Exploring parental involvement and teachers' activities in early literacy development

Tabbada-Rungduin, Teresita ✉
Philippine Normal University, Philippines (rungduin.tt@pnu.edu.ph)

Abulon, Edna Luz Raymundo
Philippine Normal University, Philippines (abulon.elv@pnu.edu.ph)

Fetalvero, Lucila R.
Philippine Normal University, Philippines (fetalvero.lr@pnu.edu.ph)

Suatengco, Rosarito Tatel
Philippine Normal University, Philippines (suatengco.rt@pnu.edu.ph)

Abstract

Parental involvement has been seen as an integral component in a child's success and the way teachers design their lessons integrate the essentials of literacy. This study explored activities parents undertake to teach their children how to read and the activities teachers design to promote literacy. The activities were correlated with the students' performance in letter-recognition tasks. Results revealed that parents are aware of their roles in literacy development and are implementing activities at home that would enhance their children's interests in reading. Likewise, teachers provide a myriad of activities that cater to the students' reading needs. There were relationships between the reading materials found at home and the reading ability of the day care students.

Exploring parental involvement and teachers' activities in early literacy development

1. Introduction

The early literacy knowledge and skills children bring upon entering kindergarten, and higher on the first grade plus their previous experiences in their homes form the foundation for learning to read in the later grade levels. Current researches (Farver, Lonigan, Xu, & Eppe, 2012; Evans & Shaw, 2008) indicate that preschool children's emergent literacy skills have been shown to be strong and independent predictors of how quickly and how well children will read once exposed to formal reading instruction.

In the Philippines, central to the preschool curriculum is the child who is envisioned to be prepared for life (SEAMEO-INNOTECH, 2012), that is, preparing children spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually while making learning enjoyable. Since the integration of kindergarten to formal education, preschool teachers have been encouraged to use the integrative approach in developing skills relative to the content focus. Researchers (Evans, 2008; Farver, Lonigan, & Xu, 2012) supports the notion that the varied teaching strategies employed to students make them learn and incidentally, prepare them for the higher grade levels.

Parents are involved in their children's education and are aware their involvement affects their children's performances in school. Parental involvement is important young children's overall development, motivation and success in learning to read. Early literacy experiences within natural settings including the home provide motivating learning opportunities and encourage parents and care givers to become even more active partners of early childhood educators in their child's literacy development (Denney, Moore, & Snyder, 2010). Those beliefs and activities coincide with Clark (2007) who states that parents and caregivers must be aware of their significant contribution they can to their children's learning by providing a stimulating environment around them, teaching them language, reading and writing as well as supporting at home the schools literacy agenda both during the early years as well as the primary and secondary schooling of the children. In addition, literacy development begins in the very early stages of life with home and socio-cultural environment pointed as the major influencing factors (Shanahan, 2008). Prior to matriculating into primary school children need to acquire cognitive and basic fundamentals which make more advanced achievement skills possible.

With the belief that children vary in their learning styles, teachers need to use different teaching strategies. Teaching-learning activities are play-based considering the developmental stage of kindergarten pupils with activities focusing on the two-track method (i.e. storytelling and reading); interactive activities; playing manipulative games; and experiential, small group discussions and total physical response (SEAMEO-INNOTECH, 2012). Effective literacy instruction provides preschool children with developmentally appropriate settings, materials, experiences, and social support that encourage early forms of reading and writing to flourish and develop into conventional literacy. Rich teacher talk, story book reading, phonological awareness activities, alphabet activities, shared book experience, and play –related activities are some of the strategies the teacher uses to promote emergent literacy (Roskos, Richgels, & Dickens, 2003).

With the collaboration of parents and teachers, meeting the diverse needs of the preschool children would be easier if the levels of the parents' involvement and the teachers' strategies are identified. This research is based on the abovementioned notions that seem to imply the need to explore how parents are involved in preparing their children to read, write and appreciate printed materials. The involvement is translated into mapping out their beliefs about their children's learning, as well as determining whether these beliefs are manifested in the strategies they use to teach their children. Likewise, the strategies employed by teachers in kindergarten and in the first grade are explored and analyzed as to which activities are often used to promote literacy.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study ultimately intends to explore how parental practices and teachers' activities relate to what students can read and their actual reading performance in school. The following are the questions that this study intends to answer:

1. Identify practices parents do to teach literacy to their children.

2. Determine strategies teachers use in facilitating reading among the day care center students.

3. Describe the reading abilities of the day care center students.

4. Determine the relationships between the children's reading ability and:

    ➢ parental involvement

    ➢ teacher strategies

The study hypothesizes that significant relationships exist between and among the variables: children's reading ability, parental involvement, and teacher strategies.

2. Review of Related Literature

The term emergent literacy, launched by Teale and Sulzby (1986) in their edited volume, and brought to life in Clay's (1993) observational studies of young children, was introduced to refer to the conception of child development as an understanding of learning to read as a process that starts much earlier in life and that is based upon a variety of foundational skills acquired before children enter formal schooling. More recently, it has come to refer to the skills and reading-like behaviors that are developmental precursors to their conventional and more advanced counterparts.

In the study of Evans and Shaw (2008) four areas of emergent literacy that contribute to word recognition were highlighted: phonological awareness, letter knowledge, print concept and vocabulary. Home factors like parents' literacy-related behaviors, sibling-child reading, and families' literacy resources were all associated with children's English oral language skills, and their English print knowledge was associated with their home resources (Faver et al., 2012).Preschool children's emergent literacy skills, oral language (e.g., vocabulary, syntax/grammar, word knowledge), phonological awareness (e.g., ability to detect and manipulate sounds in oral language independent of meaning) and print knowledge (e.g., letter identification, print concepts) are strong and independent predictors of how quickly and how well they will read once they are exposed to formal reading instruction (Lonigan et al., 2008).

The adverse consequences of economic disadvantage for children's early language development and cognitive achievement have been shown (Hart &Risley,1995) where it was found that 3- to 5-year old children living in low-income homes have smaller vocabularies and delayed language skills than their more advantaged peers. These children are also less likely to identify letters of the alphabet, to count to 20, write their names, and read or pretend to read a storybook (Nord et al., 2000). Parents can support children's early literacy skill development by engaging in shared reading, teaching and modeling literacy-related skills and by providing books, educational games, and an overall print-rich environment in their homes (Bus et al., 1995; Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994)

Some research with monological populations indicates that shared reading primarily affects children's oral language rather than their phonological awareness or print knowledge skills (Leseman & de Hong, 1998; Senecal, Le Febre, Hudson, & Lawson, 1996). Other studies have reported significant relations between the home literacy and language environment and both oral language and code-related skills (Evan, Shaw, & Bell, 2000; Frijters, Barron & Brunello, 2000; Griffin & Morrison, 1997). They found that parent teaching, not shared reading,

predicted phonological awareness, print knowledge, or both for middle-class kindergarten and first grade children (Levy, Gong, Hessles, Evans, & Jared, 2006, Senecal, Le Fevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998).

In studies made about low income families, there emerged a pattern of findings which suggests that while there is somewhat less frequent parent-child book reading (Yarosz & Barnett, 2001) and fewer books available (Raikes et al., 2006), significant associations have been reported between home literacy-related activities and young children's language and literacy skill development. Parents' engagement in literacy activities, quality of mother-child engagement, and provision of learning materials uniquely predict children's language and cognitive skills and explain 27% of their language and cognitive skills at age 36 months (Rodriguez et al., 2009). In a cross-sectional study from kindergarten to fifth grade, it was found that across all age groups, home language use was related to children's vocabulary growth (Oller & Eilers, 2000). In home where families spoke some English, children had higher English vocabulary levels.

Overall, studies of the home language environment suggest that children's language and literacy development may depend on their parents' language use or preference in the home. Family characteristics, such as home literacy environment, parental involvement in school and parental role strain, made the largest contribution to the prediction of initial kindergarten reading disparities (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008). The association between school characteristics and reading outcomes suggests that makeup of the student population, as indexed by poverty concentration and number of children with reading deficits in the school, is related to reading outcomes.

Findings on the effect of SES on children's reading and educational outcomes include economically disadvantaged children acquire language skills more slowly, exhibit delayed letter recognition and phonological sensitivity, and are at risk for reading difficulties (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). SES, being a factor in reading achievement differences, often concerns family life, but lately, contexts like schools and neighborhoods have become sources of influence. This implies that multiple contexts or settings combine and are associated with young children's reading achievement and growth and help account for the robust relation of SES to reading outcomes. Each of these settings functions in a dynamic, reciprocal process between the settings and the individual child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989; Magnusson & Cairns, 1996). Under such perspectives, functioning and development are not merely reflections of children themselves but also of the nature of experiences, resources, and interactions encountered by children across settings.

Through their resources, experiences and interactions, families, schools and neighborhoods create auspicious or risky environments for children's reading development. The nature and quality of interactions with important adults are important to children's academic and social-emotional development (NICHD, 2000). Maternal warmth and mother-child interaction have been found to be important to children's language outcomes (Hess, Holloway, Dickson, & Price, 1984: Murray & Hornbaker, 1997).Although ecological and developmental system frameworks underscore the need to examine multiple contexts on developmental outcomes (Bronfebrenner, 1979, 1989; Magnusson and Cairns, 1996), family environment remains the principal contributor to differences in early literacy and language development associated with SES, thus it is still the most explored factor. Development studies have found that children in low-SES households have less exposure to books at home (Evans, 2004; Lee & Burham, 2002, Vernon-Feagans, Hammer, Miccio, & Manlove, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998), and have parents who are less involved in their schooling (Evans, 2004). These children are less likely to be regularly read to by parents (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2005; Lee & Burkam, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Evidence suggests that differences in the quality of parents' behaviors during joint book reading (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998) and in the frequency and quality of language interaction with parents in the home (Hart & Risley, 1995, National Research Council, 2000) contribute to disparities in early reading-related outcomes. Differences in classroom quality as early as preschool are connected to early reading-related outcomes (Bryant, Burchinal, Lau, & Sparling, 1994; Dickinson, 2001; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2000). Studies

on the relation of preschool programs, elementary school reading instruction and peers to reading competence have proven that classroom environments that are rich in literacy materials, that have teachers with high expectations of students and with adequate preparation to teach reading, that provide opportunities for dialogic reading or for children to be involved in the book reading experience, that provide support and opportunities for writing, and that promote stimulating teacher-child conversations enhance early language and literacy skills. They also suggest that peers play a role in influencing early reading proficiency, with children in schools with larger concentrations of less skilled, lower SES, an minority peers exhibiting lower gains in reading during the kindergarten year (Xue & Meisels, 2004).

The following are significantly related to reading outcomes: (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008) home literacy environment, number of books owned, parent distress, and receipt of center-based care. This result suggests that both family resource and/or investment models (e.g., books in home) and family process models (e.g. parent distress) help explain reading outcomes. Each of three contexts, family, neighborhood and school, was associated with SES gaps in reading achievement at specific points in time, and/or monthly learning rates. However, resources, experiences, and relationships associated with the family context were most closely associated with reading gaps in the initial kindergarten assessment. Specifically, the results suggest that the relation between SES and children's initial competence is mediated by home literacy environment, number of books available within the home to the child, parental involvement in the school, parental role strain and warmth, and provision of center-based care prior to kindergarten. These results underscore the wisdom of programs that direct resources to strengthening family literacy environment, encouraging parental involvement in schools, and reducing parental strain. Family life can be viewed as being strongly associated with the starting point of children's reading progress. It is important to note that even in the presence of family characteristics, neighborhood and school characteristics were associated with children's reading performance. This reinforces the need to focus on characteristics and qualities of family life in preschool children and to widen the emphasis to include schools and neighborhoods as children enter school.

Studies claim that 40% of the variation in student performance is the result of teacher quality as cited in the study of Patty (2008).Using regular teachers and teaching assistants, showed greater gains in basic reading skills for kindergarten and first-grade students of teachers who had received training to emphasize phonic awareness and letter knowledge compared with teachers who followed the normal curriculum (Blachman, Tangel, Ball, Black, & McGraw, 1999),. The substantial variability in children's reading and spelling skills is partly a product of variability in genetic endowment, which for example accounts for between 50% and 80% of individual differences at the end of first grade in the United States, Australia and Scandinavia (Byrne, et. al., 2006 & 2007; Petrill, Deater-Deckard et al., 2006, 2007). Other influences include practices in the home (Petrill et al., 2006, 2007), socio-economic level and ethnicity (McCoach et al., 2006), and in the case of reading fluency at least, peer influences within the classroom (Foorman et al., 2008).

The interpretation of classroom effect studies depends on how successfully they control for other influences on achievement. For example, using state-aggregated data showed that there is a substantial relationship between the proportion of well-qualified teachers in a state and the state's level of results in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Darlington-Hammond, 2000). The controls, at state level, were the percentage of students in poverty and a measure of non-English language status. The author, however, acknowledged that adding other measures of student backgroundsuch as parent education levels might make a difference to the overall picture. Rowan et al, (2002) estimated that classroom (teacher) accounts for between 4% and 16% of variance in reading scores adjusted for student characteristics and prior scores. They also claimed that classroom accounts for around 60% of what that termed "reliable variance" in reading growth. Studies of classroom effects which identified qualities of teachers those are critical in determining whether students prosper or falter yielded mixed results. Connor et al., (2005) reported that teachers' year of education related positively to Grade 1 vocabulary but negatively to letter-word (literacy) scores.

The research focuses on analyzing parent-teacher models to quality learning. The significant relationships

between and among the variables will serve as bases for accounting the extent of influence parental practices and teachers' activities have in promoting emergent literacy.

3. Methodology

The study is a descriptive research using the correlational technique for exploring the possible relationships between the reading ability of the children and parental involvement and teacher strategies. Primarily the study looked into describing what activities parents undertake to facilitate the reading of their children. It also described the teaching strategies teachers do to teach reading. Lastly, the reading abilities of children were mapped and analyzed based on letter-recognition.

1.1 Participants

The respondents of this study were 114 day care center students and their parents coming from three (3) barangays in Pandacan, Manila. Data were also taken from the teachers of the three (3) day care centers. The students' ages ranged between 4 to 6 years old, while their parents were aged between 22 to 42 years old while the teachers between 32 to 48 years old.

3.1 Instruments

Three (3) instruments were used to gather the data. The first instrument composed of two questionnaires pertaining to parental involvement in school activities and parental involvement with regard facilitating literacy. The second instrument is about teachers' practices inside the classroom that facilitate student-learning. The third instrument is a validated-instrument on letter recognition that was presented to the students and was administered individually. All the instruments were content validated by experts and were used in other researches on parental involvement, teacher strategies and reading ability. The reading ability test, being cognitive in nature underwent reliability testing using the Cronbach Alpha. The resulting coefficient for this research instrument is .95 which means that the test is considered highly reliable.

3.2 Procedure

The study was implemented after coordinating with the barangay chairpersons of the three (3) day care canters and seeking the approval of the teachers of the children. A consent letter for testing was given to the parents as well as letters of assent to be part of the study. The testing was conducted for three (3) weeks with the children and one (1) week for the parents and teachers. Responding to the questionnaires by the parents and teachers were done before the children went home, while testing of the students were done before and after their school meals. The culled data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means and the Pearson r.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Parental Involvement in Literacy Teaching

Table 1 revealed that across the 10 activities geared towards parental involvement, the over-all mean of 3.28 was computed. This suggests that generally, the parents involved in the study "*sometimes practiced*" these activities that necessitate their involvement. It could also be gleaned from the data in Table 1 that the highest weighted mean of 3.85 was generated. This corresponds to the parents' role in reminding their children of the importance of going to school. The next highest weighted mean of 3.80 was generated in that activity which involves "assisting children in doing assignments". This could imply that parents have the concern and time when it comes to facilitating completion of home-works as the mean computed was interpreted as "almost always practiced". Nevertheless, when it comes to doing volunteer work for the centers, the parents appeared to have lesser involvement as the computed weighted mean went down to 2.23. This signified that they just "sometimes practiced" such volunteer work in the centers.

Comparing the three centers involved in the study, Center 2, Day Care Center has the lowest computed means and the weighted mean, indicative of the seemingly below par extent of engagement among the parents in this particular day care center.

Table 1

Extent of involvement of parents across the three day care centers

ACTIVITIES GEARED TOWARDS INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS	Day Care 1 Mean and Interpretation		Day Care 2 Mean and Interpretation		Day Care 3 Mean and Interpretation		TOTAL Weighted mean and Interpretation	
1. Assisting your child in doing their assignments.	3.74	AAP	3.82	AAP	3.83	AAP	3.80	AAP
2. Reading stories or books to your child at home.	2.82	SP	2.82	SP	3.00	SP	2.89	SP
3. Reminding your child of the importance of going to school.	3.82	AAP	3.82	AAP	3.91	AAP	3.85	AAP
4. Conversing with your child about what happened in school after his/her class or before going to sleep.	3.74	AAP	3.74	AAP	3.68	AAP	3.72	AAP
5. Participating in school programs when invited by the Center (e.g. Family Day).	3.49	SP	3.29	SP	3.50	AAP	3.43	SP
6. Attending regular progress meetings with teachers (e.g. showing of report card).	3.72	AAP	3.31	SP	3.52	AAP	3.51	AAP
7. Initiating to have meetings with other parents for an activity.	3.35	SP	2.92	SP	3.02	SP	3.09	SP
8. Doing volunteer work for the Center (e.g. cleaning drive, bringing refreshments during activities, sharing stories to your child's class).	2.62	SP	1.81	RP	2.29	SP	2.23	SP
9. Initiating small talks with teachers about the progress of your child in the Center.	3.46	SP	2.95	SP	3.29	SP	3.22	SP
10. Accompanying your child during fieldtrips.	3.29	SP	3.11	SP	2.88	SP	3.07	SP
TOTAL	3.40	SP	3.16	SP	3.29	SP	3.28	SP

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always practiced (AP), 3.50 – 4.49 – Almost always practiced (APP), 2.50 – 3.49 –Sometimes practiced (SP), 1.50 – 2.49 – Rarely practiced (RR), 0.00 – 1.49 – Not practiced at all (NPA)

As regards parental beliefs, Table 2 presents how parents perceive their roles in promoting literacy among their children. Across the three barangays the parents strongly agreed that reading is important and being able to read is essential to one's success in life (mean=4.73). The parents also believed that children learn and discover new things through reading with a mean score of 4.71. Likewise, they also believe in their roles as first teachers of reading among their children and being an influential figure in their child's reading behaviors and preferences. This belief emanated from their understanding that there is much they can do to help their children get ready for schooling (x=4.73); that children will do better if there is good communication between parents and teachers (4.79); that it is their responsibility to teach things at home (4.79). These parental beliefs strengthen the confidence they have towards their children; that they will do well in school and succeed in life (4.76).

Comparisons between parents from the three barangays revealed no differences regarding how parents see themselves as an integral part in their children's early literacy development. The parents believed that by exposing their children to books and teaching them how to read and comprehend through pictures would most likely increase their children's interest to read and succeed in schools.

As academic performance is primarily focused on the child's performance in the essential areas of Mathematics, Science and the languages, one component for being able to master the competencies in the integral subject areas is being able to read. This is why the prominent belief of parents is that their children can do well in school if they are able to read.

Table 2

Parents' beliefs about their involvement in promoting emergent literacy

BELIEFS OF PARENTS	Day Care 1 Mean and Interpretation		Day Care 2 Mean and Interpretation		Day Care 3 Mean and Interpretation		TOTAL Weighted mean and Interpretation	
1. I believe in the importance of reading	4.70	SA	4.70	SA	4.77	SA	4.73	SA
Children learn and discover new things in reading	4.65	SA	4.68	SA	4.79	SA	4.71	SA
2. Reading helps children express themselves and become better listeners	4.56	SA	4.66	SA	4.67	SA	4.63	SA
3.My child learns important life skills from books (like how to follow a cooking recipe, budgeting)	4.24	A	4.05	A	4.36	A	4.22	A
4. I read in order that my children will also read	4.35	A	4.38	A	4.56	SA	4.44	A
5. I am fond of reading books and pocketbooks	4.03	A	4.03	A	4.03	A	4.03	A
6. …..write on his own	4.55	SA	4.54	SA	4.68	SA	4.59	SA
7. I believe that reading to children is a bonding time. A special time to share, feel warm and close	4.65	SA	4.66	SA	4.64	SA	4.65	SA
8. I believe in the importance of parent's role	4.63	SA	4.77	SA	4.74	SA	4.71	SA
9. I am my child's first and most influential figure in his life	4.70	SA	4.62	SA	4.65	SA	4.66	SA
10. I believe that development of children's strong literacy and language skills is a basic role of parent	4.65	SA	4.68	SA	4.64	SA	4.66	SA
11. I believe that there is much I can do to help my children get ready to school	4.65	SA	4.73	SA	4.81	SA	4.73	SA
12. I believe that children will do better if parents have good communication with the child's teacher	4.85	SA	4.87	SA	4.67	SA	4.79	SA
13. It is also my responsibility to teach the children things at home	4.94	SA	4.84	SA	4.62	SA	4.79	SA
14. I believe in my children. That they will do good in school and succeed in life	4.84	SA	4.75	SA	4.70	SA	4.76	SA

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Strongly agree (SP), 3.50 – 4.49 – Agree (A), 2.50 – 3.49 – Uncertain (U), 1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree (D), 0.00 – 1.49 – Strongly disagree (SD)

Table 3 presents the beliefs of the parents translated into actions or practices or the actual circumstances of their roles and involvement in their child's reading literacy. Across the three barangays, the parents almost always practice to sound interesting when reading to keep their children's focus (x=4.17). To sound interesting, one strategy parents undertake was to talk about the pictures in the book with a mean score of 4.29, this is done through associating the pictures into something their children can relate.

Furthermore, helping their children find books to read (x=4.10) and placing the books where it is noticeable (x=4.21) are also some of the practices frequently done by the parents as a form of their involvement in their children's literacy. Aside from reading books, buying coloring books, art materials, clay and the like is the most frequent practice done by the parents (x=4.51). Moreover, playing games with children that introduce alphabet and helps to begin reading is another way of a parent or an adult in the house in getting involve with children's reading literacy (x=4.32).

The varied activities done by the parents show their commitment to ensure that their children will learn how to read, however, the data shows that parents would unlikely bring their children to bookstores to find books that interest them, which would provide an impression that parents see themselves as decision-makers for what their

children should read. The parents would also not likely engage in activities like playing language games (x = 3.57), and have their children help them in writing like making shopping lists (x = 3.46). These activities, if done, may also facilitate the learning of the students.

Table 3

Parental involvement in teaching literacy

BELIEFS OF PARENTS	Day Care 1 Mean and Interpretation		Day Care 2 Mean and Interpretation		Day Care 3 Mean and Interpretation		TOTAL Weighted mean and Interpretation	
1. I read with my child/children	4.35	AAP	3.47	SP	4.18	AAP	4.06	AAP
I try to sound interesting when reading so that the children stay interested	4.12	AAP	4.16	AAP	4.24	AAP	4.17	AAP
2. We talk about the picture in the book	4.12	AAP	4.32	AAP	4.41	AAP	4.29	AAP
3. After reading the book I encourage my children to retell the story	4.12	AAP	3.81	AAP	3.95	AAP	3.96	AAP
4. I try to make the story real by relating it to their lives	4.23	AAP	3.97	AAP	3.89	AAP	4.01	AAP
5. We talk about the moral of the story if there is any.	4.15	AAP	3.87	AAP	4.07	AAP	4.03	AAP
6. I help my children choose books to read	4.28	AAP	3.87	AAP	4.18	AAP	4.10	AAP
7. I keep the books where the children can notice them easily (Example in the sala or living room)	4.03	AAP	4.24	AAP	4.33	AAP	4.21	AAP
8. I bring my children to the bookstore to find books that interest them	3.65	AAP	3.00	SP	3.64	AAP	3.43	SP
9. I buy coloring book, pencils, crayons, art materials, clay and other stuff that will help my children learn to write	4.47	AAP	4.55	AP	4.50	AP	4.51	AP
10. I or another adult in the house play games that introduce the alphabet and beginning reading	4.24	AAP	4.34	AAP	4.36	AAP	4.32	AAP
11. I play language games when we go for a long travel	3.79	AAP	3.51	AAP	3.45	SP	3.57	AAP
12. I have my child try to help me with the writing when I make shopping lists or do writing activities	3.49	SP	3.32	SP	3.59	AAP	3.46	SP

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always practiced (AP), 3.50 – 4.49 – Always almost practiced (AAP), 2.50 – 3.49 – Sometimes practiced (SP), 1.50 – 2.49 – Rarely practiced (RR), 0.00 – 1.49 – Not practiced at all (NPA)

Table 4 shows the home routines and activities done by the parents in monitoring their child's reading habits. Singing songs, reciting rhymes and playing games are activities completed by the parents along with their children (x=4.24). The most relevant routine practiced by the parents is to monitor their children's TV time (x=4.44) since there is a need to have their leisure time after reading activities for our children so they won't get tired and bored. The media being an influential tool in the children's learning of various lessons from learning about words to learning about values is being carefully monitored by the sampled parents.

Interestingly, few parents practice bringing their children to the library (x = 2.81). This may be explained by the presence of libraries that parents and children can actually go to and have shared reading. Usually libraries in the area sampled were parts of school buildings, and that in the day care centers sampled, a space is devoted to be the classroom's library. The problem for not being able to go to libraries rests on the issue of availability and accessibility. Likewise, a number of parents do not include having their children make shopping lists or do other writing activities that are related with house-hold chores. Although considered as practical ways in teaching children literacy, the parents do not find such activities (reading labels in food packs, paying bills, looking up phone numbers) as ways to enhance their children's learning.

Table 4

Home and routine activities

ACTIVITIES	Day Care 1 Mean and Interpretation		Day Care 2 Mean and Interpretation		Day Care 3 Mean and Interpretation		TOTAL Weighted mean and Interpretation	
1. I find time to read with my children	4.18	AAP	3.87	AAP	4.14	AAP	4.06	AAP
2. I give books to my children as a present	4.28	AAP	3.54	AAP	3.95	AAP	3.91	AAP
3. I sing songs, recite rhymes and play games with my children	4.16	AAP	4.32	AAP	4.23	AAP	4.24	AAP
4. I take my children to the library	3.22	SP	2.28	SP	2.97	SP	2.81	SP
5. I monitor my children's TV time	4.49	AAP	4.53	AP	4.33	AAP	4.44	AAP
6. When doing household chores, I make use of all types of printed materials to give my child literacy activities (e.g. Reading labels, milk boxes, paying bills, looking up phone numbers, writing letters)	3.47	SP	3.63	AAP	3.86	AAP	3.67	AAP
7. I have my child try to help me with the writing when I make shopping lists or do writing activities	3.21	SP	3.19	SP	3.24	SP	3.21	SP
8. I let my children make greeting cards for members of the family (e.g. Birthday card for Dad)	3.44	SP	3.21	SP	3.41	SP	3.35	SP

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always practiced (AP), 3.50 – 4.49 – Always almost practiced (AAP), 2.50 – 3.49 – Sometimes practiced (SP), 1.50 – 2.49 – Rarely practiced (RR), 0.00 – 1.49 – Not practiced at all (NPA)

Table 5 on the other hand presents the teachers' activities facilitating early literacy in general. The following activities are constantly practice by the teachers in facilitating early literacy: organizing events around parental participation (x=5); keeping parents updated (x=5); initiating short talks with parent/s when they accompany the child in coming to class (x=5); reminding parents through each pupil's diary about the necessary assistance in doing homework/s (x=5); asking parents to volunteer for enrichment programs in the center (x=5). Conversely, teachers seem to fail in requesting parents to take part in the learning process of the children with a mean score of 3.26. The activities were concerned with ensuring that parents are informed with what happens inside the classroom as well as pieces of information that may relevant to the promotion of student development. Most of the activities encourage parental participation in the various school activities, the activities aim to enhance bonding between parents and their children as well as to make the school more transparent. Lastly, part of the teachers activities also include being involved in their children's learning by putting feedback on their children's assignments and diary.

Table 5

Teachers' activities facilitating early literacy

TEACHERS' ACTIVITIES	Mean	Interpretation
1. Holding regular progress meetings with parents (e.g. showing of report card)	4.37	AAP
2. Organizing events around parental participation (e.g. family day, parent-teacher conferences)	5.00	AP
3. Keeping parents updated (e.g. providing notice of incoming events and activities that needs their permission or attendance)	5.00	AP
4. Requesting parents to take part in the learning process of the children (read a book to their child's class)	3.26	SP
5. Posting a suggestion box at the Day Care Center for parents to make anonymous suggestions about services, activities and practices	4.00	AAP
6. Initiating short talks with parent/s when they accompany the child in coming to class	5.00	AP
7. Reminding parents through each pupil's diary about the necessary assistance in doing homework/s	5.00	AP
8. Asking parents to volunteer for enrichment programs in the center (e.g. craft-making, cooking, gardening)	5.00	AP
9. Providing formal education workshops for parents (e.g. Effective Parenting workshop)	4.37	AAP
10. Holding fieldtrips in significant places (e.g. museum)	4.37	AAP
TOTAL	4.54	AAP

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always practiced (AP), 3.50 – 4.49 – Always almost practiced (AAP), 2.50 – 3.49 – Sometimes practiced (SP), 1.50 – 2.49 – Rarely practiced (RR), 0.00 – 1.49 – Not practiced at all (NPA)

Table 6 shows the specific teachers' activities geared towards early literacy. Teachers give chance for students to talk and work in groups (x=5) likewise engaging them in large, small or one to one discussions (x=5). Giving the children the chance to learn new words for enhancing their vocabulary everyday (x=5) is also an activity that is helpful in early literacy. Furthermore, giving comments and feedback clearly and within the child's cognition (x=5) will allow the students to feel appreciated. Reading aloud with the class once or twice a day (x=5) and motivating the children to listen to the story (x=5) are activities done to withstand the attention of the students.

During reading, questions were also asked to make sure that they are actively engaged with the text being read (x=5). After reading a story, students are given engagement activities that provide an opportunity to discuss and respond to the books that have been read (x=5). Students are also provided with activities that will teach them phonemic awareness (x=5). Direct instruction to teach letter names that have personal meaning to children (x=5). An accessible and functional library is provided (x=5) to keep the reading materials noticeable to the students. A writing corner where writing materials is provided inside the classroom (x=5) as well as a functional print linked to class activities (x=5). Writing opportunities are integrated in class activities (x=5). Specific example is when students were asked to perform role playing that will require them to write (x=5). Favorite stories are repeatedly read and children are encouraged to read along (x=5) in order to maintain their participation in class activities. Students are given the chance to talk about the topics that interest them (x=5) as a way of expressing one's viewpoint. At early age, if the children or the young students were trained in this way, perhaps there will be a profound opportunity that waits. The teachers' role primarily centers on ensuring that reading becomes interesting to the children while targeting competencies that are relevant to mastering skills. Furthermore, the teacher provides the engineered activities so that students will also learn patterns and schedules which would help the children become more mindful of what they need to learn.

Table 6

Teachers' Activities Geared Towards Early Literacy

TEACHERS'ACTIVITIES	Mean	Interpretation
1. Giving chance for students to talk and work in groups	5.00	AP
2. Engaging children in large, small or one to one discussion	5.00	AP
3. Using new words that children do not usually use everyday	5.00	AP
4. Giving comments and feedback clearly and within the child's cognition	5.00	AP
5. Listening to what children have to say	4.37	AAP
6. Discussing matters that interest the children even if it is not part of the lesson	4.37	AAP
7. Reading aloud with the class once or twice a day	5.00	AP
8. Before reading a story, the children are motivated to listen to the story	5.00	AP
9. During reading, questions are asked to make sure that they are actively engaged with the text being read	5.00	AP
10. After reading a story, students are given engagement activities that provide an opportunity to discuss and respond to the books that have been read.	5.00	AP
11. Students are provided with activities that will teach them phonemic awareness.	5.00	AP
12. The classroom is equipped with instructional materials for teaching letters of the alphabet	4.26	AAP
13. Direct instruction to teach letter names that have personal meaning to children.	5.00	AP
14. An accessible and functional library is provided	5.00	AP
15. A writing corner where writing materials is provided inside the classroom	5.00	AP
16. A functional print linked to class activities is available	5.00	AP

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always practiced (AP), 3.50 – 4.49 – Always almost practiced (AAP), 2.50 – 3.49 – Sometimes practiced (SP), 1.50 – 2.49 – Rarely practiced (RR), 0.00 – 1.49 – Not practiced at all (NPA)

4.2 Students' Reading Ability

When it came to the students' reading ability, Table 7 presents their performance in a word-recognition task that was administered individually. On the average the day care students aged 3.5 to 5.5 years old were able to recognize all the letters of the Filipino alphabet with more than 60 students out of 114 respondents identifying the letters correctly. Interestingly, 113 (99.12%) students were able to recognize the letter Ñ compared with all the letters in the alphabet, this may be due to its unique characteristic of having another symbol on top of it. Next to the letter Ñ, the letter NG, was recognized by 111 (97.37%) of the students with one student taking 7 seconds before eliciting the response and two others who did not reported not knowing what the letters are. Eighty-seven

point seventy tow percent (87.72%) or 100 students were able to recognize the letters J and K, while 104 (91.23%) recognizing the letter T and 102 (89.47%) identifying the word V. These letters may have been uniquely presented by their parents or teachers or have been represented by various media-related stimuli like the first letter of the word of a famous food chain in the Philippines – Jollibee.

Table 7

Teachers' activities geared towards early literacy

Teachers' Activities	Mean	Interpretation
1. Writing opportunities are integrated in class activities	5.00	AP
2. Students perform role playing that will require them to write (e.g. doctor or teacher)	5.00	AP
3. Students perform text analysis when big books are read to them	4.37	AAP
4. Favorite stories are repeatedly read and children are encouraged to read along	5.00	AP
5. Students are given the chance to talk about the topics that interest them	5.00	AP
6. Students are given the opportunity to use emergent writing like recording information gathered in observing, experimenting and even interviewing school personnel	4.37	AAP
7. Students are engaged in dramatic plays to express what they learned.	4.37	AAP
TOTAL	4.83	AAP

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always practiced (AP), 3.50 – 4.49 – Always almost practiced (AAP), 2.50 – 3.49 – Sometimes practiced (SP), 1.50 – 2.49 – Rarely practiced (RR), 0.00 – 1.49 – Not practiced at all (NPA)

The other letters that were readily recognized and uttered by the day care center students included D (96 or 84.21%), G (94or 82.46%), H (92 or 80.70%), I (92 or 80.70%), M (93 or 81.58%), N (95 or 83.33%), P (98 or 85.96%), R (95 or 83.33%) and U (96 or 84.21%). Among the nine (9) letters recognized only one, the letters I and U were the only vowels readily recognized by the 114 students. Interestingly, the vowels A (68 or 59.65%) and O (66 or 57.89%), and one consonant, X (66 or 57.89%) were the least recognized letters. The letter A being the first letter of the alphabet seemed not to be easily recognized by the respondents which does not seem to be parallel with the idea that stimuli are primed based on first exposure, while the children are exposed to the alphabet, the first letter did not make an impact compared with the other letters of the alphabet. The parents may also have designed learning opportunities that did not focus on recognizing the letters chronologically but in terms of identifying the letter independent from how they are arranged in the alphabet.

Table 8

Extent of performance on word recognition tasks of the day care center students (n= 114)

LETTERS	Easily recognized		Not easily recognized (Latency = 7 seconds)		Not recognized	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
A	68	59.65	5	4.39	41	35.96
B	82	71.93	3	2.63	29	25.44
C	81	71.05	3	2.63	30	26.32
D	96	84.21	3	2.63	15	13.16
E	90	78.95	2	1.75	22	19.30
F	92	80.70	1	0.88	21	18.42
G	94	82.46	6	5.26	14	12.28
H	92	80.70	1	0.88	21	18.42
I	92	80.70	9	7.89	13	11.40
J	100	87.72	1	0.88	13	11.40
K	100	87.72	2	1.75	12	10.53
L	91	79.82	4	3.51	19	16.67
M	93	81.58	8	7.02	13	11.40
N	95	83.33	4	3.51	15	13.16
Ñ	113	99.12	0	0.00	1	0.88
NG	111	97.37	1	0.88	2	1.75
O	66	57.89	5	4.39	43	37.72
P	98	85.96	2	1.75	14	12.28
Q	91	79.82	6	5.26	17	14.91
R	95	83.33	2	1.75	17	14.91
S	85	74.56	3	2.63	26	22.81
T	104	91.23	3	2.63	7	6.14
U	96	84.21	2	1.75	16	14.04
V	102	89.47	1	0.88	11	9.65
W	86	75.44	2	1.75	26	22.81
X	66	57.89	3	2.63	45	39.47
Y	91	79.82	5	4.39	18	15.79
Z	90	78.95	5	4.39	19	16.67

4.3 Extent of relationship between parental involvement and reading ability

Correlations were computed between the level of parental involvement in various home-based activities and the level of reading ability of the 114 pupils in the three centers involved in the study. Across the various activities listed in the survey instrument and the reading ability as measured by the word recognition test, the study revealed that involvement of parents and the reading ability of their children correlated weakly (r = .12, p = .05) suggesting that the two variables are somewhat independent of each other and a higher level of parental involvement is not likely to contribute to higher level of reading ability among their children in the kindergarten level. Worthy to note however, is the correlation computed between the parents' effort to have a certain time to read stories with their children and the children's reading ability (r = .17, p = .05). Though the relationship established was considered "weak", it could still be an influential factor. This was supported by the findings of the study by Bus et al. (1995) and Scarborough and Dobrich (2004) which emphasized the role of parents in supporting children's early literacy by engaging in shared reading, teaching and modeling literacy-related skills and by providing books, educational games, and an overall print-rich environment in their homes.

The role of parents in the school's activities cannot be ignored. The research conducted by Aikens and Barbarin (2008) points out that the parental involvement in school and parental role strain made the largest contribution to the prediction of reading disparities among kindergarten pupils. It may be noted in the present study, that the importance of genuine involvement of parents in various activities has not yet been internalized and practiced by the parents.

Concerning how the parents believed on the importance of reading and its association with the level of reading ability, the study depicted that a "weak" but a significant relationship existed between the parents' beliefs that it is their primary role to develop early the proper reading habits of their children (r = .14, p = .05). The same scenario was found out in associating the level of reading ability and the parents' belief that they should be the first persons to teach their children how to read (r = .21, p = .05). These particular findings supported what Epstein, J.L, & Dauber, S.L. (1992) emphasized that the three major factors of parental involvement in the education of their children are the parents' beliefs about what is important, necessary and permissible for them to do with their children; the extent to which parents believe they can have a positive influence on their children's education; and the parents' perception that their children and school want them to be involved.

4.4 Extent of relationship between parental involvement and teachers' activities

When correlation was computed between the various activities being facilitated by the teachers from the three (3) Day Care Centers involved in the study, the following six activities out of the 23 activities listed in the research questionnaire, garnered the same correlation coefficient of .18:

> ➢ Listening to what children have to say;

> ➢ Discussing matters that interest the children even if it is not part of the lesson;

> ➢ Having a classroom equipped with instructional materials for teaching letters of the alphabet;

> ➢ Letting the students perform text analysis when big books are read to them;

> ➢ Giving students the opportunity to use emergent writing like recording information gathered in observing, experimenting and even interviewing school personnel, and

> ➢ Letting students are engaged in dramatic plays to express what they learned

The computed correlation coefficient of .18, though considered "weak" and "not significant" at .05 level of significance, cannot be underestimated as these activities facilitate early literacy among children in terms of vocabulary (listening to what they say and discussing matters that interests them even if it is not part of the

lesson); letter knowledge (equipping the room with instructional materials for teaching letters of the alphabet and giving students the opportunity to use emergent writing like recording information) ; print awareness like letting the students perform text analysis when big books are read to them; and narrative aspect of early literacy through the conduct of dramatic plays.

This particular result mirrors what Blachmanet et al. (1999) found out that together with phonic awareness, emphasis on teachers' activities which enhance letter knowledge contribute greater gains in basic reading skills from kindergarten and grade one students.

5. Conclusions and Implications

The study intended to explore the strategies parents and teachers use to teach their children reading. In summary, the following were the conclusions drawn out of the study:

➢ Parents believe that they are involved in teaching their children how to read and in developing their reading skills by undertaking various activities that facilitate these. Among the activities include reading stories to their children, talking about what they read, and buying books for their children they believe would assist in their reading development.

➢ Teachers are involved in the teaching of reading by engineering classroom activities that combine reading with play. The activities include reading-aloud, asking questions pertaining to the story, and providing opportunities where children can do role playing or express themselves creatively.

➢ The children were able to recognize most of the letters of the alphabet that are inclined to consonants compared with vowels.

➢ In terms of the extent of relationship between the reading ability and the parental involvement in various home-based activities, weak relationship was established. The same scenario is depicted between reading ability and teachers' activities in school.

From the findings of the study, it can be surmised that the level of reading ability among the children in the day care centers can serve as benchmarking point for curriculum planners in early childhood education in the Philippines.

Implications to the pre-service teacher education can also be gleaned from the findings. The weak relationship established between the reading ability and the parental involvement on various home-based activities is indeed a wake-up call for the teacher training institutions in the Philippines to strengthen the pre-service teachers' competencies (especially those specializing in early childhood education) on effective strategies in collaborating with parents, on discovering the various influences on the structures of homes and communities which affect children's learning.

5.1 Recommendations

➢ Parents should be provided with opportunities in which they are able to explore other activities to encourage reading among their children, among these are taking their children to the library and allowing their children to pick books based on their interests.

➢ There is a strong need to reorient the parents of the pupils in the day care centers operated by the local government units on the importance of their involvement in activities which facilitates early literacy. Particularly, conduct of parents' workshops once a year can be undertaken to address this need.

➢ Teacher activities which emphasize the kindergarten pupils' letter knowledge and phonic awareness.

➢ Further research should be done exploring the magnitude of relationships between reading and

parental practices which may include measuring response rates or doing observations at home.

6. References:

Aikens, N. L., & Barbarin, O. (2006). Socio-economic differences in reading trajectories: The contribution of family, neighborhood and school context. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*, 235-25. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.100.2.235

Blachman, B. A., Tangel, D. M., Ball, E. W., Black, R., & McGraw, C. K. (1999). Developing phonological awareness and word recognition skills: A two-year intervention with low-income, inner-city children. *Reading and Writing: An Interdiciplinary Journal, 11*, 239-273. http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1008050403932

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Annals of child development: Six theories of child development. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Revised formulations and current issues* (pp. 1-103). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Bryant, D. M., Burchinal, M., Lau, L. B., & Sparling, J. J. (1994). Family and classroom correlates of Head Start children's developmental outcomes. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 9*, 289-309. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0885-2006(94)90011-6

Bus, A. G., Van Ijzendoorn, M. H., & Pelligrini, A. (1995). Joint book reading makes for success in learning to read: A meta-analysis on intergenerational transmission of literacy. *Review of Educational Research, 65*, 1-21. http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/00346543065001001

Byrne, B., Coventry, W., Olson, R., Wadsworth, S., Samuelsson, S., Petrill, S. A., et al. (2010). "Teacher Effects" in early literacy development: evidence from a study of twins. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*, 32-42. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0017288

Byrne, B., Olson, R. K., Samuelsson, S., Wadsworth, S., Corley, R., DeFries, J., et al. (2006). Genetic and environmental influences on early literacy. *Journal of Research in Reading, 29*, 33-49. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9817.2006.00291.x

Byrne, B., Samuelsson, S., Wadsworth, S., Hulslander, J., Corley, R., DeFries, J., et al. (2007). Longitudinal twin study of early literacy development: preschool through Grade 1. *Reading and Writing: An Interdiciplinary Journal, 20*, 77-102. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11145-006-9019-9

Clark, C. (2007). Why it is important to involve parents in their children's literacy development? *National Literacy Trust*, 1-3.

Clay, M. (1993). *An observation survey of early literacy achievement.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Connor, C. M., Son, S. H., Hindman, A. H., & Morrison, F. J. (2005). Teacher qualifications, classroom practices, family characteristics, and preschool experience: Complex effects on first graders' vocabulary and early reading outcomes. *Journal of School Psychology, 43*, 343-375. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2005.06.001

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence.* Retrieved from http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n1/

Dickinson, D. K. (2001). Book reading in preschool classrooms: Is recommended practice common? In D. K. Dickinson, & P. O. Tabors (Eds.), *Beginning literacy with language: Young children learning at home an school Baltimore* (pp. pp. 175-204). Brookes Publishing.

Epstein, J. L., & Dauber, S. L. (1992). School programs and teacher practices of parent involvement in inner-city. *91*(3), 289-305.

Evans, G. W. (2004). The environment of childhood poverty. *American Psychologist, 59*, 77-92. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.59.2.77

Evans, M. A. (2000). Home literacy activities and their influence on early literacy skills. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology, 54*, 65-75. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0087330

Farver, J. M. (2012). The Home Literacy Environment and Latino Head Strat Children's Emergent Literacy Skiils. *Developmental Psychology, 49*, 775-791. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0028766

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2005). *America's children: Key indicators of well-being.* Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

Foorman, B. R., York, M., Santi, K. L., & Francis, D. (2008). Contextual effects on predicting risk for reading difficulties in first and second grade. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 21*, 371-394. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11145-007-9079-5

Frijters, J. C., Barron, R. W., & Brunello, M. (2000). Direct and mediated influences of home literacy and literacy interest on pre-readers' oral vocabulary and early written language skill. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 92*, 466-477. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.92.3.466

Griffin, E. A., & Morrison, F. J. (1997). The unique contribution of home literacy environment to differences in early literacy skills. *Early Child Development and Care, 127*, 233-243. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0300443971270119

Hart, B., & Risley, T. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children.* Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

Hess, R. D., Holloway, S. D., Dickson, W. P., & Price, G. G. (1984). Maternal variables as predictors of children's school readiness and later achievement in vocabulary and mathematics in sixth grade. *Child Development, 55*, 1902-1912. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1129937

Lee, V. E., & Burkam, D. T. (2002). *Inequality at the starting gate: Social background differences in achievement as children enter school.* Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

Leseman, P. P., & Jong, P. F. (1998). Home literacy: Opportunity, instruction, cooperation and social-emotional quality predicting early reading achievement. *Reading Research Quarterly, 33*, 294-318. http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.33.3.3

Levy, B., Gong, Z., Hessels, S., Evangs, M., & Jared, D. (2006). Understanding print: Early reading development and the contributions of home literacy experiences. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 93*, 63-93. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2005.07.003

Lonigan, C. J., Schatschneider, C., & Westberg, L. (2008). Impact of code-focused interventions on young children's early literacy skill. In N. E. Pane (Ed.), *Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Liteacy Panel* (pp. 107-151). Washington DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Magnusson, D., & Cairns, R. B. (1996). Developmental science: Toward a unified framework. In R. B. Cairns, G. H. Elder, & E. J. Costello (Eds.), *Development Science* (pp. 7-30). New York: Cambridge University Press.

McCoach, D. B., O'Connel, A. A., Reis, S. M., & Levitt, H. A. (2006). Growing readers: A hierarchical linear model of children's reading growth during the first two years of school. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98*, 14-28. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.98.1.14

Murray, A. D., & Hornbaker, A. V. (1997). Maternal Directive and facilitative interaction styles: Associations with language and cognitive development of low-risk toddlers. *Development and Psychopathology, 9*, 507-516. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0954579497001272

National Research Council. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2000). The relation of child care to cognitive and language development. *Child Development, 71*, 960-980. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00202

Nord, C. W., Lennon, J., & Liu, B. C. (2000). Home literacy activities and signs of children's emerging literacy: 1993 and 1999. *Education Statistics Quarterly, 2*, 19-27.

Oller, D. K., & Eilers, R. (2002). *Language and literacy in bilingual children.* New York, NY: Multilingual Matters.

Patty, A. (2008). *Ministers agree on merit pay for teachers. Sydney Morning Herald.* Retrieved from www.smh.com.au

Petrill, S., Deater-Deckard, K., Thompson, L. A., DeThorne, L. S., & Schatschneider, C. (2006). Genetic and environmental effects of serial naming and phonological awareness on early reading outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98*, 112-121. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.98.1.112

Petrill, S., Deater-Deckard, K., Thompson, L. A., Schatschneider, C., DeThorne, L. .., & Vandenbergh, D. J.

(2007). Longitudinal genetic analyses of early reading: The Western Reserve Reading Project. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 20*, 127-146. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11145-006-9021-2

Raikes, H., Pan, B., Luze, G., Tamis-LeMonda, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Constantine, J., et al. (2006). Mother-child book reading in low-income families: Correlates and outcomes during the first three years of life. *Child Development, 77*, 924-953. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00911.x

Rodriguez, E. T., Tamis-LeMonda, C. S., Spellman, M., Pan, B., Raikes, L.-G., & Luz, G. (2009). The formative role of home literacy experiences across the first three years of life in children in low-income families. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 30*, 677-694. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2009.01.003

Roskos, K. A., Richgels, D. J., & Dickens, C. (2003). *The Essentials of Early Literacy Instruction.* National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Rowan, B., Correnti, R., & Miller, R. (2002). What large-scale, survey research tells is about teacher effects on student achievement: Insights from the "Prospects" study of elementary schools. *Teachers College Record, 104*, 1525-1567. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9620.00212

Salkind, N. (2000). Statistics for people who hate statistics. California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Scarborough, H., & Dobrich, W. (1994). On the efficacy of reading to preschoolers. *Developmental Review, 14*, 245-302. http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/drev.1994.1010

SEAMEO-INNOTECH. (2012). K-12 Tool Kit. In *Resource Guide for Teacher Educators, School Administrators and Teachers.*

Senechal, M., LeFebre, J., Hudson, E., & Lawson, E. P. (1996). Knowledge of storybooks as a predictor of young children's vocabulary. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 88*, 520-536. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.88.3.520

Senechal, M., LeFebre, J., Thomas, E. M., & Daley, K. E. (1998). Differential effects of home literacy experiences on the development of oral and written language. *Reading Research Quarterly, 33*, 96-116. http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.33.1.5

Shanahan, T., & Barr, R. (2008). Reading recovery: An independent evaluation of the effects of an early instructional intervention for at-risk learners. *Reading Research Quarterly, 30*(4), 240-263.

Vernon-Feagans, L., Hammer, C. S., Miccio, A., & Manlove, E. (2002). Early language and literacy skills in low-income African American and Hispanic children. In S. Neuman, & D. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of Early Literacy Research* (pp. 192-210). New York: Guilford Press.

Whitehurst, G. J., & Lonigan, C. J. (1998). Child development and emergent literacy. *Child Development, 69, 848-872., 69*, 848-872.

Xue, Y., & Meisels, S. J. (2004). Early literacy instruction and learning to read in kindergarten. *American Educational Research Journal, 41*, 191-229. http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/00028312041001191

Yarosz, D. J., & Barnett, S. (2001). Who reads to young children? Identifying predictors of family reading activities. *Reading Psychology, 22*, 67-81. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02702710151130235