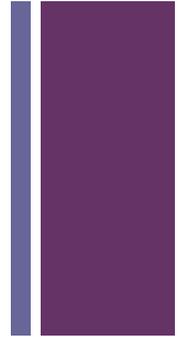


Am I Getting Through?

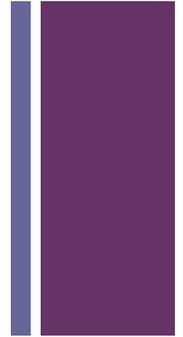
**Working With Parents Who Don't
Appear To Be Engaging In the Material**
Christyn Dundorf, Ph.D.

+ Warm Up



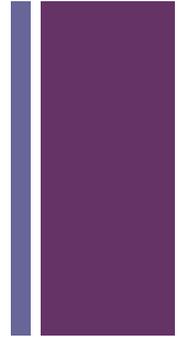
- What are some of your literacy goals for children? You can think of project goals, personal goals for your own children, from your perspective as a librarian or home visitor.
- What do you perceive the goals of the parents you are interacting with to be with regard to literacy?
- How are your goals similar to and/or different from your perceptions of the goals of the parents? Why do you think that is?

+ Small Group Activity



- 4 Groups
- Divide Librarians and Healthy Start Home Visitors.
- Then divide again in two.
- There should be two groups of librarians and two groups of Healthy Start Home Visitors

+ Discussion –



- Previous experience in this situation? What has worked?
- If you knew the “status” ahead of time, how would you prepare?
- How would you change or adapt the Literacy materials in your presentation or visit?
- What issues or concerns do you have?
- L1: Narrative Skills. Group of teen parents.
- L2: Dialogic Reading. Surprise! Low literacy group.
- HS1: Print motivation. Low literacy.
- HS2: Vocabulary, world knowledge. Surprise! Resistant parent.



We have good reason to want to involve parents in children's language and literacy development

- Lang environment in home predicts language development and skill of child
- When parents/adults in the home involve children in **conversations**, children are better at creating verbal narratives. Narrative skill related to literacy acquisition.
- When parents **read**, the more **engaged** they are when reading, and the **younger** their child is when they start, the more likely they are to still be reading with their child as the child grows older. Related to lit awareness at start of school and reading comp in elementary school
- When parents talk about words, kids listen and learn.
- When parents use forms of literacy (magazines, books, etc.), kids know more about how literacy works.



+ Some over-arching
considerations...



A parent's behavior in front of you shows you what the parent thinks **YOU** value.

- Most parents want to be seen as good parents.
- Avoid jumping in to correct the parent.
- Use a personal example to provide a suggestion if you can, naturally, in the flow of conversation.
- Continue to model in your behavior.



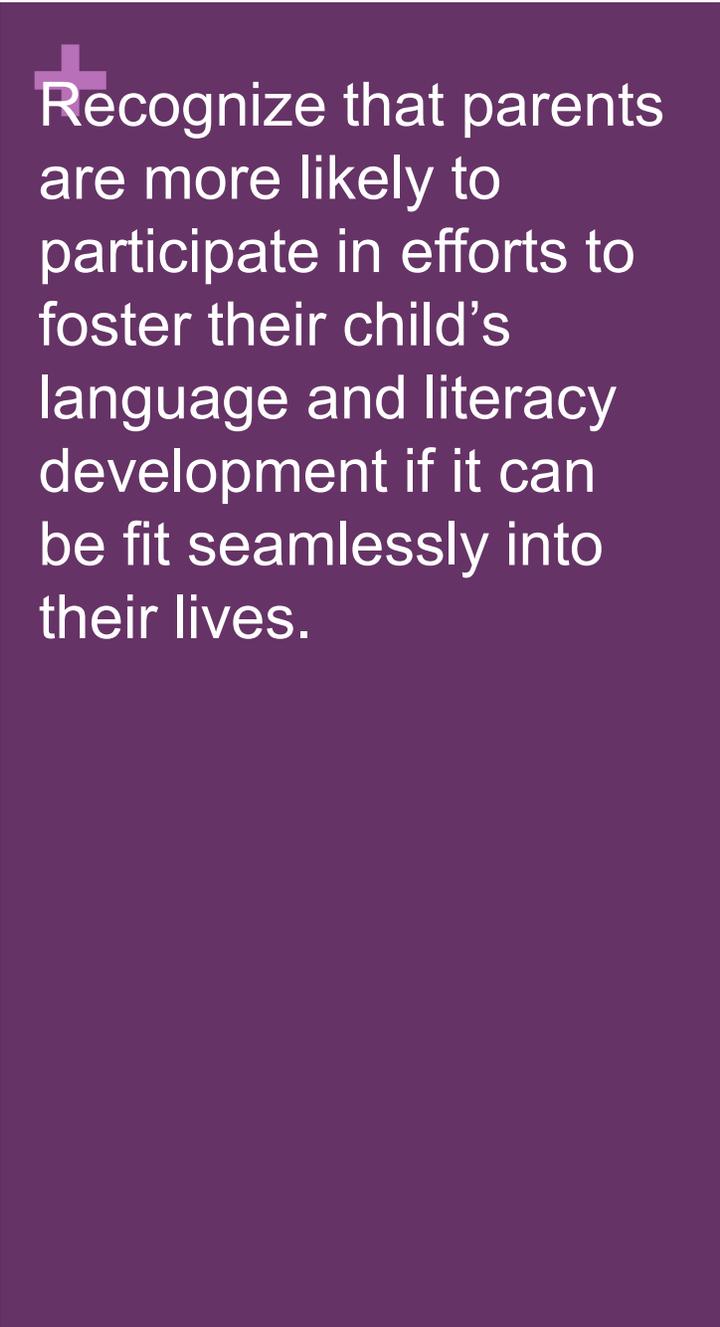
The way the parent talks to, or reads to, or disciplines their child in front of you provides **information** for you on what the parent feels is proper behavior when children and adults interact.

- In some families, children are not considered conversational partners until a certain age, such as acceptance into adulthood.
- In some families, “behaving” when guests come over means sitting quietly and only speaking when spoken to.

+

The ways that books are treated in the home or the things that parents say about books and literacy show you the role that literacy plays in their lives.

- In some families, literacy materials are considered adult materials used only for conducting business (paying bills) or sacred materials, used in the practice of religion.



Recognize that parents are more likely to participate in efforts to foster their child's language and literacy development if it can be fit seamlessly into their lives.

- Not all families sit at the dinner table together.
- Not all families have a consistent naptime or nighttime routine.
- Most families ride in the car together (or in other forms of transportation).
- Many families share time with their young children when they are being bathed or having their clothes/diapers changed.



Recognize or acknowledge parents' role as the **primary** teachers or advocates for their children.

- They may have different language and literacy goals.
- May have what you feel are inappropriate expectations regarding acquiring literacy skills.
- How can you validate what they feel is important for their child's success?



You may observe parenting that you do not like or approve of ...

- What is it about what the parent is doing that “works” for that parent or in that family.
- How does it let the parent take care of him/herself?
- Observe and respect the way parents (and families) interact with their children.
- Learn about and respect the ways in which parents (and families) interact with others in social settings.



Specific Strategies...



Supporting parents with low literacy levels

- Use inclusive language – talk about “sharing” books and literacy materials with children rather than “reading” them.
- Avoid handing **any** parent a book and asking them to read to their child before you have gauged the parent’s reading comfort.
- Be prepared to connect the parent with adult literacy services if the parent requests them.
- Wordless picture books.
- Picture books with few words.
- Alphabet or number books
- Photo books that “tell a story”
- Build world knowledge through interactive media.
- Build narrative skill by sharing family stories.



Connecting with teen parents

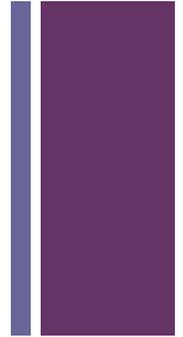
- Listen to them. What do they want to know about? Ask. Ask again.
- Teen parents may be worried that they won't be good parents.
- Use inclusive language.
- Consider a smaller group size (8 – 10 teen parents, rather than 15).
- Have your shtick down. This lets you be flexible and go with the flow.
- Books from their childhood
- Quirky books & rhymes
- Investigate electronic media as sources of stories or literacy activities for teen and child to do together.
- Photo books, cell phone stories.



Reaching out to resistant parents

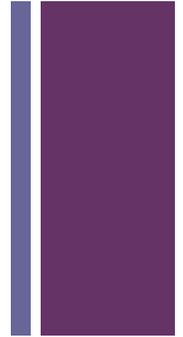
- Reflect on the source of the resistance. Explore the source with the parent if you feel comfortable.
- Have your shtick down. This lets you be flexible and go with the flow.
- Enjoy your time reading or engaging with the child or children. Your enjoyment will be a model for the parent.

+ Approaching Cultural Conflict



- Take it slow
- Understand yourself (examine your attitudes and stereotypes)
- Become sensitive to your own discomfort
- Learn about other cultures or people different from you.
- Find out what the parents' goals are
- Take risks
- Communicate, dialogue, negotiate (RERUN)
- Share power

+ R.E.R.U.N.



- Goal is to build relationship and understand perspectives. Secondary to solve problems.
- Reflect
- Explain
- Reason
- Understand
- Negotiate
- Source: Janet Gonzalez-Mena