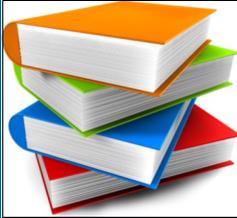


Contra Costa Language and Literacy Quarterly

A newsletter for early childhood professionals implementing Raising a Reader

ISSUE 4

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“Learning to read comes from the happiness of reading.”

Mem Fox, [Reading Magic](#), [Why Reading Aloud to Children will Change Their Lives Forever](#)

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Introduction

Welcome to our fourth issue of Contra Costa’s Raising a Reader newsletter, the Language and Literacy Quarterly. This issue is focused on ways you and your families can adapt books to make them more accessible to children with special needs. Please download the materials to use in your program, and refer to this newsletter as a resource.

This publication will provide you with:

- Research on the benefits of inclusion and adaptation for children with special needs
- Activities and resources to help you support all families in adapting books for special needs children
- Reflections from local preschool educators who are part of the Special Needs Book Adaptation Project

Literacy Adaptation Grant Awarded to Contra Costa’s Raising a Reader Program

First 5 Contra Costa and the Contra Costa Child Care Council Inclusion Project received one of four grants awarded by the national Raising a Reader (RAR) program to adapt its existing literacy materials for children with special needs or disabilities.

Seven early childhood education programs in Contra Costa county are piloting the adapted RAR kits and providing feedback about the materials, ease of adaptive suggestions, and content of written materials. These programs were selected because of their experience with the Inclusion Project, a program to train child care providers to appropriately care for and include children with disabilities in their programs. Jeannie Pierce (RAR Coordinator, First 5 Contra Costa) and Ange Burnett (Inclusion Coordinator, Child Care Council) are working together to create a variety of RAR adaptive kits for children with developmental, visual,

hearing, speech and language, and fine motor delays, as well as other learning disorders.

The goal of the project is to create adaptive tool kits that eventually will be distributed to all RAR providers in January 2012. Jeannie and Ange have been invited to attend the National Raising A Reader Conference in October, held in Boston, to present their ideas and findings, which will be used by RAR affiliates and RAR Headquarters in the future.

The first set of ideas piloted by the project are adaptations for children with fine motor delay/disorder. Teachers found that most of the adaptations easily can be made with little or no cost. For example, glue wooden ice cream spoons to pages of board books to make fun “page turners.” Stick Velcro on pages of books to give more space and to enable little fingers to grab the pages.

Adapting Books for All Children



Children benefit from participating in high quality early childhood programs that work closely with family members. Approximately 10% of children in ECE settings receive special education services, and many more exhibit behaviors of concern that don't receive specialized services. Parents of children with special needs and parents of typically developing children agree that an important benefit of including children with special needs in the early childhood setting is the acceptance of individuals with special needs, and helping all children develop a sense of what the real world is about.



The activities and materials used in most early childhood classrooms are designed to meet the needs of many children with or without disabilities. When they do not meet the specific needs of a child, they can be adapted or expanded to accommodate that child's individual needs. The purpose of an adaptation is to assist children in compensating for intellectual, physical, or behavioral challenges. They allow children to use their current skills while promoting the acquisition of new skills. Adaptations can make the difference between a child merely being present in the class and a child being actively involved.



There are many different types of adaptations that teachers can make that enable children to participate more fully in the early childhood classroom. Teachers may change the environment so children can move around more easily, modify teaching strategies and methods of response to enable all children to participate and demonstrate knowledge, intentionally group children to accommodate the child who needs additional attention and assistance, or physically adapt materials to make them more accessible. The adaptation of existing materials is called for when the materials are judged to be appropriate, but need some simple modifications to make them more accessible. Existing materials are physically altered to make them more sensitive to learning needs. Adaptations of books make it easier for children with special needs to participate in early literacy activities.

While this issue focuses on adapting books for children with special needs, adapted books can be used by all children. Adaptations can help to improve the attention and engagement of all children and can help providers to work with families in different ways. One important goal of Raising a Reader is to help connect early childhood educators and families. Teachers can learn how to adapt books for children with special needs and then use the Raising a Reader book bag exchange principles as an approach to support families in successfully adapting to having a child with special need.



All children need the opportunity to enjoy books and all the benefits this brings. Sharing these adaptations with all the children will encourage the children to value diverse abilities and you may find that children without identified challenges take to reading more easily too! Adapting books can contribute to closing the achievement gap between children with observable behaviors of concern, those with identified special needs, and those that are more typically developing.

Literacy Adaptation Resources Coming Soon!

Remember, Not all books are appropriate for all children. When you choose books that are appropriate for adaptation, consider every part of that book, from color to content. Pay attention to the story theme and the illustrations. Look at the print size, book size, and even the texture of the cover or pages. As you look through your Raising a Reader library of books to select those that may be well-suited for adaptation, choose books with repetitive or predictable text, books about relationships, family, friends and community; stories that focus on social skills and self-help skills, and books about alphabet, counting, or animals.

Watch for more information to come!

Resources

Contra Costa Child Care Council.

The **Contra Costa Child Care Council** is committed to serving parents and child care providers of children with special needs in Contra Costa County. For more information go to www.cocokids.org and choose the Quick Link "Special Needs" on the right side of the screen.

Contra Costa Libraries

From the Contra Costa County website www.ccclib.org, there is a quick link to choose "Library Accessibility." The library provides access for people in a number of ways. There are some large print children's books at all branches, and they can be put on hold and sent to any branch. Check with the librarian if need help finding these. They also have a 3X hand held magnifier.

Some branches have AWE Early Literacy Stations that have touch screens, where the book is narrated, which the librarian recommends for all children, including those with vision and hearing disabilities. This

Early Literacy Computer delivers literacy components to children ages 2-10 years old. These Early Literacy Stations are located in some libraries in Danville, Moraga, Pittsburg, Antioch, Prewitt, Dougherty Station, and San Ramon. Click here for more information on the Libraries "Early Literacy Computer"

<http://www.awelearning.com/en/markets/libraries/in-the-library>.

Every Contra Costa County Library also has low technology kits that include a hand held magnifier, a small border frame to help focus on a specific area -- also used as a signature guide -- and a 20/20 pen which writes bolder (so it's easier to see). This kit is available at all library information desks to help people with special needs.

The Santa Clara Office of Education Library

The SCCOE Library has resources such as 1500 Big Books that can be

checked out; Parent Take Home Kits – such as "Activities for Parents and Children Kits". Teachers as well as parents are encouraged to check out materials. Anyone can check out their materials for free by getting a library card from their library. The materials do have to be returned there. It is well worth the trip. Teachers and Providers come from all over for their wonderful resources. They also have a Make n' Take Resource Center where they have laminators, die cut machines, board maker, books full of ideas. Membership is \$10.00 per year, or \$2.00 per time to come and modify books at their site. They have a nice work area and samples. They have supplies available for purchase or you can bring your own supplies.

For more information, go to www.sccoe.org/depts/library





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Reflections from the Field

Melissa, a family childcare provider in Brentwood, started fine motor adaptations by adapting three books to make it easier for her children to turn the pages. She cut different color felt into small rectangles, then folded them in half to make loops. She glued one felt loop onto each page of a board book, staggering them down the side, to make it easier for children to grasp and turn the pages.

After Melissa made her book adaptations, she introduced the books to the children at circle time by passing around. She passed the three adapted books around and asked the children, "What have I done differently to these books?" Children were excited about the changes. She explained these help make it easier for fingers to turn pages. The children had fun trying her books with the new page turners.

Melissa also informed parents. She gave parents a letter about the Special Needs Pilot Project and briefly discussed what she was doing with children in the classroom.

Melissa has a preschooler with observable fine motor challenges that were confirmed after Inclusion Project staff helped her complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). After introducing the adaptations to the child and his family, she will now help the family to adapt books to leave at home.

Monica is a family child care provider in Pinole, who introduced the "Special Needs Pilot" activities to parents at a meeting. Parents were very interested in the project and congratulated her for getting involved!

Monica also introduced the fine motor book adaptations to her children at circle time. They also watched her making the adaptations and tried to help. As she read the adapted book, they were all paying attention, waiting for the next page to be turned because they liked turning the pages this special way. Monica also showed the children the eco-phone, used for adapting books for children with hearing disorders to discriminate soft and loud tone. All the children were able to try and had fun.

Monica works with one preschooler with speech and language delay. Although he already gets speech and language services and Monica receives help from the Child Care Council Inclusion program, the book adaptation project has really helped too. Monica meets with the family to share book adaptation ideas and get feedback from the family about how the adaptations are helping at home.

