



## Center for Early Literacy Learning

For **HOME-BASED** early childhood educators

# Additional skill-building exercises to help early childhood professionals guide parents in creating **LITERACY-RICH HOME ENVIRONMENTS**

Thank you for accessing the additional practices for follow-up support with the CELL Early Literacy Learning Model. Three additional practices have been provided below to assist home visitors and early intervention practitioners in working with parents to create a literacy-rich environment to promote children’s early literacy development in the home.

These practices provide the home visitor/early intervention practitioner with more opportunities to practice, evaluate, and reflect about a literacy-rich environment. The intent is to take these practices into the home and community to give the practitioner an authentic, hands-on experience utilizing components of the CELL model.

### Exercise 1

#### Activity:

Read the following vignettes from the *CELLpractices* parent practice guide *Homespun Fun*. Make a list of the examples of literacy-rich materials that are provided within each home environment.



#### **Reading Every Day**

Susan became interested in books soon after she was able to hold things on her own. Having her mom or dad read stories to her is something she really enjoys. Susan’s parents encourage her interest in books and reading. She gets to play with reading material every day. Board books, cloth books, homemade picture-album books, magazines, and talking books. These are some things they give Susan. Mom and Dad watch for chances to use Susan’s interests when they read to her or tell her stories. She has become happily involved in these activities.

#### **It’s the Right Time To Write!**

Landon, age 14 months, is very interested in watching his mother draw and write. Mom tries to find all kinds of ways for Landon to join in these activities. She encourages him to try to “write” on his own. He may only be able to scribble, but he loves “writing with Mom.” She lets him use crayons and markers while she is writing a note or making a shopping list. She lets him draw with finger paints in the bathtub before having a bath. He gets to scribble with big pieces of chalk on the sidewalk outside their house. He even “types” on Mom’s computer. As Landon does any of these things, Mom talks about what he is doing. She asks questions that help keep him involved in all kinds of pre-writing activities.

## Exercise 1, continued

### ***Tried-and-Tested Fun***

David cannot see. Sarah cannot hear. Still they enjoy traditional lap games, nursery rhymes, and fingerplays. These activities let babies listen to sounds and words and interact with their parents. They can help infants express wants and needs using gestures or sign language. Both David's and Sarah's parents involve their children in lots of these kinds of play. As they play together, the parents talk about everything that is going on. They use simple words, signs, and sentences that David and Sarah have learned and understand.

**The above vignettes are from the *CELLpractices*** parent practice guide "Homespun Fun," a publication of the Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (H326B060010). The opinions expressed, however, are those of CELL and not necessarily those of the U.S. Department of Education. Copyright © 2010 by the Orelena Hawks Puckett Institute, Asheville, North Carolina ([www.puckett.org](http://www.puckett.org)).

### **Evaluate:**

- What were some of the literacy-rich materials provided within these environments?
- In what ways did the adults support the child in exploring literacy?
- How did adults support language and literacy without using literacy materials?

### **Reflect:**

- How will you use the *CELLpractices* parent practice guides to support parents in understanding the importance of language and literacy?
- How will you support the parent in learning and "doing" the literacy practice with his/her child?
- How will you encourage and support families who have a limited amount of literacy "materials"?

## **Exercise 2**

### **Activity:**

During one of your home visits this week, identify characteristics of a literacy-rich environment. Remember that a literacy-rich environment is more than a list of materials or "stuff". It also includes adults who model the use of literacy.

Identify types of print, reading, writing and other literacy materials and how they are being used. Write down these observations following the visit.

### **Evaluate:**

Based on your observation of the home environment, answer the following questions:

- What types of literacy-rich materials were available to the child?
- Which of the materials were used by the child and parent?
- How were the materials used by the child?

## Exercise 3, continued

- How did the parent model the use of the literacy materials?
- Where did literacy learning opportunities occur within the home environment? (kitchen only, living room, outdoors, etc.)

### Reflect:

- How will you help the parent understand the importance of providing a **variety** of print, reading, and writing materials that are **interesting and inviting** and that encourage early literacy exploration?
- How will you support a family that has a limited source of literacy-rich materials?
- How will you support a family in making sure that literacy materials are easily accessible to their child?

## Exercise 3

### Activity:

It is important to recognize that families spend time within their community, making it a natural literacy-rich environment for children. Literacy-rich environments are not limited to the home or classroom. During the next week visit a community location, such as the library, grocery store, or park.

Identify as many literacy-rich characteristics and opportunities as possible within the community location. Look for things such as types of print, reading, and writing. Observe the children and adults at these locations and note how they use literacy within the environment.

### Evaluate:

- What literacy materials were available to children within the community location? Was there a variety of print, reading and writing materials?
- How did adults model the functional use of literacy within that community location?
- What literacy experiences were available to children in this setting? How did the children respond?

### Reflect:

- Now that you've completed the exercise, think about ways you can encourage families to explore literacy opportunities available within their community. Write down your ideas.
- How will you support families in utilizing literacy-rich community resources?