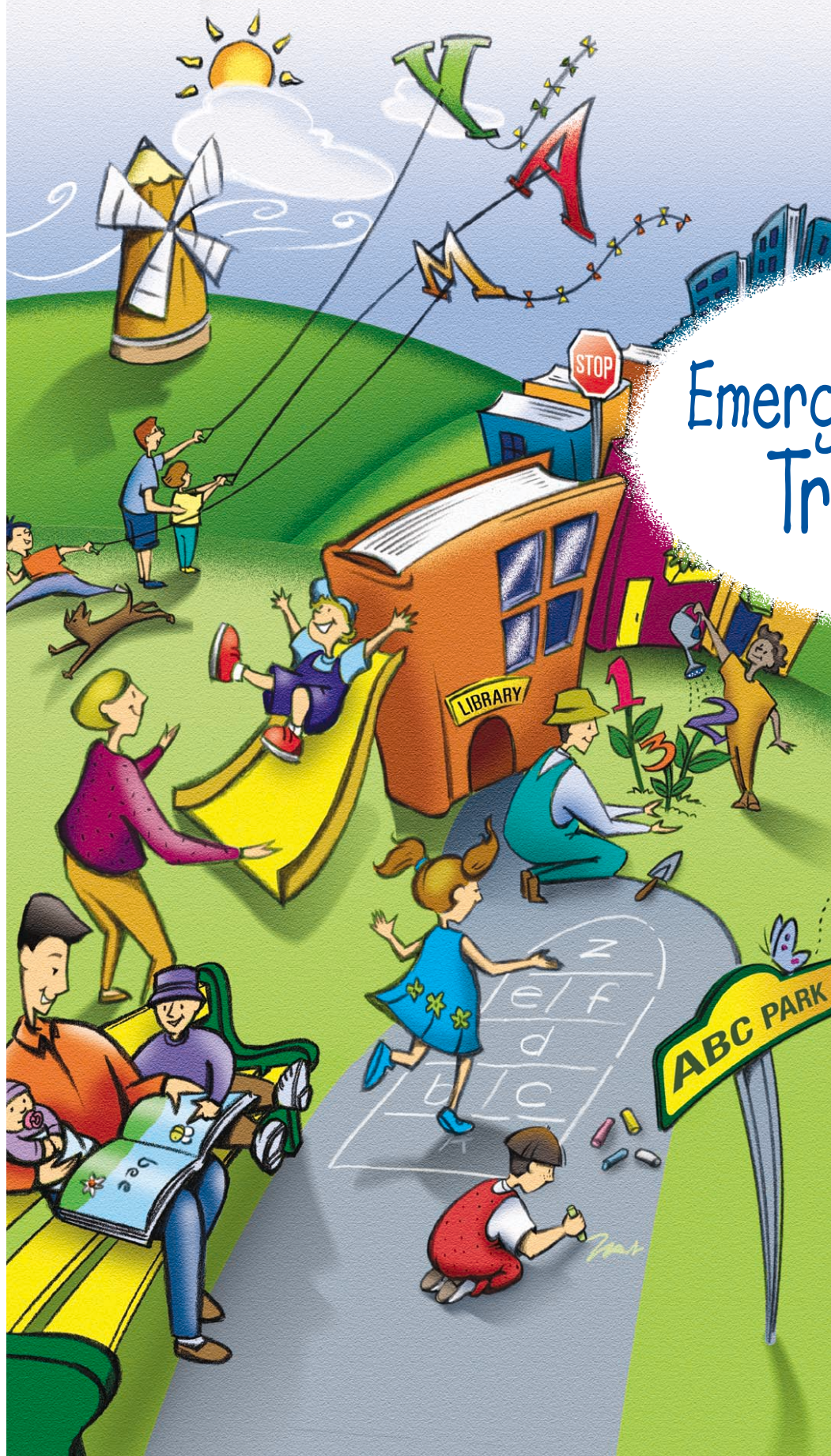


Hand
in Hand

From
A to Z!



Emergent Literacy Training



COMMISSION SCOLAIRE
MARIE-VICTORIN

Québec



EMERGENT LITERACY TRAINING



The original French version of the Hand in Hand From A to Z! project, entitled *De A à Z on s'aide!*, received the "Prix d'excellence 2000" for outstanding achievement from the Fédération des commissions scolaires du Québec.

MARCH 2004

EMERGENT LITERACY TRAINING

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The project was subsidized by the Ministère de l'Éducation, under the Joint Federal-Provincial Literacy Training Initiatives (JFPLTI) program, and by the Direction de la santé publique de la Montérégie.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the people who believed and participated in the project, including members of various boards and departments, for their steadfast commitment over the course of five years. We would especially like to thank Pierre Giguère and Guy Fortier, directors of the Service de l'éducation des adultes at the Commission scolaire Marie-Victorin, and Lino Mastriani, at the Direction de la formation générale des adultes, for their support. We are also grateful to Andrée Racine, at the Direction de la formation générale des adultes, for her help with the distribution of the Hand in Hand From A to Z! emergent literacy materials.

To obtain a set of documents and posters, please contact the Commission scolaire Marie-Victorin, Service de l'imprimerie:

- to obtain information: Richard Viens (450) 670-0730, extension 403
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The documents and posters are free, but there is a charge for postage. Additional copies of *From Cradle to Classroom* may also be ordered, but photocopying costs and postage are not covered.

FOREWORD

In 1995, the Commission scolaire Marie-Victorin, in partnership with various organizations, set up a joint action-research project on the prevention of illiteracy in a working-class area of Longueuil. Subsidized by the Ministère de l'Éducation, under the Joint Federal-Provincial Literacy Training Initiatives (JFPLTI) program, and by the Direction de la santé publique de la Montérégie, the project is intended for families with children up to 4 years of age. Its goal is to support working-class families in their efforts to foster the overall development of their children and their emergent literacy skills. The project involves five areas of research: *emergent reading and writing, early family intervention, the ecological approach, primary prevention, and partnership.*

Since the beginning of the project, the team of partners has developed and experimented with various tools and approaches to help families and their children through preventive and long-term action in the area of emergent literacy. The Hand in Hand From A to Z! emergent literacy materials, which include eight documents and five posters, represent the culmination of all the work that went into this project.

Documents

- *Hand in Hand: Emergent Literacy From A to Z*
- *Checklist for Parents*
- *From Cradle to Classroom*
- *Sharing Pictures and Words*
- *Play Workshops*
- *First Steps in Reading and Writing*
- *Emergent Literacy Training*
- *Communication Plan for Emergent Literacy*

Target Population

Staff of organizations offering services to children from birth to 4 years of age and their families
Newborns and their families
Children from birth to 4 years of age and their families
Children from 12 to 24 months of age and their families
Children from 2 to 3 years of age and their families
Children 3 years of age and their families
Staff of organizations offering services to children from birth to 4 years of age and their families
Staff of organizations offering services to children from birth to 4 years of age and their families

Emergent Literacy Training comprises two formal training sessions: one on emergent literacy and the other on the adult learning process. Each session consists of a slide presentation with supporting text. The sessions are intended primarily for staff members of organizations offering services to children from birth to 4 years of age and their parents. The document is based on emergent literacy training workshops¹ developed under the Assistance Program for Emergent Literacy in Disadvantaged Communities.

1. François Blain, *Ateliers de formation, Éveil à la lecture et à l'écriture, Partenariat, Cahier des participants* (SOFAD, 1999).

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1 OBJECTIVES OF THE EMERGENT LITERACY TRAINING WORKSHOP

- To become familiar with the concept of emergent literacy
- To define learning in terms of the child's awareness of written language
- To develop a common vocabulary related to emergent literacy
- To determine the adult learning process
- To explore parenting skills
- To determine the conditions for a successful parental intervention program

2 THE RELATIONSHIP TO WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Introduction

At the Estates General on Education, held in 1995-1996, mastering French was identified as the top priority in education.² Today, there is a tendency on the part of many to shift the emphasis more specifically to written language. In this regard, the report of the Task Force on Curriculum Reform maintains that “we must take care not to reduce language, which is the vehicle for culture, sensitivity and ideas, to a simple linguistic code.”³ This raises the question of the adult’s relationship to written language, which can be defined simply as an individual’s relationship to written language. But what are the factors that contribute to the development of this relationship?

Some authors believe that the relationship to written language is mainly social (Barré-De Miniac, Biarnès). It is primarily a function of the individual’s environment and how it develops depends on the individual’s reading and writing practices and related constraints. These authors base their conclusions on research results that demonstrate that reading and writing practices in sensitive (disadvantaged) communities are not as well developed as they are in more advantaged communities. For others (Besse, Chauveau and Rogovas-Chauveau, Fijalkow, Giasson, Thériault), written language has affective, relational, perceptible, linguistic, psycholinguistic, cultural, social, conceptual and cognitive dimensions. According to these authors, the relationship to written language is more than just mastery of a technique for converting oral language to written language or for using a code; it involves different dimensions of the human being.

The relationship to written language is dynamic insofar as it evolves throughout a person’s lifetime and, in this sense, it is similar to the concept of the acquisition of written language developed by Besse.

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2. This priority has special significance for anglophones too “given that French is their second language . . . and the language of work and communication in Québec.” Ministère de l’Éducation, *The Estates General on Education 1995-1996: The State of Education in Québec* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1996), p. 42.
 3. Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, *État de situation de la lecture et du livre au Québec* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1998), p. 34, paraphrasing the Ministère de l’Éducation, *The Estates General on Education 1995-1996: The State of Education in Québec* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1996), p. 42.

2 THE RELATIONSHIP TO WRITTEN LANGUAGE *(Continued)*

Application: The relationship to written language

Think about your relationship to written language and share your thoughts with the group.

Instructions

A. Answer the following questions in writing.

B. Discuss your thoughts with the group.

1. What do reading and writing mean to you?

2. What do you feel when you are at a library, a bookstore or a book fair?

3. Give three personal reasons or motivations for reading.

3 EMERGENT LITERACY

Introduction

According to Jocelyne Giasson, emergent literacy refers to the acquisition of reading and writing abilities (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that children develop, without formal instruction, before they begin to read in the conventional way.⁴ In other words, emergent literacy refers to what children learn and know about written language before they begin school. For example,⁵ before they know how to read, children are familiar with and can recognize certain logos, they know the difference between oral language and written language, they know that you read from left to right, they can understand an illustration, they know how to use a book and they know the different purposes of written language (to entertain, to inform, to remember, to identify objects, etc.). By observing adults carry out simple daily activities that involve written language (making a grocery list, writing letters, reading books and newspapers, using a cookbook, reading a story aloud, etc.), children naturally and gradually enter into the world of writing.

Living in an environment with diversified written-language practices helps children find answers to all the questions they have about written language. In her research on reading, Giasson presented a simple emergent literacy process for young children based on ideas developed by Bernard Lahire and Jean-Marie Besse. According to Giasson, children need contact with cultural models in order to develop an understanding of reading and writing by *observing* adults reading or writing and explaining what they are doing. Children also learn by *interacting* with adults or older brothers or sisters in written-language activities. Activities and games that involve reading and writing in an authentic way (e.g. adults reading stories out loud) are simple and effective ways for children to develop emergent literacy skills.⁶

4. Jocelyne Giasson, *La lecture, de la théorie à la pratique* (Boucherville: Gaétan Morin, 1995), p. 114.

5. Hélène Tremblay, *Preventing Illiteracy: Research, Reflections and Proposals for Action* (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 1998), p. 14.

6. By "authentic," we are referring to realistic activities that are meaningful to the child. Each and every opportunity to expose children to written language on a daily basis is beneficial.

3 EMERGENT LITERACY (Continued)

Children also need to *explore*, discover and experiment on their own, to put their knowledge into practice, and to be supported in their efforts. This process enables children to develop their own “theories” about writing, to find answers to their questions and, most importantly, to construct their relationship to written language. The value placed on written-language practices and the meaning that children assign to written language as a result of their initial experiences will later influence the way in which they approach reading and writing at school.⁷

Socialization and the acquisition of reading and writing skills

Socialization is a process of transformation in which individuals become part of society or of a group. They learn the recognized rules, standards and values of the community so that they can function adequately in their environment. By adopting the behaviour codes and values common to the group, they are sensitive to the group’s expectations and are able to meet them consistently.

In *Tableaux de familles*, Bernard Lahire examines the phenomenon of transmission at the family level and questions the environmentalist approach to socialization according to which the community is powerful enough to shape the child. According to Lahire, to be able to develop cultural skills, a child needs more than just to be surrounded by cultural objects or culturally minded people.⁸ The determining factor is “action,” not “being.” It is a family’s ability to transmit its “cultural wealth” to the child, and the objective conditions making such transmission possible, that allow for the transformation of the child. Lahire takes it one step further, opposing the process of transmission to that of construction. He questions the unidirectionality of transmission, by which the transmitter transmits a message and the receiver receives it in its entirety. He prefers the concept of “construction,” by which the receiver gives meaning to the message received in accordance with his or her individual abilities and knowledge.

7. *Preventing Illiteracy: Research, Reflections and Proposals for Action*, p. 15.

8. Bernard Lahire, *Tableaux de familles* (Paris: Gallimard, Le Seuil, coll. Hautes Études, 1995), p. 274.

3 EMERGENT LITERACY (Continued)

Jean-Marie Besse introduced the concept of life-long written-language acquisition. More specifically, he holds that children develop a personal relationship to written language within the family and that this relationship is redefined throughout their lifetime. According to Besse, this relationship begins at a very early age, changes at school, and continues to develop in adulthood through work-related, personal, cultural and relational activities, in accordance with the increasing complexity of written-language use in society.⁹ So reading and writing skills may change throughout a person's lifetime. People develop a mastery of written language through applied and constant reading. At the other end of the spectrum, failure to use written language can result in a loss of the reading and writing skills necessary to function adequately in society.

Marie Bonnafé,¹⁰ inspired by the work of Émilie Ferreiro and François Bresson, refers to the natural affinity of 3- and 4-year-olds for written language, theories and the personal constructions that already exist in young children.¹¹ According to Bonnafé, the young child is an important participant in his or her own emergent literacy process within the family.

In Québec, Jocelyne Giasson defends the meaning-construction process and proposes elements of the family environment conducive to the development of emergent literacy skills in children. As we saw earlier, children *observe* models, *interact* with them and *apply* their knowledge. This process enables them to construct their relationship to written language.

There are four important elements related to emergent literacy in young children:

1. The family is clearly the primary place for the socialization (transmission and recognition) and acquisition (construction) of written language in young children.
2. The availability of family cultural wealth is no guarantee that it will be transmitted to the young child.
3. The child is an active participant in the construction of his or her relationship to written language.
4. The acquisition process is dynamic and continues throughout the lifetime of the individual.

See Appendix I: Awareness of the Emergent Literacy Process

9. Jean-Marie Besse, *L'écrit, l'école et l'illettrisme* (Tournai: Les Éditions Magnard, 1995), p. 88.

10. Marie Bonnafé is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and secretary-general of ACCES (cultural association against exclusion and segregation), a French group that works mainly in the area of mediated reading with very young children.

11. Marie Bonnafé, "Récits, lecture et transmission familiale," *Revue Argos* (no. 19, June 1997), p. 57.

4 THE ADULT LEARNING PROCESS AND PARENTING SKILLS

The role of parents in the development of emergent literacy in children

The report *Un Québec fou de ses enfants* points out a correlation between a disadvantaged childhood and future parenting skills. Children who experience various forms of marginalization show the effects for a long time. This may even call into question their capacity to become a parent.¹² The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) confirms this claim, reporting that a child exposed to more than four risk factors may have considerably reduced capacities and skill levels over time. For example, 16-to-29-year-olds who were enrolled in literacy programs made up 35.5% of the total number of people enrolled in this type of program in Québec in 1995-1996. Furthermore, 84.3% of these 16-to-29-year-olds had experienced an academic setback in elementary school.¹³ The NLSCY also specifies that children who succeed at school are often the ones who come to school ready to learn.

However, the research includes elements that mitigate the effect on the family of being disadvantaged. According to the NLSCY,¹⁴ positive interactions (close and satisfying relationships) greatly influence child development.

According to the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), regular reading is a beneficial exercise. It is by reading that we become good readers. The Survey also revealed that literacy¹⁵ and opportunity are interrelated. Presumably, there are fewer opportunities for reading in working-class families, and members of these families read less. Working-class families also have the highest rates of illiteracy in Québec.

12. Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, *Un Québec fou de ses enfants : rapport du Groupe de travail pour les jeunes* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1991), p. 54.

13. Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, *Le temps de lire, un art de vivre : politique de la lecture et du livre* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1998), p. 32.

14. *Growing Up in Canada*, National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (Ottawa: Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada, 1996).

15. The ability to use printed information well enough to function in society, achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential. Literacy is defined according to a mode of adult cognitive behaviour based on a continuum of skills.

4 THE ADULT LEARNING PROCESS AND PARENTING SKILLS (Continued)

Two other studies support these claims. An exploratory study of parents with poor reading skills who had children aged four or younger revealed a “cultural dropping out” of parents and children with respect to school. This process, described simply by parents, resembles the three stages of the exclusion process (insecurity, dependency and the breakdown of ties). The parents say they believe in their children’s school despite the fact that their personal experiences at school left them with feelings of failure and exclusion. However, the parents say that their children are having difficulties similar to those they themselves had at school, which causes them anxiety (insecurity). In addition, if the parents do not receive the help they want and need to support their children in their difficulties (dependency), they will lose confidence in the school, and a parent-child conspiracy against the school will mark the beginning of a process of dropping out that will end with the child’s leaving school in the early years of secondary school (breakdown of ties).

The second study provides a good summary of this chapter. Prêteur’s comparative study confirms that the child acquires reading and writing skills within the family and that there are significant differences in the socialization of written language in young children in working-class families. The results of the study, which focuses on written-language practices and family educational goals, reveal that the strategies used by the child to acquire reading and writing skills originate and are applied within the framework of the family’s sociocultural practices (whether or not they are deliberately educational). The role of written language in family activities (place, time, social mediation) is therefore one of the most reliable predictors of a child’s future interest in written language.¹⁶ Like Lahire and Besse, Prêteur claims that a child’s socialization and written-language acquisition occur within the family and that the quality of the child’s relationship to written language is dependent on the family’s cultural wealth and reading practices.

16. Y. Prêteur and B. Vial, “Rapports à l’écrit et à l’école de la famille et de l’enfant en 1^{re} année du cycle des apprentissages fondamentaux,” in C. Barré-De Miniac and B. Lété, *L’illettrisme, de la prévention chez l’enfant aux stratégies de formation chez l’adulte* (Paris: De Boeck, 1997), p. 107.

Parenting skills

People don't "learn" how to be parents. Some parents emulate other parents or adults with good parenting skills. Others, who do not have access to such models, perpetuate poor reading and writing practices in their families. Some parents enroll in literacy programs so that they can help their children with their homework.¹⁷ The latter approach is time-consuming and arduous, and requires commitment and perseverance which, unfortunately, not all parents are capable of; it is, however, beneficial for both child and parent (in terms of the acquisition of reading and writing skills and aid strategies and, especially, the parent's self-esteem).

Positive parenting practices and emergent literacy activities do not, however, require extensive education or even literacy. Lahire observes that families with little education can, through dialogue or the reorganization of domestic roles, find a place, both literally and figuratively, for reading and writing in family exchanges. According to Lahire, using written language in family activities is the key to the successful development of emergent literacy in children. This confirms that the relationship to written language is first and foremost a social relationship (Prêteur) and that family recognition of written language is essential if the child is to acquire reading and writing skills. Lahire observes that some families, in their very structure, emphasize the social and symbolic importance of those who know how to read and write or the symbolic integration of the student. When no direct assistance is forthcoming, this type of family legitimization plays a crucial role in obtaining a good basic education. Presumably, this might translate into greater availability of and access to books in families, simple family activities involving written language and a recognition of reading and writing as essential elements in the child's development.

17. François Blain et al., *Recherche exploratoire menée auprès des parents analphabètes* (Longueuil: Commission scolaire Jacques-Cartier, 1994), p. 30.

4 THE ADULT LEARNING PROCESS AND PARENTING SKILLS (Continued)

Parents are very sensitive to their children's needs and want what is best for them.¹⁸ This is evident in the fact that, in recent years, parenting courses and workshops have sprung up all over Québec. Greatly inspired by the trend in adult education, these courses¹⁹ are based on the belief that parents are the primary educators of their children, and are designed to reinforce and develop parenting skills, especially with respect to young children.²⁰ Experiments with early stimulation and parenting skills training,²¹ including aspects of emergent literacy and involving parents and children aged 0 to 36 months, are currently under way in Québec. In addition, the *Programme expérimental de développement de compétences auprès de parents qui éprouvent des difficultés à lire et à écrire dans des situations d'éveil au monde de l'écrit chez leurs enfants d'âge préscolaire*²² is now under way at the Université du Québec à Rimouski. Although the effects of these actions on family reading and writing practices are yet to be determined, the preliminary results are encouraging.

Reading and the family²³

Reading is Québec's favourite cultural leisure activity. However, the amount of time devoted to reading in Québec (3.9 hours/week) is below the Canadian average (4.4 hours/week). It appears that Quebecers are more likely to choose their reading for its informational, rather than entertainment, value.

18. *Recherche exploratoire menée auprès des parents analphabètes*, p. 41.

19. These courses can be based on the parents' skills and knowledge, or may include activities specifically designed for families from disadvantaged communities.

20. Research studies show that parents' participation improves the success rate of interventions with young children. Without the parents' involvement, the beneficial effects for children will likely not last in the medium and long terms; if family practices remain unchanged, the child's learning is neither supported nor maintained (François Blain et al., *Rapport de mission sur la médiation du livre et les pratiques de lecture en milieux populaires*, Québec: Ministère de la Culture et des Communications and Ministère de l'Éducation, 1998).

21. For example, the *Programme régional de stimulation précoce et de compétences parentales* of the Direction de la santé publique de la Montérégie, or the Hand in Hand From A to Z! action-research program of the Direction de la formation générale des adultes of the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec.

22. R. Couture et al., *Programme expérimental de développement de compétences auprès de parents qui éprouvent des difficultés à lire et à écrire dans des situations d'éveil au monde de l'écrit chez leurs enfants d'âge préscolaire* (Rimouski: Les éditions Appropriation, 1998).

23. The data presented in this section are taken from *État de situation de la lecture et du livre au Québec*.

4 THE ADULT LEARNING PROCESS AND PARENTING SKILLS (Continued)

Time spent reading is divided up in many different ways, and according to certain parameters. For example, the reading habits of men and women are significantly different: 46% of men regularly read books, as opposed to 68% of women. Conversely, 32% of women say they read very often (16% say they never read), compared with 16% of men (27% say they never read). These differences are also evident among secondary school students.

The number of Quebecers who say they rarely or never read amounts to 43.1% of the population. Apparently, people who are married or living with someone and people with lower incomes read less. More married people (45.9%) and people with a household income of less than \$30 000 (45.9%) say they rarely or never read. Low-income families also have the highest percentage of people who rarely or never read newspapers (27%) or magazines (41.3%).

In the past 20 years, the number of young people leaving secondary school with a diploma has increased from 53.4% to 72.6%. Despite this increase, the reading habits of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 have not changed in the past 15 years. This confirms the fact that, for one third of all Canadian adults, there is no relationship between schooling and the mastery of language and reading skills. Factors other than schooling contribute to the maintenance or deterioration of reading skills, and two of the most important seem to be reading frequency and diversity.²⁴

Adult learning and development: The relationship between development and identity

The acquisition of knowledge and its application foster personal development associated with the construction of an individual's identity. In this context, identity is defined as the result of an ongoing developmental process. Knowledge appears to contribute specifically to the strengthening of identity. The production, interpretation and application of knowledge foster self-actualization (Danis) and the possession of liberating knowledge and the act of speaking out result in a distinctive personal identity (Solar), and therefore a transformation of thought.

24. Statistics Canada, *Reading the Future: A Portrait of Literacy in Canada* (Ottawa, 1996), p. 72.

4 THE ADULT LEARNING PROCESS AND PARENTING SKILLS (Continued)

The importance of the meaning attributed to learning content

The meaning an adult attributes to a learning experience is crucial. If learning is to contribute to personal development, the content must have meaning for the individual and reflect earlier representations (thoughts). These representations, developed through personal experience, constitute the more or less structured repertoire of knowledge through which an individual interprets and filters all new knowledge.

The filter of meaning makes it possible to integrate knowledge and modify thought, while ensuring internal consistency in individual development and preserving or strengthening identity. For instance, if a learning experience has no meaning for a person, or if it impairs his or her equilibrium (exceeds the limits within which learning contributes to development [Vygotsky]), that person will resort to denial, withdrawal or avoidance (ceasing interaction with the environment). Pastré (cited in Danis and Solar) recognizes the decisive role of the environment in the cognitive development of the individual.

According to these authors, the meaning attributed by an individual to his or her experiences does more than foster the integration of learning; it allows learning to take on an existential dimension by facilitating the integration of the person into both the physical and social environments.

Development and learning

There is some consensus that learning and development are intimately linked. Development fosters the application of knowledge in learning situations, which makes it possible to acquire new knowledge or develop skills which, in turn, broaden the spectrum of possible learning and, consequently, of development. Learning is more than an accumulation of knowledge; it changes the very structure of thought and, consequently, of the cognitive process. In the same vein, one of the conditions for the successful and long-term integration of learning is that it have an effect on the individual's previous knowledge.

Affective aspect in the cognitive domain

Several research projects related to the learning process demonstrate that, in a cognitive approach in which the adult is an active participant in both the acquisition and organization of new knowledge, the effects on development are greater than a simple increase and transformation of knowledge. It has been observed that the learning process in adults leads to psychosocial maturation (Merriam and Clark) or empowerment in terms of the adult's personal life (Canan).²⁵

Legendre introduces the affective or motivational aspect and the social dimension into Piaget's concept of imbalance in the development of an individual. She maintains that cognitive disequilibrium may be accompanied by feelings and that these feelings can interfere significantly in the equilibration process, and therefore in an individual's ability to learn and in so doing, change. On the other hand, people can use their skills and potential to intentionally provoke disequilibrium, forcing them to exceed their current level of skill. This idea brings to mind the need for self-development proposed by Nuttin in his work on the development of motivation.

In terms of the social dimension, Legendre raises two questions. The first refers to the interaction between the learner and his or her environment (peer group, educator, etc.) in the learning situation, which can be a source of conflict and interfere in the equilibration process. The second focuses on the sociocognitive conflict by presenting personal development as the result of a confrontation between the individual and the culture in which he or she is evolving. According to Hrimech, the interaction between expert and novice is comparable to that between parent and child. He points out that social interaction between adult and child (family) is essential for the development of metacognitive skills (including self-regulation) in children.

25. Canan and Merriam and Clark are cited in Claudia Danis and Claudie Solar, *Apprentissage et développement des adultes* (Montréal: Les Éditions Logiques, 1998).

4 THE ADULT LEARNING PROCESS AND PARENTING SKILLS *(Continued)*

See Appendix II: The Adult Learning Process

See Appendix III: Parental Intervention Programs

See Appendix IV: Checklist for the Implementation of a Parental Intervention Program

5 APPLICATION: EMERGENT LITERACY

Discuss how your current perception of emergent literacy differs from your initial perception.

Instructions

- A. Working alone, identify at least two new things you learned today and explain how they will influence your activities.

[illegible]

- B. Present your answer to the group.

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APPENDIX I

AWARENESS OF THE EMERGENT LITERACY PROCESS

AWARENESS OF



THE EMERGENT LITERACY PROCESS





WHAT IS EMERGENT LITERACY?

OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the concept of emergent literacy
- To define learning in terms of the child's awareness of written language
- To develop a common vocabulary related to emergent literacy

A brief history . . .

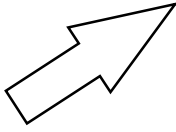
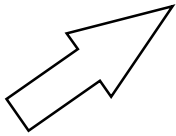
CONCEPTUALIZATION OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE



- ★ Before 1960: the child must be ready
- ★ Today: the process begins at an early age

TWO PARADIGMS

Reading readiness



Emergent literacy

READING READINESS

- There are **skills prerequisite** to learning how to read (auditory memory, rhythm, visual and auditory discrimination, psychomotor skills).
- These prerequisites prepare the child **for learning how to read.**
- Teaching children how to read is the **school's** job and follows a **logical sequence**. The child will be taught how to read at school.

EMERGENT LITERACY

- The development of written language starts early.
- The child is interested in written language and adopts reading and writing behaviours.
- The child develops as a reader-writer. Reading and writing develop simultaneously.
- Ongoing process: real-life environment, functional uses, active participation.
- Each child follows his or her own path.

Research findings

RESEARCH

Written language is a focus of knowledge that the child begins to develop from birth within the family and the community.

Emergent literacy develops in real-life situations in which reading is used for a specific purpose.

The relationship to writing from an early age plays an important role in emergent literacy.

RESEARCH (continued)

Early childhood programs stimulate the growth of the brain; neurological development is responsible for the improvements observed. (Lipps and Yiptong-Avila, 1999)

Six-year-old children who have difficulty learning to read in elementary school have had fewer cultural and social experiences with written language than their peers. Those who have had experience with written language at home and at school are better readers. (Chauveau, Rogovas-Chauveau, 1994)

RESEARCH (continued)

One thousand seven hundred hours of fairy tales (average classes) compared with 25 hours (in disadvantaged communities). (Head Start)

Family characteristics such as help with homework, parents' expectations of their children, conversations about written language, the availability of written materials, the reading of books (questions, explanations, creation, relationships with personal experience) have more influence on emergent literacy than does socioeconomic status. (Lahire, 1995; Prêteur, 1997)

RESEARCH (continued)

The child's awareness of written language is an important predictor of reading and writing success. (Mattingly, 1972)

Children who attended mom and tot programs have higher mathematics, reading and writing scores and better overall academic achievement in Elementary 1 than those who were enrolled in a kindergarten class. (Lipps and Yiptong-Avila, 1999)

RESEARCH (continued)

Regardless of household income and the level of education of the child's mother, children two and three years of age who were read to on a daily basis:

- are better at solving mathematical equations
- are 2.6 times as likely to recognize geometric shapes and twice as likely to know simple concepts of time
- have higher vocabulary scores (Lipps and Yiptong-Avila, 1999)

Definition

EMERGENT LITERACY

Emergent literacy refers to the acquisition of reading and writing abilities (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that children develop, without formal instruction, before they begin to read in the conventional way. (Giasson, 1995)

For example, children enjoy being told a story, know that written language has meaning, can turn the pages of a book, ask questions about written language around them or recognize a logo.

LEARNING?

Behaviours, attitudes, knowledge

CHILDREN DISCOVER WRITTEN LANGUAGE

- ✱ They know the difference between oral and written language.
- ✱ They know that written language has meaning.
- ✱ They like to be read to.
- ✱ They know how to use a book.
- ✱ They know that you read from left to right.

CHILDREN LEARN, DISCOVER MORE

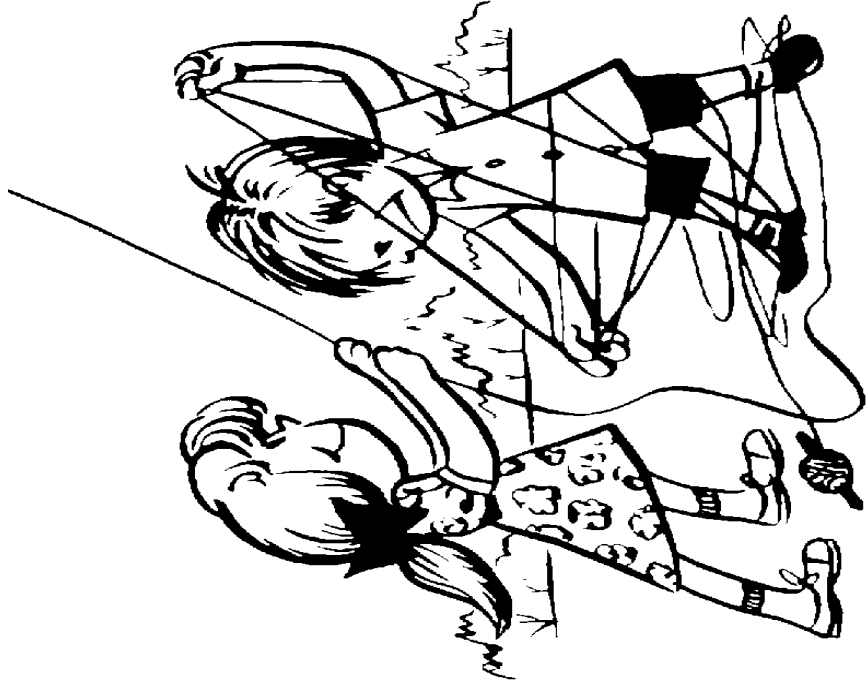
- ✱ They pretend to read; they scribble.
- ✱ They speak in the language used in books (narrative language).
- ✱ They know that written language is permanent.
- ✱ They can predict and anticipate on the basis of a picture.
- ✱ They know the purpose of reading and writing.

ACCOMPANYING THE EXPLORER

ON THE VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

THE CHILD AS EXPLORER

- Children participate actively in the construction of their knowledge and skills.
- They solve problems and formulate hypotheses.
- They conceptualize on the basis of experience and models.
- They have received no formal instruction.



Everyday functional situations involving reading and writing appear to be an important basis for emergent literacy.

By discovering the usefulness of reading and writing, the child develops a desire to learn how to read and write.

The functions of written language

THE FUNCTIONS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE



Personal



To express feelings

Instrumental



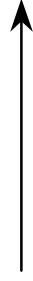
To say what you want

Control



To organize or remember things

Interactional



To communicate with others

THE FUNCTIONS OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE (continued)

Research



To discover, to learn

Imaginative



To create

Informative



To inform, to find out

DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY

As parents and educators, it is important to help children discover the functions of written language in a **natural** way.

It is important that the children's experiences with written language be enjoyable, that they be associated with play, and that they engage them on an emotional level.

TOOLS FOR LEARNING ABOUT WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Written materials in the environment:
as children increasingly interact with
written materials in their environment,
they become aware of the fact that written
language has meaning. (Thériault, 1995)

Reading books is the ideal way of
developing language and discovering
written language.

Interventions

INTERVENTIONS

- Have children participate in activities involving reading and writing.
- Recognize their knowledge, skills and attitudes related to written language.
- Base learning on their knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Foster social interactions in learning related to written language.

WITH WHOM?

With children, parents and families

Within the organization

With other organizations

Within the community

SPRINGBOARD ACTIVITIES



A reading and writing corner



Storyreading



Nursery rhymes

FACILITATORS

The role of facilitators in emergent literacy is to foster the development of new attitudes toward reading within the family and to integrate emergent literacy into their community.

TYPES OF BOOKS



Picture word books



True-to-life stories



Fairy tales



Nonfiction

PICTURE WORD BOOKS

Functions

- To help children learn to speak by using words in a sentence
- To make connections between language, pictures and real life
- To introduce the child to symbolization and seriation

TRUE-TO-LIFE STORIES

Functions

- To enrich children’s vocabulary and teach them to express themselves in the language used in books
- To allow children to understand themselves and the world around them, and to stimulate their imagination
- To help children decode real life whether or not they identify with the characters in the story
- To elicit different emotions

FAIRY TALES

Functions

- To address children’s anxieties and universal internal conflicts
- To help children gain an unconscious understanding of themselves and to cope with unspoken anxieties
- To reassure children, because the hero always wins and lives happily ever after
- To allow children to find their own interpretation

NONFICTION

Functions

- To introduce children to the wider world
- To introduce children to themes outside their experience
- To help children learn about and understand the world

APPENDIX II

THE ADULT LEARNING PROCESS

THE ADULT LEARNING PROCESS



CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT EDUCATION

- Adults must have self-esteem in order to learn.
- Adults establish relationships between learning and personal experience.
- Adults want learning to be useful.
- Adults have little spare time.
- Adults are social beings.
- Adults may be hesitant to engage in a learning process.

LEARNING METHODS

	Active	Experiential
Learning	Content	Process and content
Objective	To understand and memorize	To elicit change
Role of facilitator	To instruct	To facilitate
Role of participant	To participate actively	To take control
Tools	Learning situation	Experimentation

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- ➡ Active interaction in small heterogeneous groups
- ➡ Positive interdependence and solidarity
- ➡ Personal responsibility of each member
- ➡ Practice of social and cooperative skills
- ➡ Analysis of how the group functions

DEVELOPING SKILLS

SUGGESTED DEFINITION

Parenting skills involve the knowledge, skills and attitudes that parents possess, acquire or develop in order to fulfill the role of parent and help their child to reach his or her full potential.

(Blain, 1999)

INDIVIDUAL PATHS

Each child's knowledge is different, since the emergent literacy process occurs through the interaction of children with written materials and adults in their environment, which differ from one child to the next.

(Thériault, 1995)

PARENTING SKILLS FROM THE CHILD’S POINT OF VIEW

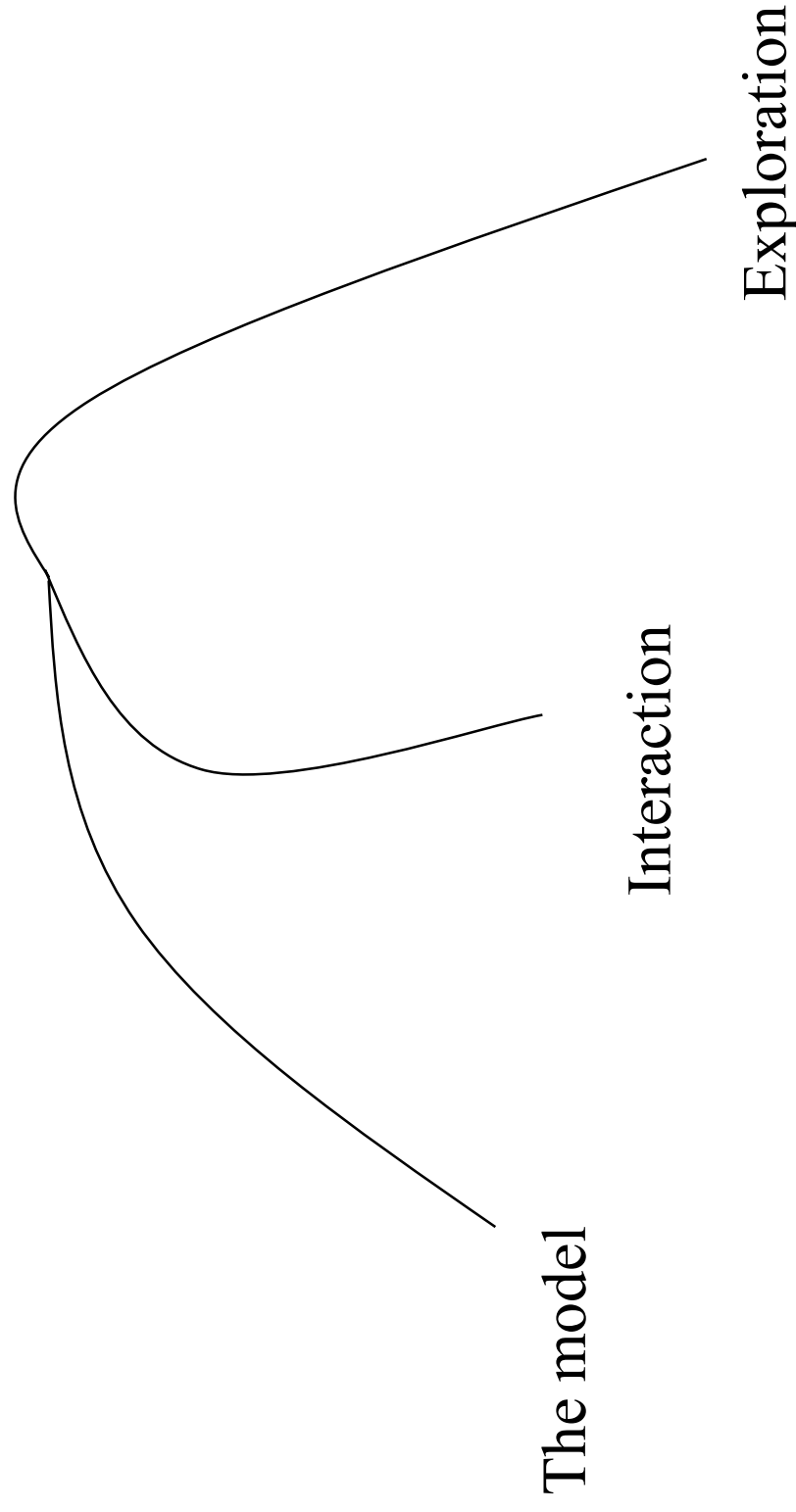
-  Helping the child develop and grow
-  Contributing to the development of the child’s self-esteem
-  Creating a stimulating environment for the child
-  Building a significant relationship with the child
-  Realizing that parents are the primary educators of their children

PARENTING SKILLS FROM THE ADULT’S POINT OF VIEW

PARENTS AS PRIMARY EDUCATORS

-  Not every family has the same written-language practices.
-  Reading and writing frequency and the variety of written materials differ from one family to the next.
-  Cultural and sociocultural factors (income, education, occupational status and reading habits) determine how, why and when the family uses written language.

THREE FACTORS IN FOSTERING EMERGENT LITERACY



THE MODEL

An adult who illustrates how he or she uses written language in everyday life through his or her behaviour, and who verbally explains the functions of written language.

For example:

- The adult uses written language in the child's presence, explaining what he or she is doing.
- The adult describes what he or she is doing when looking up a number in the telephone book.

INTERACTION

Interaction between child and adult in functional situations involving written language is key to stimulating the child's interest and developing reading and writing skills.

For example:

- The adult regularly reads a variety of stories.
- The adult and child prepare a grocery list based on pictures and words in a flyer.

EXPLORATION

The adult allows the child to explore a variety of meaningful written materials on his or her own so that he or she can observe, compare and formulate hypotheses.

For example:

- The adult sets up a reading corner.
- The adult handles written materials, uses a pencil.

SUMMARY

By *observing* adults who read in order to do something, by *interacting* with them in relation to written material, by *exploring* the written materials and receiving encouragement, children identify with adults who read and form a concept of written language and its usefulness.

(Tremblay, 1997)

A PRINT-RICH ENVIRONMENT

**THE ROLE OF WRITTEN LANGUAGE IN
FAMILY ACTIVITIES IS ONE OF THE
MOST RELIABLE PREDICTORS OF
EMERGENT LITERACY IN CHILDREN
AND THEIR INTEREST IN WRITTEN
LANGUAGE IN SCHOOL.**

**PLACE
TIME
INTERACTION**

(Prêteur, 1997)

PARENTING SKILLS FROM THE FAMILY’S POINT OF VIEW

-  Positive parenting practices
-  Family written culture
-  Family conditions
-  Types of preparation for school

POSITIVE PARENTING PRACTICES

-  Maintaining warm relations
-  Expecting appropriate behaviours
-  Using precise vocabulary
-  Asking the child questions on a regular basis
-  Refraining from intervening and interrupting the child's activities
-  Talking to the child on a regular basis
-  Changing one's way of interacting
-  Structuring the environment appropriately

APPENDIX III

PARENTAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

PARENTAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

(Nickse, 1990)

- Direct intervention (children) / indirect intervention (adults)
- Direct intervention (adults) / direct intervention (children)
- Indirect intervention (children) / direct intervention (adults)
- Indirect intervention (adults) / indirect intervention (children)

CONDITIONS FOR A PROGRAM'S SUCCESS

- ✕ Good program design (objectives)
- ✕ Early intervention
- ✕ Ongoing and intense ecological intervention
(interactive parent-child system)
- ✕ Active participation of parents
- ✕ Consolidation of parents' support network
- ✕ Heterogeneous groups (modelling)
- ✕ Standardized activities

REASONS FOR PARENTS’ PARTICIPATION

- ★ More enduring positive effects
- ★ Change in attitude and educational practices of parents, resulting in greater stimulation for the child’s development
- ★ More realistic expectations of children
- ★ Educational intervention better adapted to the specific needs of each family
- ★ Better quality stimulation at home
- ★ Acquired skills eventually transferable to siblings

CONDITIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTION

- ☛ Integration of learning focuses into the parents’ daily lives
- ☛ Recognition and appreciation of parents’ and children’s skills
- ☛ The belief that everyone—facilitators, parents and children—can learn from one another
- ☛ Parents’ participation in problem solving
- ☛ Parents’ understanding of the objectives

APPENDIX IV

CHECKLIST FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PARENTAL INTERVENTION PROGRAM

CHECKLIST

FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PARENTAL INTERVENTION PROGRAM

IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROGRAM

- ✓ Choice of type of program
- ✓ Choice of target clientele
- ✓ Choice of whether to work in partnership
- ✓ Choice of location for activities
- ✓ Dissemination
- ✓ Recruitment
- ✓ Hiring
- ✓ Training
- ✓ Monitoring of parents and program
- ✓ Evaluation

A STRATEGIC CHOICE

➔ Choice of type of program

- objectives
- direct or indirect
- information, training
- frequency
- duration

➔ Choice of target clientele

- nature
- heterogeneous or homogeneous
- age of children
- territory
- ratio

A STRATEGIC CHOICE (continued)

➔ Choice of whether to work in partnership

- organizational culture
- type of program
- roles and mandates
- facilities
- written agreements

A STRATEGIC CHOICE (continued)

➔ Choice of location for activities

- Community centre
 - easily accessible
 - familiar to parents
 - functional
 - daycare on site
 - possibility of storage
- School
 - impact on the organization
 - impact on teachers
 - school code
 - pedagogical days

IMPLEMENTATION

- ➡ Dissemination
 - usual network
 - parents' network
- ➡ Recruitment
 - mass
 - personalized
- ➡ Hiring and training
 - school board resources
 - organizational resources (employees, trainees)
- ➡ Monitoring of parents and program
 - constant monitoring

EVALUATION

Definition of evaluation mechanisms

Group interview at the end of the evaluation

