EVALUATION OF AN INTERGENERATIONAL MODEL
TO IMPROVE FAMILY LITERACY

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CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research was to determine the impact and effectiveness of an intergenerational instructional model to improve family literacy. The particular model studied was home-based. A trained volunteer tutor met and worked with both the adult learner (in this study, all were mothers) and the children, one of whom must have been five years of age or younger. This study evaluated the program using standardized tests and self-reported surveys.

Justification of the Study

Between 1980-1990 educators and policy makers within the field of adult literacy recognized the critical role parents play in a child’s literacy development (First Teachers, 1989). Reading aloud to preschool-aged children is the single most important factor for later success in learning to read (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Chomsky, 1972; McCormick, 1977). Poor reading skills are passed from one generation to the next. Parents with low literacy skills cannot read to their children. Often
they are willing but simply do not possess the skills to help (Nickse & Englander, 1985). Intergenerational literacy programs attempt to intervene and stop the cycle of illiteracy. The assumption is that both parent and child will benefit from teaching the parent to read to the child (Fox, 1986; Handel & Goldsmith, 1988, 1989; Nickse & Englander, 1985; Nickse, Speecher & Buchek, 1988; Nickse, 1990; Quintero, 1987). Most programs focus on parents and preschool or primary-aged children. The concept of family and intergenerational programs seems promising but a lack of summative research exists. Simple research designs can be found, but data collection is difficult because the illiterate adult population is very mobile. The limited numbers of adult participants prevent the establishment of control and experimental groups. There is also a genuine fear that testing participants in literacy programs will discourage them from joining these programs. Consequently, there is a great need for well-developed, systematic, long-term research (Nickse, 1990).

Definition of Terms

Adult Learner - an adult 16 years of age or older who reads below the 7th grade level and enrolls in an adult literacy or family literacy program to improve his/her reading.
Family Literacy - a form of literacy instruction that targets the adult learner and his/her children. The reading pair is the parent and child. It is assumed that when the parent’s literacy skills increase, the whole family benefits because parents become better able to encourage the development of their own children’s literacy skills.

Intergenerational Literacy - a form of literacy instruction designed to increase the reading skills of both adults and children. One essential component is the adult reading aloud to the child.

Tutor - a trained volunteer who meets regularly with the adult learner and provides individual reading instruction.

Hypotheses Under Study

H₁: Negatively stated: No significant effect will result from participation in the Families for Literacy Program (no significant difference will exist between the pre- and post-tests and surveys) for either the mothers or their children. This will be determined by administering at the beginning of the program and six months later a word recognition test and two surveys to the mothers participating in the program. A picture vocabulary test will be administered to the preschool-aged children at the beginning of the program and six months later.
**H₂:** An intergenerational approach to literacy will have a positive impact on adult learners' reading ability. This will be determined by administering a word recognition test and a reading inventory to the mothers at the beginning of the program and six months later.

**H₃:** The preschool-aged children of mothers enrolled in an intergenerational reading program will show positive gains in pre-reading skills. This will be determined by administering a picture vocabulary test to the children at the beginning of the program and six months later.

**H₄:** The mothers' attitudes will change toward reading and reading to children. This will be determined administering an attitudinal survey at the beginning of the program and six months later.

**H₅:** The mothers' behaviors will change to improve the literacy environment and to increase literacy activities at home. This will be determined by administering a behavioral survey at the beginning of the program and six months later.

**Delimitations**

The participants were recruited from a Family Literacy Program in a multi-cultural, urban community and were limited to parents who had at least one preschool-aged child (ages 3-5). Seven adult literacy students and eight
of their children participated in this study.

Methodology

1. The following materials were developed:
   a. A self-reported survey instrument. The objective of the survey was to determine if attitudes and behaviors change as a result of participating in a family literacy program.
   b. Informational Summary Form that explained the evaluation/research project to the participants.
   c. An informed consent form. Adult learners who agreed to participate and have their child/children participate in the evaluation/research project signed an agreement form.

2. The following published standardized tests were selected:
   a. Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT), (Slosson, 1963), Slosson Educational Publications.
   b. Bader Reading and Language Assessment Inventory (Bader) (Bader, 1983), MacMillan Publishing Company.
3. The surveys were pilot-tested by the researcher at a family literacy program in the East Bay Area in Northern California. The surveys were revised after pilot-testing.

4. Fifteen families initially agreed to participate and each signed an informed consent form. A total of seven families eventually completed the pre- and post-evaluation instruments. All evaluation materials were collected during the field-testing period.

5. Conclusions were drawn from these evaluation materials.

**Expected Outcomes**

It was expected that reading test score results would improve for both the mothers and children after participation for six months in the program. It was also expected that maternal attitudes toward reading would become more positive and that more behaviors promoting literacy in the home environment would result.

**Organization of the Project**

The organization of this project is as follows: Chapter 1, a statement of the problem and purpose of the study; Chapter 2, review of the related research; Chapter 3, plan and procedure of the project; Chapter 4, evaluation of
the study; Chapter 5, summary and conclusions, followed by references and appendices.
CHAPTER II
Review of the Literature and Other Related Research

This review of the literature and related research regarding intergenerational reading instruction in adult literacy programs is divided into four major sections. The first section defines adult literacy. The second section examines the reasons that motivate adults to enter literacy programs, with particular focus on the role of being a parent. The third section reviews the benefits of reading aloud to children. The fourth section explores various aspects of intergenerational literacy projects for adult learners and their children.

Definitions

It is difficult to define adult literacy. The complexity of the reading process, learner goals, and the cultural context of reading make a universally acceptable definition of literacy impossible. Indeed, a wide range of definitions exists as reported in Taber (1987). An immediate consequence is the difficulty of trying to educate an adult to become literate if researchers and educators cannot agree on what constitutes literacy (Bowren, 1987).

Nevertheless, Park (1981) states that most definitions of literacy fall within two types of
measurements: absolute and relative. Absolute goals can be thought of as external, community, and educator-made. Students enrolled in an Adult Basic Education class would most likely follow a curriculum developed by a teacher who determines the set of competencies students need to accomplish. On the other hand, relative goals are internal and self-made. These goals are learner-centered and help the student function in everyday life situations. The absolute definition includes grade equivalents and achievement on standardized tests. The relative definition, which is most often considered functional, is learner-centered with measurement self-created.

Cultural Context

Johnson (1985) cites three basic causes of illiteracy: (a) an ineffective education; (b) an intergenerational problem where illiteracy is passed from generation to generation; and (c) the increased demands and rising expectations that exist in our advanced technological society. This final cause can be thought of as cultural context. Several studies (Goodman, 1985; Harman, 1984; Northcutt, 1974) refer to cultural context as a necessary factor in understanding and defining literacy.

Northcutt (1974) views literacy as meaningful only within the context of culture. One can be literate in one
culture and illiterate in another. Harman (1984) argues that to have functional literacy skills in a particular society, one must have enough prior knowledge of that culture to be able to read for meaning, because literacy is situational and culturally-specific. Harman maintains that the high degree of functional illiteracy within the United States is probably due to cultural pluralism. Goodman (1985) extends and adds a twist to this concept. He sees present literacy education as based on elitist and narrow goals where literates are custodians of the great thoughts and literature. He says, "literacy education must abandon this custodial, elitist role, take on a populist stance, and widen its perspectives so that it can support the fullest uses of literacy by the widest number of people" (p. 389). Literacy education should have as its goal full participation of the population in all aspects of society. Goodman maintains that everyday functional aspects of literacy are important. Educators should not turn literacy into something abstract. Rather, it should emerge from the social-cultural context of everyday use.

Extending the Definition

Heathington (1987) suggests that the various definitions of literacy should address also the affective domain. The adult's feelings about reading are an essential
part of the definition. Adult learners usually have very negative feelings: poor self-esteem, fear, embarrassment, and frustration. Activities surrounding reading are not pleasurable. Understanding this factor can sensitize educators to develop better reading programs.

Fox (1986) sees literacy as a "continuum of undereducation" (p. 1) beginning with those who cannot read and write to those who have graduated from high school. Adults along this continuum can have very different literacy needs. Fox questions current literacy programs that he believes are based on the simplistic supposition that learning to read will solve illiterate people's problems. Instead he favors a support system that offers a wide range of services and assistance to the adult.

Smith (1977) agrees that a specific reference point for defining literacy is not possible. A hierarchy exists within the concept of literacy. Smith cautions that "the inability to read should not be confused with functional illiteracy. Persons who can read to some degree may not be able to read well enough to function" (p. 137). One may read and achieve some degree of literacy along the continuum, but not achieve functional literacy. Classifying one as literate or illiterate becomes impossible.
Measuring Literacy

One of the by-products of our technological society is the need for measurement. Evaluating functional literacy is not an easy task. James Ayrer (1977) constructed a test to measure functional literacy for a school district in Philadelphia. He states: "everyone knows what functional literacy is but no one can tell you" (p. 699). This lack of agreement about a definition of functional literacy becomes a frustrating problem.

Northcutt (1974) identified and later tested six general knowledge areas where adults must achieve minimal competency to function in everyday life: occupational knowledge, consumer economics, health, community resources, government and law, and transportation. Ayrer (1977) combined these general knowledge areas with four learned skills areas: following directions, using references, filling in forms, and gaining information. Both Northcutt and Ayrer used only factual questions. Ayrer states the "analysis of the difficult items in the tryout version of this test showed that students in the tryout sample found inferential and purpose items to be much harder than factual ones" (p. 701). He also points out that functional literacy became identified as minimal competency. Consequently, acceptable and current literacy tests measure specific
skills as opposed to classifying adults as literate or illiterate.

Motivating Factors for Entering A Literacy Program

In her behavioral study of adult beginning readers, Schumacher (1983) found that anxiety-frustration serves as the primary motivation for adult learners. This finding is confirmed by studies by Rosow (1988) and Smith-Burke (1987). Smith-Burke discovered that adults joined literacy projects for job-related reasons. However, Rosow maintains that self-esteem and not economics was the most common reason given. Undoubtedly, concerns about employment and poor self-image contribute directly to anxiety-frustration. Other motivating reasons are self-improvement, achieving independence, and ending embarrassment.

Children as a Motivator

Researchers are beginning to discover that family and children are a subtle but increasingly recognizable reason for participation in adult literacy programs (Heathington, 1987; Heathington, Bosner & Salter, 1984; Maclay & Askov, 1988; Rosow, 1988; Smith-Burke, 1987). Indications of this finding are promising for both recruiting and retaining adult learners. In a project using computers to teach adults 1,000 high frequency and function
words, Maclay and Askov (1988) found that 18 percent of the participants were interested in the program to help their children. In fact when both the parents and "children used the software, the children showed the most marked changes in attitude and behavior in school" (p. 25).

According to Heathington, Bosner, and Salter (1984), adults with children had a better retention pattern in their study compared to those who had no children. The researchers based their data on adult beginning readers who participated in a literacy tutoring program through the University of Tennessee. Attrition was high overall but of the 70 who began and had schoolchildren, 20 completed approximately 50 hours of instruction. Of the 171 adults who began and who had no children, only 28 finished 50 hours of instruction.

Smith-Burke (1987) found children mentioned frequently in interviews with adult learners. Making one's child proud that mom or dad could read contributed significantly to parental self-esteem. Parents also wanted to read fluently to their children without stumbling over words.

Heathington (1987) pointed out that the inability to read concerned adults in their role as parents. Several adult remedial readers felt that their poor reading skills would adversely affect their children. They were
embarrassed to have family and friends discover their reading problem. Some indicated a nagging fear that their children would ask them to read a book aloud and they would not be able to read it.

**Benefit of Reading Aloud to Children**

Reading aloud to preschool-aged children is the single most important factor for later success in learning to read (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Chomsky, 1972; McCormick, 1977). In fact children whose parents read aloud to them performed as well on early reading tasks at school as those children whose parents had been trained and used reading workbook activities at home (Brzeinski, 1964).

Teale (1984) points out the different ways of reading books and helping children interact with the printed word. One needs to look at the entire nature of the event, including the affective domain. The interaction between parent and child is far more important than simply the number of books read and the amount of time spent reading.

Chomsky (1972) investigated the linguistic stages of language development between ages six and ten. When comparing three young children with similar ages and IQs, she found that the number of books a mother could recall from her own childhood became one differentiating measure of
linguistic stage. In other words, a mother helped promote her child's linguistic development by remembering books from her own childhood. This finding surprised the researchers until they realized that:

The mother who recalls certain books with pleasure from her own childhood may well transmit this enjoyment to her child very early on when she reads to him. We may speculate that this child learns to assign a special role to reading, for what his mother enjoys doing with him, he quite naturally comes to enjoy and recognize as a valued activity. (p. 28)

As every parent knows, children often request the same book repeatedly. Teale (1984) suggests that this "book reading experience is one way of building familiarity with certain texts which, in turn, breeds anything but contempt for those texts" (p. 116).

Oral Language and the Written Word

General knowledge and insight gained from the child's own experiences as well as from those of others provide a background of information important for reading. Simply having a variety of enriching experiences is not enough. Discussing these experiences with parents maximizes the benefits.

Snow (1983) found that oral discussions between mother and child become important. The mother questions about a past event and the child shares remembrance of the experience. The child creates an internal picture.
Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson (1985) emphasize the importance of constructing meaning from such events. Children who have extended conversations at home that make them reflect upon experience learn to construct meaning from events. They have a subsequent advantage in learning to read" (p. 23).

Snow (1983) believes that a child's understanding of decontextualized language and literacy skills are important to success in reading. Literacy activities are those associated with the printed word. These, she feels can often be acquired at school. However, "the skill of using language in a decontextualized way relies more heavily on experiences only home can provide" (p. 187). The child develops the ability to think abstractly. He operates in the here-and-now (contextualized language) but can begin to think of events as remote and distant (decontextualized language). Reading aloud or telling stories to a child familiarizes the child with decontextualized language. He begins to understand that the printed word is different than the spoken word, both in form and context. He also begins to use language to discuss printed stories and books.

The discussion that goes along with reading aloud to a child can be as important as the actual story. Children achieved better in school if their parents asked questions that required thinking and related the stories to events
experienced by the child (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985).

Role of Socioeconomic Background

The socioeconomic background of a family affects a preschool child's orientation toward reading (Chomsky, 1972; Johnson, 1985; Teale, 1986; Snow, 1983). Children from middle-class backgrounds have traditionally been better prepared for school compared to children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This is especially true with today's pluralistic society and high rates of illiteracy in lower socioeconomic groups. Nickse (1990) points out how understandable it is that families burdened with poor economic conditions and all the accompanying problems find reading to children a low priority.

Nevertheless, Teale (1984) found children whose parents did not read to them during the preschool years, yet became better than average readers. Johnson (1985) agrees with Teale but sees a problem developing as the child grows older. When children from a low socioeconomic background are properly taught, they can perform as well as middle-class children for the first three years "but then begin to decelerate, falling steadily behind. What is missing is language, vocabulary, and the cognitive structures necessary for interpreting texts" (p. 3).
Clearly, teaching a child to read is critical to his personal and academic development. However, if a child’s parents are illiterate and from a low socioeconomic background, the child is at risk. The youngster may learn to read at school, but without an early foundation for higher-level interpretation of texts, reading ability can easily plateau at functional or minimal competency.

**Intergenerational Approach to Literacy**

Poor reading skills are passed from one generation to the next. Parents with low literacy skills cannot read to their children. These adults may be willing but unable to give academic support to their children. They simply do not possess the skills to help (Nickse & Englander, 1985).

Intergenerational programs are an intervention concept and target both the adult and the child. The assumption is that both parent and child will benefit from teaching the parent to read to the youngster (Fox, 1986; Handel & Goldsmith, 1988, 1989; Nickse, 1990; Nickse & Englander, 1985; Nickse, Speicher, & Buchek, 1988; Quintero, 1987). Most programs focus on parents of preschool or primary-aged children.

Nearly a decade ago, Raim (1980) created a reading club in an inner-city elementary school using parents as tutors. The club met during the school year for two hours
once a week. For the first hour parents were taught and rehearsed reading strategies and skills. During the second hour they worked with their children using the strategies, materials, and skills practiced during the first hour. Although the purpose of the club was to help improve the children’s reading attitudes and test scores, the unexpected and largest gains in reading were made by the parents. This model in New York serves either consciously or unconsciously as a prototype for more recent intergenerational models.

At present basically two models exist: parent only and parent/child together. Handel and Goldsmith (1988) and Nickse and Englander (1985) have constructed programs according to the first model. Quintero (1987) and Hayes (1989) describe programs according to the second model. Maclay and Askov (1988) report on a flexible program using either model according to the desire and convenience of the adult participants. Since the intergenerational concept is new, the unique features of each published program are highlighted in terms of curriculum design, recruitment strategies, and results.

University Students As Tutors of Adult Learners

As reported by Nickse and Englander (1985) and Nickse, Speicher, and Buchek (1988), Boston University began an intergenerational adult education and reading program in
1983, Collaborations for Literacy, which concluded in 1988. The program employed students through the work-study program from Boston University as literacy tutors for adult learners. After training, adults were tutored one-to-one with lessons using a four-step plan (demonstration; guided practice; independent practice; evaluation). The tutor modeled lessons for the parent to later use with the child and then observed the parent working with the child. Literature and activities focused on books and videotapes from the Reading Rainbow series on PBS. Collaboration for Literacy also held literacy events or socials to encourage comradery and interaction. In addition, the tutors received weekly inservice instruction and were observed while working with the adult learners during the weekly sessions. The program was five to eight months long with each tutor/adult pair meeting two to three hours weekly.

Recruitment focused on parents with children in federally funded Chapter 1 reading programs. A school-based coordinator, with contacts in the community, informed families of the program and encouraged them to participate.

Nickse, Speicher and Buchek (1988) reported that retention in the program far surpassed the national average. The researchers retained 73.3 percent of participants while the figure after one year of instruction is 30 - 50 percent for adult basic education nationwide. "Results seemed to
indicate that reading gains . . . on vocabulary and comprehension increase as a factor of the number of hours of tutoring" (p. 638). Improvement was also noted by the staff in the attitude of the whole family as a learning unit.

Community College Setting

New York City Technical College developed the Parent Readers Program to help improve the reading skills of community college students who were also parents (Handel & Goldsmith, 1988). Although participants were enrolled in developmental reading courses, they were literate but "lack[ed] the analytic skills and store of background knowledge needed of college level work" (p. 251). Children’s literature was considered an excellent vehicle for teaching adults reading comprehension strategies. Instructors modeled reading strategies and adult learners practiced with each other in pairs. In addition, instructors presented adult books related to the theme.

The program recruited students during the pilot phase from developmental reading classes. So many students responded that recruitment efforts were curtailed. Of the 30 students who attended the first workshop, 22 came to the second workshop. About 80 children were positively affected by the pilot program.

After completing the program, participants continued
reading to their children. Literature books were borrowed during and after the workshops from the program. Participants realized the educational value of reading aloud to their children. Some had incorporated comprehension strategies into storybook time. "These students became, to our eyes, no longer the burdened remedial student but, in demeanor and action, competent, lively adults" (p. 255).

Family Centered Program

As described by Quintero (1987) a non-traditional literacy program was started in El Paso, Texas. Because of adult learners’ inability or unwillingness to participate in a traditional classroom setting, an innovative approach was used. Both adults and children would meet together in the same class.

A five-step curriculum plan was developed and each session focused on a specific theme. During the initial inquiry phase, activities encouraged the use of oral language skills. Instructors phrased open-ended questions. Each family then gathered as a team for a hands-on learning activity and a language experience project. The entire group then listened to the storybook demonstration, which was directed to the children and involved them in reading comprehension strategies. Each parent-child team then chose a home activity to extend the theme of the class. The
program ran for 22 weeks and met once a week.

Initial recruitment proved difficult. Mass media including radio, television, and newspaper was used. Word-of-mouth proved the most effective means of enrolling adults. "The project staff speculated that perhaps the trust necessary to participate could only be transferred in this manner" (p. 9).

It is generally acknowledged that adults learn on a more abstract level than do children. However, Quintero (1985) discovered: that the adults not only enjoyed the concrete learning activities, but seemed to show greater improvement in literacy skills. These adults have been able to fulfill learning needs that they have on a holistic level in order to further their own literacy developments. (p. 32-33)

Adults also began to experience a connection between oral language and the written word. Consequently their own literacy development improved. These findings seem to correspond to Chall's (1983) long-held belief stated by Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson (1985), that both children and adult readers experience the same stages of progression.

The Kenan Trust Family Literacy Project

Hayes (1989) reported on the most comprehensive and
ambitious family literacy program, the Kenan Trust Literacy Project, which first started in March, 1988 in Kentucky. The Kenan Model provides both preschool education for the children and literacy education for the parents. The program is full-time and each site is staffed by an adult education teacher, a preschool teacher, and a teacher's aide. During the morning adults participate in individualized literacy instruction. The children (3 and 4 year olds) attend a preschool program that uses the High/Scope curriculum.

Families are recruited through word of mouth and through home visits to known prospects. Brochures, fliers, public service announcements, and presentations to social service agencies encourage interest and participation in the program.

Evaluation methods and the research findings are compiled by project staff. In addition, evaluation consultants observe in the classrooms and interview the teachers both at mid-year and year's end. The consultants also meet with the parents both individually and as a group at the end of the year.

Extensive data have been collected on the Kenan Trust Family Project. After completing the program, adults felt a greater sense of control over their lives and made substantial gains in three academic areas: reading,
language, and mathematics. Parents also demonstrated more patience and understanding with the needs of their children.

Before beginning the program all of the children experienced difficulty functioning socially in a group setting. Children who attended regularly improved their behavior at school. "All parents and staff described important changes in language usage, independence of actions, decision-making capability and decision behavior, and in the pre-academic performance of their children" (p. 18).

Intergenerational Learning Using a Computer

Maclay and Askov (1988) described a unique intergenerational program using computer instruction. The courseware was developed for adult learners in Pennsylvania. The purpose was to teach 1,000 high frequency and function words using a whole word approach and, consequently, expand the adults' vocabulary.

Learning models included parent only, both parents, parent and child/children, or both parents and child/children. Interaction with the computer was essentially solitary except for consultation with the instructor before and after working on the computer.

The computer learning activities were opened to the parents of children participating in Chapter 1 programs.
Chapter 1 teachers contacted the parents using a variety of methods. Initially 92 parents tested for the program and 52 finished the required 20 hours of instruction.

Results were impressive. "The experimental group had gained more than one year in reading level in only 20 hours of instruction time; traditional programs usually take 50 to 100 hours to make comparable gains" (p. 24). Although children were not required to participate in the computer learning aspect of the program, it was hoped that children would benefit indirectly by seeing their parents' new interest in learning to read. This would promote a more enthusiastic attitude toward school. "Prior to the parental involvement in the program, these children were in school an average of 88 days out of 100; after parental involvement, they were in school 95 days out of 100" (p. 24).

In the models where the children participated in the program, there was more apt to be a change in attendance pattern and attitude toward school. Children could work on the computer with their parent or parents for certain parts of the lesson. They established a mutual support system. The most effective model was the whole family. Although this group was the most difficult to schedule, the children received a strong message about the value of education.
Conclusion

This review of the research and expert opinion on intergenerational reading instruction examined the various definitions of literacy. It also described the motivations for adults to enter literacy programs. Although little consensus exists regarding a definition of literacy, experts agree about the challenge of recruiting and retaining adults in literacy programs. Research shows that adults often are motivated to enter literacy projects because of the indirect benefits for their children.

The research reveals a strong correlation between reading aloud to preschool-aged children and their future success in learning how to read.

Intervention programs that address the intergenerational problem of illiteracy were examined. The literature suggests that both the adult learner and the child can benefit from these programs, especially with the supportive involvement of the entire family. Parental reading skills improve as they learn literacy-related activities to share with their children. This increases parents’ self-esteem and an awareness of the importance of their participation in their children’s education.
CHAPTER III
Plan and Procedure of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects on mothers and their children who participated for approximately six months in an intergenerational instructional model to improve family literacy. The researcher developed an attitudinal survey and a behavioral survey to measure qualitative changes toward reading. Quantitative changes were measured using the Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT) and the Bader Reading and Language Inventory (Bader) for the adults and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) for the children.

Chronology of the Study

The following steps were taken to complete the study:

1. Select a test population.
2. Prepare attitudinal and behavioral survey instruments.
3. Choose two data gathering tests - one for the mothers and one for the children.
4. Conduct a pilot study using the surveys.
5. Obtain permission from the IRB at California State University, Hayward.

6. Obtain permission from families who wish to participate in the study.

7. Administer the tests and surveys.

8. Mothers and children participate in the Families for Literacy Program.

9. Administer the same tests and surveys approximately six months after beginning the Families for Literacy Program.

Description of the Materials

Tests.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - Revised (PPVT-R) was administered to the preschool-aged children to determine their ability to identify picture vocabulary. The children were tested using two forms (L and M) and alternate forms were used for pre- and post-testing. The Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT) was administered to the mothers to determine their ability to identify and pronounce words. The Bader Reading and Language Inventory (Bader) is an informal reading inventory designed specifically for adults. The test determines instructional level using graded reading passages. The adult literacy program routinely administers this test for diagnosis of reading problems and tracking the progress the adults make in reading.
Surveys.

Two surveys were developed to measure attitudes and behaviors toward reading (Appendix A and B). The attitudinal survey measured viewpoints toward reading in four areas: personal reading, reading to children, library usage, and other literacy-related activities. The behavioral survey measured actions taken by families in three areas: reading to children, library usage, and other literacy related activities.

Description and Selection of the Population

The study was conducted among participants beginning a Family Literacy Program. The setting was multi-cultural and urban in Northern California. Fourteen families originally agreed to participate in the study. Of this group, seven mothers and eight children (one mother had two children) completed the post-evaluation. The other families withdrew for a variety of reasons (i.e. moving, new baby, divorce, and/or other pressing family commitments). All families completing the evaluation were bilingual, speaking both English and Spanish. However, the literacy program activities were in English only.

The families were recruited by the literacy program staff over a five-month period (November, 1990 to April, 1991). A family was eligible to join the Families for
Literacy Program if at least one parent was reading at or below the seventh-grade level and the family had at least one child who was five years of age or younger. The families did not all enter at one time but over several months as the program was continuous and participants could begin at any time.

Pilot-Testing

A pilot-test of the Attitudinal Survey and Behavioral Survey was conducted in a family literacy program in the San Francisco area. The director of the program recruited three mothers and one grandmother already enrolled in the program. The researcher interviewed and administered the survey to the adults. The respondents were told the purpose of the survey and why it was developed. After completing the survey they were asked to help evaluate it. The researcher paid particular attention to language (was it easy to understand?), meaning (was it clear or did the respondent interpret a different meaning from the questions?), and wording (was word order loading a question and prompting a "correct response?").

Description of the Family Literacy Program

The family literacy program was divided into three phases. During Phase I, the reading tutor met once a week
with the mother alone to work on her reading needs and then once a week at the family's home. At this home meeting the tutor assisted and taught the mother to read preschool materials to the child/children. These included nursery rhymes, folktales, traditional stories, and picture books. The tutor encouraged extended literacy activities such as story telling, playing with hand puppets, using flannel boards, listening to music, and watching videos. The tutor also engaged the family in language experience activities such as tape recording family stories and writing letters to friends and relatives. The next phase began once the family felt comfortable with the family literacy activities and had built a trusting relationship with the tutor.

Phase II is pivotal. The family visited the library with the tutor. The library was introduced in an informal and low-keyed manner. The family visited different sections of the library and was encouraged to get a library card if family members did not already have one. After a few visits the family was asked to attend a story hour and Phase III began.

Phase III included visits by the family to story hours at the library. These were organized and presented by the children's librarian. One story hour was scheduled every month exclusively for the Families for Literacy participants. Weekly story hours were offered to the
public. The tutor encouraged the family to attend both story time events at least once a month and accompanied them to the library if so desired.

Families could continue in the Family Literacy Program for as long as they wished.

Interviewer Training

The Director of the Families for Literacy Program collected most of the data for this study. During the entry interview that was already part of the program, she administered the Bader, SORT, and the Attitudinal and Behavioral Surveys. In a separate interview the researcher tested the children using the PPVT-R. The process was repeated using the same evaluative instruments approximately six months later for each family.

The Director of the Families for Literacy Program already had extensive testing experience. Consequently, one training session was conducted by the researcher and focused on principles and practices of good survey research and interviewing techniques. Both the director and researcher role-played and administered the surveys to each other.
CHAPTER IV
Evaluation of the Study

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the impact and effectiveness of an intergenerational instructional model to improve family literacy. Growth among the families (mothers and children) was determined using the Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT), the Bader Reading and Language Inventory (Bader), an Attitudinal Survey (see Appendix A), and a Behavioral Survey (see Appendix B). Growth in the children's prereading skills was determined using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - Revised (PPVT-R).

Out of fourteen families who agreed to participate in this evaluation process, seven families continued in the program for over six months, had regular meetings with their tutors, and attended story hours sponsored by the library.

This chapter presents an analysis of the data obtained at the beginning of the treatment and approximately six months later.
Test Scores

The data (Table 1) show the raw scores (number correct) for the SORT, administered to the mothers, and the PPVT-R, administered to the children. The mean increased 29 points for the adults on the SORT and 13 points for the children on the PPVT-R.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SORT</th>
<th>PPVT-R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #1</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #2</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #3</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #4</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child #1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child #2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #5</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #6</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #7</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 For the family with two children, all statistical analysis involved using the average of the children's pre-test scores and the average of their post-test scores.
Table 2 shows the results for the Bader administered to the mothers. The Bader is a reading inventory that is used for both instructional and tracking purposes by the adult literacy program. It helps assess the adult learner's strengths and weaknesses in reading. The scores are reported in grade equivalents that cannot be analyzed statistically for such a small sample. However, Table 2 shows that growth after six months as expressed in grade equivalents. The mean growth in reading for the group was 2.8 years grade equivalent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2 - RESULTS OF THE BADER TEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surveys

The Attitudinal Survey presented the respondents (mothers) with 20 statements about reading (9 positive and 11 negative). The 20 statements were divided into 4 categories of 5 statements each. The categories pertained to an important aspect of family literacy: personal reading, reading to children, library usage, and other
literacy-related activities. Each answer was given a score 1 through 5, with the value of 5 given to the most favorable answer (maximum score equals 100).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3 - MOTHERS' ATTITUDINAL SURVEY SCORES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother #7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Behavioral Survey contained 42 questions, eight of which were open-ended and used primarily to help in answering subsequent questions. Twenty-one were yes/no questions followed by specific answers to further clarify the degree and amount of literacy-related activities. The questions were grouped into four categories or sequential sections.

Section 1 - reading directly to children (when, who, how often, and how long)

Section 2 - interactive behaviors between mothers and children that extend the story hour time (e.g. pretending to read a story, asking questions about a story, wanting the parent to write down the child's own words)

Section 3 - library usage (e.g. visiting the library, attending story hours, borrowing books for the family)

Section 4 - other activities related to reading such as personal reading (e.g. subscribing to magazines, playing games using letters, words, or sounds, less television viewing)

A numerical value was given to all answers except the open-ended questions, and then the total was computed to give pre- and post-scores.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother #1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extending reading</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother #2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extending reading</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother #3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extending reading</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother #4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extending reading</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother #5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extending reading</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother #6</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extending reading</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother #7</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading to children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extending reading</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library usage</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other literacy activities</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>total</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Total</strong></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statistical Analysis

Two statistical procedures (paired t-test and Wilcoxon signed-rank test) were used for the null hypothesis $H_0$: No significant effect will result from participation in the Families for Literacy Program (no significant difference will exist between the pre- and post-tests and surveys for either the mothers or their children).

Table 5 presents the test results and p-values. The p-value is the probability of obtaining data that show a difference larger than would result from chance alone (if the families had chosen not to enroll in the Families for Literacy Program). The paired t-test assumes that the data are from normal populations with equal variance, pre- and post. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test is a nonparametric test and does not assume normally distributed data, but does assume symmetric continuous distributions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5 - STATISTICAL RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPVT-R (Child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SORT (Mother)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal Survey (Mother)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Survey (Mother)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tests shown are all significant at the 5% level,
no matter which statistical procedure is used. It can be concluded that all four measures show significant improvement.

**Correlations**

As a rough check on the validity of the four measurements used in this study, Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed between the pre- and post-test scores for each of the four measurements.

| TABLE 6 - RESULTS FOR CORRELATIONS (PRE vs. POST) |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| **Correlations** | **p-Value** |
| PPVT-R (Child) | $r = 0.877$ | $p = 0.017$ |
| SORT (Mother) | $r = 0.804$ | $p = 0.029$ |
| Attitudinal Survey (Mother) | $r = 0.954$ | $p = 0.001$ |
| Behavioral Survey (Mother) | $r = 0.619$ | $p = 0.139$ |

A significant positive association exists between three of the four instruments. The PPVT-R, SORT, and Attitudinal Survey all show positive correlations that are significantly different from zero; the Behavioral Survey does not. This confirms that the PPVT-R, SORT, and Attitudinal Survey gave consistent results in that subjects with high or low pre-test scores tended to have high or low post-test scores. In view of the small sample size, it is not surprising that one of the four instruments failed to show a correlation significantly different from zero. The
high correlations that exist for these instruments overall, verify the validity of these measurements. Therefore, the null hypothesis that no significant effect will result from the participation in the Families for Literacy Program is rejected.

Testing Additional Hypotheses

Five additional hypotheses were under study.

H₂: An intergenerational approach to literacy will have a positive impact on the mothers' reading ability. All mothers took a word-recognition test (SORT) and reading inventory (Bader) as pre- and post-tests. Six mothers improved on the SORT with the mean increasing 29 points. On the Bader all mothers improved their scores with the mean increasing 2.8 years grade equivalent. With instruction over only a six-month period, these results are excellent. Therefore, the hypothesis that an intergenerational approach to literacy will have a positive impact on the mothers' reading ability is accepted.

H₃: The preschool-aged children of mothers enrolled in an intergenerational reading program will show positive gains in pre-reading skills. Eight children from seven families participated in the study. Six showed growth on the PPVT-R and two of the children's scores remained the same on both pre- and post-tests. Of the six children who
demonstrated change on the test, the degree of change ranged from +10 to +44. Since few of the children scored high enough for their scores to be converted into standard scores, raw and not standard scores were used in the statistical analysis. Nevertheless, the overall improvement in the scores was significant and showed a positive trend. Based on these data, the hypothesis that the preschool-aged children of mothers enrolled in an intergenerational reading program will show positive gains in pre-reading skills is accepted.

H₄: Mothers’ attitudes will change toward reading and reading to children. Five out of the seven mothers increased their scores on the Attitudinal Survey after six months. Questions on the Attitudinal Survey addressed four categories of reading: personal reading, reading to children, library usage, and other literacy-related activities. Six of the seven adults (86%) improved their attitudes pre to post toward literacy-related activities (questions 4, 10, 11, 16, 18). Four of the seven adults (57%) improved pre to post toward personal reading (questions 1, 2, 3, 9, 17) and in reading to children (question 6, 8, 12, 14, 20). One adult (14%) improved her attitude pre to post toward the library (questions 5, 7, 13, 15, 19). Overall the change in scores pre to post was significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that mothers’
attitudes will change toward reading and reading to children is accepted.

H₃: Mothers' behaviors will change to improve the literacy environment and to increase literacy activities at home. All of the adults improved their scores pre to post on the Behavioral Survey.

Questions on the Behavioral Survey addressed four categories of reading: reading to children, activities that extend family reading, library usage, and other literacy-related activities. All seven mothers (100%) improved their scores pre to post in section 2 (activities that extend family reading) and in section 3 (library usage). Six of the seven adults (86%) improved their scores pre to post in section 4 (literacy-related activities). Four of the seven adults (57%) improved pre to post in section 1 (reading to children). These results show that families were engaged in more pre-literacy activities and were visiting the library more often. Therefore, the hypothesis that mothers' behaviors will change to improve the literacy environment and to increase literacy activities at home is accepted.

In summary, the overall results of the study indicate that, as a group, subjects in the Families for Literacy Program showed significant growth between pre- and post-evaluative instruments. Participation on the program brought beneficial results to both mothers and children.
CHAPTER V

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect on mothers and their children of participation in an intergenerational instructional model to improve family literacy. The particular program studied was sponsored by a public library system in Northern California. A volunteer adult tutor was paired with an adult learner having low literacy skills. One tutoring session per week focused on the adult learner's personal reading needs and the other session involved modeling and encouraging literacy and pre-literacy activities for the whole family. Each family (in this study each adult was a mother with at least one preschool-aged child) was evaluated at the beginning of the program (pre-evaluation) and after six months (post-evaluation).

The children were tested using two forms (L and M) of the PPVT-R to determine any change in sight vocabulary. Alternate forms were used for pre- and post-testing. The adult's reading skills were tested using the SORT and BADER.
In addition, changes in attitudes and behaviors were measured by an Attitudinal Survey and a Behavioral Survey, both developed by the researcher.

Discussion and Conclusions Regarding the Hypotheses Under Study

H₀: No significant effect will result from participation in the Families for Literacy Program (no significant difference will exist between the pre- and post-tests and surveys) for either the mothers or their children. This null hypothesis was rejected. This was determined by administering tests and surveys that could be analyzed statistically. The mothers took the SORT and completed through personal interviews two surveys (attitudinal and behavioral) at the beginning of the program and six months after continuous enrollment in the family literacy program. Their preschool-aged children took the PPVT-R at the beginning of the program and after six months. Two statistical methods were used to measure the difference between the pre- and post-tests: paired t-tests and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. All of the tests were significant at the 5% level, no matter which statistical procedure was used. The Behavioral Survey showed significance at a much higher level with the t-test (significance at the 1% level). Linear correlations between
the pre- and post-tests and surveys were computed. A significant positive association exists between pre- and post-test scores for the SORT, the PPVT-R, and the Attitudinal Survey. Mothers read more and children listened to more stories. Feelings about reading changed and more activities promoting literacy occurred in the home. The library's Families for Literacy Program provided group activities and story hours for the families. In a comfortable and encouraging environment, parents and children gathered and enjoyed literature with each other. Activities promoting literacy modeled in this supportive group setting obviously encouraged similar behaviors at home.

$H_2$: An intergenerational approach to literacy will have a positive impact on mothers' reading ability. Using two instruments for testing reading, the Bader (reading inventory) and the SORT (word recognition test), it was determined that the family literacy program was effective in increasing the mothers' reading. Over a six month period, all mothers' scores improved on the Bader and six out of seven mothers increased their scores on the SORT. In the Families for Literacy Program, each adult's personal needs and reasons for reading were as important as the literacy needs of their children. Indeed the two are interrelated. The volunteer literacy tutor met with the adult learner once
a week in a session devoted solely to the mother's reading skills. The mothers were reading more and with greater comprehension. Undoubtedly this dual approach, with equal emphasis on the adult learners' reading needs as well as family literacy, was an important factor in the improved test scores.

$H_3$: The preschool-aged children of mothers enrolled in an intergenerational reading program will show positive gains in pre-reading skills. Using alternate forms (pre and post) of the PPVT-R, it was determined that the family literacy program was effective in increasing the children's pre-reading skills. As stories were read, known vocabulary words were reinforced and new words were introduced. Since most of the children in this study could not read, a picture vocabulary test was selected as an instrument to measure growth of a pre-reading skills. Knowledge of vocabulary and the concepts they represent are important pre-literacy skills. Six out of the eight children increased their scores (two very dramatically) while two of the children's scores remained the same after six months. Developmental changes occur during the preschool years and at different rates for each child. Consequently, the scores for this age group may be the least reliable indicator. Nevertheless, as a group, the children's overall growth showed a positive trend.

$H_4$: Mothers' attitudes will change toward reading
and reading to children. Using the Attitudinal Survey created by the researcher, it was determined that participation in the Families for Literacy Program helped to change positively the mothers' attitudes toward reading and reading to children. Four areas of reading were measured: personal reading, reading to children, library usage, and other family activities related to literacy. The mothers' attitudes changed (6 out of 7) most favorably toward literacy-related activities. The tutor visited the adult learner's home and read picture books aloud to the family. The tutor brought materials and activities that provided background information and extended the read-aloud story. The importance and the enjoyment derived from these literacy-related activities became apparent to the families.

The area that showed the second greatest change (5 out of 7) was the mothers' attitudes toward reading to children. One of the major long-term goals of the Families for Literacy Program is to "break the cycle of illiteracy," whereby illiteracy seems to pass from one generation to the next. Reading aloud to children on a consistent basis is integral to stopping this cycle. Both children and parents were experiencing the enjoyment of this important activity. Consequently mothers' attitudes on this important literacy activity changed.
The area that showed the third greatest change (4 out of 7) was the mothers' attitudes toward personal reading. The mothers initially joined the literacy program to improve their own reading skills. After six months this was still a central desire. The individual tutoring sessions addressed the personal reasons for improving reading skills. Growth in this area reflected the mothers' positive feelings about their own success in reading.

The area of least growth (1 out of 7) was the mothers' attitudes toward the library. Although the program was library-sponsored, the mothers' feelings about the library had changed little over six months. The mothers seemed to view the library as a formidable place, perhaps because it still contained many books they found difficult to read.

H₂: Mothers' behaviors will change to improve the literacy environment and to increase literacy activities at home. Using the Behavioral Survey created by the researcher, it was determined that the mothers' behaviors changed to improve the literacy environment and to increase the literacy activities at home. All of the adults increased their scores over the six months of this study.

Interesting trends emerged among the seven families. The behavioral survey was divided into four sections: 1) parents reading directly to children; 2) children's
behaviors showing an interest in books and reading; 3) family visiting and borrowing from the library; 4) other behaviors in the home creating a literacy environment. All seven families demonstrated growth in section 2 (extending reading activities) and section 3 (library usage). A majority of families (5 out of 7) increased their scores on section 4 (other literacy-related activities) and (4 out of 7) on section 1 (reading to children).

Children initiated and actively participated in the selection of story books and in language experience activities. Parents were interacting with and observing their children in more pre-literacy activities. Results on the Attitudinal Survey and the Behavioral Survey showed improved feelings about literacy-related activities and indicated that more cooperative behavior toward books and reading was occurring between children and parents.

Considering that only one mother improved her attitude toward the library, it is interesting to note that all seven mothers increased their scores on the Behavioral Survey in section 3 (library usage). Although feelings about the library had not changed greatly, usage of the library and its facilities had changed. Families visited the library more often and attended more library-sponsored story hours. For this particular population, six months may not have been long enough for attitudes to change toward a
facility that is a repository for books. However, had the statements on the Attitudinal Survey focused on the children's section of the library, or the literacy project center at the library, or both; a greater change in attitude probably would have occurred. Most families were visiting the library more often because of scheduled meetings with tutors and programs arranged for parents and children in the Families for Literacy Program.

As a group, the parents reported reading more often to their children and scheduling a regular story time with their children. This key interactive behavior (lap time) between parent and child is a crucial focus of the program. Mothers began to experience the fun and enjoyment of reading aloud to their children. Beyond their personal needs, the mothers now had another incentive to read: their children. A unique feature of the particular family literacy program studied was that the volunteer tutors conducted the family literacy sessions in the adult learners' homes. Most other programs provide family literacy activities at the library or at other central locations in the community, but do not encourage the tutors to visit the home. Having the tutors work with the family members in the familiar environment of their own homes built trust and provided convenience for mothers. These factors encourage the mothers to continue in the program.
Based on pre- and post-evaluative instruments, the mothers' literacy and children's pre-literacy skills improved. Self-reported attitudes and behaviors toward reading and family literacy increased over the six-month period. These results indicate that both mothers and children grew significantly while participating in the Families for Literacy Program.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Replication of this study is recommended using a control group in the research model.

2. Further research is needed to collect and compare data from two family literacy programs with different instructional models. One literacy model may be more effective than another.

3. A longitudinal study of the effectiveness of a family literacy program is needed.

4. Replication of this study is recommended with a broader sampling of the adult literacy population, particularly including more fathers, families from rural areas, and adults who speak only English and are not literate in another language.
References


ATTITUDE SURVEY

Before you begin our program, we want to know how you feel about reading, reading to children, and using the library. I will ask you several questions. There is NO right or wrong answer - we want to learn exactly how you feel.

I will read to you 20 statements about reading and library activities. Please tell me which of these answers best indicates your feelings about the statement.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Uncertain
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

1. Reading is difficult for me.
   1 Strongly Agree
   2 Agree
   3 Uncertain
   4 Disagree
   5 Strongly Disagree

2. People who write books often seem to use words that are hard to understand.
   1 Strongly Agree
   2 Agree
   3 Uncertain
   4 Disagree
   5 Strongly Disagree

3. I find that many books are boring and not good enough to finish.
   1 Strongly Agree
   2 Agree
   3 Uncertain
   4 Disagree
   5 Strongly Disagree
4. Watching several hours of television each day helps a child learn to read.
   1 Strongly Agree
   2 Agree
   3 Uncertain
   4 Disagree
   5 Strongly Disagree

5. A library card is easy to get.
   1 Strongly Agree
   2 Agree
   3 Uncertain
   4 Disagree
   5 Strongly Disagree

6. Reading aloud to children is only for teachers.
   1 Strongly Agree
   2 Agree
   3 Uncertain
   4 Disagree
   5 Strongly Disagree

7. Children would find the library boring.
   1 Strongly Agree
   2 Agree
   3 Uncertain
   4 Disagree
   5 Strongly Disagree

8. Reading to children is for learning but not for enjoyment.
   1 Strongly Agree
   2 Agree
   3 Uncertain
   4 Disagree
   5 Strongly Disagree

9. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.
   1 Strongly Agree
   2 Agree
   3 Uncertain
   4 Disagree
   5 Strongly Disagree
10. Readers understand a story better if they have experienced the same things that are in the story.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree

11. Reading together as a family is a good way to spend free time.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree

12. My child becomes bored listening to a book being read.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree

13. Time spent at the library is time well spent.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree

14. Reading to my child is fun.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree

15. Finding a book in the library is confusing.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree
16. Sharing and talking about family experiences is a waste of time.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree

17. Reading entertains me.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree

18. Books make good presents.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree

19. The library has too many books that are hard to read.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree

20. Reading to my child can eventually help him/her learn to read in school.
   1. Strongly Agree
   2. Agree
   3. Uncertain
   4. Disagree
   5. Strongly Disagree
SURVEY OF BEHAVIOR

I will not ask you some questions about activities around your home. Again, there is NO right or wrong answer.

1. Are you able to find time in your busy day to read to your child?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

   **IF NO, SKIP TO #7.**

2. When was the last time you recall reading to your child? __________

3. As a rule, do you have a regular reading time?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

4. When is this? ________________________________

5. How many times in the last month, lets say since September ___ have you read to your child?
   - [ ] No, I have not read in the last month
   - [ ] 1 - 2 times in the last month
   - [ ] 3 - 4 times in the last month
   - [ ] 5 - 10 times in the last month
   - [ ] 11 - 14 times in the last month
   - [ ] More than 14 times in the last month

6. When you read aloud, about how long do you usually read to your child?
   - [ ] 5 - 10 minutes
   - [ ] 11 - 20 minutes
   - [ ] 21 - 30 minutes
   - [ ] More than 30 minutes
7. Does anyone else read to your child?
   [ ] Yes  Who is that?  [ ] mother
   [ ] father
   [ ] grandmother
   [ ] other relative
   [ ] family friend
   [ ] sibling
   [ ] teacher

   [ ] No

Now I am going to ask you about activities some children might or might not show about reading and books. Consider if your child has shown these behaviors in the last month, let's say since September ___.

8. During the past month, can you recall your child asking to have books read?
   [ ] No, not that I recall.
   [ ] Yes, Once in the past month
   [ ] 2 - 3 times in the past month
   [ ] 4 - 5 times in the past month
   [ ] 6 - 8 times in the past month
   [ ] More than 8 times in the past month

9. During the past month, can you recall your child talking about what was happening in the pictures?
   [ ] No, not that I recall.
   [ ] Yes, Once in the past month
   [ ] 2 - 3 times in the past month
   [ ] 4 - 5 times in the past month
   [ ] 6 - 8 times in the past month
   [ ] More than 8 times in the past month
10. During the past month, can you remember seeing your child looking at books by him/herself?
   □ No, not that I recall.
   □ Yes, Once in the past month
   □ 2 - 3 times in the past month
   □ 4 - 5 times in the past month
   □ 6 - 8 times in the past month
   □ More than 8 times in the past month

11. During the past month, can you recall your child asking questions or making comments about what was happening in a book?
   □ No, not that I recall.
   □ Yes, Once in the past month
   □ 2 - 3 times in the past month
   □ 4 - 5 times in the past month
   □ 6 - 8 times in the past month
   □ More than 8 times in the past month

12. During the past month, has your child ever retold a story in his or her own words that you have read to him/her?
   □ No, not that I recall.
   □ Yes, Once in the past month
   □ 2 - 3 times in the past month
   □ 4 - 5 times in the past month
   □ 6 - 8 times in the past month
   □ More than 8 times in the past month

13. Has your child ever made up a story from a book with pictures but no words during the last month?
   □ No, not that I recall.
   □ Yes, Once in the past month
   □ 2 - 3 times in the past month
   □ 4 - 5 times in the past month
   □ 6 - 8 times in the past month
   □ More than 8 times in the past month
14. During the past month, have you ever written down words your child may have spoken, and then read the words back to the child?

☐ No, not that I recall.
☐ Yes, Once in the past month
☐ 2 - 3 times in the past month
☐ 4 - 5 times in the past month
☐ 6 - 8 times in the past month
☐ More than 8 times in the past month

15. During the past month, has your child ever pretended to read a book by memory, one that you may have read together?

☐ No, not that I recall.
☐ Yes, Once in the past month
☐ 2 - 3 times in the past month
☐ 4 - 5 times in the past month
☐ 6 - 8 times in the past month
☐ More than 8 times in the past month

I will now ask you several questions about using the library. Please remember, there is NO right or wrong answer.

16. Have you ever been able to visit the Redwood City library?

☐ Yes
☐ No

**IF NO, ASK THE FOLLOWING.** Which of the following reasons best states why you have been unable to visit the library:

☐ library is too far away
☐ library’s hours are inconvenient
☐ people who work in the library are unfriendly
☐ the library seems scary inside
☐ the library has nothing I need
☐ other (please specify) ____________________________

SKIP TO #21
17. When was the last time you recall visiting the Redwood City Library?

18. How often have you visited the library in the past six months, since April __?
   - □ Have not been able to visit the library in the past six months
   - □ 1 - 2 times in the past six months
   - □ 3 - 4 times in the past six months
   - □ 5 - 6 times in the past six months
   - □ More than six times in the past six months

19. Do you happen to own a Redwood City library card?
   - □ Yes
   - □ No
   **IF NO, SKIP TO #21.**

20. What is the average number of books you take out for yourself on each visit?
   - □ I seldom take books home for myself
   - □ 1 book
   - □ 2 books
   - □ 3 books
   - □ 4 books or more

21. Has your child ever been to the Redwood City Library?
   - □ Yes
   - □ No
   **IF NO, SKIP TO #26.**

22. When was the last time your child went to the library?
23. Can you remember how often your child has been to the public library in the last six months, since April ___?
- [ ] My child has not been able to visit the library in the past six months
- [ ] 1 - 2 times in the past six months
- [ ] 3 - 4 times in the past six months
- [ ] 5 - 6 times in the past six months
- [ ] More than six times in the past six months

24. What is the average number of books taken out for your child at each visit?
- [ ] Books for this child are seldom taken home from the library
- [ ] 1 book
- [ ] 2 books
- [ ] 3 books
- [ ] 4 books or more

25. Has your child ever attended Story Hour at the library?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

26. How often has he/she been since April ___? _____ times

I will not ask you some questions about other activities related to reading.

27. Does anyone at your home subscribe to any magazines or newspaper?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

28. Can you name them? ______________________________________________________

IF NO, SKIP TO #32.
29. How many do you receive on a regular basis?
   - Do not currently receive any on a regular basis
   - One
   - Two
   - Three
   - Four or more

30. Does anyone in your home receive any children’s magazines?
   - Yes
   - No

   **IF NO, SKIP TO #32.**

31. How many do you receive on a regular basis?
   - Do not currently receive any on a regular basis
   - One
   - Two
   - Three
   - Four or more

32. Do you have any school-aged children? (grades 1 - 12)
   - Yes
   - No

   **IF NO, SKIP TO #34.**

33. Can you recall if your school aged child/children have ever read aloud to you in the last month, since September ___.
   - No, not that I recall.
   - Yes, Once in the past month
   - 2 - 3 times in the past month
   - 4 - 5 times in the past month
   - 6 - 8 times in the past month
   - More than 8 times in the past month
34. Can you remember ever telling your child stories not using a book during the past month?
   - No, not that I recall.
   - Yes, once in the past month
   - 2 - 3 times in the past month
   - 4 - 5 times in the past month
   - 6 - 8 times in the past month
   - More than 8 times in the past month

35. Can you recall you and your child ever playing games using words, letters, or sound? (If needed, give example).
   - No
   - Yes Describe it for me.

IF NO, SKIP TO #38.

36. When did you last play this type of game? __________

37. Most children like to watch T.V. Sometimes during the day or in the evening with other members of the family. Can you recall what television programs he watches during the week? ________________

38. What does he watch on Saturday and Sunday? __________

39. About how many hours a day does your preschool-aged child watch television?
   - Does not watch television
   - 1 - 2 hours
   - 3 - 4 hours
   - 5 - 6 hours
   - 7 hours or more

40. How many more hours does he watch on Saturday? ______

41. How many more hours does he watch on Sunday? ______

42. What do you find most special about your child? ______
Oral Instructions for Informed Consent

We would very much like your help in evaluating our family reading program here in Redwood City. The reason for the evaluation is to find out what kinds of reading activities people like and how this helps children learn. If you want to help us with this study, you will take two common adult reading inventories. You will also spend about 20 minutes answering questions about how you enjoy reading and how your family enjoys reading.

We would also like your preschool-aged child to help us. We will do an activity with your child where he points to some pictures of things. For example, we might show him some pictures of animals and ask him to point to the dog. This could be done at his day-care center, preschool, or at the Project Read Office. It would take about 10 minutes.

This activity - adult reading, interview with questions, and activity with your child - will be done again in six months when our program finishes. We want to find out if you and your family like the program.

The information from you and your child will be used for this study only. Your name and your child’s name will not be connected with this information.

Although we would like you to help us, you don’t have to. You can withdraw from the study at any time and still be a member of our family reading program.
Summary

My child and I would like to help evaluate the Families for Literacy Program. For this study, I will complete two reading inventories and answer questions about reading activities and how I like them. My child will also help by doing some picture activities. This will be done now and in the spring. My name and my child’s name are confidential. I can decide later not to be in the study but still be in the family program.

Signed: ____________________________

If you have any further questions about the study, feel free to contact Diane Hansen, Coordinator of the Evaluation at 284-5268, David Miller, Director of Project Read at 780-7077 or Dr. James Shanker, Professor of Teacher Education, Cal State Hayward at 881-3117.