

# Family Literacy Programming Using the Smithsonian Institution's *Talk with Me Toolkits*

ProLiteracy Conference on Adult Education

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Family Place Libraries  
Building Foundations for Early Learning



Smithsonian  
Office of Educational Technology


**Goodling**   
for Research **Institute**  
in Family Literacy



This project was made possible in  
part by a grant from the  
Institute of Museum and Library Services



# Agenda

- Overview of the project
  - A closer look at the *Talk With Me Toolkits* (TMTs)
  - Strategies for using the TMT in family literacy
  - Evaluation findings
  - Discussion and questions
- 



# Project Team

## **Family Place Libraries**

- Kristen Todd-Wurm
- Tracy LaStella
- Sophia Serlis-McPhillips
- Caroline Mandaro

## **Smithsonian Office of Educational Technology**


- Philippa Rappoport

## **Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy**

- Carol Clymer
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- Ping Xu



# Family Place Libraries (FPL)

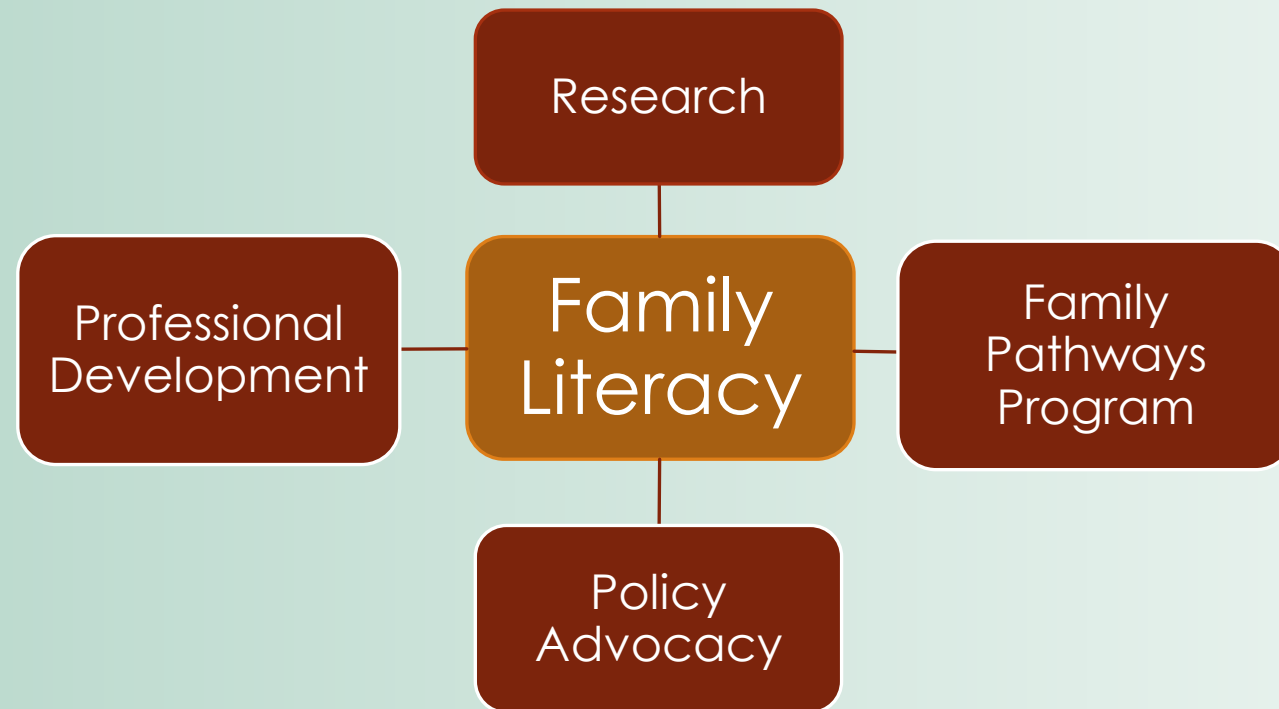
- A national program established by the Middle Country Public Library (MCPL) in Centereach, NY in 1997.
  - A library initiative for early childhood information, parent education, early literacy, socialization, and family support.
- 



# Smithsonian Office of Educational Technology (OET)

- **The Smithsonian Institution** is the largest museum system in the world with 21 museums and multiple research centers, established to increase and diffuse knowledge.
- **The Office of Educational Technology's purpose** is to bridge the digital educational resources created and curated by SI educators with the larger PK12 educational community.
- One vehicle for sharing our digital educational assets is through the **Smithsonian Learning Lab**; an interactive digital platform launched in 2016, where users can discover, create, and share resources and collections of content with over 6 million resources to choose from.

# Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy



<https://ed.psu.edu/research-grants/centers-institutes/goodling-institute>

# IMLS Grant - What We Did

- Adapted and evaluated Smithsonian OET's free, online *Talk with Me Toolkits (TMTs)* for library engagement and family literacy efforts
  - Learned what caregivers liked and did not like
  - Received input from librarians about how to use TMTs
- Supported caregivers' use of TMTs to foster reading, writing, questioning, talking, and other literacy outcomes with and for their children



*Let's take a look!*





# *Talk with Me Toolkit (TMT)*

## Objectives

- To foster and strengthen discussion between caregivers and children to promote children's language and literacy development.
- To introduce caregivers and children to an array of artifacts from the Smithsonian that includes captivating videos, real-world photographs, intriguing paintings, and other artworks.

# TMT Format

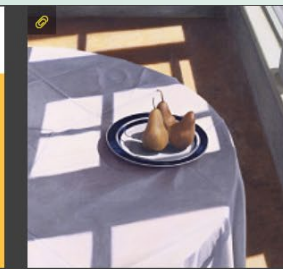
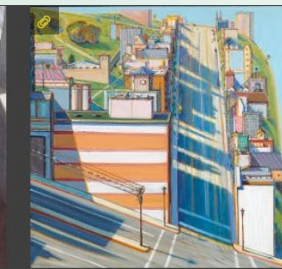


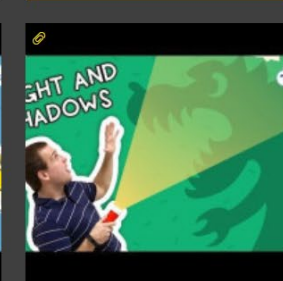
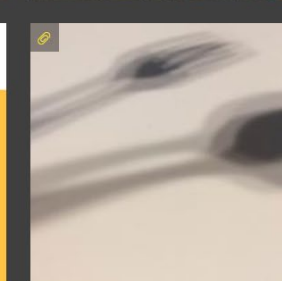
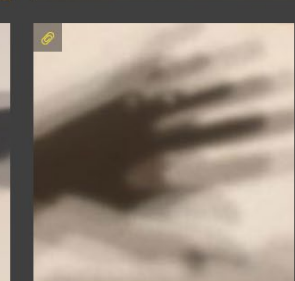

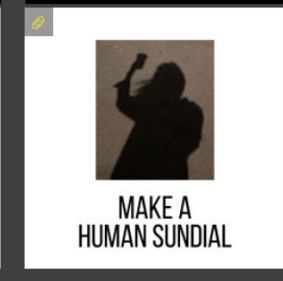
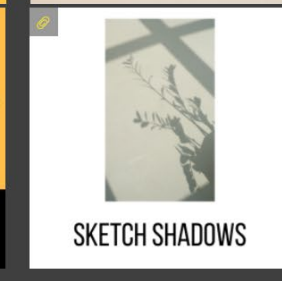
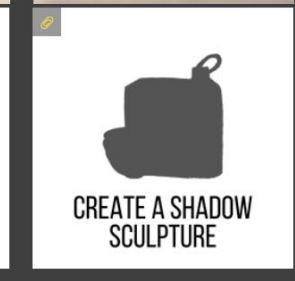
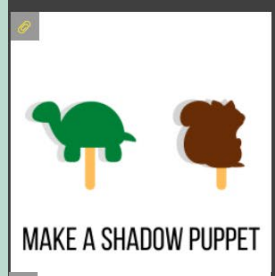
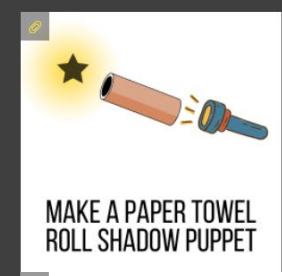







Each TMT includes:

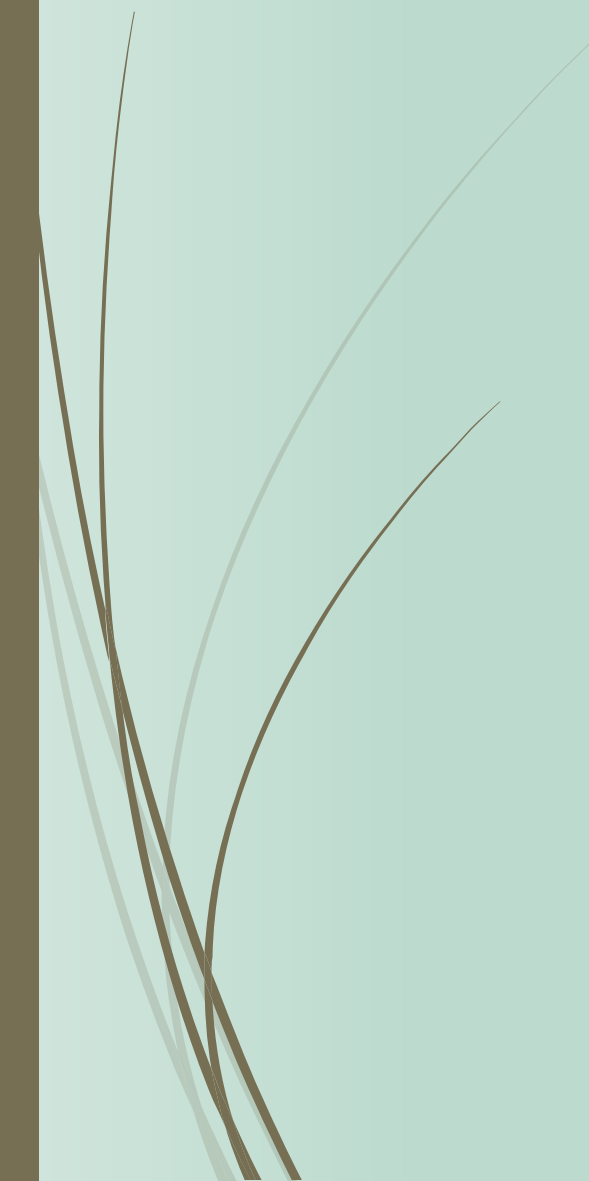
- Title page
- How to use the TMT – information about icons and how to proceed through the TMT
- Look or watch – images and videos with vocabulary and question prompts
- Play – activities that include instructions and a list of supplies related to the activities
- Read together – 3 books related to the topic with question prompts
- Additional activities and books – related to the TMT topic to promote further reading and conversation about the topic

# TMTs

The TMTs can be found at: <https://learninglab.si.edu/org/talk-with-me-toolkits>, or individually:

- *Air & Space: Can It Fly?* - <https://s.si.edu/tmt-fly>
- *Art: Colors, Shapes, and Lines* - <https://s.si.edu/tmt-colors>
- *Art: Light and Shadow* - <https://s.si.edu/tmt-shadow>
- *Me & My world: My Neighborhood* - <https://s.si.edu/tmt-neighborhood>
- *Music: Animal Tracks* - <https://s.si.edu/tmt-tracks>
- *Nature: Who Lives in the Soil?* - <https://s.si.edu/tmt-soil>

|  |  |   |   |  |   |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| <p><b>ART</b></p> <p><b>LIGHT &amp; SHADOWS</b></p> <p>ART: Light and Shadow<br/>Talk With Me Toolkit</p>  | <p><b>HOW TO USE</b></p> <p>Each image on this page is a resource. Click a resource to view it in detail. As you view each resource, use these buttons to interact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Click the Paperclip button to close or open activity information. Closing this information will make an image or video larger.</li> <li>Click the Info button to learn more about the resource (who made it or where it came from).</li> <li>Click the Zoom button to make an image larger.</li> <li>Click the Arrow buttons in the bottom navigation bar to move forward and backward in the toolkit.</li> <li>Click the Grid button in the bottom navigation bar to go back to the full toolkit.</li> </ul> | <p><b>L O O K</b></p> <p><b>FIND THE LIGHT AND SHADOWS</b></p>  |   |    |   |
| <p><b>WATCH: SOURCES OF LIGHT</b></p>  | <p><b>LIGHT SOURCES</b></p>    | <p><b>LIGHT AND SHADOWS</b></p>                                | <p><b>L O O K</b></p> <p><b>FIND THE SHADOWS</b></p>  |   |    |
| <p><b>PLAY AND EXPLORE</b></p> <p><b>SHADOWS</b></p> <p>Play and Explore: Shadows<br/>Talk With Me Toolkit</p>   | <p><b>PLAY WITH A FLASHLIGHT</b></p>   | <p><b>MAKE A HUMAN SUNDIAL</b></p>                             | <p><b>PLAY</b></p> <p><b>MAKE ART WITH LIGHT &amp; SHADOWS</b></p>  | <p><b>SKETCH SHADOWS</b></p>                                  | <p><b>CREATE A SHADOW SCULPTURE</b></p>                    |
| <p><b>MAKE A SHADOW PUPPET</b></p>                                     | <p><b>MAKE A PAPER TOWEL ROLL SHADOW PUPPET</b></p>   | <p><b>CREATE RAINBOW SUNCATCHER ART</b></p>                   | <p><b>PLAY WITH LIGHT, BLOCKS, AND SHADOWS</b></p>  | <p><b>READ TOGETHER</b></p> <p><b>MOONBEAR'S SHADOW</b></p>  | <p><b>READ TOGETHER</b></p> <p><b>SHADOW CHASERS</b></p>  |
| <p><b>READ TOGETHER</b></p> <p><b>SMOOT: A REBELLIOUS SHADOW</b></p>  | <p><b>MORE BOOKS</b></p>   | <p><b>MORE ACTIVITIES</b></p>                                | <p>Art: Light and Shadow - <a href="https://s.si.edu/tmt-shadow">https://s.si.edu/tmt-shadow</a></p>                                    |  |   |





# Strategies for Using the TMTs in Family Literacy Programs



# Manual

- Background
- *Talk with Me Toolkits* description and contents
- Tips for setting up and implementing the TMT session
- Encouraging use of the TMT at home



# Implementation Strategies

## Talk with Me Toolkit Session

- Develop a session plan/lesson plan for presenting the TMT
- Determine the number of slides, videos, activities, and books you will present to families. Typically, the slides, videos, 1 to 2 activities, and a book take 1.5 hours.
- Decide if each dyad receives a device or if you present as a group
- Most appropriate for the age group of 5- to 8-years of age. Can be adapted for other age groups





# Strategies for Adult Education

- Develop lesson plans based on the TMT topics (e.g., learning about soil)
- Print out the TMT questions and vocabulary to learn and for review to be prepared for the ILA session
- Explore how the website and TMT format work to support comfort with digital literacy



# Strategies for Parent Education

- Review the vocabulary and talk about how the words could be used at home (e.g., using the *TMT: Light and Shadow* vocabulary words of translucent)
- Discuss how important conversations and learning vocabulary are for language and literacy development
- Review strategies for vocabulary development
- Model and practice how to ask questions to further conversations (e.g., open ended questions)



# Strategies for Interactive Literacy Activities

- Provide examples of how the questions and prompts are meant as a springboard for deeper conversations
- Read the book with the caregivers and children to model interactive reading
- Decide on the activity or activities you want caregivers and children to do together and have the supplies on hand
- Choose a book from the three provided that is appropriate for the age-group attending your session

# Integrating AE, PE, and ILA

| Adult Education   | Parent Education  | Interactive Literacy Activity   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Find an article about light and shadow (e.g., <a href="https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/einstein/light/revolution-light">https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/einstein/light/revolution-light</a>)</li><li>▶ Warm up activity – Do you know about Albert Einstein?</li><li>▶ Pick out vocabulary words and discuss</li><li>▶ Teach a reading skill</li><li>▶ Read the article</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Discuss that children’s vocabulary development is an important reading skill</li><li>▶ Discuss the importance of questioning while reading (e.g., use of dialogic reading strategies)</li><li>▶ Practice asking questions while reading a book</li><li>▶ Introduce the TMT (digital learning)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Introduce the TMT and how to navigate the slides</li><li>▶ Emphasize the slides with questions and vocabulary words</li><li>▶ Engage with the TMT</li></ul> |



# Use the TMTs at Home

- Inform caregivers that TMTs are available online for use at home.
  - Provide a QR code or links to the TMTs
- Encourage families to read the additional books listed at the end of each TMT
- Encourage families to complete additional activities at home
  - Provide take-home bags with supplies and activity instructions for families to complete at home.



# IMLS Grant – Evaluation Tasks

- Evaluation and use of TMTs for 2 cohorts in 4 libraries
  - Cuyahoga County Public Library, Brooklyn Branch, Cleveland OH
  - Hillsboro City Library, Hillsboro TX
  - Middle Country Public Library, Centereach NY
  - York County Libraries, Martin Library, York PA



# IMLS Grant – Data Collected

- Caregiver pre- and post-survey
- Observation of the first and last TMT session
- Caregiver satisfaction survey with each TMT
- Librarian satisfaction survey with each TMT
- Caregiver focus group
- Librarian focus group and interviews



# Quantitative Findings

## Pre/Post Survey Comparison

After participating in the project:

➤ Cohort #1 significant increase in:

- Reading to children more frequently and for longer duration
- Engaged more frequently in family discussion during reading sessions

➤ Cohort #2 significant increase in:

- Activities where caregivers and children engage in literacy practices, such as writing alphabets, words
- Engaged in more frequent discussions together about the stories and topics they read together after completing a story.





# Quantitative Findings

## Pre/Post Survey Comparison

Cohort #1 and Cohort #2 comparison of pre- and post-survey

- Significant increase in the frequency of:
  - Caregivers reading to children
  - Doing art activities together
  - Interactive reading behaviors, such as stopping to ask children questions or children making comments and asking questions while reading.



# Qualitative Findings Overall

- Positive engagement with the TMTs, such as pointing at the slides, talking together, and asking questions.
  - “My child stayed interested and he was excited to come back every week.”
- Questions stimulated conversation and introduced new vocabulary.
- Caregivers enjoyed having the specific time set aside to interact with their children.



# Qualitative Findings Caregiver Views

- New topics and subjects introduced
  - “It was a good learning experience. There were a few things that I didn't know, so it was learning for myself as well as my son.”
  - “I think in each one that we did, there was something different that I wouldn't have personally taught my son, so that was cool. And like he said, stuff that I didn't know, vocabulary terms, I wouldn't have known how to explain videos, I wouldn't have known to show him.”



# Discussion & Questions



# THANK YOU!

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