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Involving Families in Tutoring Programs

Parents are the first and primary teachers of their children. By responding to their babies' coos and babbles, parents teach about love and security and stimulate their children's brain development. They teach their children that reading and writing are valuable, useful, and enjoyable activities through simple practices—reading aloud, having conversations, answering questions, providing books and writing materials, and demonstrating how reading and writing are used in daily life. All of these practices put children on the road to reading, however, reading with children every day is the most critical.

In some families, however, the love of reading is not passed down from one generation to the next. Parents with poor reading skills are not likely to encourage their children to explore the world of books and reading. A child who grows up in a home with at least one illiterate parent is at increased risk of growing up illiterate. Family literacy programs address this problem by helping children gain the skills that will allow them to succeed in school while also encouraging parents to set and pursue their own learning goals. Parents learn how to carry out their role as their children's primary educators, now and when the children enter school. They learn parenting skills, such as how to read aloud, while increasing their self-confidence and interest in education, training, and employment. Tutoring programs may operate in conjunction with family literacy programs, such as those implemented by Head Start or Even Start programs, or offer parenting and adult education services to the families of children they serve.

This chapter covers the following topics:

- incorporating family involvement in the program design;
- establishing a partnership with each family; and
- promoting family literacy.

Reading to a child while touching, hugging and holding him or her can be a wonderful antidote to the impersonal tendencies of the information age—for both the adult and the child. While critical to building brains, reading is equally important to building trusting and close relationships.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, Time, February 3, 1997

In this chapter:

- Incorporating Family Involvement in the Program Design
- Establishing a Partnership with Each Family
- Promoting Family Literacy



Reading aloud is the single most important activity for encouraging children to love books and to want to learn and succeed in school.

Incorporating Family Involvement in the Program Design

In addition to taking advantage of the learning opportunities that naturally occur at home, families help their children succeed by getting involved in Head Start and child care programs and schools. Parents and grandparents volunteer in the classroom, library, or art room; serve on a committee; attend meetings or workshops; or regularly talk with or send notes to the child's teacher.

Tutoring programs can offer families similar opportunities to participate in their child's learning. Family involvement strategies can be incorporated in the tutoring program's design and reinforced by reading specialists, tutors, staff, and volunteers. Your program can include parent representatives on the planning team and on the policy group that oversees program operations. You can ask for family input through surveys, questionnaires, phone calls, and home visits. In a child care or Head Start program, tutors might arrange their schedules so they can ask families for feedback and suggestions at drop off and pick up times. Tutors who work with older children in the primary grades can ask children to interview their families and report their findings in a tutoring session. From steering committee to evaluation team, the program design can incorporate specific strategies for including parents as partners in their children's learning. Here are some suggestions:

Enroll families as well as their children in the tutoring program. Provide verbal and written explanations of the roles of children, tutors, and families in ensuring that each child becomes an engaged reader by the end of third grade.

Provide a communication journal or audiotape for each family. Tutors and families can keep in touch by writing or recording messages that will be delivered by the child.

Give families progress reports at regularly scheduled intervals. Tutors can meet with families at home or at the program to share information about what the child has learned and to develop plans for the future. It is important to schedule these meetings at times that are convenient for families.

Make sure every home has children's books and writing materials. The program can share donated books and drawing and writing supplies, organize a toy and book lending library, encourage families to use the public or school library, and sponsor book giveaway events funded by community partners. The program can also help parents obtain books and magazines for themselves.

The majority of parents that I have talked with, wait until their child is in bed before they pick up the newspaper or a book to read. How is the child to know that reading is an integral part of an adult's everyday life if he never sees his favorite adult reading? Children want to be exactly like their mother or father; all grown up and able to do grown up things. If they see their parents reading—book reading for pleasure, newspaper reading for information, recipe reading for instruction, they will begin to perceive reading as important and want to partake in this marvelous activity themselves.

*Helen Davig
Even Start Director, Holmen, Wisconsin
Reading Together, 1994*

Encourage families to learn about learning. Use newsletters, tip sheets, videotapes, workshops, and resource libraries to address topics such as:

- Children Should be Heard—How Can You Make Time to Listen?
- Beyond the Books—What Else Can You Find at the Library?
- Play Together, Learn Together
- Create a Special Place at Home for Reading and Writing.

On the following page is an example of a tip sheet for families.

TIPS FOR FAMILIES**Help Your Child Become a Reader*****Make time to talk with and listen to your child.***

- Talk about what you are doing, what you did, and what you plan to do. Listen and respond to your child. Good listeners and talkers are likely to become strong readers.

Share family stories with your children.

- They will enjoy hearing about your cultural and family history, values, and traditions.

Praise your child's efforts and accomplishments.

- Point out the many things your child does well. Most children learn grammar, spelling, and pronunciation naturally when they are encouraged to listen, speak, read, and write.

Encourage reading and writing at home.

- Create special places for reading and writing. Store books and writing materials where children can reach them.
- Read aloud every day at a regular time and when your child asks for a story.
- Write a story together using words and drawings, photographs, or pictures from magazines. Take turns reading the story aloud.
- Make letters your child can trace with a finger using sandpaper, fabric scraps, or foam packing peanuts pasted on cardboard.
- Cut words and letters from magazines. Paste on paper to "write" words and messages.

Be a reading and writing model.

- Make a family message board and use it every day to ask a question, list events, or tell everyone what's for dinner.
- Write simple messages that your child can read—put a note in a lunchbox, make a coupon good for a treat, or post a thank you on your message board.
- Read aloud interesting items from the newspaper or a magazine.
- Let your child see you read and write for fun and to get things done. Read aloud what you have written—a shopping list, letter, or note on the calendar.

Read and write everywhere you go.

- Fill a tote bag with books, paper, crayons, and other things for reading and writing. Bring it when you do errands, take a trip, or wait—for the doctor, store cashier, barber, or bus.
- Read aloud the words on signs, letters, food packages, menus, and billboards.

Encourage all families to read aloud with their children. Ask every family, regardless of their own reading skills, to make time to read aloud with their child every day. Model read-aloud techniques with story books, poems, songs, and wordless picture books during home visits, on videotape, or in a workshop. Reading is Fundamental has produced two videos on reading aloud with young children. *Read With Me* features two Head Start families. *Read With Me... The Teacher-Parent Partnership* was filmed in two Head Start classrooms. Both videos demonstrate how to read aloud with young children. They reinforce the links between reading aloud and motivating and fostering children's reading skills. (See the Checklist for Reading Aloud in Chapter 3 and the tip sheet that follows.)

TIPS FOR FAMILIES

Reading Aloud With Your Child

Start reading aloud today—no child, even a newborn, is too young to be read to.

Read aloud every day, at a special time, in a comfortable place.

Read when your child asks you to.

Read your child's favorite books over and over if asked.

Read books that introduce new words, ideas, places, and people.

Read in every room at home, outdoors, and when away from home.

Relax and let your child set the pace for reading.

Let your child turn pages, repeat words, point out letters, and look for details in pictures.

Stop often to talk about the pictures, answer questions, and ask, "What do you think will happen?" "Where would you go?" "What are they doing?"

Ask your child to read aloud to you by retelling a favorite story, making up a story to go with a wordless picture book, or following along with a tape.

Point to letters and talk about their sounds—alone and in combination with others.

Make books come alive—dance, draw, dress up, make puppets, or act out a story.

Keep reading aloud even after your child has learned to read well and independently.

Establishing a Partnership with Each Family

Most tutors work with individual children once or twice a week. They may use a reading curriculum, however, as tutors get to know each child they tailor the standard approach to match the child's skills, interests, and needs. Tutors already know about books, reading, and writing, and they may be experienced at tutoring, but it can take a long time to really get to know a child. Parents, on the other hand, are experts on their children. They know what their child likes to do, what interests him, what kinds of books he enjoys. Tutors need this information to plan



A child is likely to learn more about reading when the tutor and family form a partnership.

strategies that will motivate and engage the child. In addition, regardless of their own reading skills, parents have opportunities every day to build on the learning that takes place during tutoring sessions and in child care, Head Start, school and other settings. Clearly, a child is likely to learn more about reading when the tutor and family form a partnership, just as when the teacher and the family work together. The partners can work together to set goals, plan strategies to carry out at home and in tutoring sessions, and share information about the child's progress.

Strong partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect for each partner's roles and responsibilities. Your program's initial and ongoing training for tutors should address how to build partnerships with families that support reading and learning at home. Tutors need to understand that children's parents and other adult family members have a wide range of reading skills. Some families read regularly, others read occasionally, and still others never read at all because they don't know how or may not think it's important. Every family, however, can support their child's interest in books and reading. A parent can listen while a child reads aloud, take a child to the library, share family stories, answer a child's questions, and talk with a child about her special interests or the day's events. Training can also cover strategies such as the following:

- **Demonstrate respect for the family's home language and culture.** For example, ask the child and family to help you learn to speak, read, and write a few words in his or her home language. Incorporate in your tutoring sessions songs, rhymes, stories, art, music, and books that reflect the child's culture.
- **Use familiar words rather than educational jargon.** For example, talk about reading and writing rather than literacy.
- **Establish a system for ongoing exchange of information about the child's progress.** For example, phone the family once a week at a time that is convenient for them and for you.
- **Design follow-up assignments that encourage children to involve their families in reading.** For example, a child could share a book with a family member, read a story to a younger sibling, ask a family member to tell a story about his or her childhood, or make a book with a family member using materials provided by the tutoring program.
- **Acknowledge parents' abilities and suggest ways to apply them to support children's learning.** For example, a mother could use her planning skills to set a predictable evening routine that helps her child stay organized—dinner, homework, read aloud, chores, bed.

- **Ask families to help keep track of their child's progress.** For example, ask families to contribute to a child's portfolio by saving drawing and writing samples and providing examples of the child's growing vocabulary, reading skills, and favorite books.

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTAC) developed two booklets as part of the America Reads Challenge to assist families and caregivers in their support for emerging literacy. *Ready★Set★Read for Families* and *Ready★Set★Read for Caregivers* are filled with activities and ideas that parents and tutors can use to help children from birth through age five learn about language and reading. The *Ready★Set★Read* booklets include numerous tips about how parents and tutors can form a partnership and keep each other informed and involved (see Examples of Reading and Tutoring Programs in Chapter 5).

Promoting Family Literacy

I know that by keeping her nose in the books, she is going to be a reader. If she's a reader, she could be a writer. She could be a doctor. She could be anything.

A Reach Out and Read parent

Family literacy refers to the ways parents, children, and other family members use reading and writing at home and in their community to share ideas and information, get things done, tell family stories, and teach about cultural values and practices. Children who come from homes in which there is a lot of conversation, reading, and writing learn to value literacy and are motivated to learn how to read and write. Tutoring programs can support family literacy by encouraging parents to develop their own reading and writing skills. Parents can use these skills to help their children learn and to achieve their own educational and employment goals.



Children from homes in which there is a lot of conversation, reading, and writing learn to value literacy and are motivated to learn how to read and write.

Coordinate with Family Literacy Programs and Initiatives

Many tutoring programs promote family involvement by linking with family literacy programs that offer early childhood and adult education services or by coordinating with existing school and community family involvement initiatives. A school or organization in your community might be implementing one of the programs described below. (See Appendix C, Organizations that Support Literacy, for addresses and phone numbers of these groups.)

The **Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)** is a home-based early intervention program designed to help parents feel confident in their role as teachers of their young children. The HIPPY model was developed in Israel in 1969. The first program in the United States began in 1984 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Today HIPPY operates in 27 states, serving 15,000 families in urban, suburban, and rural areas. HIPPY works with parents of children ages 3 to 5.

Parents and children enrolled in HIPPY spend 15 to 20 minutes a day completing activities that expose children to skills, concepts, and experiences with books. HIPPY activities are developmentally appropriate for the child and use household items or other common materials. Every other week, parents and HIPPY staff attend a group meeting.

Paraprofessionals, who are generally parents from the community, conduct weekly home visits to participating families. These staff offer guidance and support, link families to needed resources, and role play the activities for the coming week. The parent or other participating family member assumes the role of child while the paraprofessional models how to implement the activity.

The HIPPY curriculum, available in English and Spanish, includes 30 activity packets and 9 storybooks for each year a child is enrolled and 16 manipulative shapes that are used in activities that support visual discrimination, eye-hand coordination, and problem solving. The activity packets use a structured, easy-to-follow format that promotes the success of parent and child.

HIPPY programs benefit children, parents, and paraprofessionals. During their two to three years of participation, children gain the skills needed to succeed in school. Parents build self-confidence, take pride in their child's growth and learning, develop friendships, and learn how to seek housing, training, employment, and other services. Paraprofessionals can become community leaders and gain work experience that may qualify them for permanent, full-time employment.

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an early childhood parent education program that begins working with families at the birth of their child. PAT began in Missouri as a pilot project in 1981 and expanded to all school districts in the state in 1985. There are now over 1,900 PAT programs in 47 states, Washington, DC, and 6 countries. PAT can operate independently or as part of a comprehensive program such as Head Start, Even Start, or Title I. The PAT model can be adapted to meet the unique needs and circumstances of teen parents, child care providers, and other target audiences.

The PAT model includes home visits, group meetings, developmental screening, and a resource network. Parent educators conduct home visits to introduce

parent-child learning activities, provide information about child development, and help parents understand and support their child's growth and learning. Visits take place weekly, biweekly, or monthly, depending on the family's preference and program funding.

Group meetings allow parents to discuss common concerns and share effective child-rearing strategies. Parent-child activities reinforce family bonding. Meetings might take place in the evening or on Saturday to allow working parents to participate. Some meetings involve fathers only to acknowledge and support the special role fathers play in their children's lives. Some PAT sites have drop in and play components that take place in family resource centers.

To reassure parents and to identify potential problems, developmental screenings are conducted once a year, beginning at age one. These screenings, along with the parent and parent educator's ongoing observations of a child, allow for early intervention to address developmental concerns.

PAT programs link parents with community resources that provide services needed by the child or family. A PAT program's resource network might include speech and hearing specialists, health and mental health agencies, housing, or social services.

Even Start is a family-centered program designed to help low-income parents increase their own skills while becoming full partners in their children's education. It is a Department of Education program authorized by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The program is administered by state education agencies that fund local Even Start programs operated by schools and community-based agencies.

To be eligible for Even Start, families must have one or both parents in need of basic skills education and at least one child in the target age range—birth through age seven. Even Start is designed to effect lasting change and improve children's success through three integrated components—early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education, including parent-child interaction. Participating children gain the skills they will need to be successful learners. Parents gain basic literacy skills they can use to enhance their own lives and to support their children's learning.

Children enrolled in Even Start projects experience a range of early childhood education services through Head Start, Chapter I pre-kindergartens, child care, and other preschool programs. Older children attend kindergarten or primary grades in public schools. Their parents attend General Educational Development (GED) or other adult education programs, or classes in English as a second

language. Services such as transportation, counseling, and child care are provided as needed to allow a family to participate.

Services provided through the parenting education component of Even Start encourage parents to understand and enhance their children's development. Parents learn about services provided through community agencies, their role in their children's education, positive discipline strategies, and health and nutrition for adults and children.

Head Start is a nationwide program that provides a comprehensive array of educational, health, and social services for more than 750,000 children and their families in communities in all fifty states. Local public or private nonprofit agencies receive funding through the 10 Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Regional Offices of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Head Start Bureau's American Indian and Migrant Programs Branches. Head Start grantees and delegate agencies operate programs that reflect the needs and strengths of the community and meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

As a two-generation program that involves both families and children as active participants, Head Start pays particular attention to supporting parents as their children's first and most important teacher. Head Start programs are required to provide family literacy services, either directly or through existing community groups such as libraries, Even Start, adult education agencies, community colleges, and adult literacy organizations. To meet this requirement, programs focus on supporting parents as adult learners, encouraging them in their parenting role, and helping them access literacy materials, activities, and services.

Head Start staff help families set and achieve their own goals as stated in an individualized Family Partnership Agreement. As part of this agreement, parents might set literacy-related goals, such as to complete a basic education class or prepare for and pass a GED test. A program might provide supportive services that enable adults to attend class, such as transportation or child care for a younger child. Some programs provide space at the Head Start center so the adult education agency can hold classes at the same time as children are in attendance.

Head Start provides parent education through strategies such as home visits, workshops, and ongoing interactions. Parents are welcomed as classroom visitors and regular volunteers, and some parents become Head Start staff members. Parent education focuses on developmentally appropriate expectations for children's behavior and strategies for encouraging development—including literacy development.

Head Start programs also make sure all families have access to books and other reading and writing materials for their own use and so they can encourage their children's literacy development. Programs might organize parent-child field trips to the library and invite librarians to visit Head Start classrooms, ask businesses for contributions to create classroom lending libraries, and sponsor book giveaway sessions through groups such as Reading is Fundamental (RIF).

Head Start encourages parents to participate in all aspects of the program, from planning through evaluation. Parents serve as decisionmakers on policy groups, volunteer in classrooms, and attend parent education classes. These activities allow parents to use their literacy skills and frequently stimulate their interest in continuing their education. When parents get actively involved in the program, they are likely to become eager supporters of their children's emerging literacy.

FIVE REASONS WHY HEAD START MUST ADDRESS FAMILY LITERACY

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| <p>1 The values which young children bring to the activity of reading are established prior to their entry into elementary school, and parents are the most important influence upon these values.</p> <p>2 The best predictor of a child's educational success is the parents' educational attainment.</p> <p>3 Parents who have developed a sense of efficacy are best able to nurture their child's development of social competence.</p> | <p>4 Improving the quality of life for their child is a strong motivator for parents to accept the challenge of addressing their own literacy needs.</p> <p>5 Functional literacy skills do not guarantee economic self-sufficiency or full participation in one's community; however, without these skills such accomplishments are nearly impossible.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Jim O'Brien, Head Start Bureau</i>
Promoting Family Literacy Through Head Start, 1991</p> |
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The **National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL)** is involved with many other family literacy programs across the nation, including more than 80 Toyota Families for Learning projects. The NCFL provides training, staff development, and technical assistance services to Even Start, Head Start, American Indian, and other culturally diverse family literacy programs in urban and rural settings.

The NCFL approach to family literacy can be implemented in a home or center setting. The NCFL model has been implemented in urban and rural sites with families representing diverse home languages, cultures, and ethnic groups. All family literacy programs sponsored by NCFL include four essential components: early childhood education, adult education, parent-child interactions, and parent support groups.

The early childhood component stresses literacy skills such as vocabulary-building along with organizational and social skills that contribute to school success. Through the adult education portion, parents work on basic reading and math skills. They set individual goals such as completing a GED program, entering a vocational training program, or getting a job. Parent-child interaction time allows parents and children to play and learn together. Parents learn simple, effective strategies for encouraging their child's learning. During support group meetings, parents discuss child-rearing topics such as supporting a child's self-esteem and handling discipline, and issues affecting parents such as child care, transportation, vocational training, adequate employment, welfare reform, health care and housing.

The **U. S. Department of Education** implements several initiatives related to literacy. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act encourages schools to make parent involvement a top priority. The Act builds on research showing that children are more likely to be successful, motivated learners when their parents get to know their teachers, keep up-to-date about their activities and progress, and build on the learning that takes place at school. The Act requires parent representation on state and local school improvement panels and in grassroots outreach efforts. In addition, the Act created 28 parent information and resource centers from Maine to California operated by nonprofit groups who collaborate with schools, institutions of higher education, social service agencies, and other nonprofit organizations. The resource centers incorporate either the PAT or HIPPIY model of parent education. Each center is designed to:

- increase parents' knowledge of and confidence in child-rearing activities;
- strengthen partnerships between parents and professionals in meeting the educational needs of preschool children; and
- enhance children's developmental progress.

Descriptions of each center are available from the Department of Education at the address listed in Appendix C, Organizations that Support Literacy.

A Department of Education initiative, The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, encourages employers and community organizations to work with schools and families to affirm the importance of family involvement in children's learning. The *READ*WRITE*NOW* tutoring model, briefly described in Chapter 5, Examples of Reading and Tutoring Programs, and in Chapter 6, Step 6, Select or

Adapt a Reading Curriculum, is one of the special efforts launched by this initiative. Materials provided by the Partnership include brochures, a research report, and a collection of school outreach strategies. These and other useful materials are available from the Department of Education at the address listed in Appendix C, Organizations that Support Literacy, and at the Department's America Reads Challenge Internet Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americareads/>.

BOOKS FOR PROUD PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania developed their Family Literacy Volunteer Project (FLVP) to help educationally disadvantaged parents and their young children gain the skills they need to break the cycle of illiteracy. FLVP efforts include read-aloud training for volunteers and Parents' Record: my Own Unique Diary (PROUD) through which volunteers help

parents write a special book that describes their children's positive qualities and achievements and their hopes for their children's future. Each PROUD book is a personal keepsake that a parent can read to a child now and in the future. A *How-To-Guide* for creating a PROUD book is available from RSVP of Montgomery County, Inc., 531 Plymouth Road, Suite 517, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462.

Plan Reading-Related Events

Another way to support family literacy is to plan reading-related events for parents, children, tutors, and staff. To increase participation, take these steps:

- provide information in families' home languages;
- schedule the event at a time that is convenient for most families;
- offer transportation to and from the site;
- provide food—healthy snacks or a simple meal;
- include younger and older children; and
- ask active families to reach out to others.



Include reading in every event sponsored by the tutoring program.

Be sure to include reading in every program-sponsored event. For example, at the end of a pot luck dinner, have a read-aloud session. Reading specialists, tutors, teachers, volunteers, and parents can model strategies for reading aloud to the children. Here are some examples of reading-related events:

- Hold a **family field trip**, then suggest ways to follow up at home:
 - after story hour at the library, families can borrow other books by the featured author;
 - after a children’s play, families can retell the story through words and pictures; or
 - after picking blueberries at a farm, families can read *Blueberries for Sal*, by Robert McCloskey.
- Set up a **family book-making activity**. Ask families to bring their favorite photographs and mementos to this event. Provide materials such as paper, notebooks, binders, pens and pencils, markers, crayons, paste, holepunches, laces, and a stapler. Each family can make a book about what makes their family unique—history, celebrations, favorite foods, people, and even daily routines. Children will enjoy these books now and in the future when they share them with their own children.
- Hold **parent-child computer classes**. Ask the children to teach their parents. Families will be impressed with their children’s expertise and children will feel proud to share their knowledge with their families.
- Host a **book talk**. Choose a book that families can read with their children and schedule a time for families to meet to talk about the book and their children’s reactions. Invite a guest, such as the children’s librarian or a reading specialist, to lead a discussion about the characters, setting, plot, and messages that children might take from the story.
- Involve the community in a **family read-a-thon**. Ask local businesses to offer prizes to the family reading the *most* books, the *funniest* book, the *longest* book, and the most *unusual* book. Provide a free book for every child and adult.

Establish a Family Resource Center

Family resource centers are another way to support family literacy. A tutoring program might create its own resource center or make use of a center run by a child care program, school, library, or community group, such as Head Start. Your tutoring program's family resource center could offer:

- a family lending library of books, magazines, videos, and toys;
- workshops on topics selected by families;
- access to computers and the Internet;
- donated paper, magazines, books, and other materials to use with children;
- referrals to other agencies; and
- information about community activities for families.

A resource center can support parents as lifelong learners and as the first and primary teachers of their children.

Hold a Book Discussion Series

One way to encourage family literacy is to provide opportunities for adults to learn to value and enjoy books and reading in their lives. The Adult Basic Education Office of the District of Columbia Public Library offers *A Feel for Books*, a book discussion series for adult developing readers and their teachers and tutors. Modeled on the Vermont Reading Project which has been replicated at other sites across the country, *A Feel for Books* seeks to accomplish the following goals:¹⁶

- Encourage reading and library use among adult developing readers and their families;
- Demonstrate to adult developing readers that books and stories can illuminate human concerns, and that these adults can struggle with these concerns through reading and discussing;
- Provide adult developing readers with the opportunity to share their understandings and opinions and thereby enhance their communication skills and self-esteem; and
- Provide adult developing readers books and stories to add to their family library and encourage them to reread these books and share them with their families.

The reading selections are an appropriate length and reading level for adult developing readers. Selections include adult and juvenile fiction, non-fiction, poetry, letters, and folk tales. They introduce strong characters and themes that stimulate discussions because participants can relate them to their own lives.

The program has developed *A Feel for Books, Book Discussions for Adult Developing Readers: A Resource Manual* to guide libraries and other organizations wishing to hold a book discussion series. For more information write to the Adult Basic Education Office, District of Columbia Public Library, 901 G Street, NW, Room 426, Washington, DC 20001.



KEY POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER

- Parents are the first and primary teachers of their children.
- Family literacy is closely linked with children's success in becoming readers and writers.
- Tutoring programs can encourage and reinforce family involvement by incorporating specific strategies in the program design.
- Tutoring is most effective when the tutor and family work as partners in encouraging a child's literacy development.
- Tutoring programs can promote family involvement by linking with family literacy programs.
- Reading-related events bring families, children, and tutors together to play and learn.
- Family resource centers and family literacy programs such as Head Start and Even Start support parents as lifelong learners and primary educators of their children.
- Book discussions lead adult developing readers to value and enjoy books and reading and to pass these feelings on to their children.