

Sample Parent Education Lessons

These sample lessons are based on the concepts presented in the Learning to Read and Write Overview on page III–10. Each lesson can be adapted to the educational needs of the parents in the program. The activities are geared towards working with parents to support their child’s language and literacy development overall. It is important to review each lesson to determine if it is age appropriate for the children in the program and to make changes accordingly. Each lesson is designed to take approximately one hour. However, each can be adapted to the time frame required. Suggestions for adapting the lessons for use with ELL parents are provided in the samples that follow.

Sample III–1: The Power and Pleasure of Literacy (3-5, K-3)

1. **Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.** “Yesterday we discussed storytelling and the benefits this activity has for your child’s language development. Remember that the more language a child hears the more opportunity he/she has to hear new vocabulary. You can find other opportunities to use language, too. For instance, a picture can give you lots of ideas. You could talk about pictures in magazines or family photos. As an example, let’s talk about what you think about this picture. (Show a picture from a book or calendar — anything that is a conversation starter. You could also prepare for this activity by asking parents to bring in a family picture. Allow a few minutes for discussion.) Also, don’t forget to use the language you are most comfortable using during these interactions. The most important thing is to talk a lot with your child.”
2. **Presenting new information.** “Now that we have shared a few stories let’s look at the parts of children’s books. Take a few moments and look through one of the books on your table. Notice that on the title page we will find the name of the author and under that the name of the illustrator. Today we will discuss book illustration. Illustration refers to a picture or drawing in a book. Look at the book you chose and take note of the illustrations. With your partner, discuss the things you see in the illustrations in your book. Then compare the illustrations in your book with those in your partner’s book. These are some things to consider:
 - Discuss what the book may be about by looking only at the illustrations on the front and back pages of the book.
 - Notice how the rest of the illustrations add to the experience of understanding the story.
 - Ask questions about the illustrations.
 - Point out the shapes and colors within the illustrations.
3. **Processing the information through activities.** “Yesterday you practiced storytelling with your child. Today you will illustrate that story. Take a few minutes to think about that story and write down a few of the main ideas. Now, using the materials on your tables (paper, colors, markers, etc...) begin to illustrate each idea. Make sure to draw one picture per page just in case you need to add more illustrations later. Staple the pages together and create a book.”
4. **Helping parents apply the new information.** “Now that you have finished, take turns and practice re-telling your story using your illustrations with a partner. You now have a wordless book you can share with your child. Remember to schedule time to read to your child daily.” (Remind parents they do not need to know English to share a wordless book with their child.)

Sample III–2: The Literate Environment (3-5, K-3)

- 1. Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.** “Who would like to share how their child enjoyed the wordless book you created for them? Wordless books are a wonderful way to create new storytelling experiences for your child and build language skills. Today we are going to learn about creating a print-rich environment for your child at home.”
- 2. Presenting new information.** “Take a few minutes to think about and write a list of some examples of print materials in your home. Print materials are items that have words written on them.” (Some examples might be children’s books, food labels, mail, coloring books, shopping bags, informational pamphlets, brochures, dictionaries, grocery store ads.) “Now that you have a preliminary list, let’s share some of your ideas.” (Have parents share their lists, and add other suggestions.) “Did you learn about something you already own, but never thought of as ‘print?’”
Note: Sometimes, as in this example, the parents learn from each other, not an outside source.
- 3. Processing the information through activities.** “We are going to create a picture survey you can use with your child about his print environment. This survey will not only teach him new words, it will teach your child how to identify new objects. Use the materials on your table (paper, colors, markers, etc...) and write the following title on the first page, “Print Materials in Our Home.” Draw two pictures of print materials from your list per page. Don’t forget to label each picture.” **Note:** This activity is most suitable for parents of young children who are still learning the names of objects, and can be labeled in both English and the native language.
- 4. Helping parents apply the new information.** “Now that you have your picture survey, share it with a classmate and make sure your pictures are easily identifiable. Now you have the perfect tool to help your child become aware of his print environment.”

Sample III–3: Language Development (3-5, K-3)

- 1. Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.** “We began to discuss language development when you created your wordless books. At that time our goal was to help children enjoy literacy by participating in the fun activity of storytelling. Today we will practice a strategy to extend conversations with your children. As an example of extended conversations, let’s see who can think of the most things to say about the new plants by the front door (or the new wallpaper on the classroom wall, Maria’s skirt, the weather, etc.)” Allow a few minutes for parents to jot notes; then have them share ideas.
- 2. Presenting new information.** “Take a few minutes to think about and write down at least three things you said to your child this morning. Now count the number of words contained in those statements. Studies tell us that children exposed to a great deal of language attain a larger vocabulary and are better equipped to learn to read. Talking and listening to children is critical to their language development.” (Share listening and speaking skills from *Teaching Our Youngest* (2002), available from www.ed.gov/about/pubs/intro/index.html)
- 3. Processing the information through activities.** “So if the goal is to provide your children with language rich experiences, how can you extend the statements you just shared? For example, several of you mentioned ‘Get out of bed!’ To make this a much more language rich statement, you might say, “Johnny, get out of bed, it’s a new day and you have lots to learn!” This statement is rich with positive language and much nicer to wake up to! What else could you say?” (Allow time to share examples and chart their responses.)
- 4. Helping parents apply the new information.** “Now take your other statements and make them richer statements. You may want to post your list on the refrigerator to remind you to practice language-rich conversations with your child.”

Sample III–4: Building Knowledge and Comprehension (3-5, K-3)

1. **Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.** “A few weeks ago we worked with the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carle. In the story we read about a caterpillar that eats and eats and eats in preparation for becoming a butterfly. What was your favorite part of the book?” Share ideas.
2. **Presenting new information.** “Now that we have shared our ideas, we are going to discuss how to support your child’s language and literacy development by planning a family outing. For example, I just found out that our local library is having a special exhibit on the life of butterflies. Your child learned something about butterflies from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. This would be a perfect trip that would encourage your child to learn about something with which he is familiar.”
3. **Processing the information through activities.** “How do you plan a family outing?” (Give parents time to discuss and share ideas.) “Two of the most important factors to consider are cost (entrance fees and transportation) and age appropriateness. Family outings can be a great learning experience if you plan ahead. Let’s use the library example to plan a future outing.”
(Create a plan through discussion with parents. Offer your ideas, and ask for theirs. The results might look something like the plan below. Write the planning steps on the board or chart paper.)
 - Before you head out, think about your child’s interest in butterflies. Talk about *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* with your child. Talk about the TV show on butterflies. Talk about butterflies you see during a walk in the neighborhood.
 - Contact the library and find out the hours of the butterfly exhibit.
 - Before your visit share another story about butterflies with your child.
 - Decide what day you will visit and create some excitement for your child through conversation.
 - During the tour of the butterfly exhibit, remember to engage your child in rich conversation.
 - Finally, after your trip to the library, review and discuss with your child all that you saw there.

“Above all, follow through. Do not make any promises you cannot keep. Most of all, be creative. Even a visit to a local airport can be a learning experience if your child is interested in airplanes! You now have the basic plan.” (Allow parents an opportunity to write a preliminary plan for their next family outing.)
4. **Helping parents apply the new information.** Encourage parents to check out a book to read at home related to a family outing they would like to plan. During the next session, ask parents about their experiences.

Sample III–5: Phonological Awareness (3-5)

1. **Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.** “A few weeks ago, you learned the importance of extended conversations. How is this strategy working?” (Encourage parents to share their ideas.) “We have been having fun with language, books, and storytelling. Let’s sing one of the songs your children have been learning.” (Sing a song.) “Did you notice all the rhyming words? Which words rhyme? Rhyme is an important type of phonological awareness. Today we will learn more about phonological awareness.”
2. **Presenting new information.** “Phonological awareness is the process through which children become aware of the sounds of letters. It is an auditory and oral skill not a print skill. But it’s an important pre-reading skill. You just experienced a phonological awareness activity by singing a song. Children enjoy singing and through singing they begin to distinguish different sounds. Helping your child expand phonological awareness will make it easier for him/her to learn to read. One way to do so is by singing rhyming songs such as *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*.”
3. **Processing the information through activities.** “Think about one of your child’s favorite rhyming songs and write the words down. (Encourage parents to write and share their ideas.) Who would like to share their song?”

Note: If parents can’t write well in English they could write a song in their native language, or the teacher could write it down for them. If some of the parents have not learned to write in their first language, adapt the activity by having them just sing the song or recite the verses.
4. **Helping parents apply the new information.** “Now that you have practiced singing, be sure to share your song with your child. Don’t forget to sing, sing, sing to your child.” Tell parents you will discuss how they used this strategy during the next session.

Sample III–6: Letters and Words (3-5)

1. **Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.** “Take a look at the books on your table. What do you notice about them? Yes, they are all alphabet books. These books are one way to help your child learn about letters, their shapes and sounds. Take another look at the book you chose. What would your child enjoy about the book?” (Allow for discussion.)
2. **Presenting new information.** “Now that we have shared a few alphabet books, take a few moments and think about other items in your home that you can use to teach letters. For example, how many of you have alphabet soup or pasta at home?” (Encourage parents to write and share ideas.)
3. **Processing the information through activities.** Provide materials such as, alphabet pasta, cereals, labels, magazines, and newspapers. “Look at the different materials on your table. Each of these can be used in your home to help your child learn letters. Think about three ways you can use the materials in your home.” (Encourage parents to share ideas. Remind parents the most important thing about this activity is exposing children to letters and the letter sounds, parents can use the letters in their native language as appropriate.)
4. **Helping parents apply the new information.** “Now that you have finished, take turns and practice using your materials with a partner. Use these materials with your child at home this week. Next week we will discuss how it went.”

Sample III–7: Types of Text (3-5, K-3)

1. **Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.** “Think about the different members of your family. What makes each one different? What makes you all the same? Now, think about a favorite story or book. Just like your family, books come in all shapes, sizes, and types. These types are called genres. Each genre or type of book has a specific purpose. For example, poetry and rhyming books use rhythmic language to express thoughts and feelings. Telephone books provide information.”
2. **Presenting new information.** “There are many genres (types) of books. Throughout our time together we have worked with books from several of these genres. For example, we have worked with storybook fiction, folktales and legends, concept books, realistic fiction, non-fiction and information books, as well as poetry and rhyming books.” (Show parents each type of book as you explain how they are different.) “It is important for children to experience different types of books to prepare them for reading.”
3. **Processing the information through activities.** “Let’s think about each genre and its purpose. (Review each genre mentioned above.) Now that we know about a few genres, let’s list one book we have used under each one. (Provide an example of a book for each genre.) Now it’s your turn. Please list at least one book under each genre that you have recently read to your child.”
4. **Helping parents apply the new information.** “You will find that some books could possibly fit under several categories (genres). Dr. Seuss’s *The Cat in the Hat* can be realistic fiction or a rhyming book. As you study your list, decide if there is one genre to which you’d like to pay more attention. Also, please visit a library and check out a book that fits under this genre for our next parent education session.” **Note:** Remind parents that books in their native language should be a part of the reading experiences of their child. Encourage parents to bring in materials in their native language to share with other parents.

Sample III–8: Knowledge of Print (3-5, K-3)

1. **Engaging parents in a short, motivating, introductory activity.** “Children learn to recognize labels, signs and other print materials from their environment. It is important to teach children that there are different uses for print. One way is to point out print in your surroundings—at home and in your community. Think about your child’s favorite food, toy, or restaurant. How do they recognize this item when they are just learning to read? Yes, they “read” the label, sign or picture.”
2. **Presenting new information.** “Take a look at the print materials on your table. (Provide examples such as newspaper and magazine ads, brochures, bus schedules, forms, books, newsletters, labels, etc...) How many of these materials do you have in your home? How many of these materials would your child recognize?” (Encourage parents to share their ideas.)
3. **Processing the information through activities.** “Using the samples and materials on your table we will create an environmental book for your child. First, choose a few samples your child would recognize and a few he/she would not. Next, paste one sample per page, and on the back of the page write a few words about the item. For example, if you choose a *Cheerios* label, on the back of the page write: My son’s favorite cereal.”
4. **Helping parents apply the new information.** “Now that you are done, share your book with a classmate. Why do you think this is an important activity you can replicate with your child?” (Discuss with the group.) “Try this activity at home and bring in your book to share during our next parent session.”

