Interactive Literacy Activities: Making Learning Fun for Families

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Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults Conference
Welcome and Introductions
Session objectives

• Review evidence about the value of ILAs to develop language and literacy for immigrant families
• Discuss connections between parent engagement and children’s academic success
• Outline key characteristics of ILAs
• Explore how to develop ILAs to support language and literacy development
• Discuss fundamentals of ILA implementation in family literacy program components
• Develop an ILA to take-home and use in the classroom
What is Family Literacy?

• Family literacy is designed to “integrate early childhood education, adult literacy (adult basic and secondary-level education and instruction for English Language learners), parenting education, and interactive parent and child literacy activities for low-income families” (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

• Core components
  • Adult Education (AE)
  • Early Childhood Education
  • Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA)
  • Parent Education (often a part of AE and ILA)
Value of family literacy for ELL Parents

- Parents can learn along with their children
- Enhances parents’ leadership, self-efficacy, and confidence
- Helps integrate immigrants/refugees who are excluded from school-based activities or aspects of U.S. society (ethnic, social, economic)
- Offers a place for parents to tackle topics that they identify as significant to their families
  - e.g. learning about educational systems or how to integrate with schools, while building English language and literacy skills.
Multilingualism is not a deficit (or a “barrier”), but a strength!
Commonly verbalized fears of multilingual parents

• Fear that child’s English (or dominant language) will be stunted or delayed

• Fear that child will be confused by having more than one language

• Fear that introducing a second language will delay language development

• Fear that a lack of focus on English will lead to a lack of opportunity for jobs/higher ed./ etc. in the future
Positive impacts of multilingualism

• Job-related advantages  (Agirdag, 2014; Fradd & Boswell, 1999; Tienda & Neidert, 1984)

• Related to higher grades and standardized test scores  (Callahan & Gandara, 2014; Lee, 2002)

• Lower dropout rates  (Rumberger & Larson, 1998)

• Higher self-esteem  (Phinney, Romero, Nave, & Huang, 2001)

• Stronger sense of linguistic and cultural identity  (Engman, 2018; Pigott & Karoche, 2005)

• Positive attitudes toward own ethnic groups  (Grin, Sfreddo & Vaillancourt, 2010; Tse, 2000)
Therefore...

Support the use of multilingual literacies when creating ILAs!
Ways to make classroom and home environments multilingual

- Greetings
- Songs
- Rules and Routines charts
- Labels
  - Book baskets
  - Common things in the classroom and at home
- Supplies
- Math manipulatives
Multilingual wordwalls
Multilingual versions of books
Multilingual digital language tools

• Online Multilingual Picture Dictionaries (ex: https://pdictionary.com/italian/)

• GoogleTranslate

• WordHippo

• Duolingo
Interactive Literacy Activities or ILA
Why do we do ILA?

• ILA supports parents and children learning language and literacy skills together.
• Parents become engaged and involved in their children’s educational development and achievement.
• Parents learn how children grow and learn, particularly with language and literacy skills.
• Parents learn ideas and strategies to help children at home.
• ILAs build on the idea that parents are the child’s first teacher.
Research about parent involvement

- Literacy activities at home positively influence development in oral language, vocabulary, print awareness, comprehension, and children’s views about reading.

- The amount of time spent reading at home is a major predictor of student success in reading, literacy development, and overall learning.

- There are consistent findings regarding the positive effects of parent involvement on children’s academic and reading achievement.

- High levels of parent involvement (attending parent-teacher conferences, volunteering, going to school events) predict gains in literacy.
Fundamentals of early literacy development

• Learning to read and write begins before formal schooling
• Literacy has a function
• A strong oral language foundation is critical
• Learning is best through active engagement and constructing knowledge
Children’s language and literacy development

- Oral language
- Alphabetic principles
- Vocabulary
- Fluency & comprehension (including background knowledge)
- Print awareness & writing
Basic ILA ideas for each skill

• **Oral language** – playing with silly words, reading poems, emphasizing beginning/end sounds of words, playing with rhymes

• **Alphabetic principles** - pointing out letters in the environment, having a letter “of the day,” developing a book of letters

• **Vocabulary** – engaging in conversations, doing shared reading, asking questions, using varied words, engaging in imaginary play
• **Fluency & comprehension** – reading aloud together, talking about past events, rereading stories, talking about events in the story

• **Print awareness & writing** – writing letters to each other, making grocery lists, finding a family member to pen pal with, using writing in imaginary play
Integrating parent education into ILA

• Parent education is a time to discuss and reflect on the family, including child development, parenting skills, health and nutrition, communication, etc.

• Try to develop ILA activities that can integrate these topics (i.e., an ILA about making healthy food)
Different ways to do Interactive Literacy Activities

• **Face-to-face**: introduce activity and then have time for parent and child to work/play together.

• **Hybrid of adult education/parent education and take-home ILA**: introduce a lesson in adult education and explain and model the activity and the parents’ take home the activity to do with the child.

• **Take-home ILA**: briefly introduce the activity about how to do it, then the entire activity is done at home.
Interactive Literacy Activity sequence

• Prepare the activity:
  • Use a template,
  • Identify the objective and age-group,
  • Determine the time-frame for each part,
  • Gather the resources/materials, and
  • Spend time prepping.

• Explain and model the activity to parents. Parents should model the activity as well.

• Have parents and children engage in the activity together.

• Discuss or debrief the activity’s successes and challenges.
Example of a face-to-face ILA: Beginning sound sticks A to Z

• Prepare the activity
• Explain and model the activity
• Allow time for parents and children to do the activity
• Debrief
Hybrid of AE/PE and ILA

Take-Home ILA Lesson with Optional AE/PE Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Materials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic: Preventing the Summer Slide through Comics</td>
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<td><strong>Objectives:</strong> At the end of the lesson, the caregiver will be able to:</td>
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<td>• explain Summer Slide.</td>
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<td>• detail three strategies to prevent a reading slide.</td>
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<td>• describe how comics help children learn.</td>
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<td>• create a comic with their child and reflect on the experience.</td>
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<td>Total Lesson</td>
<td><strong>Teacher Prep for the Activity:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Time:</td>
<td>1. Read all articles thoroughly and prepare any comments or examples to</td>
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<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>clearly demonstrate. Also consider vocabulary or phases that might be</td>
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<td>+ 15</td>
<td>be unfamiliar to caregivers and how to best present.</td>
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<tr>
<td>minutes</td>
<td>2. Print <em>Three Ways to Prevent Summer Slide</em> article and *Create a</td>
<td>1. Scholastic articles – <em>Three Ways to Prevent Summer Slide, Why Use Comics with Kids? How Comics Strips Help Kids Read and Learn, Create a Comic Strip</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>debrief</td>
<td>Comic Strip* handout.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(during</td>
<td>3. Watch <em>Kids Create Comics</em> (1-7) videos.</td>
<td>2. Variety of writing utensils: Pencils, pens, markers, crayons, colored pencils</td>
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<td>next class)</td>
<td>4. Create a comic sample.</td>
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<td><strong>Note:</strong> All referenced articles and videos are listed below in the</td>
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<td>Essential Resources section. It is imperative that you review</td>
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<td>everything before beginning the lesson.</td>
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<td>Approx. 45 minutes</td>
<td>I. Introduce the activity (before)</td>
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<td>minutes</td>
<td>Today we are going to talk about what schools refer to as the Summer</td>
<td>1. White board</td>
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<td>Slide. Have you heard this term before? What does it mean to you?</td>
<td>2. Dry erase markers</td>
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<td>1. Define Summer Slide. You can also draw a playground slide to</td>
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The “Summer Slide”

START of summer

Without Practice. Reading Skills Decline

END of Summer
Connecting AE and PE

• PE:
  • Activity done in connection to an article on the “summer slide”
  • Gave an example of one strategy parents can use to prevent the summer slide from taking place

• AE:
  • After creating the comics, ask learners to read comics to focus on pronunciation
  • Together, look through the wording for grammar and spelling
  • Possible future lessons include based on these comics could include:
    • Present simple tense subject/verb agreement
    • Writing questions with negative and positive answers
    • Capital letters and punctuation for full sentences/questions
Take-home ILA

• Casual to structured take-home ILA – a continuum
• Use a template and have a document for parents to follow
• Introduce the activity for parents
  • What are the objectives, materials, and timeframe for the activity?
  • Explain and model how to do the activity
  • Provide a document that outlines with pictures or easy to follow instructions exactly what parents are to do at home
• Provide a reflection sheet about the activity that also documents time to do the activity
### Three-letter (CVC) Words

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Example of take-home ILA: Alphabet Letter-Word Game
• Use the blank template with the topic *Learning new words*!
• Examine the objectives and think about an activity you might do to meet part or all of the objective.

• Think about…..
  - How much time will the entire ILA take? By section?
  - What is the target child age for the activity? If there are varied ages, how do you adapt the activity?
  - What materials do you need?
  - How much prep does the teacher have to do?
  - What questions will you ask the parent in the debrief?
  - Think of home activities related to the objectives to extend learning.
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