



Designing and Implementing Interactive, Collaborative Family Literacy Events

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Abstract: Shared experiences through school-hosted events, such as family literacy events, can afford opportunities to support and extend academic learning while fostering positive home–school relationships. This article describes the importance of developing primary-grade students’ literacy skills through a talent development lens and explains several ways to nurture students’ literacy skills and recognize potential, gifts, and talents during family literacy events. This article features one of the activities from the family literacy events, Environmental Print Bingo, a modification of I-Spy and Bingo which uses rich and varied environmental print resources. A description of this activity, necessary resources, and implementation tips are provided. Options for differentiating this learning activity to provide more challenge for gifted learners are suggested. Throughout the article, the application of a pedagogy for early childhood gifted education and Sternberg’s triarchic theory of intelligence as a framework are discussed; these approaches informed the design of all family literacy activities. A brief overview of nine additional family literacy event activities is also shared. Welcoming and involving families of English learners is an important consideration in many communities, and therefore, preparation tips and considerations for facilitators that will help maximize the participation of all families are included. Finally, reflections and helpful advice for implementing family literacy events in your school communities are presented, including advice for implementing online family literacy events. Ultimately, this article should help readers

conceptualize, plan, and implement family literacy events in their school communities.

Keywords: underserved populations, talent development, curriculum, cross cultural/multicultural, best practices

“...FAMILY LITERACY
EVENTS SHOULD BE AN
EXCHANGE AMONG SCHOOL
AND FAMILY LITERACY
PRACTICES...”

In an effort to foster meaningful home–school connections, many schools invite parents and families to attend school-hosted events. Through these events, families and teachers can have meaningful interactions that can support building and maintaining strong, positive home–school connections. From movie nights to back-to-school barbecues, these events are often most successful when families, children, and educators are engaged in a fun, interesting shared experience (Park & Holloway, 2017; Sénéchal & Young, 2008).

Shared experiences through school-hosted events can open up opportunities to support and extend academic learning while fostering positive home–school relationships (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Park & Holloway, 2017). Hertzog et al. (2018) emphasized that parents are “significant partners in early learning” and should be considered “full partners in their children’s education,” further noting that parental expectations influence students’ academic outcomes significantly (p. 304). Additionally, extensive research illustrates that parent involvement has a positive effect on

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primary-grade students' reading acquisition and that developmental literacy can be supported both inside and outside of school (Compton-Lilly, 2007; Purcell-Gates, 1996; Sénéchal & Young, 2008).

However, the literacy knowledge and practices many students experience at home do not always align with those emphasized at school (Lapp et al., 2007). Often traditional gifted education programs privilege English language literacy knowledge and skills during both the identification process and gifted programming (Matthews & Peters, 2018). In a national study about primary-grade teachers' conceptions of giftedness, the majority of primary-grade teachers surveyed rated language and literacy skills as "very important" (65%) or "somewhat important" (31%) for entering school, an indication that teachers believe students needed to come to school with a foundation of literary and language skills already in place (Moon & Brighton, 2008). Developing students' literacy skills has the potential to increase the likelihood of identification for gifted services as students grow throughout the primary grades. Although some students enter kindergarten lacking some academic literacy skills, this does not mean that students do not have the capacity to learn these skills (Hertzog et al., 2018). Therefore, it is vital for schools to build connections with home to support young students as they develop the foundational building blocks of literacy in school.

Recognizing the importance of early literacy learning and the power of partnerships and shared experiences among schools, teachers, students, and families, we reframed the traditional blueprint for school-hosted family events to emphasize the bridge between in- and out-of-school literacy learning. With this reframing, we developed a series of activities that created opportunities for literacy learning through a partnership among schools, teachers, students, and families. These activities aim to increase involvement for all families in school experiences and to model shared opportunities for literacy and talent development that are supportive of in-school learning, yet also take advantage of rich learning environments outside of school. With these activities, schools and educators can facilitate family literacy events that are engaging for family members of all ages and support children's literacy development. For the purposes of our family literacy events, we broadly define "parent" and "family" to be as inclusive as possible, welcoming the broad network of adults who are in students' lives.

The learning experiences for family literacy events were designed as part of a larger U.S. Department of Education Jacob K. Javits grant. This project implemented interventions that aimed to increase home-school connections for supporting talent

development opportunities with the intent to increase overall literacy achievement. In sum, we developed 10 activities that were implemented during 25 family literacy events. Each of the family literacy activities prioritized expanding the conceptualizations of potential, gifts, and talents while creating collaborative literacy learning experiences. Specific literacy skills were woven throughout the activities, including phonological awareness, concept of word, vocabulary, oral language, and alphabet knowledge. Elevating literacy instruction and providing meaningful engagement with literacy learning were goals of both the larger project and the family literacy events (Kreamer et al., 2020).

Developing Family Literacy Events to Nurture Potential, Gifts, and Talents in the Primary Grades

The family literacy events were developed based on Kaplan and Hertzog's (2016) pedagogy of early childhood gifted education and Sternberg's (1998, 2000) triarchic theory of intelligence. Kaplan and Hertzog (2016) presented a vision for early childhood gifted education that prioritized intellectual engagement and challenge through meaningful activities for young children. Instead of focusing on students' acquisition of basic skills, Kaplan and Hertzog recommend the development of learning environments that respond to children's emergent abilities and that nurture potential, gifts, and talents. Central to a learning environment are enriching learning activities designed with play, exploration, social interaction, and exposure to language. These learning experiences are opportunities to encourage, nurture, and even display students' potential, gifts, and talents and can afford the recognition of emergent abilities and talents by teachers and parents (Hertzog et al., 2018; Kaplan & Hertzog, 2016).

With Kaplan and Hertzog's (2016) vision of early childhood gifted education to guide the pedagogical approach to the family literacy event activities, we looked to Sternberg's (1998) triarchic theory of intelligence to guide the types of activities needed to bridge in-school and out-of-school literacy development. Sternberg's theory of intelligence posits that each person possesses each of the intelligences, with a unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses in each area. The theory is also developmental and suggests that these intelligences are malleable and each one can be strengthened. Using the triarchic theory of intelligence as a framework for development of learning activities ensured that the learning activities addressed multi-faceted approaches to thinking and learning with the goal of developing young

students' gifts and talents. The three attributes of the triarchic theory of intelligence are analytical, "the ability to analyze and evaluate one's own ideas and those of others"; creative, "the ability to generate one or more major ideas that are novel and of high quality"; and practical, "the ability to convince people of the value of ideas and to render the ideas, practical" (Sternberg, 2000, p. 232). Each of these attributes, singly or in combination with one another, represents patterns of intelligence. Often students may show an interest or aptitude in one area, yet providing them with an opportunity to develop all attributes may support their academic and personal growth (Sternberg, 2000).

Typical schooling values analytical attributes, and this may limit support for students in developing other intelligences. Aptitudes for creative or practical intelligences can be overlooked as there are limited opportunities to develop or demonstrate these intelligences during a typical school day. However, family literacy events offer opportunities outside of the constraints of the school day to allow for application of the triarchic theory of intelligence through engaging, multimodal learning activities. Sternberg (2000) emphasized that helping students develop attributes of the triarchic theory of intelligence may help "all individuals optimize the development of their full potential" (p. 235).

By pairing Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence with Kaplan and Hertzog's (2016) approach to early childhood gifted education, we presented students with opportunities to develop their patterns of giftedness in learning activities that were intentionally designed to be interactive, employ multiple modalities, and tap into various intelligences, including practical, creative, and analytical intelligences (Sternberg, 2000). The events provided opportunities for teachers and parents to identify gifts and talents that may not otherwise be noticed within the boundaries of typical schooling. In summary, these activities advanced students' literacy development and supported student expressions of potential, gifts, and talents.

Reimagining Family Literacy Events

In this article, we feature one activity, "Environmental Print Bingo," to demonstrate how a common activity at many school-hosted events (Bingo) can be modified to better connect in-school literacy learning to out-of-school literacy experiences. The activity is a creative combination of I-Spy and Bingo and uses the environmental print that children encounter daily to create an engaging learning activity, one that families can participate in at home. Following the description of the

Environmental Print Bingo activity, we share a brief overview of the other activities developed for the project and then share lessons learned from our experiences in creating and implementing the activities. We feature general advice for implementation in both in-person and virtual learning settings and specific suggestions about how to support English Learners and their families during the activities. With the changing demographics in American public schools resulting in an increasingly diverse student population in urban, rural, and suburban schools (National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2017), it is important to invite all families and students to participate in family literacy nights by making the events accessible, inclusive, engaging, and interactive for everyone. Through this article, we provide ideas and strategies for implementing interactive, literacy-oriented home-school events to support students' development of patterns of giftedness and literacy learning inside and outside of school.

Learning Activity Description: Environmental Print Bingo

Literacy learning in daily life is reinforced through the practice of recognizing words and letters in environmental print (Strickland & Shanahan, 2004). Children encounter words every day: in the grocery store, on street signs, and at home to name a few. Environmental Print Bingo (or I-Spy Bingo) is a highly interactive game in which teachers, students, and families collaborate to spot alphabet letters and text features. Throughout the game, families identify and discuss words in everyday environmental print, such as advertisements, packaging, street signs, and maps. With Environmental Print Bingo, children learn to notice the words around them and develop their literacy skills. It is important to emphasize that this version of Bingo is different from typical Bingo. This activity can be incorporated into an in-person or virtual family event to support home-school connections and to develop students' literacy skills and analytic attributes (Sternberg, 1998). The following sections detail the purpose of the activity, materials for the activity, steps of implementation, and tips for implementation.

Purpose of the Activity

- To help students to match letters and letter sounds using environmental print and text features.

Materials for the Activity

- Environmental print bingo cards

Steps of Implementation

Step 1: Opening: Generate interest and build community. Start with a brief icebreaker or introduction activity of your choice. Then, get everyone excited about playing bingo! Go over the directions and then model with a practice round. Emphasize that you need to find an example of the clue in the environmental print BEFORE you can mark it off on your bingo card.

Step 2: Start playing! Both read and project every clue. Give families time to find an example of the clue in the environmental print before marking it off on the bingo card. Encourage everyone to work together if someone gets stuck.

Step 3: Continue calling clues until you have at least one winner (usually, you will need to go through about 15 clues to get a winner). You can also do a few extra clues to get multiple winners.

Step 4: Closure: Celebrate everyone for participating. Have everyone pick 1–2 clues that they are going to challenge their families to find examples of on their way home.

Note: you will need to put the clues into a bingo card generator program (there are many available for free online) so that everyone gets a card in which the clues are in different places. The same clues need to be on every card but in different places. You cannot photocopy the sample bingo card for everyone—the game will not work!

- Extra environmental print bingo cards that families can take home
- Environmental print bingo clues slide show
All of the clues should be displayed so everyone can see them. The facilitator should both read and point to the clue. Put the clues in order ahead of time and include a couple of easier ones first (to help everyone understand the game) and then mix in easier and hard clues.
- Environmental print bingo rules
- Lots of environmental print: newspapers, cardboard boxes of food, toys, and other household goods, maps, flyers, advertisements, etc.
- Bingo daubers, markers, or crayons
- Bingo prizes for the winners
- “Words We See” Handout for families to take home

Tips for Implementation

Tip 1: This activity can take additional preparation time.

Make sure to have enough environmental print available and accessible for everyone to participate.

Tip 2: During the event, when speaking to the group, facilitators may need to repeat the clues 2–3 times to make sure everyone has it. Especially those that focus on letter sounds. Encourage families to talk about the clues and letter as they work to find the examples. The students should point to and say the word, letter, or example out loud as they find it. Give families time to find and talk about each clue before moving on to the next one.



Figure 1. Family literacy night with I-Spy bingo cards.

Environmental Print Bingo in Action

When implementing this game at a family literacy event, teachers and family members work together to help students to find the examples of alphabet letters and text features in the environmental print so the students can mark them off on the bingo cards. This activity provides opportunities for discussing written language and reasoning whether or not items they find fit the clue. For example, one bingo clue might be “find a word with the letter ‘e’ as in elephant.” With this clue, the students and families sort through the examples of environmental text to find a word with the letter “e” that uses the short “e” sound, not the long “e” sound as in “eat.” This clue requires letter recognition in different contexts and supports several developmental literacy concepts, including phonological awareness, concept of print, vocabulary, oral language, and alphabet knowledge (Figure 1).

Preparing Bingo Clues and Environmental Print

In order to scaffold the activity and provide supports for students at different levels of literacy development,

we pre-prepared both the clues and the environmental print. The clues were in a slideshow that we projected, which gave students the opportunity to see and hear the clue as the facilitators read the clue aloud in multiple languages. Another advantage of pre-preparing all of the clues was that we could put some easier ones first, for practice, and vary the level of difficulty to keep everyone's interest and engagement high throughout the game.

Environmental Print Bingo requires a wide variety of examples of environmental print for students and their families to search. Prior to the event, we collect examples of environmental print: newspapers, advertisements, cereal boxes, and maps and flyers from local areas and attractions. We organized these into bags to pass out, so each family would have a variety of different types of environmental print during the game.

At the event, families and students caught on quickly to this new version of Bingo, after only a couple of practice clues to warm up. After calling out a clue, teachers, students, and families were given a few minutes to sort through the environmental print and find the clue before marking it off on the Bingo cards. Everyone had the visual clue to look back at on the screen as they searched through the environmental print (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Families participating in a family literacy event.

Differentiating to Meet Student Needs

Environmental Print Bingo presents several opportunities to differentiate for students who are advanced readers or are exhibiting potential. The Bingo cards are easily modifiable, and teachers can adjust the clues to account for various degrees of student readiness or interest. Additionally, the environmental print resources used for the Bingo activity represent multiple reading levels and were drawn from various contexts, including local maps, products (e.g., toys and food), and advertisements, thereby lending themselves to differentiation by readiness and reading level (Tomlinson, 2014). The environmental print resources

include both words and images, considering students' varied learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014).

With the flexibility inherent to this activity, teachers can differentiate for students by increasing the complexity of the clues. For example, if a student easily finds a word with the "f" sound in "fun," challenge her to try to find a word with the "ph" sound in "phone." This example adds blends and diagraphs to challenge early readers.

Teachers can also differentiate by interest, collecting more complex or subject-specific environmental print and aligning clues to a topic that is especially interesting for students. For example, to tie to subject-specific interests in science and nature, work with a local science or nature center, park, or museum to include science-focused maps, brochures, and interpretive signs. With these simple modifications, teachers and parents ensure that all students are appropriately challenged during this literacy learning activity.

More Family Literacy Activities! Developing Practical, Creative, and Analytical Skills

Environmental Print Bingo is one of the 10 activities we developed for family literacy events. Sternberg's (1998) triarchic theory of intelligence, including practical, creative, and analytical intelligences, provided a framework for the literacy focus of each activity, and Kaplan and Hertzog (2016) guided our pedagogical approach to creating activities focused on play, exploration, and social interaction that would be engaging for families to participate in together. Below, we will preview other family literacy activities we developed, which will hopefully spark ideas for activities you can develop and implement in your own school (Figure 3).

Practical

The practical activities we developed focused on geography and resources of the local community: flower seeds, fruits and vegetables, maps of local roadways and hiking/bike trails, and books representing a variety of genres from the local public library. The *Seeds All Around* activity focused on the information found on seed packets to help students learn the practical application of literacy skills when planning and planting a garden. Each of these activities emphasizes practical intelligences skills such as putting students' ideas into practice and communicating their ideas to others (Sternberg, 2000). For example, in the *Mapping Your World* activity, students create a map of a familiar place (e.g., town, park, school, or bedroom). This activity also lends itself to differentiation, since the location that students map could vary in challenge. A familiar space, like a bedroom,

Family Literacy Night Activities

Practical	Seeds All Around
	Mapping Your World
	Self-Selected Books and the Library Catalogue
Creative	Imaginative Storytelling
	Ponderings and Wonderings
	Build a Story
	Reading Wordless Picture Books
Analytical	Conversation Cards for Reading Together
	Environmental Print Bingo (I-Spy Bingo)
	Sophisticated Synonyms Concentration Game

Figure 3. Family literacy night activities.

would be easier to map than more distant spaces or larger spaces, such as the center of town or their elementary school.

Creative

The creative activities focused on imagination and storytelling. In the *Build a Story* activity, we started with a story prompt and then families built three-dimensional models to represent how they thought the story should end. The *Reading Wordless Picture Books* activity provided examples and prompts to engage families in orally telling the story represented by images in this unique genre of picture books. These creative learning experiences engage students in developing their creative intelligence through storytelling and the generation of imaginative ideas (Sternberg, 2000). Employing multiple modes of expression, including drawing and building, provided opportunities for students to develop literacy skills through creative means that are not often emphasized in school.

Analytical

The analytical activities focused on facilitating conversations that enabled analyzing and evaluating language, stories, and ideas. The *Sophisticated Synonyms Concentration Game* reimaged the game of Concentration, but in this version, players matched words that are synonyms of each other using pictures as clues. The *Conversation Cards for Reading Together* activity provided a fun way to prompt conversation about any book families read together. *Environmental Print*

Bingo, discussed earlier, required more preparatory work and materials, yet these other activities required very few materials or resources to prepare beforehand. These activities and similar ones can help students to develop analytical intelligence (Sternberg, 2000) and provide practice in higher-level thinking skills including analysis, compare and contrast, and evaluating ideas through games and conversations that extend beyond typical literacy instruction.

Advice for Implementation of Family Literacy Events

Through the implementation process of each learning activity during family literacy events, we gained insight into effective planning and facilitation practices. Advance preparation is necessary when planning and facilitating a successful, engaging family literacy event with culturally and linguistically diverse families. It is essential to understand the cultural communication norms of families in your district and implement events in a ways that are respectful and welcoming to all families.

In the following sections, we share advice for implementation, with the caveat that each population of students and families is different, and the activities may need to be tailored to your local school community. We have also created activity-specific directions, and we encourage you to email us to request the full family literacy night activity guide with the full overview, purpose, materials, steps of implementation, tips for implementation, and options for extension for each activity.

The advice in the following sections is intended to facilitate successful, engaging family literacy events. Our experience in implementing these events allows us to offer considerations when planning your own family literacy events that anticipate or preclude possible issues that might occur. Implementation advice could also help with differentiating activities for the unique students and families in your school community.

Encouraging Engagement

Use strategies to encourage high levels of engagement among students, families and teachers. Effective strategies for meaningful engagement and relationship-building include inviting dialogue, fostering collaboration and communication with hands-on materials, and modeling tasks or products.

Inviting Dialogue

Invite dialogue to facilitate discussion and storytelling among students, families, and teachers and encourage relationship-building and engagement. To be linguistically inclusive, facilitators should welcome families to use the language they are most comfortable with while engaging in the activities. Choose materials that will help to foster inclusive use of language in the activities. For example, we purposefully designed the *Wordless Picture Books* activity in such a way that families could use language of their choice when telling stories. Wordless picture books are particularly conducive to this linguistic flexibility, because they do not require knowledge of one specific language to read or retell stories.

Prompting questions can also be provided to facilitate the activity or generate discussion. These can be shared on a handout, anchor chart, or slides. For our family literacy events, we hired professional translators who work with the school district to translate all materials before the events. For example, the following prompting questions were used for an activity about collaborative imaginative storytelling and were shared on handouts in multiple languages:

- What happens next?
- Why did the character do that?
- How was the character feeling?
- What does it look like there?
- What would you do if you were there?

In the *Conversation Cards for Reading Together* activity, students and family members took turns reading and answering the prompts on the cards and sharing their ideas with the group as we read picture books. Teachers joined families to ask follow-up questions and engage in discussion.

Hands-on Materials

Hands-on materials also encourage engagement. For example, in the *Environmental Print Bingo* activity, we provided bingo cards and environmental print materials, such as newspapers, maps, and cereal boxes, and included examples of environmental print in multiple languages. In the collaborative storytelling activity, a toy was used to inspire the beginning of a story. Ensure that there are toys, blocks, crayons, environmental print, or other relevant hands-on materials available for everyone attending the family event. If possible, send some of the hands-on materials home with families, so that they can continue the activities at home.

Modeling Tasks or Products

Model the steps of a task or how to create a product to generate interest and to make the content and directions accessible for all families, including English learners. For example, if families are making up a story together, ensure that you have a model story ready to share or sentence starters to inspire the writing process. Consider having an interpreter model and deliver key information and directions using the different languages present at the family literacy event. Contact your school system to identify interpreters that could be hired to help facilitate events.

Facilitators could model a task or product creation with the whole group, or if you have multiple facilitators and interpreters, model with small groups. Be sure to provide families with opportunities to ask questions after modeling and have other educators work with the families to support engagement and relationship-building.

Supporting Access to Information

Supporting inclusive access to all of the materials and information for a family literacy event helps families use information during the event and then continue to apply what is learned at home. To support continued application at home, provide handouts for families to take home that include directions for a task, key terms, and prompting questions, and ways to differentiate, including scaffolding and extending learning and discussion. The following sections detail specific ways you can support access to information through your use of language, vocabulary, and texts during the family literacy events and by collaborating with local and school librarians.

Language and Vocabulary

Use accessible and supportive language to facilitate the event, including both spoken and written language. Facilitators should ask themselves, “Am I using language that is accessible for all families? Am I scaffolding the

content-specific, academic language or other key terms that are used?" As you prepare for your event, read all of the books and resources that will be used and identify key terms and define those terms. Then build in scaffolds to clearly communicate those vocabulary, through handouts or anchor charts, including providing translations. For example, for the *Environmental Print Bingo* activity, the key term "environmental print" should be translated into other languages and defined in a kid-friendly way, such as "words and pictures that you see around you in your world every day." The term could be written on an anchor chart with examples provided. When using specific words or new vocabulary, define the terms in kid- and family-friendly ways.

On written materials, consider including icons, images, or other visual cues that can help support English language learning and literacy development. When using images, ensure that all visuals are inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Choosing and Presenting Texts

When planning for a family literacy event, it is essential to carefully curate a variety of culturally and linguistically diverse texts and resources. Strive to be inclusive and responsive with language choices, especially when modeling activities that use sample story themes, character names, and settings. Ensure that story themes, characters, names, and settings are as representative as possible. In all instances, reading materials should include multicultural themes and identities. There are many ways to choose reading materials that relate to your students and their families. Teachers could ask their students to choose books they would like to explore in-depth at a family literacy event. By selecting texts purposefully, all attendees can feel a part of students' literacy development.

When sharing picture books with a whole group, use a document projector, Big Book, or a poster-sized version of important pages, so that everyone in the audience can see the text and illustrations. Use digital resources to support presenting texts in multiple ways, for example, audiobook versions may be available in multiple languages or could be pre-recorded by interpreters for families to listen to during the event. For the Build a Story activity, we showed a brief, approximately two-minute section of an animated, read-aloud version of a picture book. We played it twice, each time in a different language, before the families went on to build their own ending to the story.

Collaborating with Librarians

Several activities lend themselves to collaboration with school or local librarians or media specialists. For example, some of our events, while designed for school settings, actually took place at local public libraries. By

working with local public librarians, you can raise awareness of resources available at the library, support families in gaining more access to literacy materials, and provide mini-lessons about accessing and navigating the online library catalogue. Librarians can also help to curate high-interest books at various reading levels and enable access to audiobooks, ebooks, and texts in multiple languages. You could also draw upon resources that librarians have already created, such as visual guides to accessing the library catalogue or lists of featured books. Work with librarians to provide lists of suggested titles that are available through the library. Be sure to include books in all of the languages represented in your school community on these lists, if possible. Through collaborating with libraries, more literacy resources can be provided for families.

Incorporation of culturally and linguistically responsive practices is vitally important when preparing family literacy events in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Advance preparation tailored with the audience in mind will encourage engagement and enhance learning opportunities, both at the events and when learning continues at home.

Family Literacy and Virtual Learning

In order to make family literacy events more accessible to everyone, you may want to consider technology-based options for these events. While the events discussed in this article were implemented in face-to-face settings at schools and libraries, the need for virtual learning options is now more important than ever. Preparing online family literacy events will differ from place to place, based on access to technology and internet infrastructure; however, we wanted to share a few ideas about how we envision some of these activities translating into the digital world. To do so, we chose two of our family literacy activities to serve as examples of engaging and interactive online events.

In the *Imaginative Storytelling* activity, students are given three unique objects and are asked to incorporate them into a story. In a virtual space, together with their families, students can gather a variety of objects such as spoons, magnifying glasses, boxes of tissues, stuffed animals, toy trucks, balls of yarn, postcards, boxes, action figures, and leaves to serve as the building blocks of their story. While students are locating these objects, teachers could talk with parents about the elements of a story and model how to use open-ended questions to prompt students as needed. Just like in face-to-face events, virtual events should include interpreters and all written materials should be translated.

Virtual events are also an opportunity for family members to share the types of stories they enjoy telling at

home, information that could be helpful to facilitate a future family literacy event. In a virtual environment, through the use of video conferencing systems, using breakout rooms allows for families to work and talk with educators and each other. Breakout rooms can facilitate collaboration and relationship-building.

During the *Build a Story* activity, families create the ending of a story using blocks or other objects. The event facilitator reads the first part of a picture book, then students and families work together to create how they think the story ends. In a virtual environment, families may build the ending of the story with blocks or other items they have on hand, draw the ending using paper and markers or crayons, or use a digital art app to create a virtual drawing or animation. This activity readily translates to a virtual setting: students can talk about and show what they created with the group by holding it up to the camera, taking a photo and sharing it as an attachment, or sharing their screen. Depending on how many families attend, sharing can happen in small-group breakout rooms or the whole group in order to give everyone a chance to participate.

We recognize these types of activities may work well because of the limited number of materials needed. For activities like *Environmental Print Bingo*, providing virtual Bingo cards and making sure families have enough environmental print to work with at home may be more logistically challenging. Likewise, for the *Seeds All Around* activity, families would need access to materials such as seed packets and ensuring that access would take some planning. However, these activities could also be provided to families asynchronously with directions and materials for them to be able to access and play with at home. Teachers could also provide videos with directions and modeling to support engagement. We recommend printing a set of materials and sending them home for families to use or providing materials online for families to download. In addition, the events could be made accessible to more families, such as those who could not attend, if, with permission of attendees, the online event were recorded to share with more families.

Conclusion

Plan your family literacy nights to be as accommodating as possible to families' schedules: evening events can give working family members the opportunity to attend. Collaborate with the school or PTA to provide meals or snacks for those who may not have had a chance to eat dinner. Consider personally calling families to invite them to your event. Translators can also be a great resource for connecting communities and can support the event by inviting families and providing a helpful linguistic and cultural bridge among the school and families. Offering family literacy events via

synchronous virtual learning may also provide pathways to participation that could accommodate more families. These small but significant logistical decisions can go a long way toward bolstering attendance. Even so, some families may have particular needs that limit their availability to attend your event. Always remember that lack of attendance does not necessarily signify lack of interest in students' literacy development (Lapp et al., 2007).

Parents want to be equal partners in their child's education (Lapp et al., 2007). Family literacy events should be purposefully structured to create spaces for teachers and families to engage in meaningful conversations and opportunities for collaboration around students' literacy skills through an asset-oriented approach to support students' literacy development at school and at home. Family literacy events should be an exchange among school and family literacy practices and provide chances for families to bring their prior experiences and at-home literacy practices into the event.

The family literacy events shared here were designed to develop talents in all students through interactive, learning experiences framed around Sternberg's (2000) triarchic theory of intelligence. The events served as vehicles for talent development by cultivating opportunities for teachers and parents to engage with students in literacy learning activities. In this article, we used our experiences facilitating family literacy events to explore how these events are able to foster positive home-school connections and support parents in engaging their children in literacy experiences at home (Trainin et al., 2017). Ultimately, family literacy nights should be planned using an asset-oriented approach, share inclusive resources tailored to your school's unique community, and accommodate the diverse needs of families.

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Bios

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