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Improving Head Start Children's Emergent Literacy and Phonemic Awareness Through Parent Training

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IMPROVING HEAD START CHILDREN'S EMERGENT LITERACY AND PHONEMIC AWARENESS THROUGH PARENT TRAINING

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology

Western Kentucky University

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Specialist in Education

by

Kelli Jo Bradbury

May 2001
IMPROVING HEAD START CHILDREN'S EMERGENT LITERACY AND PHONEMIC AWARENESS THROUGH PARENT TRAINING

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Typically, research on emergent literacy and phonemic awareness is focused on children older than five years of age. The research clearly suggests that emergent literacy and phonemic awareness skills are precursors for children to learn to read and that low-income children often lack these skills. However, very little research has focused on emergent literacy and phonemic awareness skills of four-year-olds.

Another important factor that has been neglected, thus far, is the impact parents may have on their children acquiring these skills. Therefore, this study presents a training program that addresses emergent literacy and phonemic awareness in low income, four-year-old, Head Start children. The study found that children of families who received the phonemic awareness and emergent literacy training program achieved a higher level of phonemic awareness skills on post-intervention measures. These results suggest that four-year-old children can learn phonemic awareness skills from their parents when provided with appropriate materials that can be utilized in the home.
Introduction

A traditional pastime of children and parents alike is reading a favorite bedtime story. This pastime not only helps the parent-child bond but it also promotes skills that young children need in order to establish basic reading and writing functions. Basic reading and writing skills were once thought to be "teachable" during first or second grade. However, it is now believed that these skills need to be developed at a much earlier age, for example, at age three and four (Teale & Sulzby, 1989). This concept is known as emergent literacy. Emergent literacy is linked with "the period between birth and the time when children read and write conventionally and is linked to the child's natural surroundings" (Sulzby & Teale, 1991, p. 728). Many researchers have defined emergent literacy differently. For the purpose of this study, emergent literacy will be defined as "the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are presumed to be developed precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, p. 849).

Emergent literacy is a cornerstone to the later development of reading and writing skills. Children need to be exposed to print at an early age in both pre-schools and in the home for the most effective development of reading and writing. This researcher proposes to develop and implement a pilot training program for the parents of Head Start children to provide the parents with helpful skills and strategies in guiding their children through the process of emergent literacy. By doing so, the children will be expected to
progress at a better rate through his or her reading and writing development and, as a
result, begin school with a better understanding and a solid foundation in which to foster
achievement. Pre- and post-intervention assessment of the Head Start children’s
phonemic awareness will be conducted as a measure of whether or not the training has a
direct effect on the children.
Literature Review

Emergent Literacy

Emergent literacy is complex. It involves a number of different skills, knowledge, and attitudes that all combine to form the ability to read, write, and understand what has been read and written (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The focus on emergent literacy can be seen in the school systems at the early grade levels. It is beginning to play a more important role in curriculum as schools move toward more advanced kindergartens. Preschools are slowly taking over the more traditional role of the kindergarten classroom, and more often it is expected that by school age children should be ready to begin reading. The term emergent literacy is best thought of as a continuum of learning experiences, starting out in early life, rather than the all-or-none phenomenon that begins when children start school (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The focus now is shifting to preschool classrooms and what can be done for children ages three and four to help promote their emergent literacy skills (Teale & Sulzby, 1989).

Teale and Sulzby (1989) identified five functions that are essential to acquiring emergent literacy. The first is to recognize that in a literate society, learning to read and write begins very early in life. Traditional views of teaching reading only to children ages six and above need to be cast aside. The new focus should look to younger children, ages three and four, to begin the reading process. The second function is that literacy is an integral part of the learning process. Real life situations help promote
emergent literacy most, and it is these types of situations that are influencing young children. A third point is that reading and writing develop simultaneously. Both areas must be promoted to ensure a literate child. Fourth, children learn actively by constructing their own understanding of how their written language works. Children display this understanding by invented spellings and their "pretend" reading, which is discussed in more detail later. The final function states that parental demonstrations of literacy are very important for the development of emergent literacy skills.

It is important to also understand the skills involved in emergent literacy. To help explain concept, Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) have separated emergent literacy into two levels of processing. The outside-in process represents children's understanding of the context of the book or similar writing that they are trying to read. The inside-out process is the children's understanding of rules used in reading and writing.

**Outside-In Processing**

There are three levels to outside-in processing which are language, convention of print, and finally emergent reading (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). First, at the very basic level, a child must have sufficient language skills in order to develop the process of reading. There are several aspects of language that are important at different levels in the process of emergent literacy. “Reading, even in its earliest stages, is a process that is motivated by the extraction of meaning” (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, p. 850). This step includes a child being able to not only sound out each word by the syllable but to also combine all of them to produce a meaningful word. Language also requires a conceptual knowledge aspect that necessitates the child to have an understanding of the word as well. Without this understanding, the word has no meaning for the child. Oral
language in the child’s life is a key factor. This connection between reading and language, specifically oral language, has shown to affect later reading proficiency (Bishop & Adams, 1990). However, the connection has been demonstrated to be of greater importance later in the sequence of learning to read than at the early stages when a child is first exposed to reading (Mason, 1992). Convention of print is the next step in the outside-in process.

Convention of print is another basic unit of outside-in processing. It includes common English rules such as reading from left to right, from top to bottom, knowing differences between pictures and print, and understanding basic punctuation such as commas and question marks. It also involves knowing differences between pictures, the cover of the book, and the print on the pages. This knowledge helps with the process of learning to read (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

The third level of outside-in processing is emergent reading. Emergent reading is simply when the young child is pretending to read what is on a page or in a book. This is demonstrated often with young children. They pick a colorful book, sit down, and go through it either making up a story based on the pictures or actually telling the correct story from memory if it is a favorite book of theirs. “This reading-like play rapidly becomes picture stimulated, page matched, and story-complete” (Holdaway, 1979, p. 40). This type of activity should be encouraged because it is an initial clue that reading is considered important and fun for the child.

Inside-Out Processing

Inside-out processing is a more deeply involved procedure along the path of learning to read. Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) discuss five main areas of focus.
These include the knowledge of the grapheme, syntactic awareness, phoneme to grapheme correspondence, phonemic awareness, and finally emergent writing. A child’s understanding of each of these concepts is essential for reading and writing. Grapheme understanding is simply understanding and using the letters of the alphabet for a particular language. “Knowledge of the alphabet at entry into school is one of the strongest single predictors of short- and long-term literacy success” (Stevenson & Newman, 1986, p. 647). A child cannot learn to read without this basic understanding of letters and their corresponding names.

Syntactic awareness, also known as structural awareness, focuses on grammatical concepts in reading. A knowledge of sentence structure increases the speed of reading because it allows the child to focus more on comprehension than on the splitting up or separation of sentences or phrases.

The next area of the inside-out process is phoneme to grapheme correspondence. Phoneme to grapheme correspondence is point at which the child begins to understand the link between the phonemes and the alphabet. Phoneme to grapheme correspondence could take practice since the English language contains many sounds that are identical. There are also several words that use different letters for the same sound; for example, the “c” in cat and the “k” in kite are the same sound and use the same phonemes but correspond to different letters.

The fourth area of inside-out processing, phonemic awareness, is a major focus in current research, and is often considered extremely important for the development of emergent literacy. It is not enough that a child simply knows the letters. He or she must also be able to recognize their corresponding sounds and groupings of sounds. Phonemic
awareness consists of the “conscious manipulation of phonemes in spoken language and involves awareness of syllables, phonemes, and phonetic units of speech” (Jenkins & Bowen, 1994, p. 28). A detailed description of phonemic awareness will be presented later. The last skill of emergent literacy discussed by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) in the inside-out processing is emergent writing, that time when the child invents spellings of words and pretends to write. It can be as basic as their writing letters and claiming that they have written their name or as complex as writing words using invented spelling and claiming they have written a story. Also embedded in emergent writing is word awareness, where the child associates the words with the meanings; for example, the word car and bug are both small words, each only three letters long, but their meanings are very different in size. Initially, the child may believe that car needs to be a big word because of the actual size of a car in comparison to that of bug, which is a much smaller object. The combination of information clearly shows that children gain knowledge about learning to read and write well before formal schooling.

Phonemic Awareness

There is strong evidence that practice in phonemic awareness increases reading achievement (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Jenkins & Bowen, 1994; Snider, 1995; Wagner & Torgeson, 1987). Phonemic awareness is generally necessary for the fundamental tasks of reading and spelling. Due to this importance, phonemic awareness is the area of literacy that will be assessed. The need is an understanding that spoken words and written words correspond to each other. Each child develops each of these skills at different levels, but there are activities that can increase the development of phonemic
awareness. Regardless of when they develop, phonemic awareness abilities have been shown to be a fundamental tool for preparing children to read (Bradley & Bryant, 1985). Phonemic awareness has been shown to be one of the best predictors of future reading development among children (Chaney, 1998; Spector, 1995; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Tasks that involve using phonemic awareness include tapping out each separate syllable as the child says the word and rhyming words with each other. These are classic examples of exercises used in classrooms to help promote phonemic awareness. Children must be able to recognize that a word can be broken down into segments of letters that combine to form that sound. For example, the word fig is a combination of three letter segments, /f/, /i/, and /g/. The child must also realize that by simply changing the middle segment to an /o/ that a whole new word, fog, has been created with an entirely different meaning. “Children who already have, or who are taught, phoneme segmentation skills (even simple rhyming skills) are at a significant advantage in learning to read over children who lack phonemic awareness” (Chaney, 1994, p. 373).

Adams (1990) has identified phonemic awareness as having five levels of processing. First is the appreciation of sounds. Second, the ability to compare and contrast is processed by grouping words with similar or dissimilar sounds at the beginning, middle, or end of a word. Third, children must be able to blend and split syllables. Next, phonemic segmentation is processed. Phoneme segmentation is the ability to isolate sounds in words. Finally, they must then be able to manipulate phonemes to create new words. Phonemic awareness is usually mastered by becoming aware of larger units first, which means that a child will recognize whole words first and
then pay attention to the smaller parts, such as the phoneme. In an early study by Liberman, Shankweiler, Fischer, and Carter (1974), the researchers found that only half of preschool children tested could tap out syllables. By the end of kindergarten, 90 percent of the children had the ability. Beginning kindergarten students are expected to have this skill when they enter the school year. However, the trend in recent years has been that kindergarten is the time for instruction in phonemic awareness skills. Schools today would have more preschoolers with these abilities. Wood and Terrell (1998) suggest that many young children can and should develop phonemic awareness before beginning reading or attending school.

The Reading Environment

The development of children's emergent literacy skills can be facilitated by optimal preschool and home environments. Researchers have found that within the preschool, separate reading centers are a useful tool to provide maximum development of literacy skills (Lesiak, 1997; Morrow, 1989). Lesiak (1997) suggested that a corner should be established where reading is promoted as an everyday activity, not as an instructional activity. Posters should be hung on the walls and a variety of books should be provided, including familiar books, newspapers, and magazines. The area should accommodate five to six children and have comfortable chairs and pillows for the children. It is important to introduce new books every other week to replace the others. Play-acting and puppets should also be encouraged as forms of emergent reading.

In a study by Taylor, Blum, and Logsdon (1986), the hypothesis that high print classrooms create a more productive environment for the development of reading skills was supported. High print classrooms are places that have a significant amount and
variety of reading materials for the students to use. Taylor et al. (1986) compared the
emergent literacy skills of students in high print classrooms to students that were not in
high print classrooms. Four areas surfaced as having an impact on the differences
between low and high print classrooms: (a) type of language used in displays, (b) location
of print in the room, (c) availability of print to children, and (d) time frame of ongoing
written language play in the classroom. Results showed that the children in the high print
environment scored significantly higher on a written language awareness test and a
school readiness test. A high print home environment has also been shown to be
important to the development of reading skills (Beals, DeTemple, & Dickinson, 1994;
Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1992). High print homes, which are homes with many different
types and amounts of reading materials available, have been found to often produce more
efficient readers. The preschool age home literacy environment also correlates with high
school literacy levels (Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991). Leichter
(1984) described families’ effects on literacy:

Families affect emergent literacy in three ways: by the
amount of literacy material available in the house; by the
number of interpersonal interactions with literacy activities
(though these can be with other members of the household
including siblings); and by the climate established in the
home for literacy, including the aspirations of family members. (p. 42)
The most prevalent example of an emergent literacy activity in the home environment is
shared reading between the child and the parent. This shared reading has been shown to
enhance vocabulary development in preschool children (Senechal, Thomas, & Monker, 1995; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

The amount of print available in the home is also an important factor in a good reading environment. In contrast, “children having problems with reading at school are more often children from minority groups and lower SES families” (Snow, 1983, p. 168). It is these families that are typically considered as having low-print home environments. However, even though the home may have insufficient reading material, there may be additional activities that parents can do to help improve their children’s chances of being competent readers. These are discussed in detail later. It is very difficult to actually pinpoint a moment in a child’s young life when literacy begins to develop. For that reason it is crucial that parents become involved long before they send the child off to formal schooling, where it may be too late or too difficult for that child to catch up.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement, as stated before, and shared book reading “do make a significant contribution to literacy development” (Dickinson & DeTemple, 1998, p. 243). Some notable findings have shown that parental involvement is more than just reading aloud to a child. “Children’s reading performance is correlated with the amount of reading done by their parents, the quality of parents’ reading material, and the value placed on reading by parents” (Hess, Holloway, Price, & Dickson, 1982, p. 93). It also involves different types of interactions, a significant amount of time spent devoted to reading, a variety of books used, and placing value on reading within the home. Parents who tend to value reading more and do more reading themselves have children who become stronger readers. The same is not true at the other end of the scale. It is
important for the parents to be models for their children. Often times, children will mimic what the adult in the room is doing. The same can also be true for reading. "It may not be enough that parents read to their children. They need to be models, reading on their own for their own enjoyment and demonstrating that this is an important activity to them" (Nespeca, 1995, p. 175).

There is a variety of ways to enhance reading and language skills when reading a book to a child. Simply reading the book then setting it down does not promote the language and reading skills that are developed when a child is read to and then asked questions about the story or asked to point out pictures to show the actions of the story. On the other hand, reading need not involve only sitting down and reading a book. Literacy touches practically every aspect of daily living. When dinnertime comes, recipes are needed and directions are read and followed. Another type of activity can involve parents preparing a shopping list and pointing to items as they write them down on the list. Then, at the store, the parents read off the written item as they put them into a cart, thereby demonstrating the earlier concept of matching written words with actual objects. These are great ways to show a child how reading is useful and necessary in everyday situations. These examples help model the importance of reading without getting a book off the shelf and reading it. Teale (1984) points out that "Children can still learn to read and become good readers, but being read to while young is still one experience that proves effective in literacy development" (p. 120).

**Socio-Economic Level**

"It has been reasonably well established that children from low-income families tend to achieve less well in reading and writing than their middle class counterparts"
Middle-class families use stories with more 'complex language forms' and use conversations to build bonds between mother and child, thus utilizing and developing a stronger reading base (Snow, 1983). The value that a family places on reading also tends to differ between low and high print homes. "Working-class parents tend to limit the discussion to factual questions . . . . In contrast, middle-class parents are more likely to encourage open-ended discussions about why events occurred" (Dickinson, 1989, p. 126). It may be these differences, combined with their economic status, that continue to put these children at a disadvantage early on. Ninio (1980) found that mothers from lower-SES groups had fewer teaching behaviors toward their children. With these different parenting styles and approaches to reading, the impact has an effect on children and their later development of reading skills. Small differences in families, such as the questions asked following story time, can make a big difference in the long run. It is common that parents agree that reading is an important activity to do with their children; however, many do not actually take the time to do it. Nespeca (1995) points out that "Head Start parents need to be encouraged to do more writing and drawing with their children . . . . Also, more instruction on how to conduct oral discourse while reading books to children would be beneficial" (p. 176).

Socioeconomic levels can also affect everyday life and create missed opportunities for children from low-income families to experience common events. It was found that as early as 48 months of age, children from low-income homes were already at a distinct disadvantage (Smith & Dixon, 1995). Smith and Dixon conducted research that was based on three areas of understanding the function of print: (a) recognizing environmental print (logos or other familiar signs in the world), (b)
describing the functions of literacy objects (newspaper, calendar, coupon, etc.), and (c) recognizing readable print (understanding that certain letter patterns must go together to form a word).

Function of print was defined as "attempts to read words in print using their appearance" (Smith & Dixon, 1995, p. 244). Recognizing environmental print involved the child recognizing common signs such as McDonalds, Kmart, and speed limit signs. The low-income group had a lower mean score on this task. Another difference between the groups of low- and high-income children that appeared was the child’s knowledge of print concepts. Identifying functions of literacy objects were tested by asking children to name common objects such as a newspaper, a telephone book, and a receipt. These objects were also used to assess the knowledge of print concept and common literacy tools. It was found that lower-income children did not recognize the words or signs as quickly as children from higher-income families. In the final task, the children were shown note cards with strings of letters, numbers, or scribbles written on them. They were asked to answer the question "Is this a word that big people read?" (Smith & Dixon, 1995, p. 244). One reason for the differences that appeared could be the missed opportunities of the low-income children. "Several investigators of low-income preschoolers have reported that many families do not effectively engage their children in literacy activities needed to adequately advance their knowledge" (Smith & Dixon, 1995, p. 246).

Another reason lower income families are put at risk for lower reading achievement is due to the lack of financial resources to expose their children to literacy materials. "Lower income families have less money to buy books, writing materials, or other
resources that would help with literacy development” (Nesperca, 1995, p. 154). It was reported by low-income parents that they did not read daily newspapers and that most books available in their homes were adult level materials such as the Bible (Smith & Dixon, 1995). Thus, lower recognition of environmental print at the preschool level may be due to the child’s limited experiences, which could account for children’s low scores and abilities. Low SES families are also less likely to devote an area where children could practice reading, writing, or drawing. “During the first 4 years of life, young children of poor parents are generally read to less often and have fewer meaningful interactions with printed materials than middle-class children do” (Smith & Dixon, 1995, p. 247). The nation recognizes this problem and is attempting to curb it by providing low-income families with Head Start programs to boost their children’s abilities.

**Head Start Programs**

The Head Start program began in the mid-1960's as an innovative way to help young children from low income families. At first, the program was an eight-week summer program targeting children ages three, four, and five. By 1969, some of the programs had made the conversion to an all-year program; by 1972, almost all Head Start programs had changed over to an all-year program (Vinovskis, 1993). This program has maintained many of its original goals over the past three decades. Giving disadvantaged children a boost before entering traditional schooling has been a primary focus. Parental involvement in the Head Start program is also essential. “The philosophy of Head Start is that parents are a child’s first and most important teachers and should be involved in a full range of program operations, from direct services through decision
making and evaluation" (Fuentes, Cantu, & Stechuk, 1996, p. 16). According to Head Start standards, parental involvement goes far beyond direct participation in the classroom. Roles include classroom volunteers, field trip assistants, policy and program roles, approving curriculum, staff hiring, and program evaluations. Head Start programs are already out there attempting to have the at-risk children catch up with their more advantaged peers. “Head Start programs can play a role in literacy activities and involving the parent, as parent empowerment is an important component of the Head Start program” (Nespeca, 1995, p. 156).

**Purpose**

Phonemic awareness is an important determining factor for future reading achievement. Children from low-income families are at a distinct disadvantage of not acquiring these emergent literacy skills, especially phonemic awareness. This study focuses on emergent literacy, specifically phonemic awareness, of at-risk preschool children. There is strong evidence that practice in phonemic awareness increases reading achievement (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Jenkins & Bowen, 1994; Snider, 1995; Wagner & Torgeson, 1987). While phonemic awareness is not necessary in speaking the language, it is important for the fundamental tasks of reading and spelling. Due to this importance, phonemic awareness is the area of literacy that will be assessed. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effects of the parent-training program implemented with Head Start families. Specifically, the research question for this study is as follows: Can parent training impact the phonemic awareness skills of at-risk four-year-old children?

Head Start families will be asked to volunteer to participate in the study to help parents improve their children’s phonemic awareness abilities. A parent-training
program on emergent literacy, and specifically phonemic awareness, is needed to provide parents and children with better opportunities. Children should be exposed to emergent literacy techniques. Providing additional enrichment activities in the home should be an additional boost for children. With that thought in mind, a phonemic awareness intervention-training program should be very beneficial to the families. By teaching the parents these appropriate techniques and skills, the children will receive training in both the home and school environment.
Method

Participants

Head Start children attending the Bowling Green, Kentucky, centers during the 1999-2000 school year were identified as potential subjects. Parents of four-year-old children were asked to participate. Thirteen families initially volunteered, and five families completed all of the training sessions.

The intervention group consisted of five families; all training sessions were conducted with the mother and child only. Two families were Caucasian, two families were African American, and one family was of Indian descent. The mean age for the intervention group was four years and one month and consisted of two males and three females.

Of the eight families who originally volunteered but did not participate, four families were not available for post-intervention assessments. The other four families agreed to post-intervention assessments and were considered a post-hoc control group. Two of these families participated in the first session but did not continue the program; therefore, they were considered part of the control group. Within the four post-hoc control group families, 3 were Caucasian, and the other family was African American. The mean age of the control group was four years, five months, and consisted of all females.
Procedure

Parents were given detailed description of the project and permission form (Appendix A). Once the parents volunteered and indicated the potential meeting times convenient for each family, the families were originally split into groups and contacted through the Head Start teachers. Due to the low number of parents attending the initial meetings, all future training sessions were one-on-one with the investigator. The children were assessed using three phonemic awareness tasks as pre- and post-intervention measures: the Onset Recognition Fluency measure of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (Kaminski & Good, 1998) and two sub-tests from the Phonemic Awareness Assessment Test recommended by Adams, Foorman, Lundberg, and Beeler (1998). These tasks were chosen because they address phonemic awareness in preschoolers. One instrument alone did not assess four-year-olds in all of these areas; therefore, portions of these instruments were deemed age and skill level appropriate. It should be noted that these are informal instruments without psychometric aspects that can be reported. The phonemic awareness post-intervention measures were the same instruments used as pre-intervention measures and were re-administered after the completion of the six training sessions.

At the beginning of each session, beginning with the second session, each parent filled out a feedback questionnaire based on the previous lesson (Appendix B). During each session, the investigator recorded time spent on answering questions, reviewing the previous session, presenting the instructional activity, and practicing the skills. An additional feedback form was given to the parents after the completion of all six sessions to evaluate parent perceptions of the training program (Appendix C).
 Intervention/ Pilot Program

The intervention consists of a six-week sequence of skills that teaches parents various techniques to use when reading to their children. The curriculum was adapted from Fitzpatrick’s (1997) Phonemic Awareness workbook. The program’s first session focused on emergent literacy lessons. The remaining five sessions consisted of teaching parents activities that direct children’s attention to the sounds in words.

Session 1

In the first session, basic emergent literacy skills and emergent literacy techniques in daily living were discussed.

Goal. The goal of Session 1 was to provide parents with emergent literacy techniques to use with their children on a daily basis to help improve their child’s awareness of literacy.

Rationale. Parents were shown how to read to their children interactively instead of passively. The emergent literacy tips were intended to provide a good base of knowledge to help the parents read to their children. Parents were also taught a variety of ways to interact with their child using literacy in daily life activities. Using emergent literacy in daily activities will allow the child to see parents modeling the importance of literacy in everyday life. As noted earlier, modeling by a parent is an important part of emergent literacy. The session was presented to the parent in a role-play and modeling format with one-on-one instruction while the child was present.

Activity. Since this meeting was the first one, the first activity was an introduction of the investigator, parent, and child. Following the introduction, any general concerns or questions that the parent had were addressed. Once this
question/answer period was completed, the lesson began. First, a compilation of tips was provided for the parent and reviewed (Appendix D). Each of the parents were asked whether they had already initiated any of these activities with their children and were asked to describe examples to the investigator. The investigator went over each of the tips and related how each one is important and how it can be used with children. Once the demonstration was complete, the children were asked to select a book from the room; each parent and child then practiced the tips. The investigators were available to address any questions, concerns, or comments during the one-on-one reading activity. Once each parent and child finished practicing the technique and there were no further questions, the investigator moved on to the next activity for the session. Parents were then provided with a list of possible ways to include their children in literacy activities (Appendix E). The list was reviewed and the parent(s) were asked if they could think of any additional ways that literacy affects daily life. Parents were again asked if they were currently using any of these techniques with their child and if so, was asked to share. Blank picture calendars of all the months were then passed out and each child and parent were asked to fill in important dates for their individual families (Appendix F). Each child was asked to identify his or her birthday month and day and to color in that special box to represent his or her birthday. Crayons and markers were distributed for the children to use and then collected at the end of the session. The investigators were with each parent and child to answer specific questions or concerns that the parent might have. Once the calendar activity was finished, the investigators presented the action plans (Appendix G) that listed the times when each parent and child could implement these activities at least three times during the week. Each parent was asked to pick at least three different techniques from
the list provided. Each parent was also asked to return the action plans next week to discuss the success of the plan.

Session 2

The following sessions are devoted to helping the child develop better phonemic awareness skills. The second session focused on rhyming words and looking at word patterns.

Goal. The goal of session 2 was to teach the parents to help the child to develop auditory awareness of sounds within words (Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Rationale. Exposure to rhyming words is essential to master this level of phonemic awareness. Rhyming, as discussed earlier, is an important skill to practice when establishing phonemic awareness. The session was presented to each parent in a role-play and modeling format with one-on-one instruction while each child was present.

Activity. First, each parent filled out the Evaluation Form for the previous session. Next, any questions or concerns from each parent was addressed. The investigator introduced the lesson to each parent and child by saying words in the room that rhymed or using the child’s name to make a rhyme. Then, each parent was given a list of rhyming pairs of words obtained from Fitzpatrick (1997, p. 74-76). The investigator explained to the parent that each child should be exposed to rhyming words to help him or her get accustomed to hearing the sounds in words. The investigator then picked a pair of rhyming words and a non-rhyming third word and presented them orally to the child. Then, she asked each child which word did not rhyme. Once the demonstration was complete, each parent practiced this concept with the child while the investigators provided one-on-one feedback and assistance. Once each parent felt that
the child clearly understood the concept of rhyming words presented orally, the investigator presented another activity with rhyming words. The investigator used rhyming picture cards (Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 77-88) to identify which pictures represent rhyming words. All parents were given copies of rhyming word cards to use with their child. Each child and parent went over all of the pictures and picked out the rhyming matches. The investigator suggested that for one of the weekly activities, the cards could be cut into squares and a memory rhyme game could be played with their child. The investigators asked if there were any questions about the activities. The investigators then presented the book The Foot Book by Dr. Seuss (1996) and the homework assignment for the week. Each parent was asked to have the child point out rhyming words within the story. The action plan was filled out by each parent and included the reading of The Foot Book and the memory rhyme game.

Session 3

This session was an additional step in the rhyming process for the development of phonemic awareness skills and involves counting syllables in words.

Goal. The goal of this exercise was to teach the parent to help the child develop stronger auditory discrimination.

Rationale. Syllables are acoustic and by identifying them the child learns to distinguish different sounds. This step is the next one in the importance of understanding rhyming patterns. By having the child separate words into syllables, he/she is building an important foundation for the next lesson. The session was presented to the parent in a role-play and modeling format with one-on-one instruction while the child was present.
Activity. First, each parent filled out the Evaluation Form for the previous session. Next, any questions or concerns from each parent were addressed. The lesson began with the investigators each tapping out the syllables of their first name. Then, each of the parents were asked to tap out their names into syllables. The pair then practiced clapping out the syllables in their names, using their first, middle, and last names. The investigators then gave instructions on two different activities where each parent can practice this technique with their child. In the first activity, each parent and child will choose a book and work on tapping out words in the story. Each parent will randomly choose a few words throughout the story and have the child tap out the syllables for the selected words. To make this exercise more fun, each parent can have the child use a table to make a drumming noise for each syllable. In the second activity, each parent and child can find objects in the home and tap out the syllables in the objects' names.

The investigators then presented the activity for the day, the Bag of Objects. The investigator had a paper bag with various common objects. For example, the bag contained a pencil, a pen, a seashell, a paper clip, an eraser, a crayon, a rubber band, a toy flower, a pair of sunglasses, a toy tiger, and a bookmark. Each child was instructed to reach in the bag and grab an object. Once each child identified the object, the investigator and the child clapped out the syllables together. After the first few objects were selected, each parent joined in and the investigator stopped helping. At this point, the investigator asked each child how many syllables, or claps, the child heard. Once each team completed its activity with the objects in the bag, the investigator presented picture cards with multi-syllable words (Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 89-90). These pictures represented more syllables than the objects in the bag, thus increasing the difficulty of the
exercise. Once each child and parent went through the pictures, the investigator presented the book *Mother Goose: A Collection of Classic Nursery Rhymes* (Hague, 1984) to each parent and child. Then, to end the session, each parent filled out the action plan and included the reading of nursery rhymes to the child, tapping or clapping out syllables of objects in the home and words in the stories, and working with the picture cards. The investigator also reminded each parent to have the child count the syllables each time.

**Session 4**

This session took the previous session a step further by focusing on breaking down words into specific sounds or phonemes. The main focus of this session is looking at the parts of a word.

**Goal.** The goal of this lesson was to teach the parent to help the child understand that speech can be broken down into small parts. By breaking down the word, the child used oral synthesis, which focused on hearing sounds in a sequence and separating them.

**Rationale.** The child, once able to hear the rhyming patterns and break words into syllables, was ready for the harder task of hearing the individual sounds or phonemes in words. Sometimes a child may think a word is one long sound, especially when alphabet knowledge is limited. This lesson was broken into two sessions due to the difficulty of the task. The session was presented to the parent in a role-play and modeling format with one-on-one instruction while the child was present.

**Activity.** First, each parent filled out the Evaluation Form for the previous session. Next, any questions or concerns from each parent were addressed. An overview of the lesson was presented as a continuation from last week in separating syllables.
Each child was asked to close his or her eyes and listen carefully to the sounds that could be heard in the room. Then the child was asked to tell the investigator and the parent what he or she heard. This practice helped prepare the child for the listening task ahead. Then the investigator picked a small word, “at,” and broke down the sounds into /a/-/t/.

If the child did not seem to be able to hear the sounds, the investigator repeated the word until the child recognized the two sounds in the word. Next, the investigator presented the child with two-phoneme word picture cards (Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 91-92). Each child and the investigator went through each picture and broke the words into their individual sounds. Next, the investigator gave each parent more picture cards that represented three-phoneme words (Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 93-94). Each parent and child practiced these words. The investigator introduced the song “The Wheels on the Bus” to accompany this activity to help the child hear the sounds more clearly. The song was sung using the words “the sounds in cat are /c/-/a/-/t/, /c/-/a/-/t/, /c/-/a/-/t/; the sounds in cat are /c/-/a/-/t/ all day long.” Following this exercise, each parent filled out an action plan for the next week using this technique three times with the different picture cards. They were encouraged to do so while reading any book to their child by simply picking out a random word and having the child break it into syllables and then into sounds. The investigator then presented the songbook The Singing Bee (Hart, 1982) to use with the child.

Session 5

This session continued to emphasize phonemes but used words with more phonemes per word.
Goal. The goal of this session was to teach the parent how further explore the sounds in words with their child by providing a deeper understanding of how words are broken down.

Rationale. This skill provides support for the least prepared children who have little or no concept of words or sounds (Fitzpatrick, 1997). The session was presented to the parent in a role-play and modeling format with one-on-one instruction while the child was present.

Activity. First, each parent filled out the Evaluation Form for the previous session. Next, any questions or concerns from the parents were addressed. The lesson was introduced as a continuation of the previous lesson using longer words with more sounds. The investigator reviewed with each child the listening activity of sounds in the room and explained that the activity for the lesson was going to use many more sounds than before. The investigator presented each child with four-phoneme picture cards (Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 95-97) and reviewed the separation of sounds in the words. Next, each parent practiced with their child using five phoneme picture cards (Fitzpatrick, 1997, p. 98 - 100). Once the pictures were completed, each parent filled out the action plan and included using the picture cards, objects around the house, and words in books to separate out sounds with the child.

Session 6

This session introduces a new topic, beginning sounds of words.

Goal. The goal of this lesson was to teach the parent how to introduce the skill of isolating sounds and hearing them separately by identifying for the child where a given sound is heard.
Rationale. The previous two lessons prepared the child for this concept by providing an understanding of individual sounds within words. This lesson helped each parent teach the child how to pay attention to the position of a sound in a word. The session was presented to the parent in a role-play and modeling format with one-on-one instruction while the child was present.

Activity. First, the parent filled out the Evaluation Form for the previous session. Next, any questions or concerns from each parent were addressed. The investigator introduced the lesson. It was presented as a game where each child could make different words beginning with the same sound or letter. The investigator picks the sound that each child’s name begins with and thinks of three words that use the same sound at the beginning of the word. Each child and parent was given a set of cut out letters, containing two of each one. Each child picks a word and the word is spelled out. Then each parent was instructed to make another word beginning with the same sound. For example, one child chose “book” and the parent then picked the word “blue.” Once several words were completed with this activity, the investigator then began pointing to common objects in the room and asked the child, “What sound did you hear at the beginning?” Objects included table, chair, light, garbage can, book, paper, and door. It was explained to each parent that this lesson could also be done around the house with any words while reading or talking. Each parent should say, “Bring me the toys that all start with the sound /b/” or set out three household items and say, “What do these objects start with?” An action plan was filled out using these techniques with beginning sounds. Since this meeting was the last one in which lessons were taught, there was no session evaluation form for this lesson. However, each parent was asked to participate in
a discussion about his/her feelings and reactions to the study. Post-test meeting times were discussed. All parents requested that the posttest be done at the end of that session and their request was accommodated. Each parent filled out the Overall Project Evaluation Form. Finally, each parent and child was thanked for being a part of the study.
Results

The data collected at the pre-and post-assessments were used to track any progress made by the students as a result of the training sessions. Due to the low numbers of parents participating in this project, only descriptive analyses of the data were used. The four families that self-selected out but were available for post-intervention assessment formed a control group, thereby providing the means for a comparison between the families receiving the phonemic awareness intervention training and those who did not. Individual scores for each assessment are presented for both the control and intervention groups. The means for the pre-and post-phonemic awareness tests were also compared for both the intervention and control group. In addition, the parents were given evaluation forms following each individual session. The mean scores for each item per session are presented. Also, at the completion of the program, the parents were given an overall evaluation form of their opinions and reactions to the program. This information was also analyzed to help make revisions for future programs.

Phonemic Awareness

A total of 5 families completed all six sessions and the pre- and post-tests. All five children either performed the same or improved in each of the three phonemic awareness tasks that were given. A total of four children who were originally signed up for the program but did not attend all sessions (2 families completed the first session) were able to be posttested. These four children became the control group. The results for all nine children are presented in Table 1. The results for these children varied. Some
Table 1

Pre- and Post-Test Individual Raw Scores on Phonemic Awareness Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Identification</th>
<th>Onset Fluency</th>
<th>Detecting Rhyme</th>
<th>Counting Syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* – DIBELS. b – Adams et al. (1998).

The means for both the intervention and control group were calculated and compared. For the Onset Fluency tasks, the total score possible was 16. On the Detecting Rhyme sub-test, the total possible score was 5, and on the Counting Syllables sub-test, the total possible score was 5. The mean scores for the intervention and control groups are presented in Table 2.
Table 2

Pre- and Post-Test Phonemic Awareness Mean Raw Scores for the Intervention and Control Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Intervention Group (n=5)</th>
<th>Control Group (n=4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onset Fluency (16)</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detecting Rhyme (5)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting Syllables (5)</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Numbers in parentheses are maximum score possible.

Parent Session Evaluation

The parents filled out session evaluation forms rating the previous session on various items. Each individual question was rated on a scale from one to five, where a rating of 1 was Strongly Disagree and 5 was Strongly Agree. Overall, the majority of the items rated at a 4.0 or above. The only item that fell below that rating was in Session 1, where the question addressed the newness of the activity. These results are presented in Table 3. Within the session evaluation forms, parents were additionally asked how often they practiced the week’s lesson with their child. Consistently, the majority of the answers were two to three times a week.
Table 3

Parents' Mean Ratings of Individual Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>S-1</th>
<th>S-2</th>
<th>S-3</th>
<th>S-4</th>
<th>S-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understood the lesson's directions.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lesson was useful for my child.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I saw the lesson's practical purpose.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activity was new for me.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was helpful for me to practice the lesson with the leader.</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Session 1 = Emergent Literacy; Session 2 = Rhyming; Session 3 = Syllable Counting; Session 4 = Phoneme Segmentation # 1; Session 5 = Phoneme Segmentation # 2. Ratings were based on the following scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Parent Overall Evaluation

Each parent filled out an Overall Program evaluation form at the end of Session 6. Individual items were rated on the same 5-point scale as the Session Evaluation items. All items rated at a 4.0 or above on the Overall Program Evaluations. The results from this analysis are presented in Table 4.
Table 4

Parents' Mean Ratings of the Overall Training Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Overall Mean Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The leaders were helpful, polite, and listened to me.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was glad that I was in this program.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This program gave good information.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the books from this program.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the handouts from this program.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned new ways to read and work with my child.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I plan to use what I learned in the future.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This program will help my child with reading.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt I could ask questions during the lessons.</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to work with my child more as a result of this program.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ratings were based on the following scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.
Discussion

The results of this study indicated that the children whose parents received the phonemic awareness training sessions did better on phonemic awareness tasks than those children from families who had not received the training. This outcome was expected because the research suggests that exposure to these tasks will provide a better understanding of phonemic awareness and the skills within. Overall, the intervention group performed better on all three tasks involving phonemic awareness skills. The higher gains suggest that while incidental learning may have occurred during the time of the training sessions, the intervention group greatly outperformed the control group. The intervention group was also able to come close to obtaining the highest maximum score on the Detecting Rhyme sub-test.

When looking at the specific tests, interesting results were found. On the Onset Fluency task, while both groups did improve, the intervention group made a larger gain at 3.4 points in comparison to only 1.5 points for control. The Detecting Rhyme sub-tests give even more credit to the program due to the improvements shown by the intervention group. Both groups again made gains in this area, but the intervention group more than tripled their overall mean and the control group gained only a quarter of a point. Further, when analyzing the Counting Syllables sub-test, the control group lost ground, going from a mean of 2.5 to a mean of 1.0. The intervention group greatly improved this skill, too.
In analyzing the session evaluation forms, the program seemed to be successful in the eyes of the parents as well. The only item that fell below a 4.0 mean was a rating of the “newness” of session 1’s activity. This session was designed to be a simple subject matter that most families would be familiar with and thus would provide the leaders and the families a chance to familiarize themselves with each other. Across all sessions, the parents rated the usefulness of the lesson at a mean of 4.6. This rating justifies one of the main goals of this project: families learning useful techniques to take home and work further with their children. There is further evidence that the study contained treatment integrity, with the parents consistently reporting that they practiced the lessons two to three times a week with their child.

To further evaluate the program, the Overall Program evaluation forms were analyzed. Out of ten questions, not one fell below a mean of 4.0. An important area that received a mean rating of 4.6 was the parent’s belief that the program will help their child with reading. In addition, parents were glad to have been in the program, felt it provided good information, and provided them with new ways to work with their children. One of the most successful items (mean of 4.8) involved the books that were provided to the families during the program. Providing them with these books reinforced the usefulness of and the ability to practice the lessons in the home, outside of the sessions.

The research suggests that Head Start parents are willing to work with their children if the instructions are clear and the tools are available. In only six sessions, improvement was seen from all children who received the intervention training. Parent involvement is a clear Head Start mandate, as well as a focus on phonemic awareness.
Therefore, staff training in these areas presented in the six training sessions should become part of the Head Start curriculum.

This research may impact the roles of school psychologists, speech language pathologists, and Head Start staff within the preschool setting. By having this information that parent involvement after only six sessions increased phonemic awareness skills, the staff and support personnel could be trained in these areas to provide wrap around lessons to further improve the children’s skills. The direct one-on-one method of parent training was shown to be effective, and by using this method, the staff and support personnel could also implement these skills. By involving all available resources, the parents could be provided with direct one-on-one instruction in many different areas.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study is the small group of families that volunteered to participate. Working within the demographics of Head Start families, it is very hard to get families to commit to a six-week program such as this. Every attempt was made to accommodate schedules, but in the end only five families were able to complete all six sessions. Within the five families, it was, at times, difficult to get them to the sessions. The author, on a few occasions, would meet the family at a time that was not scheduled just to ensure that the week’s lesson was taught. When it came time to posttest the self-selected control group, only four out of eight children were available. A further limitation of the current study is that only one city in Kentucky was utilized for this project. While it did attempt to involve Head Start children from three different facilities within the city, only two facilities ended up having children complete the six sessions.
Future Research

Research conducted in the future needs to continue to work with the preschool population. Much of the research today focuses on Kindergarten age children. This study does show that preschoolers are capable of understanding and using these types of skills. Another important aspect for the future is to attempt to obtain a larger sample size of families. By having a larger sample size, the differences seen here between the groups could then be evaluated for statistical significance. With a larger sample size, the results could then be generalized to a wider population of children.

Future research needs to also examine the long-term effects, if any, that the children and parents may experience as a result of being involved in similar training. Perhaps a longitudinal study would provide useful information as to the lasting effects the training has on parents, as well as the children. A study involving children at this age and their parents could be implemented; the children could then be tracked through Kindergarten, first, and second grades to assess continued parent involvement and reading skills development. Results of this area of research could aid preschool and Head Start teachers in knowing what specific pre-reading skills that four-year-olds could benefit from. In addition, more age-appropriate phonemic awareness assessments should be developed to address the skills of four- and perhaps even three-year-olds. It has clearly been demonstrated that this age group can acquire and do have early phonemic awareness and emergent literacy skills that could be assessed.

Another important factor to examine involves other skills that could be taught relating to phonemic awareness. These could include ending sounds, middle sounds, word families, and object to word recognition. These are other areas of phonemic
awareness that have not yet been looked at in four-year-old children, but would be beneficial them.

If this study were to be replicated, a few changes should be made to improve the training sessions. One area that may prove to be more effective is home visits. Home visits would more likely increase the number of families willing to participate. This approach would eliminate transportation problems, parents forgetting to come, and time, work, and scheduling constraints. Related to this concept could be a more collaborative environment between the Head Start facility and the training sessions. The Head Start facility could adopt these activities as part of daily lessons. The parents could then be provided with the tools to implement the techniques in the home with the training intervention implementer. Such collaboration would also provide a more consistent learning environment for the child, with possibly longer lasting results.

A second area that could be improved is the training sessions. Based on parent feedback, Session 1, involving emergent literacy, was not considered a new activity. Perhaps this lesson should be used as an introduction and move directly into the rhyming activity from Session 2 as part of the first session. Also, different activities could be used for the sound blending exercise. Different colored blocks could represent each sound, and the child would push the block as each sound is made. The possibilities are endless for creative ideas that could be used to implement these sessions.
References


Appendix A

Parent Permission Slip
Dear Parent/Guardian,

You and your child are being asked to take part in a study about children's early reading skills. This early reading program is being given by Kelli Bradbury and Dr. Carl Myers of Western Kentucky University. The goal of our program is to get a better idea of what activities happen in the home related to reading and to improve children's reading abilities. By improving your child's reading abilities, he or she will be better prepared for the upcoming school year.

Before and after the program, your child will be given a task during school hours to see what they know about letters and sounds. After the child completes the task, six learning sessions will be provided to you for one hour each session. During the learning sessions, you will be given tips, instructions, and free materials on how to give your child a head start on reading. This will further your child in the school readiness process.

We want you to know that you and your child’s taking part in this is entirely voluntary. If you or your child decide not to take part, it will not affect you or your child in any way. You or your child may choose to withdraw from the study at any time. All information gathered in the study will be kept strictly confidential and is available only to the project staff. Your information will be coded by numbers and your names will not be used.

The procedures in this study have been reviewed and approved by the Western Kentucky University Committee for the Protection of Human Research Participants. If you have any questions about this study, you may call Dr. Carl Myers at 745-4410. We urge you to call us if you have any questions or concerns.

We hope that you and your child will take part in our early reading project. We want to make this a pleasant experience for your family. Please fill in your and your child’s name and your child’s date of birth on the attached form. If you decide to be in the study, please check the “yes” box, sign your name, fill in the date, and write down the best day of the week and time that you would be able to meet with us. Return this letter to your child’s Head Start teacher. When your child returns the letter to the teacher, whether you are taking part or not, your child will be given a small reward.

Thank you for your time and help. We hope to work with you and your child.

Carl Myers, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Psychology

Kelli Bradbury
School Psychology Graduate Student
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Child’s name: __________________________________________________________

Date of Birth: __________________________________________________________

Your name: ____________________________________________________________

Please circle the Head Start location where your child attends:
Jones Jagger     Bryant Way     Graham

_____ No, I do not wish to participate in this program.
_____ Yes, I have read the information provided about the program and agree for myself
and my child to take part in the program conducted by Kelli Bradbury and Dr. Carl Myers
of Western Kentucky University. I understand that I may withdraw from the program at
any time without penalty.

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Parent/Guardian Signature                Date

If you checked YES, please pick from the following list the best day of the week and
time(s) that would be best for you to meet with us for the reading sessions. Also let us
know which facility would work best for you to meet at if you have a preference. Thank
you. You may check all that apply:

_____ Monday 12:00 - 1:00           _____ Thursday 2:00 - 3:00
_____ Monday 5:30 - 6:30           _____ Thursday 3:30 - 4:30
_____ Tuesday 2:00 - 3:00          _____ Friday 12:00 - 1:00
_____ Tuesday 3:30 - 4:30          _____ Friday 1:30 - 2:30
_____ Wednesday 2:00 - 3:00        _____ Friday 3:00 - 4:00

I can meet at the following Head Start locations: Please circle all that apply.
Jones Jagger     Bryant Way     Graham

If you take part in our program, will you need additional child care during the training
sessions?   _____ Yes   _____ No

If yes, please indicate the age(s) of the child/children: ________________________

Please return this letter to your child’s teacher.
Appendix B

Parent Session Evaluation Form
PARENT EVALUATION FORM
SESSION_____

We would like to know how you feel about your participation in the recent session. Please answer the questions by circling the number that best tells us what you think. You can write additional comments on the back. The scores that you give will not affect you or your child in any way, so please tell us your honest opinion. This will help us improve our program in the future. Thank you!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. How often did you and your child practice last week’s lesson?
   _____ None - if none, please answer question 7.
   _____ Once
   _____ 2-3 times
   _____ More than 3 times

7. If you did not practice, was it because: (check all that may apply)
   _____ time I had planned did not work
   _____ unexpected event(s) happened
   _____ sickness
   _____ my child was not interested
   _____ forgot
   _____ harder than I thought
   _____ other (Please explain): ____________________________________________
Appendix C

Parent Overall Program Evaluation Form
OVERALL EVALUATION FORM
PARENTS' VIEWS

We would like to know how you and your child felt about participating in these training sessions. Please answer the following questions by circling the number that tells us what you think. You may write additional comments on the back. The scores will be used to help us make our program better in the future so please give us your honest opinion. Thank you so much for participating in our program!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The leaders were helpful, polite, and listened to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I was glad that I was in this program.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This program gave good information.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I liked the books from this program.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I liked the handouts from this program.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I learned new ways to read and work with my child.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I plan to use what I learned from this program in the future.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. This program will help my child with reading.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I felt I could ask questions during the lessons.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I need to work with my child more as a result of this program.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Parent Emergent Literacy Tips
Emergent Literacy Tips for Parents

☆ Be models for your children - let them see you reading

☆ When you read a story to your child - ask them questions about what is happening on the pages

☆ Have them use pictures from the story to make up their own story

☆ Have a place for the child to read and make it a special place for them

☆ Have different reading materials in the home - magazine, story books, Bible

☆ Pick a certain time each night to read to your child

☆ Make the story come alive - use voices and sounds

☆ Let your child practice writing letters - even if it is just “scribble” for now

☆ Have conversations with your child not using “baby talk”

☆ Use the public library for a variety of books

☆ If older children - have them read with the younger child
Appendix E

Emergent Literacy Daily Activities
Daily Emergent Literacy Tips

* Shopping/Grocery lists
* Paying bills
* Cooking/Following recipe
* Following directions/instructions
* Reading street signs
* Reading store names
* Checking tv listings
* Following a map
* Working puzzles
* Playing games
* Making appointments in calendars
* Using calendars in general to find birthdays, special dates and holidays
* Sending or making own cards for events (Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day)
* Writing out envelopes and sending mail
Appendix F

Example of Calendar for Emergent Literacy lesson
Appendix G

Example of Action Plan
ACTION PLAN

SESSION _________
TOPIC _________

My child and I will work on the following activity:

______________________________

this week at the following days and times:

____________________ at ________________

____________________ at ________________

____________________ at ________________

____________________ at ________________

SIGNATURES

____________________________
Parent/Caregiver

____________________________
Child

Notes or Additional Instructions:

____________________________

____________________________

____________________________

____________________________
Appendix H

Letter from Human Subjects Review Committee
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
Human Subjects Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs
104 Foundation Building
502-745-4652; Fax 502-745-4211
E-mail: Phillip.Myers@WKU.Edu

In future correspondence please refer to HS0031, December 10, 1999

Anna Alexander
P.O. Box 202
Sweden, KY 42285

Dear Anna:

1. Your research project "Phonemic Awareness in Preschool Children in Relation to Social Class," has undergone review by the Western Kentucky University IRB for human subjects of research and it has been determined that risks to subjects are: (1) minimized and reasonable; and that (2) research procedures are consistent with a sound research design and do not expose the subjects to unnecessary risk. Reviewers determined that: (1) benefits to subjects are considered along with the importance of the topic and that outcomes are reasonable; (2) selection of subjects is equitable; and (3) the purposes of the research and the research setting is amenable to subjects' welfare and producing desired outcomes; that indications of coercion or prejudice are absent, and that participation is clearly voluntary.

2. In addition, the IRB found that: (1) informed consent will be sought and documented from each prospective subject. (2) Provision is made for collecting, using and storing data in a manner that protects the safety and privacy of the subjects and the confidentiality of the data. (3) Appropriate safeguards are included to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects. Please store all data securely at an on campus location for a minimum of three years after the project is completed.

3. Your research therefore meets the criteria of Full Board Review and is approved subject to receipt of signed articles of agreement with head start programs participating; and the letter to the parents must be made more reader friendly. Please note that the institution is not responsible for any actions regarding this protocol before approval. Copies of your request for human subjects review, your application, and this approval, are maintained in the Office Sponsored Programs at the above address. Please report any changes to this approved protocol to this office. A Continuing Review protocol will be sent to you in the future to determine the status of the project.

Kindest regards,

Sincerely,

Phillip M. Myers, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Sponsored Programs and
Human Subjects Coordinator

c: Human Subjects File0031

Kell Building
2012 William Road
Cabinet 0031A

Dr. Carl Myers, Department of Psychology, WKU

HSApprovalAlexander0031