

Using Family Literacy Programs to Combat the COVID-19 Education Slide

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Welcome and Introductions



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INSTITUTE
FOR THE STUDY
OF ADULT
LITERACY

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

ISAL: <https://ed.psu.edu/research-grants/centers-institutes/institute-study-adult-literacy>

Agenda

What is family literacy?

Family literacy during the pandemic

Defining the “Covid-slide” and understanding challenges

Interactive Literacy Activities and the COVID-slide

Moving forward....

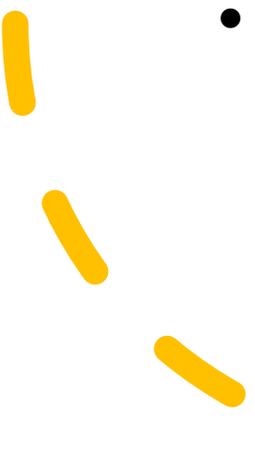
Family Literacy

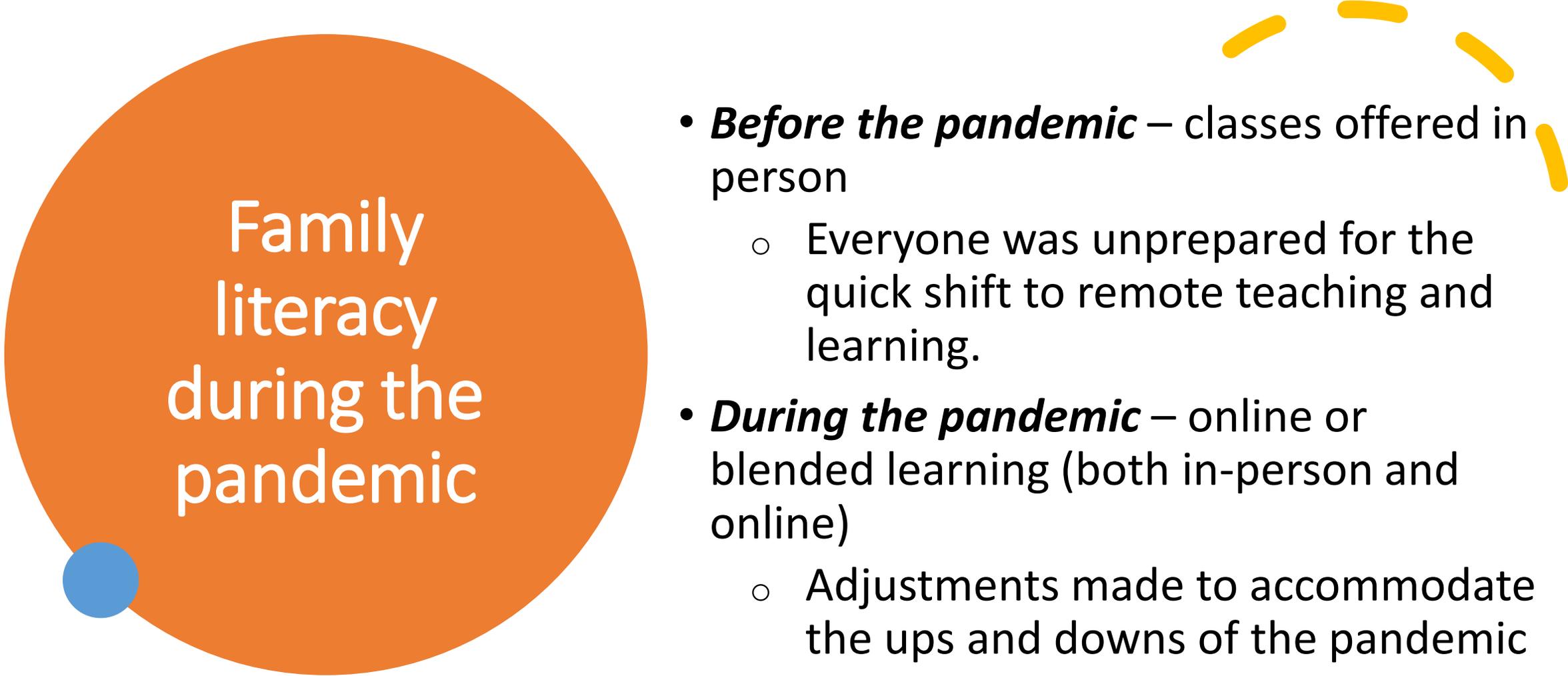
Family literacy based on Kenan's model of 4 components:

- Adult education or English Language Learning for adult learners
- Early childhood & school-age education
- Parent education
- Interactive literacy activities for the parent and child to do together



Importance of family literacy

- Targets families who need literacy, education, and language resources
 - Strategy that focuses on the whole family
 - Help adults work on their own educational growth while also:
 - ✓ learning about the development of their children,
 - ✓ connecting to schools and teachers, and
 - ✓ engaging in literacy activities with their children to support learning and development.
- 



Family literacy during the pandemic

- ***Before the pandemic*** – classes offered in person
 - Everyone was unprepared for the quick shift to remote teaching and learning.
- ***During the pandemic*** – online or blended learning (both in-person and online)
 - Adjustments made to accommodate the ups and downs of the pandemic
- ***After the pandemic*** – hyflex or blended
 - To better meet the needs of families



What has your experience with
remote instruction been?

Please share in-person and in the chat

Issues families faced during the pandemic

- Families unequipped and unprepared for quick shift to remote instruction
 - Inadequate digital access
 - Lack of knowledge about technology and computers
 - Limited understanding of what to do, how much to do, and how to support their child's learning
- Family schedules became complicated as families navigated the remote learning for adults and children
- In family literacy programs, adults struggled to keep up with their own learning while also supporting their children.

“COVID-slide”

- Like “summer slide”, reading and math skills decreased due to time away from the classroom
- Low-income children are more susceptible
- Digital and communication **challenges** were the primary reason

COVID-Slide: Digital Challenges

- Access to devices and internet difficult
- Survey by Pew Research Center, April 2020
 - Nearly 43% of low-income parents stated their children would use a cellphone to complete their homework
 - 40% did not have reliable internet
- Quality of remote instruction varied

Family Literacy and the COVID-Slide

Combating Digital Challenges

- Develop and/or continue programming that is accessible on various devices (tablets, smartphones, computers)
- Provide guidance about accessing computers, WIFI, internet services
- Provide digital devices and hot spots
- Assist families to access information to:
 - Develop and maintain relationships with teachers and school
 - Effectively use technology to strengthen the home-school partnership
 - Know how to stay on top of their children's assignments and learning
 - Understand the expectations of the schools
 - Access school resources, particularly to counter the Covid-Slide

- Difficulties communicating with teachers and schools increased
 - Connection issues
 - Technology
- If ELL, difficulty understanding the communication (written and verbal)
- Parents unsure of what lessons their children were learning, or how to support their children

COVID - Slide: Communication Challenges

Family Literacy and the COVID-Slide

Combating Communication Challenges

- Be proactive and do not wait for the families to ask for help
- Communication crucial to remind caregivers about upcoming remote and in-person classes, access to recorded classes, assignments or other announcements
- Be flexible and learn from families the best way to communicate – Texting? Reminder apps? Email? Facebook?



Other **ideas** to combat digital and communication challenges?

Adults in family literacy and Covid-Slide

- Adults also had challenges to keep up with their own educational goals AND their children's learning
- Strategy:
 - Contextualize lessons to address parent's needs
 - Example:
 1. Develop lessons for caregivers to practice how to access school and teacher websites
 2. Practice writing emails to teachers about their child's progress
 3. Watch and talk together about webinars from the school to support children's learning
 4. Explore and learn how to navigate education apps (this supports all FL components)

Interactive Literacy Activities can help combat the COVID-Slide

Interactive Literacy Activities (ILAs)

- Opportunities to extend learning in the home
- Can range from everyday activities using household items to playing structured games
- ILAs can occur in-person, hybrid, pre-recorded, or take-home

Interactive Literacy Activities can help combat the COVID-Slide

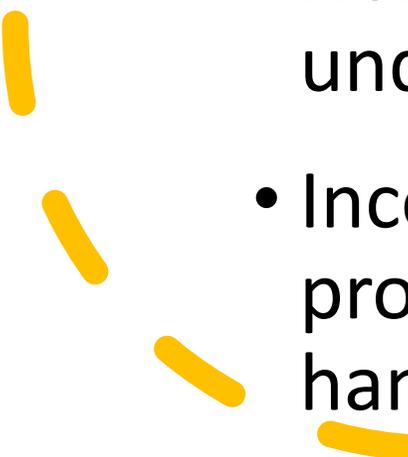
Promoting ILA

- Develop a supportive relationship with families
- Incorporate materials that are easily accessible for ILAs – items around the house.
- Explore educational apps together during ILA
- Make sure the purpose for the ILA is understood



Moving Forward....

Family Literacy programs can:

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- Support caregivers with information about how to support their children's learning
 - Help advocate for digital access and help caregivers understand digital resources
 - Incorporate more digital literacy into the curriculum and programming for families so they are better equipped to handle future challenges.

Discussion

More Information

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Practitioner's Brief:

McLean, E. & Clymer, C. (2021). *What we learned yesterday will guide us today: How family literacy programs can address the COVID-19 slide, Practitioner's Guide #8.*

Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy, Penn State University,

<https://ed.psu.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Practitioner%20Guide%20%238%20COVID%20slide%20Publisher%20Final.pdf>