

Section G: Culture & Context

## indicates that the article is a research study

##Leseman, P. P. M., & de Jong, P. F. (1998). Home Literacy: Opportunity, instruction, cooperation and social-emotional quality predicting early reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 33(3), 294-318.

Literacy development is thought to begin at home long before formal instruction in reading and writing begins at school. Literacy development begins at home through the introduction of books and participation in literacy-related activities between parents and their children. However, large differences exist among the home literacy environments provided by families, and consequently the preparation of children for school learning. In this paper, the authors examine three issues they consider relevant to family literacy.

The first issue examines the constructive processes responsible for the association between home literacy and developmental and educational outcomes. They question they try to answer is whether “mere exposure and modeling of certain behaviors are sufficient or whether co-constructive interaction leading to higher levels of knowledge is essential to obtain results.” Taking a social constructivist perspective, the authors side with research stating that several aspects of the home literacy environment are crucial for the development of children’s language development and literacy acquisition. These aspects include: opportunities to participate in literacy-related activities; the passing down or teaching to their children, by parents, the knowledge involved in these processes; and finally, in order to guarantee high involvement and good cooperation, affective/motivational aspects are also important. While other studies have observed these facets one at a time, the authors of this paper examine their separate and joint contribution to children’s language and literacy development.

The second issue addressed by this study is the contextuality of home literacy. Often, research [quantitative] has observed home literacy through a limited social and cultural context inclusive only of a family’s socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. In turn, this skews the insight into the functional and meaningful relationships of home literacy aspects with the larger features of daily life connected to socioeconomic conditions and minority status. In this paper, the authors try to lessen the gap that exists between ethnographic and quantitative studies.

The third issue addressed by the authors is the relationship between home literacy and language and literacy development. The current assumption is that home literacy is a causal link for language development. However, this assumption can no longer be considered valid because correlational techniques can equally point causal links to the reverse. Instead, the authors of this paper used a longitudinal design to strengthen the causal conclusion.

The results of this study indicate that home literacy does determine school literacy achievement even when effects for early language level and home language are controlled. The authors also find that the degree of opportunity for literacy interactions does affect literacy learning, however, literacy and language development are not affected by the social-emotional quality of the interaction. Finally, the authors caution

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that a too narrow focus promoting children's literacy may be insufficient in bringing about lasting change. Instead, attention should be paid to the broader sociocultural context of the home literacy environment, in particular when working with ethnic minority groups and special attention should be given to enhancing literacy use for pleasure.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture/Context

Section B: Parenting Education

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section J: Parent Involvement

Lopez, G. R., Scribner, J. D., & Mahitivanichcha, K. (2001). Redefining parental involvement: Lessons for high-performing migrant-impacted schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(2), 253-288.

Migrant families are an academically vulnerable group. Being faced with economic, health, and work-related difficulties, many students of migrant families have low academic achievement and high drop-out rates. Involving parents from migrant families in schools is a challenge. This qualitative study reflects a five month period of research in four schools that were considered to have been effective in the involvement of migrant parents. The schools that were successful in parent involvement focused on meeting parental needs above all other involvement considerations and held themselves accountable in meeting those multiple needs on a daily and ongoing basis.

Suggestions for success:

- Create an awareness of migrant family needs in general;
- Find out specific family needs through home visits;
- Open continuous interactions with migrant families to keep aware of shifting needs;
- All administration and staff members must make a commitment to meet migrant family needs;
- Hire individuals with specific leadership qualities;
- Place priorities on families;
- Make year-round commitments to families;
- Interact with families on a regular basis;
- Invest time, effort, and finances in families;
- Move beyond needs to empower parents to get involved;
- Find strategic methods to encourage parental involvement;
- Provide a welcoming environment;
- Recognize parents for taking the initiative to get involved;
- Affirm parents and families;
- Provide educational services to address migrant family needs;

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

- Use parent education to increase awareness of parental rights and responsibilities in the educational process;
- Aim parent education at self-improvement;
- Mobilize social service resources;
- Collaborate within the school system;
- Collaborate with outside agencies

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Miller, S. F. (2005) Bringing together home and school. *Family Literacy Forum*, 4 (1), 3-11.

Influenced by years of work in schools, Finn Miller addresses the issue of inequity in parents' ability to advocate successfully for their children. In particular, she looks at the question of what role adult and family literacy educators could play in opening up two-way conversations between schools and families about these "great contrasts" in order to address the community's needs more effectively.

As a means of contextualizing the article, Finn Miller briefly considers previous research on parent/family involvement. She includes several studies that demonstrate the positive academic outcomes made possible by parent/family involvement. Others stress the effect of culture and family background on the relationship parents have with the school. She looks more closely at Even Start programs through one qualitative and two quantitative studies that consider family characteristics that predict participation, and success, in these programs.

Finn Miller notes that there are several barriers that may prevent family involvement, including school environment, culture and language, educational level of parents, psychological issues, and logistical issues. She suggests that awareness of these issues and attempting to adapt the school to fit parents' needs better may increase advocacy. Drawing on the work of several researchers and theorists, Finn Miller stresses the importance of the teacher's role in facilitating family involvement. She also recognizes the need for teacher training in how to most effectively take on this responsibility. Her research and suggestions are beneficial for both teachers and staff developers.

**Cross-reference:**

Section G: Culture/Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

Morrow, L. M. (Ed). (1995). *Family Literacy: Connections in Schools and Communities*. New Brunswick, NJ: International Reading Association, Inc.

This book was referred by a number of participants coming to the meeting, so it is included in this collection. For your reference, the chapters included in the book and their authors are listed here.

Part One: Perspectives on Family Literacy

1. Family Literacy: New Perspectives, New Practices—Lesley Mandel Morrow
2. Which Way for Family Literacy: Intervention or Empowerment?—Elsa Roberts Auerbach

Part Two: Family Literacy Practices –

1. Programs in Schools
  - a. Implementing an Intergenerational Literacy Project: Lessons Learned—Jeanne R. Paratore
  - b. Combining Parents’ and Teachers’ Thoughts About Storybook Reading at Home and School—Patricia A. Edwards
  - c. The Family Writing and Reading Appreciation Program—Lesley Mandel Morrow with Jody Scoblionko and Dixie Shafer
  - d. Have Your Heard Any Good Books Lately?: Encouraging Shared Reading at Home with Books and Audiotapes—Patricia S. Koskinen, Irene H. Blum, Nancy Tennant, E. Marie Parker, Mary W. Straub, and Christine Curry
  - e. Enhancing Adolescent Mothers’ Guided Participation in Literacy—Susan B. Neuman
  - f. Let the Circle Be Unbroken: Teens as Literacy Learners and Teachers—Billie J. Enz and Lyndon W. Searfoss
2. Organization-Sponsored Programs
  - a. Reading Is Fundamental Motivational Approach to Family Literacy—Ruth Graves and James H. Wendorf
  - b. Helping First Graders Get a Running Start in Reading—Linda B. Gambrell, Janice F. Almasi, Qing Xie, and Victoria J. Heland
  - c. The Even Start Family Literacy Program—Patricia A. McKee and Nancy Rhett
  - d. A Comprehensive Approach to Family-Focused Services—Meta W. Potts and Susan Paull
  - e. Parents and Children Reading Together: The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy— Benita Somerfield
  - f. Linking Families, Childcare, and Literacy: *Sesame Street* Preschool Educational Program— Iris Sroka, Jeanette Betancourt, and Myra Ozaeta
  - g. The Family Literacy Alliance: Using Public Television, Book-Based Series to Motivate At-Risk Populations—Twila C. Liggett

## Part Three: Developing New Practice

### 1. Research and Perspectives

- a. Family Literacy Practice in the United Kingdom—An International Perspective—Colin Harrison
- b. Opportunities for Literacy Learning in the Homes of Urban Preschoolers—Linda Baker, Robert Serpell, and Susan Sonnenschein
- c. Children Practicing Reading at Home: What We Know About How Parents Help—Diane H. Tracey
- d. Shared Lives and Shared Stories: Exploring Critical Literacy Connections Among Family Members—Daniel Madigan
- e. Representations of Literacy: Parents' Images in Two Cultural Communities—Vivian Gadsen

### **Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Mulhern, M., Rodriguez-Brown, F. V., & Shanahan, T. (1994). Family literacy for language minority families: Issues for program implementation. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

This article reviews considerations in designing and implementing family literacy programs for limited English-speaking populations. This article examines the strategies and practices of Project Family Literacy: Aprendiendo/Learning, Mejorando/Bettering, Educando/Educating (FLAME), a federally funded program for Latino/a families that serves six elementary schools in Chicago, IL. Approximately 15-20 families are served per school. Project FLAME is designed with two integrated components of Parents as Teachers and Parents as Learners.

In an introductory section, the authors review the family's role in children's learning, barriers to family involvement in education, and family literacy programs as a means of linking homes and schools. The authors then describe Project FLAME. In the main discussion of program development and implementation, the authors examine the following considerations in the form of questions: (1) taking the appropriate first steps; (2) determining the location and scheduling of classes; (3) curriculum design; (4) language of instruction; (5) selecting instructional materials; (6) staffing; (7) maintenance of attendance and involvement; and (8) program evaluation. Embedded in this section are illustrations of specific practices and strategies of Project FLAME. Appendices provide the resources of a Project FLAME model lesson plan and a list of resource organizations.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section B: Parenting Education  
Section C: Program Descriptions and Models  
Section G: Culture and Context  
Section J: Parent Involvement

Muro, A. (1997). *Taking the “L.E.A.D.” in family literacy: Literacy education action for the deaf*. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College, Literacy Center.

This report gives a description of the “L.E.A.D.” program in El Paso, TX. This program was designed to help economically disadvantaged families of deaf parents and hearing children. The goal of the program was to increase and improve communication within and for these families to enhance the future social interactions of the children and to strengthen the reading/writing and oral/sign skills of family members.

The barriers to access of educational, health, cultural and social services are increased dramatically when poverty and deafness are coupled together. The deaf parents in this study were delayed in their own linguistic development because they were not exposed to a visual sign language until much later in life (if at all) and this perpetuated itself in their children’s linguistic development as well. The Deaf population in El Paso presented unique characteristics because of its proximity with the U.S./Mexican border. Three sign language systems (American Sign Language, Mexican Sign Language, Signed English) exist in this geographic area. Limited research and lack of services provided for this population result in little current knowledge for this population.

This report outlines the steps taken by the “L.E.A.D.” program in El Paso to implement their family literacy program for the Deaf. The program incorporates the four components (Adult Education, Parenting, Education, Parent and Child Interactive Literacy Time, Early Childhood Education) of the family literacy model and describes in detail the successes and tribulations experienced with each component. The author shares the program’s recruitment strategies, curriculum development strategies and focus, and suggests that home visits are an integral part of parenting education. In fact, the most effective parenting education occurred during home visits. The author also shares insights learned throughout the 23 months that the report takes place.

Finally, this report includes a letter and a brochure developed by the “L.E.A.D.” program to help children of deaf parents communicate with their teachers and school administrators about the barriers faced by them and their families within the school system/setting. In closing, the author comments that the “L.E.A.D.” program was the first and only one of its kind. The author states that there is a need for additional research to be done to serve special populations family literacy programs.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

## Section G: Culture and Context

Muro, A. (1997). *Taking the “L.E.A.D.” in family literacy: Literacy education action for the deaf*. El Paso, TX: El Paso Community College, Literacy Center.

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### **Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section G: Culture and Context

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

National Center for ESL Literacy in Education. (2002). *Family Literacy and Adult English Language Learners*. Washington, DC: Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED461304)

Family literacy programs provide educational opportunities for both adults and children. These programs have become a new trend because of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The Even Start Family Literacy Program falls under Title I legislation and the program is responsible for adult education, parenting education, early childhood education, and interactive parent and child activities. The United States is experiencing an increase in immigrants and consequently, family literacy programs need to provide opportunities for adult English language learners. The National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) suggests that in order to serve these learners and have them demonstrate visible progress, family literacy programs should provide ample instructional time. The programs also need to incorporate children of all ages because older children need to understand the social and formal structures of the new country. Instruction should build upon prior, as well as new, language experiences, especially in speaking English. Respect for the culture is also important to the program and participant learning. Instructors should learn about and include traditions of participants' cultures. Learning should also be built on the participants' strengths.

The NCLE suggests that the inclusion of these practices will increase the literacy development of the second-language participants. This article is important for practitioners in the family literacy field, especially those with second-language learners. This paper offers suggestions for improving practice.

### **Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

##Neuman, S. B., Hagedorn, T., Celano, D., & Daly, P. (1995). Toward a collaborative approach to parent involvement in early education: A study of teenage mothers in an African-American community. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 801–827.

This qualitative study explored beliefs about children's literacy and learning held by 19 African-American teenage mothers participating in a family literacy program. Even within this relatively similar group, parents held a variety of beliefs on their role and their child's role in learning and literacy. Further, parents varied on general beliefs about learning and literacy and schooling. Although parents varied in their perspectives, the authors also noted that mothers held shared goals demonstrated through four quotations: (1)"You gotta teach them something;" (2)"I want my child to be safe;" (3)"A good teacher is keeping that respect;" and (4)"What I'm doing, I'm doing for her." The authors stress that practitioners and researchers need to be careful not to view ethnic or cultural

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## indicates that the article is a research study

groups as homogenous in their beliefs. Through developing collaborative relationships between parents and staff that acknowledge the importance of parent beliefs, partnerships can be established to promote children's success in school.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy

Section B: Parenting Education

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Olivos, E. M. (2006). *The power of parents: A critical perspective of bicultural parent involvement in public schools*. NY: Peter Lang.

Olivos' book offers a clear, comprehensible look at some of the contradictions surrounding parent involvement in public schools. He proposes an alternate view of parents who are often labeled as uninvolved, one that highlights parents' exclusion from schools and schools' unwillingness to recognize parents' political voice, advocacy for their children, and forms of participation that differ from the norm that schools request. His study documents how a small group of Latino parents formed a group that progressed from having no voice in the school to one that was able to shape policy and practices at the school. Olivos provides different models of parent involvement and suggestions for increasing meaningful dialogue and participation between bicultural parents and schools. His argument is based in a structural social analysis (e.g., disparities between different ethnic and socio-economic groups), noting that inequalities in society are reproduced within the school setting. Olivos supports his argument through concrete examples and some literature. His book is not laden with theorists or references, which can be construed as strength or a weakness, dependent on what the reader is seeking.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Orellana, M. J. (1996). ¡Aquí Vivimos! Voices of Central American and Mexican participants in a family literacy project. *Journal of Educational Issue of Language Minority Students*, 16. Retrieved August 14, 2003, from <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/miscpubs/jeilms/vol16/jeilms1608.htm>

This article describes a family literacy project designed to capture the stories of sixteen immigrant families in the wake of the 1992 Los Angeles Riots. The project was not designed to teach literacy, but to promote authentic community literacy by providing resources and personnel over a six-week period to compile the stories of Spanish speaking families from the Haven Street Elementary School. This project was also

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**## indicates that the article is a research study**

designed in response to the felt needs of the community that lacked low cost, structured, safe, enrichment activities for children.

The author describes the general framework of the project session. The opening of each session was for the entire group and reviewed homework and offered opportunities for sharing, which lead into the introduction of the day's writing theme. After a brief explanation and brainstorming session and/or short discussion to stimulate ideas, groups of family units would start writing a piece for the collective anthology. Teachers facilitated this process. During the last hour, the children and adults were separated. The children participated in age appropriate activities and recreation, while the adults held reflective discussions. The sessions ended with a short evaluation period used for planning the next week's themes. Variations within this general framework were also described to promote techniques that would encourage the active involvement of all participants.

The article reviewed a selection of quotes from the participants and the anthology to describe the major themes that developed from the project. The themes include thoughts on myths and realities about life in the United States, cultural adjustments, work experiences, living situations, and hopes for the future.

The project culminated in a book that was distributed to community libraries, organizations and the school. A teacher's guide was developed for the book for its use in teacher pre-service on community culture in the Los Angeles area. In addition, proceeds from the book were used to support a Parents' Center at Haven Street Elementary School that offers ESL and other adult classes.

### **Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section G: Culture and Context

##Orellana, M. F., Monkman, K., & MacGillivray, L. (2002). *Parents and Teachers Talk about Literacy Success*. (No. 3-020). Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.

The authors propose that spatial and temporal dimensions should be considered in understanding the relationship between different social contexts and perceptions about literacy and success. Data is drawn from two different studies; sources include: focus groups with parents and teachers, observations, formal and informal interviews, field notes, etc. The researchers find that Mexican and Central American parents have a broader definition of success (i.e. not only linked to academics) and an optimistic outlook for their child's success, yet they state that the children control the direction of their lives. The teachers, while they do not operate from a "deficit" perspective, tend to focus on social obstacles and lack of opportunities facing their students; the teachers feel powerless to change the structures of society and rely on the families to make a

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## indicates that the article is a research study

difference in their students' lives. The authors suggest ways to build a shared understanding between parents and teachers in order to better support children's academic and general success.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section B: Parenting Education

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Osterling, J. P., Violand-Sanchez, E., & von Vacano, M. (1999). Latino families learning together. *Educational Leadership*, 57(2), 64-68.

The authors of this article describe how two community-based programs are addressing the needs of a community whose schools have 43 percent of their students who have languages other than English as their primary language and more than 70 percent of these are Spanish speakers. To assist non-English speaking parents who felt disempowered when their language knowledge was not valued and disconnected from their children and the schools, the local schools have worked with community organizations to support initiatives to overcome these challenges.

The school system has “publicly acknowledged that proficiency in more than one language is a social asset and an economic asset and that parent of culturally and linguistically diverse students are valuable coeducators” (65). The school system also established first-language-instruction pilot programs and made resources available for community-based educational programs.

Two programs described in the article are Empowering Families Through Literacy and Escuela Bolivia and are based in Arlington, Virginia. Program goals for the children include:

- Improve reading, writing, and mathematics skills;
- Teach language, culture, and traditions of parents and grandparents;
- Provide a caring community that cultural values; and
- Establish collaboration between parents, community organizations, and schools.

Both of the programs provide instruction for parents in reading, writing, and mathematics while children receive tutoring and enrichment activities in Spanish. Both programs are conducted on Saturdays because of employment conflicts with many of the parents. Programs include activities for students through the high school level. Community partners include the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Mexican Embassy, the Bolivian Embassy, George Mason University, parents, and the Arlington Public School System.

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Padak, N. & Rasinski, T. (Eds.). (1995). *Family Literacy. The Reading Teacher*, 48(7).

This issue is dedicated to the topic of family literacy. An introduction is followed by seven articles regarding various aspects of family literacy. The topics addressed in the articles include the importance of the family in literacy development; the Parents as Partners Reading Program; school outreach programs; the varying use of print in families; creating cultural connections between parents and their children; project FLAME and family literacy programs for Latino families; and the use of family portfolios to evaluate family literacy programs.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section G: Culture and Context

Paratore, J. & Harrison, C. (1995). A themed issue on family literacy. *Journal of Reading*, 38, 516–517.

This themed issue is a collection of articles that present broad and diverse views of family literacy. The authors challenge educators to reexamine the deficit hypothesis, which they believe derives from a lack of congruence between home and school literacy experiences and a lack of understanding about the practice of literacy in linguistically and culturally diverse families. The authors' goal is for readers to reformulate their ideas about family literacy programs and practices in order to promote home/school partnerships.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

## Paratore, J. R. (2001). *Opening doors, opening opportunities; Family literacy in an urban community*. Needham Heights, Allyn & Bacon

The author presents the process of creating, tracking and evaluating a particular family literacy program, the Intergenerational Literacy Project (ILP). She addresses practical topics such as partnership with the surrounding community, target participants, recruitment, curriculum and evaluation. Detailed accounts of materials, class structure, intake and exit questionnaire/interviews, student work and evaluation methods are

## indicates that the article is a research study

provided in this book. Additionally, this text provides an excellent overview of current family literacy research and practices in an accessible manner.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Description and Models

Section F: Assessment & Evaluation of Family Literacy Programs

Section D: Curriculum & Instruction

Section B: Parenting Education

Section G: Culture & Context

##Park, E. (2001, Winter). The relationship between parenting practices and academic achievement: A cross-ethnic comparison. *UC LMRI Newsletter*, 10, 1.

This dissertation study examined the effects of parenting practices on high school students' academic achievement. Comparisons were made including four ethnic groups: Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites with a special emphasis on Korean-American families.

The findings of this dissertation include:

- A. The processes by which parenting practices affect grades vary among ethnic groups, although the effects are minimal compared to those of previous achievement.
- B. Among White, Asian, and Hispanic families, parents and children together making decisions about children's social activities appeared to contribute to their children's high achievement more than parental involvement.
- C. Parental home involvement had a positive indirect effect on academic achievement among White, Black, and Asian families citing student aspirations and enrollment in advanced programs.
- D. Among ethnic minority groups, parental involvement had a negative direct effect on academic achievement.
- E. Results suggest that unless parental involvement at home induces students' positive characteristics, it in itself does not necessarily support adolescents' academic achievement.
- F. Data suggest that Korean American parents of high achieving students engage in serious discussions regarding academic matters and provide appropriate support.
- G. The major parental involvement behaviors among parents of low-achieving students tend to be frequent nagging.
- H. Parental school involvement had direct and indirect effects on achievement. The direct effect was found among Blacks and Hispanics. The positive effects included aspirations and course enrollment. Parental school involvement by Korean American parents was relatively low regardless of their children's academic achievement.

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Summary:

The results of this study suggest that parenting processes affect high school students' aspirations, course enrollment, and disciplinary problems. Parenting practices do not overrule the effects of previous achievement. There are both inter-ethnic group and intra- ethnic group (Korean Americans) differences in terms of parenting practices and their children's achievement.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy

Section B: Parenting Education

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

##Perry, N. J., Kay, S. M., & Brown, A. (2008). Continuity and change in home literacy practices of Hispanic families with preschool children. *Early Child Development and Care, 178*, 99-113.

This qualitative study examined how Latino immigrant families incorporate school-based interactive literacy activities (ILAs) into their existing home literacy practices. Few studies have examined home literacy experiences among diverse populations; this study fills this gap in the literature by focusing on Hispanic families of preschool children. The study investigated how Hispanic parents view school-designed ILAs, the types of instructional strategies they most often use during school-designed home literacy interactions, how their beliefs and histories of literacy learning influence the ways that they practice ILAs in their home, the ways in which other family members participate in school-designed ILAs intended for preschool children, and how Hispanic parents support their children's bilingual language development during home literacy activities. Participants were 13 Spanish-speaking families enrolled in an Even Start Family Literacy program. Results indicated that Hispanic parents utilized school-based ILAs when they believed it would help their children succeed academically. Parents also tailored ILAs to reflect their cultural beliefs. For example, siblings were often involved in ILAs along with parents. Overall, Hispanic parents tended to emphasize pleasure and interactivity in ILAs, utilize scaffolding strategies, impart moral messages to children during ILAs, and encourage bilingual literacy opportunities. The researchers provide important preliminary and descriptive information regarding the home literacy practices of a small group of Hispanic families.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Interactive Literacy

Section B: Parenting Education

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

## indicates that the article is a research study

Pianta, R. (2004). Relationships among children and adults and family literacy. In B. H. Wasik, (Ed.) *Handbook on Family Literacy* (pp. 175-192). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.

Pianta explains the developmental systems theory and then employs it in considering adult-child relationships within the context of children's literacy development. Systems link and interact, creating a multi-system world with multi-system domains. Conceptual tools must be acquired in order to respond to this complexity, and literacy is crucial for decoding.

Adult-child relationships for the very young are characterized by themes of "regulation and modulation of physiological arousal and joint attention". Attachment processes are crucial for protecting immature humans, leading to a *secure-base* function where the adult is established as the conduit between information and the child. If the child feels safe and secure both physically and emotionally, then attachment relationships can predict success with regards to the development of emergent literacy.

Motivation/communication and instruction/skill acquisition are the two interactions involving adult-child relationships during children's literacy development and are interdependent. Relationship systems are comprised of multiple components, both biological and reflecting the quality of the relationship. Systems require feedback and are sensitive to the environment and other external conditions. All the components form a system. The implication for practitioners within family literacy programs, highlighted in the summary, involves focusing on the goal of change which the parent identifies while simultaneously providing a secure base for the child to explore literacy.

**Cross-Reference:**

- Section A: Interactive Literacy
- Section B: Parenting Education
- Section C: Curriculum and Instruction
- Section G: Culture and Context

##Pong, S.-l., Hao, L., & Gardner, E. (2005). The roles of parenting styles and social capital in the school performance of immigrant Asian and Hispanic adolescents. *Social Science Quarterly*, 86(4), 928-950.

Authors Suet-ling Pong (Penn State University), Lingxin Hao (John Hopkins University) and Erica Gardner (Washington State Office of Financial Management) conducted an empirical study to discern the role that parenting styles and social capital plays in the school success of their children. This research focuses on white, Hispanic and Asian families. The researchers analyzed data from the Adolescent Health Survey. Main variables measured were: GPA, generational ethnicity, three types of family decision making, parent responsiveness, dinner with parents, social talk, school talk, PTA

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participation, educational expectation, trust in child and intergenerational closure. In general they conclude that family influences as a stand alone indicator can not explain “ethnicity-generation” differences of grade point averages for Hispanic and Asian students; parenting practice differences are not reflected in student GPA. The authors describe their findings in depth. The findings confirm aspects of the immigrant optimism theory. The researchers conclude by defining areas for further investigation regarding school success, parenting practices and immigrant optimism.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture & Context

Powell, D., Okagaki, L. & Bojczyk, K. (2004). Evaluating parent participation and outcomes in family literacy programs: cultural diversity considerations. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of family literacy* (pp. 551-566). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

This chapter discusses the manifestation of personal and cultural beliefs in parenting behaviors and how these beliefs impact parents’ views of family literacy programming and evaluation measures. In the first part of this chapter, the authors review research and provide culture specific examples of the interplay of culture, literacy and childrearing. Additionally, the authors examine parental goals and expectations, approaches to literacy, and family roles and relationships. The second part of the chapter outlines suggestions for evaluating parent participation and program outcomes. The authors discuss ways in which social class and cultural variations in beliefs and parenting practices are affecting current areas of evaluation. Included are types of data and investigations that might better reflect the parent group, parent interactions with the program, quality of program, suitability of program and the results of the program. Considerations for developing a family literacy program and appropriate evaluation measures are provided. The authors give concrete and relevant observations and suggestions. This chapter offers a fascinating look at the diversity of cultures and expectations found in family literacy programs. This chapter should be read by teachers, evaluators, program developers and policy makers.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture & Context

Section B: Parenting Education

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy Programs

Puchner, L. D. (1997). Family literacy in cultural contexts: Lessons from two case studies. (*Technical Report TR97-01*). Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Adult Literacy. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 412 376).

Three sets of assumptions usually generalize across numerous models of family literacy programs in the U.S. First, these programs assume that literacy flows in a unidirectional path from parent (usually mother) to child. Second, programs assume certain literacy interactions occur in the home. For example, children develop strong literacy skills in the home because parents provide children with opportunities to engage in school-like activities. Third, these programs assume that becoming literate affects families positively. However, Puchner argues that the ability to become literate in a language can significantly impact, change, and may even breakdown existing community and family structures. In two case studies—one of Southeast Asian immigrants in the U.S. and another of four villages of southern Mali—the author provides empirical evidence to question the appropriateness of these assumptions. Puchner concludes with recommendations for flexible approaches to family literacy, the understanding of positive and negative effects of literacy programs on communities, and the need to integrate and implement evaluation into family literacy program components.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Purcell-Gates, V. (1993). Issues for family literacy research: Voices from the trenches. *Language Arts*, 70, 670–677.

This article explores issues researchers of family literacy must address to achieve valid study results. These issues include better understanding the relationship among poverty, families with low literacy levels, and emergent literacy; finding effective methods for understanding the ways in which families contribute to future school success; attempting to gain more congruence between the results of studies and the perceptions and experiences of the families and communities being studied; and refraining from inferring causal relationships from correlations. Purcell-Gates illustrates these issues with an example of an ongoing family literacy study.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Purcell-Gates, V. (1995). *Other people's words: The cycle of low literacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

The author presents a case-study of a family dealing with the consequences of low literacy. A young urban Appalachian mother concerned with her inability to read to her

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

second grade child joins a university-based literacy center designed for children. Purcell-Gates follows this family for a 2-year period as mother and son learn to read and write together. She describes the progress the pair makes toward literacy and their eventual success in the context of social, cultural, and cognitive factors, all of which must be taken into account when understanding the learning process of individuals.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

##Purcell-Gates, V. (1996). Stories, coupons, and the *TV Guide*: Relationships between home literacy experiences and emergent literacy knowledge. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31, 406-428.

“The purpose of this study was to document and describe the ways in which print is used in the homes of low-income U.S. families and to explore the relationships between these uses of print and the emergent literacy knowledge held by the young children in these homes” (p. 406). In this study, the author observed 24 children, ages 4-6, in low-socioeconomic-status homes over an aggregated week time period. The study looked at social domains mediated by print, complexity of text, relationships between types and frequencies literacy events, and emergent literacy knowledge held by the children.

“Results revealed a description of literacy practice and literacy learning which included great variability in type and frequency of literacy events across the 20 homes. The results also suggested the following patterns of relationships between home literacy practices and emergent literacy knowledge: (a) children’s understanding of the intentionality of print is related to both the frequency of literacy events in the home and to their personal focus and involvement in the literacy events, (b) children knew more about the alphabetic principle and the specific forms of written language more in homes where literate members read and wrote at more complex levels of discourse for their own entertainment and leisure, and (c) parents’ intentional involvement in their children’s literacy learning was higher when their children began formal literacy instruction in school” (p.407).

Further comments:

Results of this study may be skewed due to the fact that participants, although in a low-SES group, were all interested and involved in both their children’s and their own literacy progress. The degree of reading and writing done in various homes differed greatly. “Some families in this study, in fact, lived busy and satisfying lives with very little mediation by print” (p.425). The study also points out that although many of the homes involved environmental print in their literacy activities, “children are better served by observing and experiencing the reading and writing of connected discourse decontextualized from physical (such as signs and containers) and pictorial contexts” (p.426).

## indicates that the article is a research study

**Cross-Reference:**

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Culture and Context

Purcell-Gates, V (2004). Family Literacy as the site for emerging knowledge of written language. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.) *Handbook on Family Literacy* (pp. 101-116). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

The author states that family literacy should be a “descriptive construct” and not one that is prescriptive. In this article she focuses on emergent reading and writing within this context. Her intent is to counter the claims that middle class children achieve school literacy over those children from a poverty base due to oral language development. She begins by describing the language that children employ when they pretend to read - a language which does not resemble their pattern of speech – a written language that they produce as they read aloud. She argues that emergent language knowledge reflects written language and not oral language.

Language is influenced by the social context; for example, court language is different from church language. What we write does not always resemble how we speak. Purcell-Gates designed research to focus on how children learn a *linguistic register* specific to a social context. She collected oral narratives and pretend reading responses (“sound like a book”) in order to compare oral with “written”; the language for each was different in vocabulary, syntax, and degree of decontextualization. Those children who had been read to aloud were not linked by any common SES indicators. She found that two years of schooling brought all children exposure to hearing reading aloud; there were no differences in the scores when *written register* was scrutinized.

She argues that language can develop from written-to-oral and that it is exposure to print and use of print that allows children’s emergent literacy to develop and that emphasis on oral language development is leading us astray. The implication for family literacy is that all children need to be exposed to written language in any form – shopping lists, coupons, religious texts, etc. Family literacy should maintain a focus on supporting written language development through those environments, experiences and activities. This article is particularly useful for practitioners, program planners and researchers.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Interactive Literacy

Section B: Parenting Education

Section C: Program Development and Models

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Culture and Context

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

Quintero, E., & Velarde, M. C. (1990). Intergenerational literacy: A developmental, bilingual approach. *Young Children*, 45, 10–15.

Quintero and Velarde describe the development and implementation of El Paso Community College's model Intergenerational Literacy Project. The project uses a developmental approach to teach Spanish-speaking parents and their children together to improve their literacy skills in both Spanish and English. In addition to a general overall description of the project, the article discusses important assumptions regarding literacy development upon which the program is based as well as key curriculum components. A brief explanation of the program's effect on parents and children concludes the article.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Culture and Context

Robertson, A. S. (1998, April). *What are the issues that confront high-risk families: How can organizations such as ERIC and the National Parent Information Network help?* Paper presented at the Parenthood in America Conference, Madison, WI.

Communities are woven together by stories that resonate with its history and knowledge. In this paper, the author begins with *A Home Visitors' Story*. It is the true story (names were changed to protect the identity of participants) of Margaret, a home visitor, in a newly funded family literacy program designed to serve “high-risk” families. At the center Margaret meets Carol, a grandmother living in a housing project taking care of her ex-boyfriend’s two pre-school children. Carol’s household will soon add her own daughter, her daughter’s two children, soon to arrive new baby, and husband. Margaret finds herself trapped between her moral convictions and her professional responsibilities. Her heart tells her to help Carol, but her professional duties require that she report Carol to the housing authorities and children’s services. The latter decision would result in Margaret breaking Carol’s trust and if neighbors found out, this would undermine any new programs at the family center as well. The former decision would mean that Margaret could also lose the trust she had from people at the housing authority and children’s services. Finally, Margaret began a collaborative process with other agencies to find ways to help Carol and her family.

Stories such as Margaret serve two purposes. First, these stories teach us about hearing and respecting the parents and the professionals involved directly with needy families. Second, these stories are important because they discuss the many critical problems faced by neighborhood programs supporting and educating high-risk families. Examples of these problems include: ethical considerations for personnel; inflexible or ineffective public systems in education, housing, welfare, and justice; damaged community social

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

networks; limited employment opportunities within communities; differing viewpoints among family support professionals; poor communication among individuals, programs, and agencies.

Programs are continuously being pushed beyond their limits and so the question posed is: How can national organizations such as ERIC and NPIN help? The response is to collaborate with a wide variety of individuals, agencies, and organizations. With the creation of *Parents ask ERIC* (ERIC website), ERIC hopes to increase access to relevant, high-quality research and resources when needed, and in turn allow professionals like Margaret, and parents like Carol, to “become more competent in their roles and feel more capable when reaching out to help others within their community” (pg. 7).

### **Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section E: Collaboration Within Programs and Among Social Service Agencies

Section J: Parent Involvement

Rodriguez-Brown, F. (2004). Project FLAME: a parent support family literacy model. In B. Wasik (Ed.) *Handbook on Family Literacy: Research and Services*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum. 213 – 229

A program designed specifically to enhance literacy learning for a community of mostly Hispanic immigrants is described within this chapter. Home literacy cultures, communication styles, interaction and views regarding literacy are examined within the context of this program. Focus on the concept of *familia*, already central to Hispanic culture, provides a convenient vehicle for applying a family literacy model to this community. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the program was piloted in the Chicago public schools before disseminating nationally.

The program objectives are 1) to increase parents’ ability to provide literacy opportunities for their children, 2) to increase parents’ ability to act as positive literacy models for their children, 3) to improve parents’ literacy skills so they can more efficiently initiate, encourage, support and extend their children’s learning and 4) to increase and improve the relationship between the parents and the schools.

The instructional program included activities to train participants through a routine of semimonthly workshops. The core program was *Parents as Teachers*, which was conducted in the language most familiar to the participants. Twice a week, participants were involved in *Parents as Learners* – two hour sessions focusing on basic skills. *Parents as Leaders* evolved into a summer institute where outside speakers were brought in to address questions or concerns of the participants. *The Trainers of Trainers* program allowed graduate parents to develop leadership for literacy activities in the community. *Parents as Volunteers* enlisted those program participants as aides for classroom teachers who prepare the parents for their roles before they entered the classroom.

The conclusion highlights that increased self efficacy and social networking into the community are major outcomes from this program, which then positively impact success with parenting and community roles. Specifically, “Validation of knowledge is particularly relevant to new immigrant parents who find themselves isolated” (227). The chapter is of interest to those planning programming or curriculum, or to those planning family literacy within specific cultural contexts.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section B: Parenting Education  
Section C: Program Development and Models  
Section F: Assessment and Evaluation  
Section G: Culture and Context  
Section J: Parent Involvement

Schwartz, W. (1999). *Family Literacy Strategies to Support Children’s Learning*. (ERIC Digest Number 144)

In this digest, Schwartz addresses the parenting component of family literacy programs. The author makes suggestions of various principles that can contribute to successful programs. She initiates her recommendations by stating that although most participants are culturally and ethnically diverse, speak different languages, and are frequently of lower income, “families have a wide range of experienced-based knowledge that can inform program development.” Schwartz emphasizes the importance of programs reflecting and incorporating participants’ naturally-occurring literacy activities. This enables participants’ familiarity with curriculum and encourages self-confidence and empowerment.

Schwartz relates that literacy activities can be fostered on-site, in home visits, and within the community. Curriculum should “respond to participants’ needs and interests, and [be] culturally and linguistically relevant.” Suggested topic could include:

- Attitudes about child-rearing, including behavior management.
- Strategies for problem-solving, with particular attention to parent-child concerns.
- Strategies for transferring learning to various situations at home and at work.
- Household management, including integrating employment into parents’ schedules.
- Family relationships, including abuse.
- Ways to learn about one’s own child.

The author states that “all parent-child activities have a literacy component, and parents are encouraged to see routine family interactions as opportunities for literacy experiences. They are also instructed in specific ways to reinforce their children’s learning in the early childhood component.” Schwartz states that the key activity should be parent-child

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

reading. Other activities should include oral skills development, opportunities to interact with other people, and visiting cultural centers in the community. Schwartz concludes by emphasizing the need for staff that can convey respect, build self-confidence and self-respect, and be flexible in using learner-centered teaching strategies. The author states that programs should collaborate with local service agencies and incorporate participants' perspectives when evaluating programs.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context Section B: Parenting Education

##Silvén, M., Pekka, N., & Voeten, M. J. M. (2002). Do maternal interaction and early language predict phonological awareness in 3- to 4-year-olds? *Cognitive Development, 17*, 1133-1155.

This paper presents findings from a longitudinal study that looked at how phonological awareness is affected by mother-child interaction and the child's language development. Sixty-six two-parent families from Finland were selected to participate in this study. On average the mothers had 14 years of education and the fathers had 13 years of education. With some rare exceptions, the primary caregivers of the children in this study during the first 10 months of life were their mothers.

Results indicate that phonological awareness is present even at the earliest stages of vocabulary learning. Differences in both the mother's sensitivity during joint play episodes and the children's vocabulary in infancy were indicators of later language acquisition and seemed to especially contribute to the progress of phonological awareness years before formal reading instruction began. The findings also show that mothers' educational level is directly correlated the their interactional sensitivity and the father's educational level is related to the children's skill in combining lexical items at two years of age, but neither parent's educational level was found to be related to phonological awareness.

Frequent high quality play interactions provided by mothers during the first years of life result in children having more advanced language skills as measured from early to middle childhood. It was also concluded that early language acquisition is a two-way process driven mutually by parent and child. This finding supports the view that, over time, language development is a child-driven process. Citing Vygotsky, the authors of this paper state that the parents' behaviors is what prompts the early phases of sound pattern awareness in their children and that children's knowledge about words is what determines the growth of the sound pattern awareness.

Finally, the authors cite that their sample is rather small to justify definite conclusions and that replications of their findings are needed to confirm that conscious access to speech emerges from the repeated process of enriching knowledge.

## indicates that the article is a research study

**Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy

Section G: Culture/Context

Snow, C. & Tabors, P. (1996, January). *Intergenerational transfer of literacy*. Paper presented at the symposium for Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice, Washington, DC. Retrieved September 12, 2002, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/integ.html>

The authors identify characteristics that would explain why some children, more than others, enter school better prepared to excel in reading. The authors look at intergenerational transfer of knowledge about literacy from the perspective of familial attitudes, behavior, and perspectives.

The authors' research begins by highlighting previous research findings stating that socioeconomic class difference is related to school achievement. The research indicates that children from low-income families demonstrate an educational deficit upon entering school and this deficit grows with each cumulative year.

The difficulty about literacy, as noted by the authors, is that it is not a uniform skill that can be taught and then strengthened with time and continuous instruction. This characteristic further complicates the goal of isolating literacy mechanisms to see how various familial effects have different implications for the literacy development of children. The authors also state that little research is available about social class and the effects of literacy since most research focuses on observable differences in children upon entering school. Social class is magnified as children get older and this implies then, that "familial effects account for more than just differences in emergent literacy skill" (p. 1). Thus, the authors caution that we must distinguish "familial influences in terms of what aspect of literacy they influence as well as how that influence is exerted" (p. 2).

The authors assess four mechanisms proposed by research conducted over the last 25 years. The mechanisms are simple transfer, participation in literacy practice, enjoyment and engagement, and linguistic and cognitive mechanisms. While literacy programs do focus on the teaching of basic skills and encourage book reading as a joint venture, they fail to promote literacy as a social practice and don't stress enough the importance of rich oral language interactions; both of which are essential elements in the development of children's literacy.

In conclusion, the authors state that although transfer of knowledge is an important skill necessary for emergent literacy, it is the family-induced motivation and family-generated language abilities that exert the most influence throughout the elementary school years. The challenge then becomes how to help families understand their roles in the literacy development of their children and how to aid that development.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

##Sparks, B. (2001). The gendered construction of the adult education and family literacy act. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2001(91), 47-54.

Sparks offers an insightful analysis of The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Investment Act, focusing on how policy texts construct gender and difference to maintain a system of exclusion and power. She bases her analysis in feminist epistemology using Smith's concepts of *ruling relations* (intersection of institutions which organize and regulate society). Sparks argues that family literacy programs promote the ideology that families are the locus of society's problems, which, in turn, justifies government intervention in the domestic (feminine) sphere. Statistics reveal the gendered, racial nature of family literacy. Sparks contends that family literacy programs highlight the child's success, subsuming the mothers' educational needs under those of her child's. This policy perpetrates a system of gendered inequality which disallows multiple definitions of woman (e.g., as worker, learner, mother). The author calls for further research into the implications of this policy, program implementation, and the role of "family" which will disrupt patriarchal systems of power.

**Cross-reference:**

H: Government Policy

G: Culture & Context

Spielman, J. (2000). At the kitchen table: Building home-school partnerships that support learning. *Family Literacy Forum*, 1(1), 9-13.

In this article, the author shared her year-long experiences as a teacher and literacy staff developer. Her objective was to try and find ways of including families in the teaching and learning process. The goals of her experience were to model for teachers how to build mutually respectful relationships with parents, to validate families' knowledge of their own children, and to demystify how literacy works. Providing some successful real-life cases, the author testified to the importance of the home-school relationship. In conclusion, the knowledge that children possess (as a result of living in their families and their communities) is a powerful foundation for successful learning in the formal context of learning that occurs in schools. As a result, the author believes that reaching out to families is one way to connect children's lives to literacy instruction. Furthermore, she suggests that a version of equitable partnerships between families and schools is becoming a reality.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

## indicates that the article is a research study

## Section G: Culture and Context

St. Clair, R. & Heitzman, C. (2003). More than a mention: Cultural responsiveness in family literacy. *Family Literacy Forum*, 2 (1), 19-24.

Within this article the authors address the issue of how the cultural heritage of the family plays an important role in family as well as school literacy programs. It is their belief that cultural responsiveness is considered less than important in both the school and family literacy programs, relegating the family and home to a much lower position while ignoring that each family has its own style of literacy which is reflected and embedded within the customs and interactions of the family. They propose that culturally responsive curricula that are used within schools and family literacy programs should be based on relationships developed between the home and school. A culturally responsive curriculum is defined by the authors as a process of knowledge selection and presentation that acknowledges and builds upon the cultural backgrounds of the learners. This curriculum is designed as an integrated, interdisciplinary, learner-centered curriculum. Critical thinking skills are developed, as well as strategies that promote cooperative learning and whole language instruction. The success of the curriculum is dependent upon appropriate staff development and should be a part of a coordinated building-wide effort.

Utilizing the culturally responsive curriculum model is beneficial to both school and family literacy programs in that standardized gains are usually noted because the learners are engaged and motivated. Literacy and language skills usually follow from the desire of the learners to learn and understand. Moving toward a more culturally responsive approach is worthwhile because learners will view diversity as a source of pride, strength, and learning.

### **Cross- Reference:**

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Cultural and Context

##Taylor, D., & Dorsey-Gaines, C. (1988). *Growing up literate: Learning from inner-city families*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

In Taylor's second book, she and Dorsey-Gaines follow four inner-city African-American families. In this qualitative study, the reader learns that children from these families can be successful readers, even in the face of overwhelming poverty and unfortunate circumstances. Like the middle-class families Taylor studied previously, these families provided literacy experiences for their children in their everyday lives. However, they are distinguished from the middle-class families in that they often used literacy activities as a means to an end (e.g., applications for food stamps, AFDC, WIC, and student financial

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aid forms). The authors of the book recommend their work for educators, researchers, and policymakers.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy

Section G: Culture and Context

Section H: Government Policy

Tracey, D. H. (1995). Family literacy: Overview and synthesis of an ERIC search. In K. Hinchman, D.J. Leu, & C. Kinzer (Eds.), *Perspectives on literacy: Research and practice, forty-fourth yearbook of the National Reading Conference* (pp. 280–288). Chicago: National Reading Conference. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 379 611).

To pull together and facilitate further knowledge within the field of family literacy, as well as to better define family literacy, Tracey conducted a comprehensive review of the literature. Using the descriptor "family literacy" on two indexes within the ERIC system (Resources in Education (RIE) and Current Indexes to Journals in Education (CIJE)), 409 references and abstracts were located and reviewed. For the final reporting of the literature, 135 documents were sorted into 3 main categories—research emphasis (19 percent), program descriptions (35 percent), and position papers (38 percent)—and then analyzed. Several strengths, weaknesses, and needs in the literature emerged as a result of the review. The primary weaknesses noted were a lack of clear and agreed-upon definitions in the field; a disproportionately small percentage of documents created from a research perspective; a too narrow focus on topics that would fit more appropriately into areas outside of family literacy; and a lack of research on program efficacy. Primary strengths included the fact that the attrition rate for participants in family literacy programs is considerably smaller than in adult literacy programs, and that documented research consistently supports the finding that participants of family literacy programs are benefited by increased positive literacy interactions in the home between parent and child as a correlate of participation.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section A: Parent and Child Interactive Literacy

Section B: Parenting Education

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section E: Collaboration Within Programs and Among Social Service Agencies

Section F: Assessment and Evaluation of Family Literacy (FL) Programs

Section G: Culture and Context Section H: Government Policy

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

Trujillo, O.V. (1997). A tribal approach to language and literacy development in a trilingual setting. *Teaching Indigenous Languages*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED415060)

The Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona is a trilingual tribe (Spanish, English, and Yaqui) with a rich cultural background that has roots in Sonora, Mexico. Many members of the tribe are not functionally literate in any language because all three languages are incorporated into instruction. The lack of functional literacy is demonstrated by statistics on school achievement where only about two-thirds of the tribe members have completed the eighth grade and less than one-fifth have completed high school. Many of the tribe members were placed in the learning disabled classes in school because of poor assessment results. Bilingual education was not offered to the students in the public education system. Most members speak Spanish and therefore do not test well on standard English written assessments.

After a lawsuit against the school district in 1973, assessment policies were changed stating that students should be tested in their primary language. In 1984, the Pascua Yaqui tribe adopted a language policy stating that the Yaqui language and culture become a part of the educational process. The Yaqui Family Literacy Partnership Program was created in 1988 and funded by the

U.S. Department of Education. The goal of the program was to increase literacy within the family with the hope of increasing educational outcomes of the children. Among the instructional strategies included in the program was the history and cultural themes of the Yaqui tribe. The program was enthusiastically received by the community and gained the attention of the tribal members.

The author of the paper studied the Yaqui people and their literacy viewpoints for her doctoral dissertation and eventually was elected as the Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council Vice-Chairwoman. The author initiated educational projects and community surveys that led to Project Kaateme, the Pascua Yaqui Even Start Family Literacy Program. The intergenerational program builds on family strengths while encouraging positive self-esteem and stimulating children's academic achievement.

The focus of this paper was the Yaqui tribe and their challenges with literacy. The tribe realized the importance of educating both children and family members with the goal of improving family situations. This paper has educational implications for both family literacy programs and the trilingual tribe, but all family literacy programs.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture/Context

Section C: Program Descriptions/Models

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

Valencia, R. R. and Black, M. S. (2002) “Mexican Americans don’t value education!”—  
On the basis of the myth, mythmaking, and debunking. *Journal of Latinos and Education*. 1 (2), 81-103.

According to Valencia and Black, the long-standing myth that Mexican Americans do not value education is based in “deficit thinking” which blames faults inherent in the student for a lack of achievement, rather than social inequalities or shortcomings of the school system. Valencia and Black trace the origins of this myth to early master’s theses, scholarly literature on “cultural deprivation” and children who are “at risk,” and media attention to the inflammatory remarks of a few individuals. The authors counter the myth with strong evidence that Mexican Americans have consistently shown a deep interest in education through litigation, advocacy organizations, political demonstrations, and legislation. Parent involvement literature and a case study further support the authors’ position. The only shortcoming of this passionate article is that Valencia and Black do not suggest specific ways that educators and policy makers can debunk this myth.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement

Vernon-Feagans, L., Head-Reeves, D., & Kainz, K. (2004). An Ecocultural perspective on early literacy: Avoiding perils of school for nonmainstream children. In B. H. Wasik (Ed.), *Handbook of Family Literacy* (pp. 427-448). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

In this article the authors propose an ecocultural model for early literacy based on Bronfenbrenner’s three spheres of influence combined with a socio-cultural view of emergent and family literacy. This proposed model focuses on the responsibility of the community and professionals to understand non-mainstream children, their readiness to learn and their family culture. This understanding requires introspection about the myths that shape the educational community and society at large. The authors address the three spheres of influence: microsystems/mesosystems; exosystems; and, macrosystems. As well as, five myths that subtly form perceptions and hinder the ability of communities and schools to receive children. The myths are: the myth of individual competition and hard work; the myth of disadvantage and difference; the myth of dysfunctional parenting and families; the myth of lack of ability or skill; and, the myth of poor motivation. These affect school curriculum, teacher methodology, parent-teacher interaction and student self-perception. Acknowledging the myths will lead to a community that is ready to educate all children. The five myths are explored in depth and related to current research. This chapter addresses important issues for the family literacy field; it should be read by teachers, school administrators, curriculum and program developers.

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

## **Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture & Context

Weinstein, G. (1998). *Family and Intergenerational Literacy in Multilingual Communities*. ERIC Q&A. (ERIC Document No. ED421899)

This article addresses questions relating to family and intergenerational literacy in multilingual communities. Weinstein provides answers for questions relating to:

- A. Research
  - a. Current research is more focused on how language and literacy practices are rooted in native culture that may or may not be similar to a local school system
  - b. Often children become fluent in English much quicker than their parents which may be reflected in changing intergenerational relationships.
- B. Policy initiatives
  - a. Equipped for the Future, the current national initiative, is consistent with ethnographic research and can be a useful guide for family literacy work.
- C. Program goals
  - a. Improving school achievement by promoting parental involvement
  - b. “Improve skills, attitudes, values, and behaviors linked to reading”
  - c. “Enable adults to develop a critical understanding of schooling”
  - d. Construct “activities that address family and community concerns and attend to the role of home language and culture”
  - e. Reconnect generations in a positive way
- D. Delivery models
  - a. Kenan model
  - b. Models that begin with one generation and reach out to others
- E. Curricula and materials
  - a. “Curricula and materials are largely influenced by program goals.”
  - b. Participatory, problem-posing, project-based
- F. Directions for the future
  - a. Collaboration between home and schools
  - b. “There is more to family and intergenerational literacy than children’s school achievement.”
  - c. “Planning and instruction begin with inquiry into learners’ lives”
  - d. “The program addresses needs that learners themselves define.”
  - e. “The program encourages generations to share knowledge and experience.”
  - f. “Learning communities are fostered both among learners and among practitioners.

**## indicates that the article is a research study**

**Cross-Reference:**

Section G: Culture and Context

Section H: Government Policy

Weinstein-Shr, G., & Quintero, E. (Eds.). (1995). Immigrant learners and their families: Literacy to connect the generations. *Language in Education: Theory and Practice*, 84. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 379 964).

This document is a collection of essays intended for the reader who wishes to learn about programs and curricula for adult immigrants and their children. The first section's theme is collaboration. An overview of projects implemented in California for language minority families is presented. Two chapters focus on the collaborative process experienced during the implementation of two literacy programs. The second section, Curriculum: Drawing on Learner Strengths, is comprised of four chapters that each discuss the ways in which specific programs develop curricula to build on participants strengths. Projects discussed in this section include one based on research and participants' needs, one which promoted writing and reading as a form of "social action," one which linked the curriculum to the participants' outside world, and one which had success in using story-telling with a reading program for mothers. In the last section, the following issues are identified: (1) the need to learn more about the participants and their existing literacy practices; (2) the need to develop innovative ways to measure and evaluate change and success within literacy programs; and (3) the need to generalize to the other contexts in which immigrant families learn.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section C: Program Descriptions and Models

Section D: Curriculum and Instruction

Section G: Culture and Context

Whitehouse, M. (2001). "Reading" families: Deficit discourse and family literacy. *Theory into Practice*, 40(3), 212-219.

This article examines the continued conflation of diversity and difference within the family literacy field. This is marked by the guiding ideology that if culturally diverse families mirror the culture of mainstream families they will achieve educational and economic success. Whitehouse and Colvin further posit that while the overt language of deficit families has been replaced by a strengths approach based in nurturing and caring for individuals within families, this change does little to highlight the numerous economic, cultural, and institutional barriers that marginalized families face. Each author provides concrete examples from family literacy classes that underscore how "caring educators who understand and work with families often perpetuate a deficit-based,

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individualistic view of families by excluding parent voices and focusing on what makes these families different from the “rest.” The authors advocate including families as dialogue partners in learning. The authors ground their argument in sparse but seminal literature in the field. They offer clear examples from real-life settings that underscore their interpretation of the family literacy field. The authors present very general suggestions for redirecting family-educator relationships from an emphasis on difference to value and understanding.

**Cross-Reference:**

Section B: Parenting Education

Section G: Culture and Context

Section J: Parent Involvement